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OF
JOHN DENNIS

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THE CRITICAL WORKS
OF
JOHN DENNIS

EDITED BY
EDWARD NILES HOOKER

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INTRODUCTION

SECTION I THE CANON

Since the appearance of the bibliography in Professor Paul's study of Dennis not many alterations of any importance have been made in the canon of his works. Only a few additions must be made to his list, and only one item in the list must be rejected. No good evidence has yet been presented to show that any of the anonyma excluded by Paul were actually composed by Dennis. Of the two anonymous works which he accepted without conclusive proof, one has since been established beyond reasonable doubt as the product of Dennis's hand Most notable of the materials unknown to Paul, which have since turned up, are a few manuscript letters, and a complete essay in manuscript, only a mangled fragment of which, printed in 1817, was available to him

One item which should be added to the list of Dennis's works is his first published book, *Poems and Letters upon Several Occasions,* which was advertised in the Term Catalogues, Nov., 1692, as published by D Brown, and which was apparently on sale by December [1] This work was a reissue of an earlier publication, originally put out anonymously, and now, in 1692, given out again under Dennis's name but without his authority It consisted chiefly of juvenile verses, together with a few letters, and by 1692 Dennis was unwilling to own his first-born [2] I have not seen a copy of this work, and I know of no library in which it is catalogued The loss of the juvenile verses is no misfortune, but one must regret the disappearance of the letters, for some of Dennis's most interesting criticism appeared in his correspondence It is likely that some of the material in this volume was incorporated in the *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose,* published in 1693 by James Knapton

A second item to be added to Dennis's bibliography is his translation of the fifth book of Tacitus's History This translation he contributed to a three-volume work published in 1698 but possibly begun as early as 1693 [3] Among other contributors were Dryden, William Bromley, and John Potenger

A third item to be added is an interesting postscript to a letter, the letter with its postscript appearing in Aaron Hill's *Plain Dealer.*[4] The letter itself

[1] Dennis's friend Motteux described this volume as "a little Twelve-penny Book printed many years ago and now once more offer'd to the World" (*Gentleman's Journal,* November, 1692, p 2)

[2] Motteux said (*ibid*) "It seems to consist most of Juvenile Verses, and was formerly publish'd without any Name to it, neither doth Mr *Dennis* own it to be his"

[3] *The Annals and History of Cornelius Tacitus* Dennis's portion is contained in vol III, pp 353-382 For evidence that this undertaking was projected as early as 1693 cf Macdonald, *John Dryden, a Bibliography* (Oxford, 1939), p 177

[4] No 57 (Oct 5, 1724) The postscript contains an interesting statement of the idea of the Chain of Being It is reprinted below, p c

was published elsewhere, with Dennis's name attached to it, so that there can be no doubt as to the author.[5] Since the postscript, which appears only in the *Plain Dealer*, is therein represented as the work of the same hand as that which composed the letter, and since it is couched in Dennis's style, it should be accepted as his work.

A fourth item to be added is a letter dated Oct. 7, 1724, written to Aaron Hill and printed in the *Plain Dealer*.[6] Hill had recently visited Dennis and urged him to have his picture drawn for the benefit of posterity. In this letter Dennis explained that he was unwilling to have his portrait done by an inferior artist and that he was too poor to pay an excellent one.

A fifth item to be added is an essay on drinking, dated Sept 15, 1724, and printed in the *Plain Dealer*.[7] The essay, in the form of a letter, was sent to a friend whose identity is not revealed. The subject of the essay, the evils of drinking, was one which had attracted Dennis's attention for many years.[8] This item in all probability is identical with the essay "Against Drinking" which Dennis proposed to include in the second volume of the *Miscellaneous Tracts*.

A sixth item to be added is the letter which Dennis sent to a newspaper early in 1731, rejecting Pope's proffered assistance in obtaining subscriptions for a proposed edition of the critic's works The letter is referred to in an epistle from Pope to Hill dated Feb. 5, 1731, and again in an epistle from Hill to Pope dated Feb 10, 1731 I have not been able to locate it

A complete bibliography of Dennis would list titles of books which reprinted portions of his works. It would note, for example, that the anonymous tract, *The Usefulness of the Stage to Religion and to Government*, printed in 1738, is composed of fragments of Dennis's *Usefulness of the Stage*, that *The Progress of Dulness* (1728) reprinted most of his "Observations upon *Windsor Forest*" and his "Observations upon *The Temple of Fame*", that the *Popiad* (1728) consists almost entirely of quotations from his *Remarks upon Pope's Homer*, and that the *Curliad* and the *Twickenham Hotch-Potch* reprint portions of the same work, that the *Prompter*, no 171, reprinted a portion of the *Grounds of Criticism*, a portion which in turn was reprinted by the *London Magazine*,[9] and that several of the biographical dictionaries in the century following Dennis's death printed long excerpts from his works These excerpts, quotations, and reprints, however, have no textual value, and no importance whatever except, perhaps, as they indicate that fragments at least of his works were known to a rather large audience.

[5] The letter was included as a specimen published with the *Proposals for Printing by Subscription Miscellaneous Tracts, Written by Mr John Dennis* It is reprinted in this edition, II, 223-227 Numbers in bold-face here and hereafter refer to pages in this edition

[6] No 60

[7] No 96 (Feb 19, 1725)

[8] Cf I, 22-23

[9] Cf I, 508

The item listed by Paul as *Letters on Milton and Congreve,* supposedly published in 1696, should be removed from the bibliography. No such work ever existed The mistake was launched by William Godwin, who in all probability was using this title inexactly to refer to the work which I have printed under the title of *Letters on Milton and Wycherley.*[10]

The *True Character of Mr. Pope and His Writings* was published anonymously, and it has been variously ascribed to Dennis, or to Gildon, or to Dennis and Gildon in conjunction. Though the brief enclosed "character" may have been contributed by Gildon, the pamphlet as a whole was unquestionably written by Dennis[11] There is no evidence, however, that either the first edition (1716) or the second (1717) was authorized.

The letter to the *Daily Journal* of May 11, 1728, which I have included in the Appendix, was ascribed to Dennis by Pope, and this attribution is accepted by Paul. There is no conclusive proof that Dennis was the author, but the letter follows his style and his manner and his ideas so thoroughly that the attribution has a very high degree of probability.[12]

The *New Project for the Regulation of the Stage* (1720), which professes to be the work of Dennis and Gildon, though it was properly rejected from the canon by Paul, has unfortunately been included in the list of works by Dennis which appears in the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* The *New Project* is actually a satire on Dennis and Gildon, and the fact that Pope happily summarized it in his *Peri Bathous* suggests that he was privy to the secret of its authorship.

Pope accused Dennis of a share in the authorship of a letter in Mist's *Weekly Journal,* dated June 8, 1728 The letter, however, bears no trace of Dennis's hand, and there is not the slightest reason to suppose that he had anything to do with it[13]

A strange enthusiasm for assigning anonymous books and pamphlets to well-known authors sometimes descends upon cataloguers and upon untrained scholars, introducing a lamentable confusion in the fields of literary studies. An example of the horrible results of such enthusiasm is found in the Union Catalogues of the Library of Congress, where Dennis has been credited with the authorship of Henry Carey's *Blundrella.* Many other specimens of *anonyma* have been assigned to Dennis on little more than intuition *Pope Alexander's Supremacy and Infallibility Examin'd* (1729), though it was rejected by Paul, is still frequently catalogued as the work of Dennis and George Duckett According to D Nichol Smith, it is highly improbable that Duckett had any share in the undertaking[14] And it is equally improbable that Dennis was

[10] Cf II, 491-492

[11] Cf "Pope and Dennis," in *ELH,* VII (1940), 189-192

[12] Cf II, 526

[13] Cf II, 516 The letter was reprinted in *Gulliveriana* (1728), p 308

[14] *Letters of Thomas Burnet to George Duckett, 1712-1722,* ed D N Smith (Oxford, 1914), p. xix

involved In the first place, Dennis himself referred to "the ingenious and sagacious Author of *Pope Alexander's Supremacy*",[15] there is no instance known of Dennis's paying a sly and disingenuous tribute to himself. But more important, in the second place, is the fact that the style of the work is not Dennis's and that there is no sound external evidence upon which the attribution could be based The pamphlet should still be listed as anonymous A man so convinced as Dennis was of the rightness of his judgment and the importance to the public of his writings, and so avid as Dennis was of fame, and so courageous as Dennis was in facing the consequences of his words, is not likely to permit any considerable piece of work to leave his hands without a signature attached to it Even the trivial *Poems in Burlesque* (1692), which according to the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* was published anonymously, has a signed dedication. The *Person of Quality's Answer to Collier's Dissuasive* was printed anonymously, but Dennis later included it in an authorized edition of his works The two parts of the *Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar* were printed anonymously, but Dennis identified himself as the author in the dedication of the second part Amazingly little of his writings was left unclaimed Except perhaps for a few letters to the newspapers, it is unlikely that any further works by Dennis remain among the masses of *anonyma* published in his lifetime. At any rate attributions to Dennis of anonymous pamphlets and articles should be made with the greatest caution, and should be received with scepticism unless they are based on something more solid than intuitions and flimsy parallels

Apparently only a few works by Dennis still survive in manuscript Of these the most considerable is the essay called *The Causes of the Decay and Defects of Dramatick Poetry,* which is printed complete in this edition for the first time On the back of this manuscript, now in the Folger Shakespeare Library, is a note "Copies of Mr Dennis, lodgd for money borrowd No 6" The number suggests that several other manuscripts were deposited at the same time, probably in 1725 or 1726 Dennis at this time was collecting his materials for the second volume of the work to be issued under the title of *Miscellaneous Tracts.* The second volume, which never reached publication was to have contained, in addition to the *Causes of the Decay and Defects of Dramatick Poetry* and the *Letters on Milton and Wycherley,* the following items 1) an essay "On Virtue," 2) an essay "On the Immortality of the Soul," 3) an essay "Against Drinking," 4) an essay "On the Harmony of the *English* Poetry," 5) a group of familiar letters, and 6) several letters to Dennis from Prior, Rowe, Walter Moyle, and other prominent men[16] It is likely that some of these were among the manuscripts deposited with the printer together with the *Causes of the Decay and Defects of Dramatick Poetry* The essay "Against Drinking" was probably the one printed in the *Plain*

[15] *Cf* II, 376

[16] *Proposals for Printing by Subscription, in Two Volumes in Octavo, the Following Miscellaneous Tracts, Written by Mr John Dennis* The *Proposals* were dated "London, Oct 25, 1721"

Dealer, and the essay "On the Harmony of the *English* Poetry" was probably the one given to James Greenwood for the second edition of his *Grammar*.[17] Although none of the other six items, so far as I can discover, has up to the present been brought to light, it is still possible that they exist The letters from Prior, Rowe, and Moyle, at least, would be heartily welcomed by students of Augustan literature

A few letters by Dennis still survive in manuscript In the British Museum may be found a letter to Charles Montagu, Lord Halifax, dated July 3, [1699],[18] and two letters to Sir Hans Sloane, one of Sept. 17, 1722, and the other of April 30, 1728 [19] The Folger Shakespeare Library preserves the letter to Henry Davenant dated March 20, 1706 [20] And the Historical Manuscripts Commission has printed a few letters to Prior, dated Jan 10, March 17, March 23, and April 11, 1721 [21] A two-page memorial presented by Dennis to the Lord High Treasurer on Aug 29, 1711, is preserved among the Treasury Papers [22] It is probable that other manuscripts survive, but I have not been able to locate them

The manuscript of *Liberty Asserted* deposited in the Canadian Archives, appears to be merely a copy of the printed play [23] In the University of Texas Library there is a manuscript containing several poems by Dennis which appear in the *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose* of 1693, it is not in Dennis's holograph, but is apparently a copy made from the printed book by some anonymous contemporary [24]

SECTION II PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The account of Dennis's personal relationships may seem to be somewhat less than necessary in a study of his criticism Unfortunately, the value of Dennis's work has too frequently been judged on the basis of a false notion concerning his character. He was vain, irritable, suspicious, and envious, therefore (so the usual argument would run if it were made explicit) his judgments were interested, distorted by passion, and unsound He is pictured as a poverty-stricken hack, a social outcast, at war with all that was refined and beautiful By one eminent American scholar he is even set down as a

[17] Printed in this edition II, **236-240**

[18] Printed in this edition II, **388-389**

[19] Printed in this edition, II, **490-491**

[20] Printed in this edition, I, **520**, previously printed by the Hist Mss Com, xv, app 2, p **83**

[21] Bath, III **494 498 499-500**, and **501-502**

[22] *Calendar of Treasury Papers, 1708-1714,* p **306**

[23] Mrs George Bryce, "A Rare Find in the Canadian Archives, being a tragedy entitled 'Liberty Asserted' by John Dennis," in *Proceedings and Transactions* of the Royal Society of Canada IV (1910), Section II, pp **3-24** I have not seen the manuscript

[24] The poems in the manuscript occupy pages **1-21** in the printed book I am indebted to Professor R H Griffith, who called the manuscript to my attention and furnished me with a photostat copy of it

"dunce", that is, a pedant, whose dullness caused him to abuse the learning which he had painfully acquired. Some of these misconceptions can be eradicated by a knowledge of his dealings with his contemporaries. The account of his friendships, moreover, may serve to throw some light upon his tastes, his habits, his surroundings, and may aid in defining the influences that bore upon him, as well as the influence which he exerted on certain of his contemporaries. It is, of course, impossible to list all of his friends and acquaintances, to say *nothing of analyzing* them. From the fact that Dennis mentions some of his closest friends only once or twice in all his writings we may safely conclude that there were many of whom he found no occasion to speak. He was a frenzied letter-writer, but comparatively few of his letters have survived. Nevertheless our information is full enough to provide a picture which, however incomplete, is at least in perspective and in proportion.

As early as his Cambridge days Dennis had developed tastes for literature and for the society of writers and artists Sometime before 1681 we find him entering into the pleasures of the town He had come down to London from the university and at the Fountain Tavern in the Strand was supping one evening with Richard Duke,[1] David Loggan, the artist and engraver, and a certain Mr Wilson who was known to Otway, when the company was moved to pledge the health of "Captain Wycherley"[2] In this great era of English comedy it was almost inevitable that an impressionable young university man, stricken by the charms of literature, should be fascinated by the theater and awed by the name of Wycherley Although Dennis remained at Cambridge until he was nearly thirty, receiving his M.A. in 1683 and tarrying at least three years thereafter, probably in the capacity of a tutor,[3] he took occasion to visit London frequently, no doubt to haunt the playhouses and to exchange literary gossip with his friends in the taverns and coffee houses, enjoying the gaiety of the town and living generally, as was his wont, beyond his means The companionship of writers stirred him to emulation, and in this period he launched himself modestly on a career as a man of letters by gathering together a little volume of his poems and letters, published at first anonymously, and in 1692 reissued under his name but without his authority

During the autumn of 1688 Dennis made his way through France and Italy in the company of Lord Francis Seymour, who had been a schoolmate at Harrow.[4] When he returned to London, he plunged headlong into the literary life of the town. His circle of acquaintances was large and of varied types By 1692 he was on familiar terms with Fleetwood Sheppard, to whom he dedicated his *Poems in Burlesque*[5] He was also on familiar terms with the

[1] Duke was a Cambridge man, of exactly the same age as Dennis His friendship with Atterbury, Prior, and Dryden may have been of assistance to Dennis in effecting acquaintance with those gentlemen

[2] Cf II, 410-411

[3] Fred Tupper, "Notes on the Life of Dennis," in *ELH*, v (1938), 211-217

[4] Paul, *John Dennis* (N Y, 1911), p 4

[5] The language of the dedication indicates certain common interests, such as strong liking for Butler's poetry, and shows Sheppard to have been acquainted with some of

enterprising Peter Motteux, to whose periodical, the *Gentleman's Journal,* he contributed at least five poems.[6] Among the more frequent contributors to the *Gentleman's Journal* were Sedley, Tate, Tom Brown, Joseph Mitchel, William Pittis, Fransham, Denne, Dove, D'Urfey, Hawkshaw, Manning, Power, Prior, Gildon, John Phillips, Thomas Sergeant, Congreve, Southerne, and Oldmixon Many of these writers are known to have been friends of Dennis, and it is probable that he was at least acquainted with most of them. During the 1690's he was undoubtedly on friendly terms with such professional men of letters as Charles Gildon, whose esteem for Dennis was such that he put aside his own intention to vindicate Shakespeare from Rymer's assault because Dennis had promised to undertake the task,[7] and John Oldmixon, for whom Dennis wrote a prologue in 1698 and to whose periodical, the *Muses Mercury,* he contributed in 1707. At about this time also he may have been introduced to Henry Cromwell, a gentleman and literary dilettante, who was probably known to Gildon and who contributed several poems to Gildon's collection, *Miscellany Poems upon Several Occasions* (1692) He was on friendly terms with John Crowne, from whom he drew many stories of his early life and his later career as a dramatist[8] Among his most intimate friends during this period were Thomas Cheek, Thomas D'Urfey, and a Mr Wymersell[9] With D'Urfey he shared an interest in burlesque and Butler, and with Cheek he shared an interest in Voiture[10] Atterbury was his intimate friend, in part, perhaps, because of their common enthusiasm for Milton.[11] He conversed with Sir Henry Sheeres and a Mr "Walkeden," who were friends of Wycherley's and with whom he exchanged anecdotes about the Plain Dealer.[12] At least as early as 1692 he frequented Will's,[13] the most famous coffee house of the day, where the wits and beaus met to display their respective talents

Although Dennis was frequenting Will's as early as 1692, some time was to pass before he became an intimate of the giants who congregated there In

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Dennis's writings, at least with the poem "Upon our Victory at Sea" Although Sheppard was a close friend and protégé of Dorset, it is interesting to note that Dennis was not personally acquainted with Dorset when he dedicated the *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose* to him in 1693

[6] In the issues of May, June, October, and November of 1692, and in the issue of January, 1693 Motteux (whose name Dennis rhymed with *Pothooks*) gave evidence by his comments on Dennis in the issue of November, 1692, of a warm regard and a knowledge of his plans and activities

[7] *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays* (1694), p 64 In this same volume Gildon's "Essay at a Vindication of Love in Tragedies" was directed to Dennis Gildon took the opportunity to express his admiration for Dennis in his continuation of Langbaine, the *Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets* in 1698

[8] Cf II, 404–406

[9] Wycherley to Dennis, Feb 4, 1694, in Dennis, *Select Works,* II, 495

[10] Both Cheek and Dennis translated some of Voiture's letters, their translations appearing together in *Familiar and Courtly Letters* (1700, reprinted in 1705 and 1724)

[11] Paul, p 6 n

[12] Cf II, 409

[13] Dennis, *Poems in Burlesque* (1692), p 12

1692 he was an impecunious and inelegant young man of an undistinguished family, and his only achievements in literature were unpromising trivialities Within the first three months of 1693, however, he had published the *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose* and the *Impartial Critick*, the latter an entertaining dialogue containing an able and ingenious reply to Rymer and a handsome compliment to Dryden If Dryden had not noticed Dennis before, the *Impartial Critick* would have recommended its author to his notice However it was, they were acquainted by the end of 1693, and in January of the following year Dennis was addressing his first letter to Dryden, a letter conceived in idolatry and couched in terms indicative of a brief acquaintance [14] Dryden answered cordially, and Dennis wrote again, on March 3, 1694 [15] Dryden's reply was long and gracious, commending his correspondent both as a critic and as a poet, and revealing the fact that he had been discussing Dennis's affair of the heart with Wycherley.[16] No other specimens of the correspondence between Dennis and Dryden survive—unfortunately, for Dryden's letter to Dennis is easily one of the most interesting which he ever wrote Apparently the friendship lasted until Dryden's death, although we have no proof of it, yet Dennis's strongly unfavorable review of Blackmore's *Prince Arthur* in 1696, his attack on Collier and defence of the stage in 1698 and his joining the confederacy of the wits in replying to Blackmore's *Satyr against Wit* in 1700 suggest a certain community of interests and tastes that implies continued friendship Moreover, Dennis's own statement that there were many in Dryden's circle who tried to convince the master that Dennis would be the first after his death to traduce his memory,[17] points to the conclusion not only that Dennis maintained a characteristic independence and was aware of the master's faults, but that several of the wits were envious of his share in the master's affections After Dryden's death Dennis remained in his own fashion, loyal to the memory of his friend He criticized *All for Love* severely, though with professed reluctance in view of the veneration in which he held Dryden's great abilities [18] He pointed out that though *Absalom and Achitophel*, the *Medal*, and *MacFlecknoe* were beautiful libels, yet they were still libels rather than just satire [19] He observed, very properly, that the *State of Innocence* fell infinitely below *Paradise Lost*, though he was inclined to attribute Dryden's failure partly to his use of rhyme [20] Yet he bestowed praise as well [21] and his letter to Tonson [22] contained one of the warmest and

[14] *Letters upon Several Occasions* (1696), pp 46-48

[15] *Ibid*, pp 49-52 Dryden's reply to the first letter has apparently not survived, but the opening sentence of Dennis's letter of March 3 makes it clear that Dryden had encouraged his tender of friendship

[16] *Ibid*, pp 53-56

[17] Cf II, 400

[18] Cf II, 162-165

[19] Cf II, 201

[20] Cf I, 377

[21] Cf I, 198 and 407, II, 280

[22] Cf II, 399-401

most discriminating tributes paid to Dryden during the eighteenth century. Dennis's critical faculties were too sharp and active to be dispossessed by the generous warmth of friendship His affections, in fact, seem never to have been so powerful as to blind him to the faults of their object.

Dennis's acquaintance with Wycherley probably began at about the same time as his friendship with Dryden. The earliest specimen which survives of their correspondence is Dennis's letter dated from London, Jan 19, 1694[23] It is clear from this letter that though Dennis had frequently enjoyed Wycherley's conversation, he had only recently received permission to write to him, and he was not yet assured that Wycherley would answer. To this offering Wycherley responded promptly in a letter dated Feb 4[24] No doubt he was pleased by the adulation of a young man who had already attracted attention by his poetry and his criticism and whose offers of friendship Dryden had encouraged A regular correspondence developed between the two men Although the tone of this correspondence on the whole is highly artificial, full of extravagant compliments in the best style of the time, yet there are occasional signs of genuine personal interest. When Dennis was experiencing the miseries of unrequited love, Wycherley poured out consolations drawn from the stores of his own experience[25] Dennis relied sufficiently on the strength of their friendship to maintain his independence and to dissent from his friend's opinions, when Wycherley sent him a whimsical "Panegyrick upon *Puns*" he replied by intimating that punning is a mark of dullness and that the scum of the people may be distinguished by their manner of quibbling[26] By the end of 1694, while Dennis was in the country, his tavern-friends were sending their regards to him through Wycherley[27] In 1698, when he wrote the *Usefulness of the Stage*, Dennis commended the great abilities of Wycherley with an enthusiasm that must have been gratifying to the elderly poet[28] After the death of Dryden, however, the friendship seems to have cooled, there is no evidence to show that he was in communication with Wycherley for several years before the latter's death. Though Wycherley was well acquainted with Pope from 1705, it may be significant that Pope met Dennis only about three times in the first decade of the century, and then through

[23] *Letters upon Several Occasions* (1696), pp 7-12

[24] *Ibid*, pp 13-16 The remainder of the correspondence which can be identified with assurance is as follows Dennis to Wycherley, Feb 17, 1694 (pp 20-21), Dennis to Wycherley, [Nov 20, 1694] (pp 22-23), Wycherley to Dennis, Dec 1, 1694 (pp 24-27), Dennis to Wycherley, [March 31, 1695] (pp 28-30), Wycherley to Dennis, April 11, 1695 (pp 31-33), Dennis to Wycherley, [shortly after April 11] (pp 34-35), Wycherley to Dennis, Aug 31, 1695 (pp 36-38), Dennis to Wycherley, Sept 10, 1695 (pp 39-40), Dennis to Wycherley, Oct 30 [1695] (pp 41-45), Dennis to Wycherley, [1695?] (pp 64-68) The recipient of the last letter is identified in the *Select Works* (1718), II, 509

[25] Dryden to Dennis, [March, 1694], in *Letters upon Several Occasions* (1696), pp 53-58 Dryden had seen Wycherley's letter just before he wrote to Dennis

[26] *Ibid*, pp 64-68

[27] *Ibid*, p 27

[28] Cf I, 157-158

the instrumentality of Henry Cromwell.[29] When Dennis in 1711 described Wycherley as an ancient wit haunted by an evil spectre (Pope),[30] he was evidently no longer on terms of warm friendship with his old acquaintance. Yet he never ceased to speak with the utmost respect of Wycherley's talents in comedy, and his letter to Congreve of Aug. 1, 1721,[31] pays a full measure of judicious admiration to the author of the *Plain Dealer*.

With Congreve Dennis's friendship endured for over twenty-five years Since Congreve was a friend of Dryden's, Dennis probably met him as early as 1693, but of the letters which Dennis printed none seems to date from before 1695 The correspondence with Congreve attained a comparatively high plane, Dennis's comments on Ben Jonson were excellent criticism,[32] and Congreve's reply, the letter Concerning Humour in Comedy,[33] is an admirable analysis of a difficult subject and a painstaking work which Congreve would not have given himself the trouble of writing if he had considered his correspondent a mere acquaintance or a man of negligible abilities One of Congreve's closest friends of these days, Walter Moyle, became Dennis's friend as well, and the three occupied prominent places among the wits at Will's Moyle, like Congreve, had a strong interest in literary criticism and theory, and the three men, when they were separated, continued by letter the discussion which they had begun in the coffee house. The coffee-house groups were closely-knit units, and Dennis and Moyle apparently shared letters from Congreve,[34] just as Moyle was likely to pass a letter from Dennis over to Wycherley,[35] and Wycherley to show his correspondence with Dennis to Dryden [36] Moyle's good friend, Thomas Sergeant, who after Moyle's death prepared his works for publication in 1726, was one of Dennis's intimates for over two decades, and Anthony Hammond, who contributed the account of Moyle's life to the 1726 edition of the works, was well known to the wits of Dryden's day Among other friends shared by Moyle and Dennis (and, probably, Congreve) were Sir George Markham, Mr Mein, and a Mr. Welby [37] Mein, a jovial fat man, probably of Irish extraction, was one of Congreve's most intimate friends,[38] and remained attached to Dennis for several decades After 1700 Moyle retired to his estate at Bake, in Cornwall When Dennis wrote to Moyle in

[29] Cf II, 370

[30] Cf I, 416

[31] Cf II, 230-235

[32] Cf II, 384, 385-386, and 521

[33] Congreve to Dennis, July 10, 1695, in *Letters upon Several Occasions* (1696), pp 80-96

[34] Dennis to Congreve, August 8, 1695, *ibid*, pp 97-98

[35] Wycherley to Dennis, April 11, 1695, in *Letters upon Several Occasions* (1696), pp 31-33

[36] Dryden to Dennis, 1694, *ibid*, pp 53-56

[37] Dennis to Moyle, Jan 16, 1720, in *Original Letters* (1721), pp 159-162

[38] I am indebted to Mr John Hodges for this information Further information about this obscure but interesting friend of the wits will be given in the edition of Congreve's letters which Professor Hodges is preparing

1720, he had not seen him for twenty years.[39] A second letter to Moyle, dated May 24, 1720, indicates that that gentleman responded cordially,[40] and we know that Dennis planned to include the correspondence in the second volume of the *Miscellaneous Tracts*.[41] With Congreve Dennis maintained something of their old friendship for many years. After Dryden's death Congreve lost part of his interest in the theater and devoted more of his time to playing the part of a gentleman; he moved in better circles than Dennis could ordinarily presume to enter. Yet Dennis saw him occasionally as late as 1720,[42] and Congreve subscribed to the *Miscellaneous Tracts* The mysterious individual who signed his work by the name of Charles Wilson reports that Congreve "was continually bestowing upon *Dennis* Pecuniary Favours," and that when Pope complained of being mistreated by Dennis, Congreve advised him to adopt the simple remedy of subscribing for some of Dennis's books.[43] Though Wilson was one of Curll's hacks, and his assertions must not be taken too seriously, it is still easy to believe that Congreve assisted Dennis in his financial troubles and tried good-naturedly to prevent his becoming embroiled in unnecessary quarrels with his contemporaries. Towards Congreve's plays Dennis had only unqualified admiration, and for Congreve himself he seems to have had a high personal esteem. When Steele charged him with having been "severe upon Mr. Congreve," Dennis dismissed the charge as a fiction unworthy of being answered [44]

Several of the less distinguished members of Dryden's circle were friends of Dennis William Walsh, for whose critical abilities Dryden seems to have had an undue respect, was very well known to Dennis, who respected his learning, candor, and judgment [45] Walsh subscribed to *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*, and his friendship with Pope apparently did not affect Dennis's regard for him, nor did Dennis think the less of him for his being a Beau. With the amiable Southerne Dennis was probably on friendly terms in the 1690's, but we have no evidence of their friendship until 1704. In the Preface to *Liberty Asserted* Dennis acknowledges that his "valued Friend," to whom he had read the play before production, gave him excellent advice for improving the design of it, and he pays tribute to Southerne's understanding of nature and his power of touching the passions [46] His gratitude to and esteem for Southerne, however, did not prevent him, years later, from exclaiming indignantly (and perhaps enviously) at the sum which Southerne received

[39] *Original Letters*, pp 159-162

[40] *Ibid*, pp 211-213

[41] *Proposals for Printing by Subscription, in Two Volumes in Octavo, the Following Miscellaneous Tracts, Written by Mr John Dennis* (1721)

[42] Dennis to Moyle, Jan 16, 1720

[43] Charles Wilson [?], *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Amours of William Congreve* (1730), Pt II, p 136

[44] Cf II, 211

[45] Cf I, 416

[46] Cf I, 324

from the booksellers for the *Spartan Dame* [47] Of Sir Henry Sheeres, a member of the Royal Society and a companion to both Dryden and Wycherley, Dennis makes only one mention [48] they conversed together and exchanged anecdotes about Wycherley. Sheeres was one of the men to whom Pope's *Pastorals* were shown long before their publication, he was probably the intimate friend addressed as "Harry" whom Granville introduced to Pope.[49] He was also one of the large tribe of gentlemen with classical learning who in the last decade of the seventeenth century were engaged in turning the ancient literature into English He had a hand, together with Dryden, Moyle, John Phillips, and Tom Brown, in a translation of Lucian, and to his translation of Polybius Dryden contributed a Character of the author. The fact that Dennis, who knew so many of the men employed in translations, engaged in so few enterprises of the kind, serves to indicate his low opinion of the art of translation

Among the lesser geniuses of the age whom Dennis knew well was Tom Brown, the tone of Brown's last melancholy letter to Dennis,[50] in fact, suggests a certain degree of intimacy They may have known each other for several years, for Dennis was acquainted with Brown's friend Peter Motteux Brown was one of the few subscribers to Dennis's grandiose project, a fragment of which was published as *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry,* and he displayed both a knowledge of Dennis's criticism and a respect for his abilities.[51] Under the leadership of Brown, Dennis joined with a group of wits including Garth, Codrington, Steele, Sedley, Burnaby, and Vanbrugh to satirize Sir Richard Blackmore in a little volume called *Commendatory Verses, on the Author of the Two Arthurs, and the Satyr against Wit* (1700). Though Brown was almost the antithesis of Dennis in conduct and temperament, his liveliness of mind and his wide learning in Latin, French, Spanish, Italian and Greek literature provided a sufficient bond between him and the critic

William Burnaby, one of the collaborators with Dennis in the *Commendatory Verses,* and a former contributor to Motteux' *Gentleman's Journal,* was on friendly terms with the critic for a few years In 1702 he contributed an epilogue to Dennis's *The Comical Gallant* Although they shared a passionate interest in the stage, and an admiration for Aristotle and Dacier that bordered on idolatry, their interests were probably never very closely identified Dennis mentions Burnaby only once, and then merely to recall his association with Steele in a series of alchemical experiments [52]

Christopher Codrington, a wit and man about town as well as a soldier, was an intimate friend of Dennis according to Dennis's early biographer [53] To

[47] Cf II, 184

[48] Cf II, 409

[49] Cf Lansdowne, *Works* (1732), I, 436-437 Part of the letter is printed in Sherburn, *Early Career of Pope,* p 52

[50] B Boyce, *Tom Brown of Facetious Memory* (Cambridge, Mass, 1939), pp 175-176

[51] Cf I, 428

[52] Cf II, 190

[53] *Life of Mr John Dennis* (1734), p 20

Dennis's tragedy *Iphigenia* (1699) he contributed an epilogue, and he bestirred himself to induce his friends to attend performances of it, moreover, though refusing the dedication of the piece, he seems to have given the author a very handsome present.[54] The friendship was interrupted by Codrington's appointment as governor of the Leeward Islands, but they still found occasion to collaborate in the *Commendatory Verses*

During Dryden's lifetime Dennis became intimate with the kindly and genial Garth, who was one of "his most hearty and constant Friends"[55] Garth was one of the wits who joined with Dennis, Brown, Codrington, Steele, Burnaby, Sedley, and Vanbrugh to write the *Commendatory Verses* against Blackmore in 1700. His good friends Codrington and Cheek were also friends of Dennis Apparently Garth showed his *Dispensary* to Dennis and Dryden before he published it in 1699, and apparently they approved of it heartily, for Charles Boyle, explaining why his muse was unfit to praise the *Dispensary*, wrote [56]

> Artists alone should venture to commend
> What D[ennis] can't condemn, nor D[ryde]n mend

The good doctor was one of the four individuals most active in promoting subscriptions to Dennis's grandiose project which dwindled down to the *Grounds of Criticism*, a project in agitation during the year 1703[57] Nothing is known of the relationship of Dennis and Garth in later years, after 1704 Dennis mentions Garth only once, to characterize his *Dispensary* as, in effect, a libel [58]

Though Thomas Cheek, translator of Voiture and friend of Garth, was one of Dennis's closest friends in the early 1690's,[59] they had lapsed into a state of hostility by 1700 Shortly after Dennis's *Iphigenia* was produced, Abel Boyer's rival work on the same subject, *Achilles, or Iphigenia in Aulis*, was brought on the boards and published The prologue to this work was contributed by Cheek, who according to Boyer's preface, also polished the lines of the play Dennis had no choice but to consider this an unfriendly act, especially as Boyer's preface breathed contempt for his rival's play A year later appeared a volume in which both Boyer and Cheek were concerned, *Letters of Wit, Politicks, and Morality*, manifesting the same unfriendly spirit toward Dennis Not only does it include Cheek and exclude Dennis from the ranks of the wits who ruled at Will's, but in describing a type of would-be wits who, "in a fond imitation of the incomparable *Milton*, mistake *Bombast*

[54] *Ibid*

[55] *Ibid*

[56] Commendatory poem prefixed to the *Dispensary*

[57] Cf I, 507

[58] Cf II, 201 Since Dennis does not mention Garth at all in his early works, his failure to mention him more than once in the later works does not show a cooling off of their friendship

[59] Wycherley to Dennis, Feb 4, 1694, in Dennis, *Select Works*, II, 495

and *puffy Expressions* for *Sublime*; and having had their fustian Plays damn'd upon the Stage, ransack *Bossu* and *Dacier*, to arraign the ill Taste of the Town," it seems to point directly at Dennis.[60] There is no evidence that the friendship with Cheek was ever resumed, but at least Boyer, in the course of time, came to feel more kindly toward Dennis, for in the *Political State of Great Britain* he reprinted all of Dennis's *Julius Caesar Acquitted* together with a few editorial remarks indicating his approval.[61]

Dennis's earliest biographer remarked on the subject of the critic's acquaintances "Among his most hearty and constant Friends, were the Duke of *Buckinghamshire*, the Earls of *Hallifax* and *Pembroke*, Mr *Anthony Henley*, *Walter Moyle*, Mr Secretary *Burchet*, *Dryden*, *Garth*, *Wycherly*, and *Congreve*." [62] Since the biographer was largely right in regard to Moyle, Dryden, Garth, Wycherley, and Congreve, we may well assume that his information concerning the other names had some basis in fact To John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, Dennis may have become known through the instrumentality of Dryden or Wycherley. In 1701, at any rate, the critic dedicated, by permission, his very ambitious and important volume, *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry*, to the noble lord. No doubt he was amply rewarded, for he continued more than two decades afterwards to speak of Buckinghamshire's critical opinions with approval and even deference. It is quite unlikely that the relationship between the two men approached familiarity,[63] yet they seem to have been in frequent communication Buckinghamshire approved decidedly of *The Person of Quality's Answer to Collier's Dissuasive*,[64] and his hearty approbation of *Britannia Triumphans* led him to recommend Dennis to Godolphin's attention.[65] Dennis was assured of his good opinion, and was indebted to his friendly interest for a word of caution concerning the attack on Addison.[66] Why Buckinghamshire should have interested himself in Dennis is perhaps explainable by the fact that both men belonged in spirit to the age of Dryden, both were interested in criticism and were convinced of the importance of the rules, and both believed that good literature and morality were inseparably linked

Of greater significance in Dennis's career was his friendship with Charles Montagu, Lord Halifax Through one or another of his acquaintances, possibly Walter Moyle or Fleetwood Sheppard, Dennis met this ambitious statesman and

[60] "Original Letters on Divers Subjects," Letter III, in *Letters of Wit, Politicks, and Morality* (1701), pp 216-221

[61] Vol XXIII (Jan, 1722), pp 12-35

[62] *Life of Mr John Dennis* (1734), p 7

[63] As a gentleman, as well as a man of taste, Buckinghamshire refused to take literature too seriously He shared the attitude toward critics which was then in vogue, and by 1719 he had decided that Dennis was a mere critic, unworthy of the esteem which a man of letters might deserve (cf "The Election of a Poet Laureat in 1719," in *Works* [4th ed, 1753], I, 144)

[64] Cf II, 414

[65] Cf II, 173

[66] Cf II, 398-399

generous patron of letters. By 1696 Montagu had taken Dennis under his wing, and in the dedication to his *Letters upon Several Occasions* Dennis praised his friend's warm interest in the softer studies of humanity. "For which," he continued,

> your Zeal has been so diffusive, that it has extended it self even to me tho a bare Inclination to cultivate Eloquence and Poetry, was the only thing which could recommend me to you, yet even this has been encourag'd by the Promise of your Protection, and by the Humanity of your receiving me The Access which I have had to you, has been the greatest Obligation that you could lay upon a Man, who has still valued Merit above all the World, and who has sought his Improvement more than he has his Advancement

As first lord of the treasury Halifax gave Dennis to believe that he would derive some advantage from the alteration of the coin, and it was to Halifax that Dennis turned during his financial troubles in 1699.[67] Although Dennis failed of that constant attendance upon his lordship which members of the nobility exacted of those whom they patronized, Halifax generously kept him in mind. In 1706, dedicating his most ambitious undertaking in poetry, *The Battle of Ramillia,* to Halifax, Dennis acknowledged that his lordship had recently made some provision for his welfare at a time when he was in great need This provision in all likelihood consisted in helping to secure for him a waitership in the customs In 1713 Dennis proposed to consult Halifax concerning the remarks on Addison's *Cato* before they were published.[68] On Oct. 28, 1714, he wrote Halifax, protesting that he could serve his country only under his lordship's administration.[69] Unfortunately Halifax died in the following year, and Dennis lost his most steadfast and generous protector. To what extent Halifax was responsible for introducing Dennis to other Whig men of letters such as Addison and Ambrose Philips we have no way of knowing, but it is probable that Dennis would not have won the notice of Godolphin and Henley so easily without his aid. One more point is worth noting in spite of the patronage and protection of Halifax, Dennis never became a party-writer Clearly the most active Whig patron of letters was capable of exercizing his benevolence without expecting service in return.

Thomas Herbert, eighth Earl of Pembroke, was a patron to Dennis for over two decades, the *Essay on the Navy* being dedicated to him in 1702, and the reply to Mandeville, *Vice and Luxury Public Mischiefs,* in 1724 For the last nine or ten years of Dennis's life he received presents of money from Pembroke, according to Thomas Cooke.[70] Pembroke's interest in Dennis is of special note, for he was something of a naval expert, serving his country at various times as first lord of the admiralty and as lord high admiral. Dennis's wide knowledge of actual conditions in the navy and the sense displayed in

[67] Cf II, 388-389

[68] Cf II, 399

[69] Cf Dennis, *Original Letters,* pp 358-359

[70] Thomas Cooke to Thomas Baker, a letter printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine,* LXV (Feb, 1795), pp 105-106

his proposals for improvement have already been commented on,[71] but the fact has escaped attention that the *Essay on the Navy* was dedicated to a lord high admiral, and that the lord high admiral thought highly enough of the author to befriend him for thirty years after the work was published. In this connection it should be recalled that, according to Dennis's earliest biographer, one of his heartiest friends was "Mr Secretary Burchet"[72] Josiah Burchett, once a clerk to Samuel Pepys, was from 1698 to 1742 sole secretary of the admiralty It is clear, then, that in writing of the navy Dennis had reliable sources of information, and that he had the ear, and probably the approval, of men in positions of authority

Anthony Henley, a wit and a prominent Whig, friend to Garth and Addison, was acquainted with Dennis at least as early as 1703, probably much earlier. He subscribed to the *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*, and in 1704 Dennis dedicated to him his popular play, *Liberty Asserted*, which had been based upon a suggestion from Henley In the dedication Dennis remarked that he sometimes had the pleasure of hearing Henley talk of criticism Dennis's tone does not suggest intimacy, and there is nothing more to support his biographer's assertion that Henley was one of his heartiest friends

Of all his patrons perhaps the most generous was George Granville, Lord Lansdowne It was almost inevitable that Granville, himself a playwright and a critic as well as a man of fashion, should appeal to Dennis In 1702 Dennis dedicated the *Comical Gallant*, and in 1711 the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear*, to Granville whom he praised as the man who best understood the Bard Granville, we know, admired the *Person of Quality's Answer to Collier's Dissuasive*,[73] and he seems to have been genuinely interested in Dennis's welfare, for we find him writing to the lord high treasurer in August, 1711, asking that Dennis should be provided for and reminding his lordship of the promise already made that Dennis should have encouragement[74] Apparently nothing was done by the Tory ministers, and Granville took it upon himself to fulfill the promise In 1719, writing to Steele, Dennis expressed gratitude to Granville for a handsome present the like of which had never been seen in his time.[75] After this date Dennis probably saw little of his lordship, who was on good terms with Pope In 1731 Pope wrote that he had secured the promise of Granville to aid in a subscription for Dennis,[76] and the fact that the promise was secured by the little gentleman of Twickenham indicates that Dennis and his lordship had drifted far apart Even gratitude would not have caused Dennis to overlook Granville's definitely Jacobite sympathies, which waxed strong after 1715

[71] Paul, *John Dennis*, p 47
[72] *Life of Mr John Dennis* (1734), p 7
[73] Cf II, 414
[74] Cf I, 506
[75] Cf II, 173
[76] Pope to Hill, Feb 5, 1731 in Elwin-Courthope, x 18

Although Dennis had a large number of influential patrons during his lifetime, it is doubtful if he had more than a slight acquaintance with most of them. Even with Halifax and Granville, to whom his indebtedness was greatest, there is no evidence that he enjoyed a real friendship or a free exchange of critical ideas. His deference to his patrons was the conventional attitude of dedications, the attitude of poor men toward their economic betters. There is no clear evidence that they had any influence upon the formation of his critical ideas On the other hand, they serve to demonstrate his independence; he chose patrons from both the Whigs and the Tories, and he wrote nothing upon order. He prided himself upon not being a party-writer, though he was fully convinced that to provide sufficiently for his future he had merely to espouse a party interest.[77] When he offered his services to Halifax in 1714 he expressed an anxiety, not to advance the cause of the Whigs, but to serve his country,[78] the offer was made to a statesman of the moderate order, who was doing his utmost to prevent the Whigs from taking vengeance upon the Tories.

The death of Dryden in 1700 marked the end of an era. In 1700 also Congreve abandoned the playhouse. At about this time Walter Moyle left London, never to return Wycherley survived, but as an old man whose work was done. The glory of Will's began to fade In 1701 a writer describing Will's remarked that "this Place has lost most of its illustrious Founders," and he deprecated the presence of would-be wits, "who rather darken than heighten its former Splendour"[79] For some reason that urge to compose verse which had seized the gay and witty gentlemen, and even the statesmen, of the reign of Charles II, lessened in its force, and the nobility gave itself over to other pursuits Roscommon, Rochester, and Buckingham were dead, and Sedley and Dorset had outgrown their youthful zest for writing, except for an epigram or two Halifax probably never wrote a line after 1700 With the entrance of professional men of letters, the Boyers, Motteux, Gildons, Oldmixons, Ozells, Defoes, something of the glamor of *belles lettres* was lost, and the distance between the man of letters and the gentleman was immeasurably increased The gulf between the gentlemanly amateur and the professional man of letters was widened by a theory, which had then some vogue, that literature received its value not from its contents but from a liveliness of manner combined with grace, propriety, and a negligent ease of style such as one might expect of an urbane and cultivated gentleman or of those who associated familiarly with gentlemen Work which savored of earnestness or toil was looked upon with suspicion, and the elegant or witty or lively trifle was exalted. The professional writer, therefore, was likely to be an object of contempt, and in Pope's *Dunciad* this contempt reached its best and most extreme statement. For the first three decades of the eighteenth century the gentlemen of taste together with the small group of authors whom they took to their bosoms main-

[77] Cf I, 322-323

[78] Dennis to Halifax Oct 28, 1714, in *Original Letters* (1721), pp 358-359

[79] Abel Boyer and others, *Letters of Wit, Politicks, and Morality* (1701), pp 216-221

tained their narrow kingdom against the enemy; and by their power, their wit, their good manners, and their gift of raillery they imposed their tastes upon the polite and fashionable world. Although they were touched by the current interest in Milton and by a few of the literary ideas conveyed in the chaste and temperate prose of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, they remained for the most part indifferent to the new movements in literature which came with the rise of middle-class audiences and readers, indifferent to high seriousness and moral purpose in literature, to an emphasis upon the passions of the heart, to the naive and sublime of religious feeling, and to the strong and vivid color of common life. Isaac Watts and Defoe represented two phases of the new force which was entering literature, and both alike were neglected by the arbiters of taste. More and more, as the years passed, Dennis found himself out of sympathy with the polite taste of his day.

The turning point in Dennis's career as a writer and critic occurred in 1705. Writing to a friend in 1720 he boasted that until his forty-fifth year he had tasted of the world and enjoyed the daily company of distinguished gentlemen, but, he added, "For these last fifteen Years I have retir'd from the World, and confin'd my Conversation to 3 or 4 of my old Acquaintance" [80] The change was drastic. Before 1706 he had produced six plays, seven critical treatises, four long poems, at least three political treatises, a collection of letters together with a translation of Voiture, a translation of part of Tacitus, and various shorter items of a miscellaneous nature—a considerable output for a period of about twelve years. During the remainder of his life he produced two plays, two long poems, four critical treatises, four political treatises, two volumes of translation, a few miscellaneous items, and ten pamphlets devoted to excoriating Addison, Steele, and Pope In general there is little in the later period that is new, apart from the material connected with personal quarrels, with the possible exception of passages in the *Remarks upon Cato* there is nothing in the later period showing the lightness, wit, and ease of the *Impartial Critick*, the effects of haste, carelessness, and irritability are all too evident in the works written after 1705

[80] *Original Letters*, p 46 The three or four "old Acquaintance" were probably to be found among such friends as Sergeant, Cromwell, Gildon, Congreve, Mein, Welby, Markham, and Booth Dennis's statement that he "retir'd from the World" is not to be taken literally He appeared in company at the country estate of a Mr Hungerford (*Original Letters*, pp 280-281), he drank convivially and discussed literature in a merry company that met at the home of S— T— Esq (*ibid*, pp 35-44), he kept up with coffee-house gossip (cf II, 407), he saw many friends occasionally, made numerous acquaintances in his old age, and maintained a voluminous correspondence His retirement probably meant nothing more than that he withdrew from active participation in the clubs and factions which sprang up in the coffee houses after Dryden's death Even the literary clubs were strongly partisan, the members praised one another's work, and damned the productions of outsiders A man with Dennis's independence of spirit, to whom literature was an art rather than a matter of party-loyalty, would have been uncomfortable in such a company But in a time when taste was dictated by clubs and factions, to withdraw from membership in these groups was virtually to renounce one's hopes for immediate fame, it was virtually to retire from the world

The change may be explained by several facts. In the first place, by 1705 Dennis was approaching his fiftieth year, and he seems to have lacked the flexibility of mind required to adapt himself to new times and new people In the second place, his health began to fail at about this time, as early as 1704 he was beset by a long illness,[81] and frequently thereafter he referred to his distress of body.[82] In this light we can understand more easily the querulousness, the displays of suspicion and envy, which disfigured his old age In the third place, he received an appointment as a waiter in the customs in 1705, and the salary of £52 yearly attached to the post [83] removed him from actual want, and therefore lessened his incentive to cultivate the muses; during the five years that followed his appointment, his output was shockingly small—it was not until 1711, when he was plunged into serious financial difficulties, that another productive period commenced In the fourth place, his withdrawal from the society of the town removed him from the sort of stimulation under which his best work had been accomplished It may well be that the sharpness of perception and the amplitude of mind evidenced in the *Usefulness of the Stage* was the result, as one of Dennis's opponents suggested, of his having sat "at the head of a Club" for over a month, sharpening the arguments with which Collier was to be demolished.[84] In Dryden's day the gentlemen and writers who frequented Will's discussed literature and the theories of literature with a zest and earnestness that made the subjects appear vital, a man of taste and intelligence could scarcely exist in such an atmosphere without being stirred to speculation and debate, without having his ideas challenged and clarified In such a society Dennis grew up. After 1700, however, in a population rapidly growing and, from the tide of immigation that flowed from France, the Low Countries, Scotland, and Hanover, rapidly becoming less homogeneous, the talk of the town developed new interests, more political, more active, more exciting Dennis was more or less conscious of the change, for his *Large Account of Taste* in 1702 was given over to deploring the decline of interest in good literature and to offering explanations for it. Instead of adjusting himself to the new tone of society, Dennis withdrew His firm assumption that literature was of supreme importance to religion and the state, his gravity of manner and his complete absorption in his subject, together with his positiveness of opinion (a positiveness in keeping with the mode of the literary debate of the former age, when each participant set forth his views as firmly and conclusively as possible, terminating his discourse with the invitation, "This is my belief—correct me if I am in error"), all these traits tended to make him slightly ridiculous in the period after Dryden's death, his learning appeared as pedantry and his positiveness of manner appeared as a kind of ungentlemanly dogmatism To a small group

[81] Cf I, 374
[82] Cf II, 398, 159, 162, 240, 352, and 412
[83] Paul, *John Dennis*, p 58, n 10
[84] Cf I, 467

of wordly wits he came gradually to be a stock joke When Pope satirized him in the *Essay on Criticism,* his "eccentricities" were already sufficiently well known to make the brief references intelligible to Londoners who followed literary gossip In 1705 Dennis withdrew from a society to which he no longer belonged, and his withdrawal not only deprived him of the stimulation which he might have found in the company of many other writers and critics but also tended to confirm in him the "eccentricities" for which he became the butt of popular jest There is little doubt as to the fact that Dennis was lonely in his later years He wrote interminable letters, stating his ideas or theories concerning literature, and he sometimes wrote frenziedly, addressing the same individual twice in the same day, expounding new ideas which he could not keep to himself and which, in the absence of congenial company, he was forced to set down in a letter [85] These strange literary epistles, each one demanding an opinion in reply, must have been something of a trial at times, but Dennis was discreet, or fortunate, enough to address a goodly share of them to gentlemen of the old school—Henry Cromwell, Thomas Sergeant, Richard Blackmore, and Matthew Prior—who had learned to enjoy the game

Posterity has judged of Dennis's temperament and character (and, unfortunately, his ability) largely on the basis of his relationship with Pope. Let us review the facts to see what they actually prove. In the first place, the two men had scarcely a nodding acquaintance Dennis was introduced to Pope, evidently between 1704 and 1710, by his bookish friend Cromwell, and at Cromwell's recommendation he appeared about three times in Pope's company before 1711 [86] Suddenly he found himself attacked in the *Essay on Criticism,* attacked for no reasons that he could understand other than envy at his established reputation, and sheer malice [87] He retorted at once, hastily and angrily, in the *Reflections on An Essay upon Criticism* There is no evidence that the two men ever met after 1711 Apparently they exchanged letters only once, and when Pope subscribed to the *Select Works* and the *Original Letters* he did so through the medium of Cromwell and Congreve The famous quarrel, therefore, sprang up between two men who were barely acquainted

Why Pope satirized Dennis in the *Essay on Criticism* is a question that cannot be answered with certainty. Dennis was unaware of any serious disagreement or quarrel In all probability Pope looked upon Dennis as a ponderous and inelegant fellow, who made himself ridiculous by his dogmatic air, his show of learning, and his careless dress combined with his lack of the social graces Other gentlemen had laughed condescendingly at the modern Longinus, why shouldn't he? Moreover, Dennis was known as The Critic. It was natural for an ambitious young man writing of critics and criticism, and following the elegant tradition of Roscommon and Buckinghamshire by setting down his principles in deft and epigrammatic rhymes, to extract a bit of fun

[85] Two letters, for example, were written to Henry Cromwell on June 14, 1720 (cf II, 407)

[86] Cf II, 370

[87] *Ibid*

from the spectacle of his slightly uncouth rival. It is difficult to think of Pope as a literary critic, but he must have expected to establish a reputation as one by his *Essay on Criticism*, Cromwell, in fact, flattered Pope that he had outdone Dennis in criticism [88] As the most conspicuous critic then living in England, Dennis was the obvious rival and the obvious target.

Dennis was surprised and indignant at the unexpected attack from a man whom he scarcely knew and with whom he had no quarrel His indignation was heightened by the fact that the attack came shortly after he had been satirized in the *Tatler* and after he had quarreled with his old friend Richard Steele,[89] and at a time when he was oppressed by debts and anxiety [90] To understand his irritation one should remember that Dennis was a vain man, proud of his position as The Critic and convinced that his poems and plays, though they had brought him but a modest reputation, had the stuff of greatness in them and that they were sure to be esteemed by posterity They had stood the test of criticism, but the test of ridicule and raillery was an entirely different matter He knew that one piece of ridicule by Dryden had all but annihilated the reputation of that excellent comic poet, Thomas Shadwell. From 1709 he had been subjected to ridicule by an anonymous pen in the *Tatler,* and the satire in the anonymous *Essay on Criticism,* following closely upon the heels of the *Tatler,* led him to believe that he was the victim of a sly and stealthy attempt to discredit him before the public. Since his whole life had been devoted to the cause of the muses and to the hope of attaining lasting glory through literature, he felt that there was too much at stake to allow the attempt to pass unnoticed Therefore he struck back furiously in the *Reflections on An Essay upon Criticism* Anger, wounded pride, jealousy of his reputation, and indignation at having been attacked anonymously while he was in the depths of adversity, all went into the making of the pamphlet He had been assailed with satire, and with satire he retaliated, mingling it, however, with criticism that was in some measure valid and just [91]

The quarrel might have stopped at this point if Pope had not persisted Dennis, so far as we know, wrote nothing more against Pope for over two years, even though the attack upon him continued In 1713, however, with the appearance of Pope's *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris,* also published anonymously, a blow was given that hurt Dennis in a vital spot. The pamphlet was amusing and mildly whimsical, but it was fiendishly clever as well. Dennis, who had spent the best years of his life urging that the essence of poetry was passion, that great poetry involved great passion, and that the sublime called for high imagination and rapture and transport, who had tried to embody in his own plays and poems the principles which he had urged in his criticism, was represented as being in the hands of a physician who cared for the insane

[88] Cromwell to Pope, Dec 7 1711, in Elwin-Courthope, vi, 128
[89] Cf ii, 441-442
[90] Cf ii, 421
[91] Cf i, 525-526

The implication was clear: that just as the fustian and passion of Nat Lee had proceeded from insanity, so the seriousness and passion of Dennis were the result of a deranged mind. In this incident the two main schools of Augustan literary thought came into direct opposition. Pope stood for and illustrated the virtues of urbanity, ease, grace, elegance, and technical finish, the other school, championed by Dennis, stood for high seriousness, passion, and correctness in design or structure rather than in technical details. As everyone knows, the poet and poetry of high seriousness are peculiarly vulnerable to the attacks of raillery and burlesque. Realizing his vulnerability Dennis took up the cudgels against Pope, whom he recognized behind the veil of sly anonymity. And the weapons had to be cudgels because, though laughter may demolish the serious and passionate, it may not avail against the urbane, the clever, and the satirical.

For nearly four years after the publication of the *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris* Dennis wrote letters and brief treatises lashing out at Pope and his works. Most of them were written to personal friends and were not designed for publication. Even under almost continuous provocation, given him by Pope, Swift, Gay, Parnell, and perhaps others of the Popean circle, Dennis restrained himself. Not until 1716 was the *True Character of Mr Pope* given to the press, and there is no evidence that it was printed with Dennis's authority. In 1717, under special and particular provocation he published the *Remarks upon Pope's Homer*, containing reflections on *Windsor Forest* and the *Temple of Fame* as well as on the Homer. His letters on the *Rape of the Lock*, begun in 1714, were not published until 1728, and then only after attacks upon him in the *Profund* and in the first *Dunciad*. It appears, on the whole, that Dennis was patient and long suffering.[92] Those who are interested in vindicating Pope's share of the turmoil will grant that Dennis did not publish his attacks upon Pope until after he had been sufficiently provoked, but will add, "Pope knew that Dennis wrote attacks upon every one of his works that appeared, and was circulating the attacks in manuscript among his acquaintance; and that very knowledge was reason enough why Pope should provoke him." Possibly so. But we must remember that such an excuse cannot explain the *Critical Specimen* (1711) or the *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris*, both of which were written and published at a time when Dennis, to the best of our knowledge, was neither writing nor publishing a word against Pope.

Perhaps the important question in this connection is not why Dennis replied to Pope, but why he replied with so much fury and malice, with so much grossness and bad taste, and why Pope egged him on. Dennis's conduct is explainable on two grounds. First, he was a proud and irritable individual, angered and perplexed by what he considered stealthy attempts to undermine his hard-won reputation, to undo his life's work. The fact that most of the attacks upon him were published anonymously freed him from the scruples of

[92] For evidence on this point cf. "Pope and Dennis," in *ELH*, VII (1940), pp. 188-198.

good taste. Besides, his humor was of the rough-and-tumble variety, incapable of the quickness, deftness, and delicacy required to fence with Pope. In the second place, he took the popularity of Pope to be a symbol of the degeneracy of public taste, the preference for what is light, elegant, and idle over that which is high-minded, passionate, and useful, Pope's popularity was a general vice or frailty to be assailed through Pope himself by the means of satire. Even in his first reply to Pope he showed clearly that he was striking at the taste of the town, and he announced clearly that he was mingling satire and just criticism. His satire was harsh and personal, spiced with anger and indignation, and bristling with bad manners—but then, Juvenal was not noted for gentleness or good manners. In short, Dennis in his quarrel with Pope must be judged partly as a satirist driven, like Juvenal, by savage indignation Why Pope egged him on is a little more difficult to explain. On the whole, Pope probably enjoyed the controversy, though he seems occasionally to have been hurt by Dennis's thrusts. Pope played his hand shrewdly and well Each encounter, as it irritated and confused the old critic, drove him to a furious rejoinder, in which he displayed himself ill-natured, ill-mannered, lacking in poise and urbanity, his bad manners concealed the virtue of his cause, and created a prejudice against him in the minds of the very people whom Pope was most anxious to please The quarrel, therefore, was good publicity for Pope, and Dennis's enmity was a greater advantage to him than his friendship Those who have lavished a sentimental pity upon the little gentleman, whose deformities were so brutally exposed by his antagonists, have missed the point, Pope would have laughed heartily at them. When he provoked the unkempt bards of his time to rude and clumsy attacks, he won the support of nearly all of the fashionable world, the world for whom he wrote.

After 1717 there was a lull in the quarrel Pope subscribed to the *Select Works* (1718) and to the *Original Letters* (1721). This action was a gesture neither of charity nor of a desire for reconciliation, Pope was in a position to buy books, and he purchased the works of his enemies as well as of his friends, especially when his enemies did him the favor to write about him. Dennis, however, chose to consider it an act of friendship, and he not only deleted several references to Pope in the *Original Letters* but also indited a letter to Pope explaining that he desired no traces of their quarrel to remain.[93] Pope's reply, which Dennis took to be an expression of sorrow for his part in the quarrel, is merely a polite and noncommittal acknowledgment of Dennis's epistle.[94] Within a year or two Pope was again composing satire upon Dennis, and things came to a head once more with the publications in 1728 and 1729 of Pope's *Profund* and *Dunciad* and of Dennis's replies.[95] In 1730 Pope was engaged in forwarding a proposal to aid Dennis by securing subscriptions for reprinting some of his works,[96] and Dennis denounced this

[93] Dennis to Pope, April 29, 1721, in Elwin-Courthope, x, 111-112
[94] Cf II, 370-371
[95] Cf II, 511-512 and 516-517
[96] Cf Pope to Hill, Feb 5, 1731, in Elwin-Courthope, x, 18 and n

activity as a transparent device for purchasing his silence[97] In 1733 Pope assisted in promoting a benefit for his old enemy, though he nullified the virtue of his action by writing a sneering prologue for the performance and by giving himself full credit for his charity in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*

Little credit can redound to either Dennis or Pope for his share in the controversy. Dennis was provoked and goaded on to assail Pope, but the virulence and bitterness of his replies were out of proportion to the provocation. Yet some grace may be allowed him, for he fought in behalf of a principle as well as out of a desire for vengeance, if the popularity of Pope was an evil, then it was logical to attack the evil by showing the unworthiness of the author favored by such popularity. Pope, on the other hand, kept his temper and minded his manners He acted not out of malice or spite, but in part out of the sheer pleasure of watching the rude fellow squirm He had nothing to gain except, perhaps, publicity For him there was no principle involved, no cause to be maintained. When in the *Profund* he satirized Dennis's early attempts at verse, he satirized something that was already dead His thrusts at Dennis were clever and amusing, but they brought unnecessary distress to the ablest and most learned critic of the times, to whose genuine merits Pope was for the most part blind

In 1706 Addison was present in company when Dennis drew out a manuscript and read aloud his new poem, the *Battle of Ramillia*[98] We do not know how long before this incident they had become acquainted As young friends of Dryden they may have met in the last decade of the seventeenth century They were both on friendly terms with Steele and Garth, and both had known the beneficence of Halifax They held similar views on politics and religion, and they shared many interests in literature and in literary theory There is nothing that points to the existence of a real friendship between the two men but Dennis unquestionably had an esteem and respect for Addison When the satire upon him and upon critics in general began to appear in the *Tatler* and *Spectator,* he absolved Addison of any direct responsibility though he was inclined to blame him for giving Steele, as he thought, a free rein[99] Addison's communication to Lintot in 1713, disapproving of the *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris,* confirmed Dennis's belief in his fairness and integrity[100] As for the *Remarks upon Cato,* it is clear that Dennis was attacking a play rather than a man, a play enormously over-rated by his contemporaries, and the justice of most of his reflections on *Cato* has been confirmed by posterity The later *Letters upon the Sentiments of Cato,* published after Addison's death, cannot be commended, but it is a work devoted exclusively to literary criticism, devoid of personalities Shortly before his death Addison subscribed to the *Select Works* According to the obscure and unreliable "Charles Wilson," Dennis in return for this subscription

[97] *Ibid*, pp 18 and 21
[98] Cf II, 24
[99] Cf II, 399
[100] Cf II, 371

"promis'd Mr. *Addison* at an Interview with him and Mr *Rowe*, that he would burn some other *Remarks* on *Cato* which he had then by him, and never more engage in any Controversy against him."[101] The story is improbable, for Addison would no more have stooped to exact such a promise than Dennis would have stooped to be bribed Dennis's genuine respect for Addison's abilities can readily be demonstrated Although Dennis was annoyed because Addison, who had read and applauded his remarks on Milton, failed to mention in the *Spectator* papers on Milton that many of his points had been anticipated by the older critic, still he admitted that Addison was clearly the most ingenious, and perhaps the most learned, of all Milton commentators[102] And many of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* papers written by Addison, said Dennis, "deserv'd the Applause which they met with"[103]

By the time the Little Senate at Button's rose into prominence Dennis had withdrawn from an active part in the life of the town. Apparently he had little to do with the literary Whigs who made up its membership Tickell he refers to in only one work, and there he gives no intimation that he was acquainted with the man[104] He praises the poetry of Ambrose Philips on occasion, but suggests neither friendship nor acquaintance with him.[105] Eustace Budgell he never refers to Except perhaps on very rare occasions it is unlikely that he saw Addison after 1709 or thereabouts And after 1709 he was on hostile terms with Steele for several years

Dennis's relationship with Steele appears, from the facts at hand, one of the most unpleasant chapters in his life He knew Steele, in all probability, as early as 1700, when they joined Tom Brown and others in writing the *Commendatory Verses*, attacking Blackmore Until 1710 they enjoyed a warm and unbroken friendship, and they shared a number of interests they were fervent supporters of the protestant succession and of the house of Hanover, they were Whigs and supporters of the moderate group of the Church of England, they were devoted to the theater, and they both had a strong didactic bent Steele, to be sure embarked on certain excursions, such as the experiments in alchemy, with which Dennis had no sympathy (and Dennis in later years utilized his knowledge of them as a weapon against his old friend),[106] but on the whole the two men were congenial. According to Dennis himself, in a letter of Oct 23, 1711,[107] Steele "caress'd me where-e'er he saw me, and call'd himself my Friend" Steele was present with Addison to hear Dennis read his long poem, the *Battle of Ramillia*, and he heartily applauded it[108] The "Christian Hero" was undoubtedly in thorough accord

[101] *Memoirs of the Life of William Congreve* (2nd ed., 1730), Pt II, pp 140-141
[102] Cf II, 223
[103] Cf II, 415
[104] Cf II, 153 If by the pseudonym "Nichil" Dennis intended us to understand Tickell, then further references may be found in II, 280, 290, 279
[105] Cf II, 104, 120, 257, 325, 376
[106] Cf II, 190, 202, 212, 213-216
[107] Cf II, 422
[108] Cf II, 24

with Dennis in his desire to see poets employing the materials of the Christian religion and spirit more widely in their works. In the middle of 1710, however, bad feeling sprang up. Dennis, who found himself in financial trouble, sent to Steele for advice—and probably for a loan—and the impecunious Steele failed to reply. whereupon Dennis composed another letter, couched in a sharp and plaintive manner.[109] Evidently Steele succeeded in raising some money for his old friend, and Dennis after some months repaid the loan, for on Oct 23, 1711, Dennis wrote that he was at last quit of the obligation to Steele [110]

But the loan which Steele's generosity provided did not restore tranquillity. In January of 1711 Dennis began a systematic reading of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* papers, inspired, as he said, by gratitude for the loan To his surprise and horror he discovered a series of attacks upon critics, which he took to be aimed at himself (as one at least undoubtedly was), and he concluded that Steele was the author [111] For several months thereafter he wrote letters to the *Spectator,* protesting against the "treachery" of his old friend and against the ideas presented in specific papers, a few of the letters were chosen out of a multitude and published together with the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* late in 1711. So firmly convinced was he of Steele's hostility that he even accused him of instigating Pope's attack in the *Essay on Criticism* [112] *There is no evidence whatever to support this accusation.* There is, however, a distinct possibility that Steele assisted Pope, or encouraged him, or at least was privy to his designs, in the attacks on Dennis during the following two years Some such idea is necessary to explain the curious fact that when Addison wished to disavow any sympathy with Pope's *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris* he caused Steele to write the message for him [113] The note was a short one, which Addison could have written himself in less than two minutes It looks very much as if he desired to make known not only that he disapproved of the pamphlet but also that Steele was fully aware of his disapproval If this interpretation is correct, the letter becomes a masterpiece of subtle reproof

In 1713 Dennis was still convinced that Steele was the sole author of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* papers that seemed to reflect upon him, [114] and he wrote an angry letter to disparage Steele (whom he referred to as "Teague") for his part in the *Guardian.*[115] His bitterness lasted for at least one more year, for on March 31, 1714, he wrote to Walter West complaining of the brutality and folly of "that Captain of Farce," his old friend Richard Steele [116] How-

[109] Dennis to Steele, July 28, 1710, in *Original Letters,* p 28
[110] Cf II, 422
[111] Cf II, 441
[112] Cf II, 422
[113] Cf II, 371
[114] Cf II, 399
[115] *Original Letters,* pp 284-286
[116] *Ibid,* pp 287-288

ever unjust his suspicions were, Steele refused to bear a grudge Within a few years they were reconciled, and Steele was taking active measures to aid his erstwhile enemy

On Feb 27, 1718, he directed a letter to Dennis, inviting the old critic to dine with him on the following day and, after dinner, to read his tragedy, the *Invader of His Country*.[117] Dennis accepted with alacrity, and the tragedy was read to Steele, Cibber, and Booth, all of whom applauded warmly and promised to produce the play at Drury Lane during the next season.[118] Various circumstances concurred in delaying the production,[119] for which delay Dennis was inclined to blame only the three managers, though he thought that Steele might have exerted himself effectively in his behalf if he had so desired The truth is that Steele made it a policy not to interfere in the affairs of the managers, in securing their promise to produce Dennis's play he had done as much as he thought proper Dennis's letters to Steele and Booth, following the delay, were plaintive but not impertinent, he was irritated, but not yet to the point of exploding Perhaps it is a black spot on his character that he suppressed his wrath as long as he had anything to gain from the actor-managers of Drury Lane But late in 1719, after his play had appeared on the boards and had failed, he boiled over with rage, rage directed against the managers, however, and not against Steele

The quarrel with Steele would not, in all likelihood, have been renewed if Sir Richard in 1720 had not undertaken in a new periodical, the *Theatre*, to defend the conduct of actors in general and of Cibber in particular. This procedure appeared to Dennis in effect as support of the managers in their controversy with him, consequently he retorted in the first part of the *Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar*, ostensibly an attack upon Steele but actually a mean-spirited and vicious libel upon Cibber Cibber made no attempt to defend his character in print, but Sir Richard, at last irritated by the vengefulness and unfairness of Dennis, poured out upon him a full measure of justice [120] As a result the old critic devoted the second part of the *Characters and Conduct* to an attempt at discrediting Steele Although Steele did not himself reply to the second part, the spite in Dennis's soul was kept alive. Hearing that a new comedy by Steele was in preparation and learning something of its nature, he wrote and published an attack upon the type of comedy which it represented [121] Not satisfied with this revenge, he wrote and published an attack upon the play itself as soon as it was staged and printed [122] The fact that Dennis was fundamentally right in his remarks on the nature of comedy, and largely right in his remarks on the *Man of Mode* and the *Conscious Lovers* is not enough to palliate the offense He was unhealthily

[117] Cf II, 162
[118] *Ibid*
[119] Cf II, 471
[120] Cf II, 487-488
[121] Cf II, 495-496
[122] Cf II, 498-499

vindictive, motivated in part by envy of Steele's superior fortune and popularity

It is a relief to note that he did not pursue Steele to the grave. After January of 1723 Steele's career was virtually finished, and the hostility faded out. Dennis had nothing more to say of his old friend, neither of praise nor of blame. Many of the things which he said of Steele in the course of their quarrel contained enough of the truth to hurt, but by refusing to acknowledge any merit whatever in the man he convicted himself of harboring evil passions.

Dennis's acquaintance with Cibber never reached the stage of intimacy. The old critic was not the sort of companion that Colley would have chosen for himself, and the gaiety and prodigality of Cibber would not have appealed to Dennis They may have known each other early in the century, but we have no record of their meeting until Feb. 28, 1718, when Cibber and Booth went to Steele's home to hear Dennis read the *Invader*.[123] The difficulties surrounding the production of the *Invader* embittered Dennis permanently against Cibber, who as a manager of the Drury Lane theater was much too hard-headed and practical to be overly moved by the importunate requests of an unsuccessful playwright But insult was added to injury the Epilogue to the *Invader*, written by Cibber and spoken by Mrs. Oldfield, was full of scorn for the unsuccessful playwright [124] Consequently Cibber received the full brunt of the critic's spleen in the first part of the *Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar*, and he was aroused to offer a reward to anyone who could identify the anonymous author.[125] Dennis boasted at about this time of having administered a beating to Colley, [126] nothing more is known of the incident During 1720 Dennis took every opportunity to make disparaging remarks about Cibber and all his works [127] and five years later he was still plucking the same string [128] Cibber's offense seems to have been his lack of respect for Dennis It is true, as Dennis asserted, that the drama languished under the reign of King Colley Dennis and many of his contemporaries believed that the greed of the playhouse-managers, and especially Cibber's keen sense for box-office appeal, were among the most serious obstacles to the progress of the drama, and Dennis undoubtedly believed that in attacking Cibber he was striking a blow in favor of dramatic literature. Even if this view had been well founded it would not have justified the bitterness of Dennis's tone

For Robert Wilks Dennis had only caustic criticism,[129] but the remaining manager of Drury Lane, Barton Booth, was his friend for many years Booth was not only an actor but also a gentleman, a poet, and a passionate admirer of Milton His interest in literary discussions made him a proper companion

[123] Cf II, **162**
[124] Cf II, **406**
[125] Aitken, *Life of Steele*, II, 232
[126] Cf II, **211**
[127] Besides those in the *Characters and Conduct*, cf II, **406-407** and **408-409**
[128] Cf II, **277-278** and **281-283**
[129] Cf II, **407**

and some of Dennis's knowledge of theatrical affairs undoubtedly came to him from this source Dennis became acquainted with Booth in 1700 or within a year or two of that date[130] In the summer of 1708 he waited on Booth, attempting to interest the actor in his new tragedy, *Appius and Virginia,* of which four acts were completed, and in the same year Booth carried a letter from him to Richard Norton of Southwick.[131] Whether Dennis recognized the actor's very considerable talents at this time is a matter of pure conjecture, it may be worth noting that Booth's excellence was not generally admitted until 1712. In 1714 Booth's condemnation of *Windsor Forest* brought an enthusiastic confirmation from the critic,[132] who was delighted to have support in his war against Pope. In 1718 Booth was present with Cibber and Steele to hear Dennis's new tragedy, the *Invader,* and he approved of it for presentation during the following season. For the delay that ensued Booth was probably not responsible, since Cibber was the dominant spirit in the triumvirate, yet Dennis blamed him in part When Booth invited him to dinner early in the spring of 1719, he declined, expostulating with his old friend for betraying his interests, but going on to discuss the present state of the stage[133] This letter, and the following one of May 25, are on the whole reasonable presentations of a point of view, written in a manner which suggests that Dennis was accustomed to address letters concerning current literary interests to Booth Their tone was far from angry, and when they were published in 1721 Booth's name was removed, the heading "To Judas Iscariot, Esq" being substituted The general public was not expected to identify Judas Iscariot with Barton Booth, and since there were no other traces of the quarrel in the *Original Letters,* it would appear likely that Dennis was in the mood for a reconciliation. That they resumed something of their old friendship later is indicated by Booth's subscription to Dennis's *Miscellaneous Tracts,* which appeared six years after the *Original Letters*

These, then, were the chief quarrels in which Dennis was concerned The affair with Richard Blackmore was not really a quarrel The *Remarks on Prince Arthur* attempted to deal not with Blackmore but with his epic, *Prince Arthur,* as Dennis said in the Preface, he was concerned with the author only "in his poetical capacity" In 1697 Dennis inserted in the Prologue to *A Plot, and No Plot* a jocular reference to the physician's habit of composing verses in his coach between visits to patients In 1699 Blackmore ridiculed Dennis's writings in the *Satyr against Wit,* and Dennis a few months later joined a group of wits in writing the *Commendatory Verses,* an attack upon the bardic efforts of the physician As a wit and a comic poet Dennis appeared to Blackmore as being in need of chastisement, and the dull and leaden verses of Blackmore provided all the justification which the wits required for ridicul-

[130] Cf II, **165**
[131] Cf II, **392**
[132] Cf II, **135**
[133] Cf II, **165-167.**

ing his courtship of the muses But Blackmore harbored no grudge against the critic. In 1704 he was listed as a subscriber to the *Grounds of Criticism,* and a friendship based on mutual respect and common interests grew up between him and Dennis.[134] No doubt Dennis's profound desire to establish Christianity as the basis of poetic inspiration, and his steadfast conviction that sound religion was the most essential support of sound government, appealed strongly to Blackmore, much of their correspondence dealt with the importance of religion to government[135] They disagreed often about the merits of contemporary writings Dennis sent Blackmore the manuscript of the *Letters upon the Sentiments of Cato* because his correspondent had praised *Cato*, he offered to send him reflections on Pope's Homer because Blackmore had praised the translation,[136] he disagreed with Blackmore on the theory of the epic[137] Differences of opinion concerning literature, however, did not affect their friendship The legend that Dennis would not brook contradiction or disagreement in his acquaintances is apparently based on flimsy foundations

It is tempting to assume that there was some sort of relationship between Dennis and Isaac Watts, but there is no evidence to prove it Blackmore had a deep admiration for Watts, who responded with gratitude to the compliments of the physician-laid[138] The same qualities in Watts which attracted Blackmore would have appealed to Dennis Like Dennis, Watts was a fervent admirer of Milton, and like Dennis he believed that modern poets should return to divine subjects; much of the Preface to *Horæ Lyricæ,* in fact, deals with the dependence of poetry on religion,[139] a subject which Dennis had treated at large some years before Watts' book was published Yet Watts makes only one mention of Dennis he groups him with Dryden, Congreve, and Otway, distinguished dramatists who could, if they liked, "furnish out a Christian Poem" with far less toil and expense than are required for composing a modern play[140] Watts probably knew some of Dennis's critical works, he may have been influenced by them But this we do not know Dennis makes no mention of Watts, nor does he mention Watts' good friends John Hughes or Samuel Say, with whom he had much in common

[134] Cf I, **448-449**

[135] *Original Letters,* II, 461-486, the same three letters are included in Dennis's *Vice and Luxury Publick Mischiefs* (1724)

[136] Cf II, **109**

[137] Cf II, **109-114**

[138] Thomas Gibbons, *Memoirs of Watts* (1780), pp 298-300

[139] In the *Reliquæ Juveniles* (ed 1734, p 73) Watts urged Pope to undertake a translation of the Psalms, his talents as a religious poet having been established by the *Messiah* Watts seems to have been interested primarily in the lyric as a form for religious verse, and he advocated the measures of Pindar, free and unconfined, as being best suited to maintain the dignity of religious subjects, "as well as give a loose to the Devout Soul, nor check the Raptures of her Faith and Love" (*Horæ Lyricæ* [1706], sig A5)

[140] *Horæ Lyricæ* (1706) sig A3*v*

One of the most enduring friendships which Dennis formed was that with Henry Cromwell. A very minor poet and one of the lesser wits in the last decade of Dryden's lifetime, Cromwell was a rather earnest gentleman with some learning and with a serious interest in literature, both ancient and modern. Early in the eighteenth century he became acquainted with Pope, whom he introduced (at Pope's own request) to his friend the critic. For a few years Pope seems almost to have supplanted Dennis in Cromwell's affections, Cromwell even felicitated Pope at having in the *Essay on Criticism* outdone Dennis as a critic, but he made it clear in the same letter that Pope was a novice in the greater forms of poetry, in which Dennis had to some degree succeeded [141] In 1712 the friendship between Pope and Cromwell cooled, and their correspondence was virtually ended. In 1713 Cromwell was accusing Pope, with some reason, of having ridiculed him in the *Narrative of Dr. Robert Norris*, [142] though Pope denied the charge, it is not likely that Cromwell was altogether fooled In the meantime Dennis and Cromwell were hard at it, settling literary problems Dennis's letter "Of Simplicity in Poetical Compositions" was a reply to Cromwell's request for an opinion of Addison's critique of *Chevy Chase*,[143] and the Mr. C— to whom the *Letters upon the Sentiments of Cato* were addressed was almost certainly Cromwell One of the few gentlemen who visited Dennis at his lowly lodgings,[144] Cromwell also served his interests in handling subscriptions to the *Select Works* and the *Original Letters* [145] Dennis was sufficiently familiar with Cromwell's affairs that he judged correctly of how that gentleman's correspondence with Pope had found its way into print some months before Cromwell himself discovered the secret [146] Although the correspondence surviving is largely bookish, a warm regard apparently existed between the two men, a regard that endured through changing times and circumstances

Another friend of many years standing was Thomas Sergeant, a minor poet of the 1690's and possibly a member of the group of wits who surrounded Dryden Dennis became familiar with Sergeant in 1702,[147] and in 1720 he was still corresponding with him [148] Sergeant was a gentleman in comfortable circumstances, who spent part of his time haunting Exchange-Alley, and who later became the literary executor of Walter Moyle. In 1704 he was listed among the subscribers to the *Grounds of Criticism*, and he evidently remained on close terms with Dennis for many years since there is a personal touch and informality in Dennis's letters to him that set them off from the somewhat heavy and bookish correspondence with other individuals. To Sergeant

[141] Elwin-Courthope, VI, 128
[142] *Ibid*, p 197
[143] Cf II, 29
[144] Cf II, 159
[145] Cf II, 370
[146] Elwin-Courthope, VI, 132
[147] *Original Letters*, pp 126-128
[148] *Ibid*, pp 93-102

Dennis described his recovery in health or spirits in a letter of Jan 18, 1713;[149] to Sergeant, in a letter dated Sept 20, 1716, he promised to send remarks on Pope's Homer[150]—and this promise points to the suspicion that Sergeant was the recipient of Dennis's *True Character of Pope*. To Sergeant he wrote on Aug 27, 1717, expressing his love of nature, of mountains, meadows, and natural winding streams.[151] Probably the friendship lasted several years after this date

Another old acquaintance of Dennis's was Mr F Wilkinson, of Lincoln's Inn. He was the literary executor of the learned Dr Thomas Burnet, Master of the Charterhouse, and Dennis undertook the translation of two volumes of Burnet at his request. His case illustrates the great difficulty of expounding the personal relationships of Dennis, for though he was acquainted with the critic nearly fifty years, Dennis alludes to him only once, and then without mentioning his name[152] Yet he must have cherished a respect and regard for Dennis, otherwise he would not have urged the task of translation upon him.

Several of Dennis's good friends exist as little more than names. In a letter to Walter Moyle on Jan 16, 1720, he listed a few of Moyle's acquaintances whom he had been in the habit of seeing during the twenty years following Moyle's departure from London[153] Among these mutual acquaintances were Congreve, Sir George Markham, Mr Welby, and Mr Mein. Welby we recognize as one of the few individuals who had earnestly solicited subscribers to the *Grounds of Criticism*, and Mr Mein, the intimate friend of Congreve, is probably the same individual as the Mr Man who was engaged in 1722 in promoting subscriptions to Dennis's *Miscellaneous Tracts*[154] Dennis could not have been altogether without some amiability or personal charm or he could not have held so many individuals attached to himself over so many years

Among other friends of Dennis about whom we know little are Henry Davenant and Richard Norton Both gentlemen subscribed to the *Grounds of Criticism* Dennis wrote Davenant in 1706, presenting him a copy of the *Essay on the Opera's*,[155] one would judge by the letter that they were mere acquaintances and only occasional correspondents Richard Norton, of Southwick, a wealthy country gentleman, had manifested his interest in the drama by writing a tragedy, *Pausanius*, which was published in 1696, their devotion to the theater served as the basis of friendship Norton's devotion to the drama was so notorious, in fact, that he was accused of having turned his chapel into a theater[156] He was a patron of dramatic poets, to him Cibber

[149] *Ibid*, pp **163-165**
[150] *Ibid*, pp **126-128**
[151] Cf II, **401**
[152] Cf II, **415**
[153] *Original Letters*, I, **159-162**
[154] Cf II, **490**
[155] Cf I, **520**
[156] Thomas Davies, *Dramatic Miscellanies* (1784), III 410

addressed his popular comedy, *Love's Last Shift,* in the dedication of which he defended himself from the charge of plagiarism.[157] Dennis's letter of 1708 indicates that he was confident of Norton's interest in his dramatic activities,[158] and Norton indicated his desire to support Dennis's interests by taking six copies of the *Grounds of Criticism.*

Even after Dennis's withdrawal from the coffee-house society of London he continued to meet some of the more important men of letters We do not know when he first met Nicholas Rowe, but in all probability the meeting took place very early in the century,[159] for Dennis was a warm friend of Barton Booth, and Booth was an old friend and schoolmate of Rowe's. We are somewhat surprised that they maintained a friendship, for Rowe was not only on good terms with Pope but was the successful rival of Dennis in 1715 when they both sought the laureateship. Yet we know from Dennis's letter of October 5, 1715, that he was in the habit of seeing Rowe, and the jocose and familiar tone of the letter indicates that theirs was no mere acquaintance.[160] Early in 1717 Dennis was extolling the merits of Rowe's Lucan,[161] and early in 1718 he was engaged in a friendly literary debate with Rowe over a passage in Virgil's third ecologue.[162] Both men were hearty Whigs, though not of the faction most closely associated with Addison Dennis, moreover, seems to have known Thomas Parker, first Earl of Macclesfield,[163] for whom Rowe acted as clerk of presentations in 1718 Perhaps Congreve as well as Booth served as a link between Dennis and Rowe

One of Dennis's most interesting literary friends was the poet and diplomat, Matthew Prior They may have known each other in the last decade of the seventeenth century, for both were under the protection of Halifax. In 1713 Dennis sent Prior a copy of the *Remarks upon Cato,* and the latter's tactful reply, expressing a desire to improve his acquaintance with the critic, indicates that the bond between them at that time was slight By 1720 Dennis was on a more familiar footing with Prior, whom he occasionally visited and who helped him to secure subscriptions to the *Original Letters* That Prior played the game and responded to Dennis's literary epistles is most probable, for Dennis proposed to include familiar letters from him among those intended for the second volume of the *Miscellaneous Tracts* Although Dennis detested Prior's political principles, he found in him a man of wide learning, a genuine bibliophile, and a gentleman of the old school who took pleasure in the literary debate. Perhaps Prior's friendship with Congreve inclined him to cast a favorable eye upon Dennis.[164]

[157] *Ibid*

[158] Cf II, 392-393

[159] It is likely that they were acquainted in 1703, a "Mr Row" is listed among subscribers to the *Grounds of Criticism*

[160] *Original Letters,* pp 19-20

[161] Cf II, 135

[162] Cf II, 402

[163] *Original Letters,* I, 148-149

[164] Prior and Congreve were closely associated during this period (cf II, 489)

Among Dennis's literary friends were some less reputable than Rowe and Prior. John Oldmixon, a Whig writer and historian, was known to him in the 1690's. In 1707 when Oldmixon was editing the *Muses Mercury* Dennis was one of the contributors. Both men cultivated the attention of Arthur Mainwaring,[165] who was able to dispense favors among Whig writers. Oldmixon was one of Curll's hacks during the brief period of 1716-1717 when Dennis was connected with the piratical publisher Apparently the amiable relations between Dennis and Oldmixon continued, for the latter's *Essay on Criticism* defended the old critic and spoke highly of his learning and his fire.[166]

A second impecunious friend and professional writer was Charles Gildon, whose respect for Dennis had been demonstrated as early as 1694[167] By 1715 the literary public had somehow managed to couple their names, as Pope was to do later in the *Dunciad*[168] It was inevitable that they should do so, perhaps, in view of the public tributes which Gildon paid to his fellow critic in 1694, 1698, 1710, 1718, 1719, and 1721[169] In 1718 Gildon gave the impression that he and Dennis met almost daily in honor of Apollo[170] That they were constant companions at this time is possible, but that they stood on a plane of equality is unlikely Gildon acknowledged Dennis as his "Master," and addressed him with some deference, and Dennis, on his side, grew slightly indignant at the charge that he had ever collaborated with Gildon[171] Though Gildon, as a literary hack and a party-writer, held a station inferior in esteem to Dennis's, he was far from contemptible, Wycherley and Addison would not have received him if he had been without ability Even in his blindness and poverty Gildon found the means to subscribe to his friend's *Miscellaneous Tracts*

Another literary hack whose acquaintance Dennis made was Dr. George Sewell, translator, pamphleteer, dramatist, and poet, a Whig who in the period from 1712 to 1715 had addressed several copies of verses to Marlborough and Addison We know from Dennis's letter of March 10, 1719, that he was in the habit of seeing Sewell[172] It appears also from this letter

[165] Dennis tried to interest Mainwaring in his tragedy, *Appius and Virginia*, and with complete success, as Mainwaring's letter of April 7, 1708, indicates (cf II, 522)

[166] *Essay on Criticism*, in Oldmixon, *Critical History of England* (3rd ed, 1728), II, 8

[167] Gildon's "Essay at a Vindication of Love in Tragedies," in the *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays* of 1694 was addressed to Dennis Cf also p 64 in the same volume

[168] In 1716 Aaron Hill dedicated *The Fatal Vision* to Dennis and Gildon In 1720 a pamphlet was issued, called *A New Project for the Regulation of the Stage*, and Dennis and Gildon were given as the authors, actually it was a satire upon the two critics In the first *Dunciad Variorum* Pope attributed the *True Character of Mr Pope* to Dennis and Gildon jointly

[169] *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays* (1694), p 64, *Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets* (1698), p 38; *Works of Shakespear*, VII (1710), p xliv, *Complete Art of Poetry* (1718), I, sig a8v and p 191, *Post-Man Robb'd of His Mail* (1719), pp 112-113, *Laws of Poetry* (1721), pp 61 and 121

[170] *Complete Art of Poetry* (1718), I, p III

[171] Cf II, 374

[172] Cf II, 403-404

that both Sewell and Dennis looked with disfavor upon the management of the Drury Lane playhouse; that Sewell was not in the good graces of the triumvirate may be deduced from the fact that his highly successful tragedy, *Sir Walter Ralegh,* was produced by the company at Lincoln's Inn Fields An anonymous pamphlet of 1720 described Sewell as a follower of Dennis.[173] It was to Sewell, in all probability, that the critic addressed his letters on Milton in 1722.[174]

Though he lived a relatively retired existence, Dennis still made new friends in his advanced years With Giles Jacob he became acquainted sometime before 1719, probably through the instrumentality of Congreve, who was interested in Jacob's *Lives of the Poets* According to the original plan Dennis was to write the dedication for the second volume of the *Lives.* The dedication was written, but Jacob declined to use it, apparently because it contained an inoffensive comment on the decline of Cowley's reputation.[175] Dennis said nothing, but, not to lose his labors, he printed the proposed dedication in his *Original Letters* Jacob appeared at Dennis's lodgings one Sunday evening in April, 1721, and protested against the printing of the dedication on the grounds that the passage on Cowley offended both Congreve and Prior The objection was ridiculous, and Dennis, to use his own words, "turned the rascal ignominiously out of doors" [176] They were reconciled in 1729 by the sting of the *Dunciad Variorum,* though Jacob modestly refused the honor of being styled Dennis's "great Friend and Second" [177]

Another friend of Dennis's old age was Lewis Theobald In 1717 when Theobald satirized Dennis and when Dennis angrily retorted, they were unknown to each other, they did not become acquainted until some years thereafter.[178] Theobald's *Shakespeare Restored,* published in 1726, evidenced a healthy respect for Dennis's learning and sagacity, a probable sign of their acquaintance By the time Dennis addressed his *Remarks upon the Dunciad* to Theobald in 1729 they had struck up a friendship, and Dennis was familiar not only with Theobald's previous work but also with his plans for the future That they were generally supposed to be closely associated in the years surrounding the publication of the *Dunciad* may be inferred from Spence's satire upon them [179]

Another enemy of Pope with whom Dennis became acquainted in the 1720's was Thomas Cooke, chiefly known as the translator of Hesiod In 1725 he showed his hostility to Pope in a poem called *The Battle of the Poets,* in which he also praised Dennis as a vigorous and righteous critic From about 1724 the Earl of Pembroke was in the habit of sending presents to Dennis,

[173] *The Battle of the Authors* (1720), p 27
[174] Cf II, 491
[175] Jacob to Prior, May 18, 1721, in Hist Mss Com, Bath, III, 503-504
[176] Dennis to Prior, April 11, 1721, in Hist Mss Com, Bath, III, 501-502
[177] Cf II, 372
[178] Cf II, 355
[179] Cf II, 517

occasionally employing Cooke to deliver sums of five or ten guineas at one time. Cooke's letter to Baker,[180] from which we derive our information, is inaccurate in many of its details, but it displays a considerable knowledge of Dennis's career. Cooke was inclined to be a bit critical, blaming Dennis's want and hardships partly on his own extravagance, one infers that Cooke was something less than a devoted follower

Another gentleman whose critical faculties were not numbed by Dennis's virtues was Aaron Hill In 1716 Hill dedicated his tragedy, *The Fatal Vision*, to Dennis and Gildon, the dedication was probably unique in Augustan literature, for it exalted critics, of whom the two men addressed were the chief living representatives, as men "great in knowledge men who, through the gloom of Fortune's shade, shine out, to the impartial eye, with native lustre" There is no way of telling how Dennis was affected by this outburst, but he probably made the acquaintance of Hill shortly afterwards His letter to Hill dated Oct 7, 1724, makes it clear that Hill was in the habit of visiting him at his lodgings, and was an old friend.[181] During the years 1724 and 1725 Hill devoted himself warmly to championing Dennis's cause he published at least three letters written by the critic,[182] he praised the *Remarks on Prince Arthur*, the *Grounds of Criticism*, *Appius and Virginia*, and the *Invader*,[183] he urged his readers to subscribe to the *Miscellaneous Tracts*,[184] he lauded John Rich's project for producing the *Old Bachelour* for Dennis's benefit on Jan 4, 1725,[185] he quoted from Dennis's verse and from his remarks on the value of religion in poetry,[186] and he displayed much the same attitude as Dennis toward such subjects as Italian opera and Cibber's *Caesar in Egypt* and the necessity of the Rules[187] At this time Hill was the leading spirit in a small literary group that included Mallet, Thomson, Savage, and Cooke, and it was he, in all probability, who introduced some of these men to Dennis A few years later he had the temerity of suggesting to Pope that he talk less of his benevolence and do something to relieve Dennis's wants[188] When Pope replied that he had already attempted, without much effect, to interest his friends in aiding the critic, Hill responded with an honest estimate of Dennis's character and writings that deserves to be quoted[189]

> Where a man's passions are too strong for his virtues, his suspicion will be too hard for his prudence [Dennis] has often been weak enough to treat you in a manner that moves too much indignation against himself not to leave it unnecessary for you also to punish him Neither of us would choose him for a

[180] *Gentleman's Magazine*, LXV (Feb, 1795), pp 105-106
[181] *Plain Dealer*, no 60
[182] *Ibid*, nos 57, 60, and 96
[183] *Ibid*, nos 54 and 82
[184] *Ibid*, no 54
[185] *Ibid*, no 82
[186] *Ibid*, nos 54, 82, and 87
[187] *Ibid*, nos 54, 59, 80, 94
[188] Hill to Pope, Jan 28, 1731, in Elwin-Courthope, X 14
[189] Hill to Pope, Feb 10, 1731, *ibid*, p 21

> friend, but none of the frailties of his temper, any more than the heavy formalities of his style, can prevent your acknowledging there is often weight in his arguments, and matter, that deserves encouragement, to be met with in his writings

Hill deprecated Dennis's attacks on Richard Steele,[190] yet Dennis admitted him into friendship He felt that Dennis had been too harsh upon Pope, yet he wrote an elegy on the occasion of the critic's death, and he took up his cause again in the *Prompter*[191] It is interesting to note that Dennis could enter into friendship with a man who was independent enough to disagree with him, and that a contemporary of such varied experience as Hill could recognize the value of his critical principles even though he disapproved of his attitude toward particular individuals

For a time, probably during the 1720's, Richard Savage professed friendship for Dennis, and he is listed among the subscribers to the *Miscellaneous Tracts* The diseased mind of this young man, however, led him to an extraordinary display of hypocrisy, while living on familiar terms with Dennis, as he himself confessed, he composed the following pleasant libel [192]

> Should Dennis publish you had stabb'd your brother,
> Lampoon'd your monarch, or debauch'd your mother,
> Say, what revenge on Dennis can be had,
> Too dull for laughter, for reply too mad?
> On one so poor you cannot take the law,
> On one so old your sword you scorn to draw,
> Uncag'd, then, let the harmless monster rage,
> Secure in dulness, madness, want, and age

During the controversy over the *Dunciad* Savage appointed himself as Pope's champion, and in that capacity found occasion again to exhibit his satirical gifts at the expense of his erstwhile friend [193]

Various individuals appear briefly on the stage of Dennis's life Mr John Freeman, a contributor to Motteux's *Gentleman's Journal,* lent his name to the author's mouthpiece in the dialogue of the *Impartial Critick,* and to him also Dennis dedicated *Iphigenia* in 1699 A Mr. Harman and a Mr. Maxwell were among the four individuals most active in securing subscriptions to the *Grounds of Criticism* The popular comedian, Penkethman, was evidently among his acquaintances, for he occasionally composed important letters in the behalf and in the name of the actor.[194] A certain gentleman named Hungerford once offered to send a boat to bring Dennis to his home in the country, and the critic's reply indicates that he was well acquainted with Hungerford and that he pursued the acquaintance even though he disapproved of the Jacobite company that congregated about his correspondent.[195]

[190] Dorothy Brewster, *Aaron Hill* (N Y, 1913) p 168 and note
[191] *Gentleman's Magazine* for January, 1734, *Prompter,* nos 48 and 171
[192] Johnson, Life of Savage, in *Works,* ed Murphy (1824), vii, 294
[193] Cf below, sect 3, note 82
[194] *Original Letters,* pp 21-25 and 152-153
[195] Dennis to Hungerford, March 18, 1715, *ibid,* pp 280-281

Mr. Walter West earned the critic's thanks on one occasion by interceding for him with Steele [196] The Rev. Mr. Mansell, rector of Cosgrave, was the recipient of Dennis's confidences in 1717 and 1720, and took the trouble to defend Dennis when he quarreled with his brother-in-law [197] On Jan 2, 1719, Dennis sent a copy of the *Select Works* as a New Year's present to Mr. J. Charlton, Esq., whom he had formerly known.[198] James Thomson and David Mallet both aided in the benefit for Dennis produced in 1733, and they both subscribed to the *Miscellaneous Tracts*, they became acquainted with Dennis around 1725, probably through the instrumentality of Aaron Hill. John Rich, the theatrical manager, appeared as a friend in need; recognizing Dennis as a benefactor of the stage, he voluntarily produced Congreve's *Old Batchelour* in 1725 for the critic's benefit, and he subscribed to the *Miscellaneous Tracts* Two decades previously, his father had subscribed to the *Grounds of Criticism* Richard Bentley also subscribed to the *Miscellaneous Tracts*, but there is no evidence that Dennis knew the great classical scholar The "drinking Quaker" to whom Dennis often lent money [199] cannot be identified, nor can "that Monster J— S—," whom Dennis suspected of malice; [200] equally obscure are the identities of the "Mrs S***," "Mr. R***," and "S— T— Esq.", with whom he corresponded [201] Dennis knew Lintot, Curll, and the senior Tonson, apparently, only in the way of business A certain Mr Bradley befriended the old critic and did him the honor to defend him, in 1720 or 1721, from the charge of being ill-natured.[202] To Mr James Greenwood, a grammarian and surmaster of St Paul's School, Dennis sent complimentary copies of the *Invader* and the *Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar* in 1720, and in 1722 at Greenwood's request he wrote an essay on prosody to be included in the second edition of the schoolmaster's grammar [203] In 1728 he dedicated the *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* to George Duckett, who had also been attacked in the *Dunciad*, whether he knew Duckett personally is an open question.[204] Martin Bladen, soldier, politician, and poet, who had tried his hand at the drama in the early years of the century, was a stranger to Dennis, yet he expressed his esteem and sympathy for him by sending compliments and a present, probably in 1732 or 1733 [205] Of Sir Hans Sloane Dennis solicited a subscription to his *Miscellaneous Tracts*, the two letters to Sloane which survive, however, hint at

[196] Dennis to West, March 31, 1714, *ibid*, pp 287-288
[197] *Ibid*, pp 45-47 and 146-147
[198] *Ibid*, pp 150-151
[199] *Ibid*, pp 282-283
[200] *Ibid*, pp 146-147
[201] *Ibid*, pp 58-60, 282-283, and 35-44
[202] Cf II, 412
[203] Cf II, 236
[204] Duckett in 1711 was apparently no admirer of Dennis's (cf I, 431)
[205] Thomas Burnet, *Treatise concerning the State of Departed Souls*, trans Dennis (1733), Dedication, pp iv-v

nothing more than a passing acquaintance.[206] In 1730 Bishop Atterbury, deprecating Walpole's indifference to true merit, sent Dennis a large present of money, which he had had to borrow in order to relieve the distress of his old friend.[207] Another old friend, as we discover in Dennis's letter of Aug 2, 1722 (included in *Vice and Luxury Publick Mischiefs*), was John Potter, Esq., who had developed the pleasant habit of sending presents to the improvident critic.

These were a few of the many individuals whose lives touched Dennis's at some point. There were many more of whom we know nothing. If Dennis wrote many purely personal letters, he did not value them enough to publish or even to save them. His prime interest was literature and learning, and their applicability in the service of religion and the state. He seems to have been relatively little interested in the play of personality, even in his libels upon Steele and Pope he was largely concerned with their doctrines and their effect upon public taste rather than with the character of the men. Most of his friends about whom we know anything were in some way connected with the pursuit of literature or the love of learning For a man who was acquainted with all the famous wits of an era famous for its wits, Dennis tells us amazingly little about the lives of the people, except in the brief letters concerning Crowne and Wycherley he is almost entirely without interest in the biographical detail Literature and learning constituted his ruling passion, and it is not surprising that a man like Hill should respect his accomplishments without loving him.

Yet it would be absurd to stress only one side of him, the side that was vain, passionate, irritable, and suspicious In view of his long friendship of twenty or thirty years with Congreve, Blackmore, Sergeant, Mein, Cromwell, Booth, William Welby, Sir George Markham, Gildon, Atterbury, and other contemporaries, we can be sure that there was something in his character which appealed to good men We must remember, to judge him fairly, that his longest and most bitter quarrels, those with Steele and Pope, hung upon literary disputes, that in these quarrels he was contending for principles in the validity of which he firmly believed, and that when he indulged in personalities and libel he could have pointed to a long line of distinguished precedents in pointed satire, including Dryden himself.

It would be equally absurd to regard Dennis as a dunce or a pedant. There is a certain amount of justice in Hill's remark about the "heavy formalities of his style," for he sometimes relied upon an insistent repetitiousness to gain his point, he was too often given to *a priori* reasoning, and he indulged too often in certain rhetorical devices such as the dilemma; yet he could manage raillery when he saw fit, and the *Usefulness of the Stage* is a model of clear, direct, and cogent exposition. His learning was beyond question genuine No dunce or shallow dilettante would have been tolerated and en-

[206] Cf II, 490-491

[207] *Gentleman's Magazine*, LXV, 105-106

couraged by Dryden, Congreve, Wycherley, Rowe, and Prior Pope himself knew the strength of Dennis's mind, and he agreed with Hill that the critic deserved to be distinguished from the mass of creatures whom he had set down in the *Dunciad*.[208]

Dennis was strongly committed to whiggish principles, but he was never a party-writer He chose his patrons from among both Whigs and Tories, and his political tracts were designed to serve the good of his country rather than the fortunes of a minister. He was an effective pamphleteer, and it is unthinkable that his eminent friends among the Whigs, such as Godolphin, Henley, Mainwaring, and Addison, would not have rewarded him if he had turned his energies to serving the party His concentration, his passionate and virtually exclusive interest in literature during a period when the minds of men were given to party strife and to the accumulation of wealth, is not the least of his virtues After 1700 he withdrew from clubs and factions, cliques and coteries, without whose support he was a single, lonely man carrying on a hopeless struggle His independence cost him a heavy price, and he was justly proud of his willingness to pay it

SECTION III REPUTATION

To trace the fluctuations of Dennis's reputation in full would require a volume, and it is doubtful if such a volume would reward the pains of either the reader or the writer I propose to give merely a brief survey of opinions and attitudes which seem to me to be representative of the trend

Until 1692 Dennis was virtually unknown as a writer His earliest work, a little book entitled *Poems and Letters upon Several Occasions*, was printed anonymously, it fell on deaf ears, and by 1692 the author was ashamed to own it He had a host of acquaintances among the minor men of letters, and his association with Fleetwood Sheppard would imply that he was a gay tavern-companion In 1692 he made his first serious bid for fame, publishing two small volumes of poetry and contributing two poems and two translations to Motteux's *Gentleman's Journal* From Motteux himself we have the first published criticism of Dennis's work, as well as the first indication of how other critics regarded it Of the *Passion of Byblis* Motteux wrote [1]

> It hath been admir'd by the severest Critics, and indeed there cannot be more Warmth, more Majesty, and yet more Softness and Delicacy than appears in that Admirable Translation

Evidently the fragment of Juvenal published in the October, 1692, issue met with a favorable reception, for in the November issue Motteux wrote, addressing his readers "I knew that you would be of my mind, in wishing that Mr. *Dennis* had translated wholly the 8th of *Juvenal* " [2] Further on

[208] Pope to Hill, Feb 5, 1731, in Elwin-Courthope, x, 18

[1] *Gentleman's Journal*, i (October, 1692), p 17

[2] P 2

the same page Motteux extolled the forthcoming *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose,* proclaiming the fables in it to be equal in worth to those of La Fontaine In the issue of January, 1693, Motteux spoke his word in favor of the *Impartial Critick* The book, thought Motteux, achieved both of its aims, and its title was eminently suitable

> For tho [Dennis] has thought it necessary to examine the first Poem in Mr *Waller,* and the Character of Mr *Dryden's Oedipus,* he hath been no less careful to do Justice to the rare merit of those two great men, and fairly considered and answered all the chief arguments that can be raised for introducing a Chorus on our Stage [3]

In the same issue he reviewed the *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose,* but this time he said little of the verse, but expatiated instead on the leading idea of the Preface, first crediting Dennis with having distinguished two main types of burlesque, and then himself developing the distinction This is probably the first published recognition of Dennis's originality and perspicuity as a critic

By 1694 Dennis's abilities as a critic were apparently recognized Gildon asserted that he had demolished Rymer's contentions regarding the necessity of a chorus in the drama,[4] and the three most important essays in Gildon's *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays* were directed to Dryden, Walter Moyle, and Dennis—distinguished company for a new writer like Dennis Among the wits and men of letters his repute was high, both as poet and critic Dryden himself wrote to Dennis [5]

> Your own poetry is a more powerful example, to prove that the modern writers may enter into comparison with the ancients, than any which Perrault could produce in France, yet neither he nor you, who are a better critick can persuade me, that there is any room left for a solid commendation at this time of day, at least for me

Later in the same letter Dryden wrote

> There is another part of poetry, in which the English stand almost upon an equal foot with the Ancients, and it is that which we call Pindarique, introduced, but not perfected, by our famous Mr Cowley and of this Sir you are certainly one of the greatest masters

These are extravagant compliments, but it is clear from their correspondence that Wycherley and Moyle, too, entertained a high regard for Dennis, and Congreve in 1695 paid him the compliment of directing to him the letter "Concerning Humour in Comedy." In coffee-house and tavern where the wits gathered Dennis was known and admired [6]

[3] P 26

[4] *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays* (1694), pp 69-70

[5] *Prose Works of Dryden,* ed Malone, I, II, 33

[6] Wycherley wrote in a letter dated Dec 1, 1694 (*Letters upon Several Occasions* [1696], p 27) "Your Friends of the Coffee-House and the *Rose,* whether Drunk or Sober, Good Fellows or Good Wits, show at least their Sense, by valuing you and yours, and send you all their Service "

In 1695 Dennis published the *Court of Death*, his second carefully wrought and pretentious Pindaric. By this time he was recognized as a daring bard, a poet who soared on mighty passions and who aimed at sublimity. Dryden had remarked of his attempts at the Pindaric, "You have the sublimity of sense as well as sound, and know how far the boldness of a poet may lawfully extend"[7] In 1695 an anonymous versifier, describing those who had contributed elegies upon the death of Queen Mary, wrote:[8]

> Majestic *Dennis* next demands my Lays,
> Soar, Muse, and strive thy feeble Flight to raise,
> In Numbers, like his own, attempt his Praise
> Like *Pindar*, he, unutterably bold,
> Burns like a raging Fire and cannot be contrould
> Gods! With what State his daring Thoughts arise,
> While with sonorous Wings he upwards flyes,
> Till he seems lost above his darling Skies!
>
> .
>
> How shall I show his vast commanding Force!
> His rapid Transports, and unequall'd Course!
> His tow'ring Muse which scorns a human Flight!
> But shines aloft, and blinds with too excessive Light!

Dennis himself realized even in 1693 that his poetry had something in it which "seems bold to presumption"[9] In the Preface to the *Court of Death* he tried to defend himself against such "horrible extravagancies as have been lately so falsely and unreasonably laid to my charge"[10] Two years later Congreve and Dennis were attacked, Dennis for giving way to poetic rage by an anonymous pamphlet, *Justice of the Peace*[11] A probable hit at Dennis's addiction to passionate utterance and the sublime is found in Boyer's *Letters of Wit, Politicks, and Morality* (1701), where the author satirizes a type of would-be wits who, "in a fond imitation of the incomparable *Milton*, mistake *Bombast* and *puffy Expressions* for *Sublime*, and having their fustian Plays damn'd upon the Stage, ransack *Bossu* and *Dacier*, to arraign the ill Taste of the Town"[12] However much Dennis's poetry was esteemed in a small circle, there was a movement of protest against it, a protest of those who disliked his "uncouth hobbling Verse,"[13] and of those who preferred the polite, easy, and elegant to the strained enthusiasm and self-conscious transports of Dennis's muse

As we have seen, Dennis was esteemed a critic of great parts as early as 1694. In 1696 Oldmixon referred to him as "one of our best Judges" of poetry[14] Dennis's position among the wits was so well established that he

[7] *Prose Works of Dryden*, ed Malone, I, II, 35
[8] *The Mourning Poets*, pp 6-7
[9] Cf I, 6
[10] Cf I, 42
[11] Cf Paul, *John Dennis*, p 23 I have not been able to see this pamphlet
[12] Pp 216-221
[13] *A Comparison between the Two Stages* (1702), p 176
[14] *Poems on Several Occasions* (1696), sig [A6]*v*

seemed obviously the person to humble Blackmore, probably the expectations of his companions were a factor in moving him to write the *Remarks on Prince Arthur*. Of this work Gildon remarked:[15]

> [Dennis has made a name for himself both in prose and in verse], but for none more than his Critical Observations on the so much Celebrated Prince *Arthur*, writ by Sir *Richard Blackmore*, in which he has shewed himself a perfect Critick, and Master of a great deal of Penetration and Judgment

During the Collier-controversy Dennis assumed the responsibilities of his position Whether or not he presided over a group of the wits in planning a method of replying to Collier, he was at least recognized by several of Collier's followers as the leader in the counter-offensive. Collier himself took considerable pains to refute Dennis's arguments, and the author of *The Stage Condemn'd* devoted nearly forty pages to an attack upon the *Usefulness of the Stage* Tom Brown and Oldmixon defied Collier to answer Dennis's contentions Apart from Collier himself, Dennis was recognized as being the most important figure in the controversy.[16] His reputation as a critic is attested to by a remark in the Preface to *Achilles: or, Iphigenia in Aulis* (1700), where Boyer speaks of him sneeringly as "a *Giant-Wit*, and a *Giant-Critick*" His most ambitious performance in literary criticism, the *Advancement and Reformation of Poetry*, was commended by the *Post-Angel* in 1701.[17] In some circles his criticism was apparently received more favorably than his poetry, for one of the characters in the dialogue entitled *A Comparison between the Two Stages* (1702), commenting on the *Comical Gallant*, says of Dennis, "Let him stick to his Criticisms and find fault with others because he does ill himself"[18]

Dennis's career as a dramatist began in 1697 with the production and publication of *A Plot, and No Plot* It was not successful on the stage, and it seems to have attracted no extraordinary attention, though Gildon praised it extravagantly for its regularity, and Collier honored it with a growl, and an anonymous work of 1702 described it as a formal and laboriously written farce[19] His next play was the musical drama *Rinaldo and Armida*, staged and published late in 1698 This too was a failure in the theater, and Dennis himself confessed that the objections to its catastrophe were nearly universal[20] Yet Dr William Aglionby, a friend and correspondent of Prior, praised it as "a fine entertainment,"[21] and Oldmixon expressed hearty approval,[22] and there were a few satirical comments upon it as well[23] His

[15] *Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets*, entry under John Dennis

[16] For a brief account of Dennis's part in the controversy, cf I, 467

[17] *Post-Angel* (May, 1701), pp 383-384 I have not seen this item, I am indebted to the kindness of Professor Sherburn for this information about it

[18] P 182

[19] Cf I, 465-466

[20] Cf I, 196

[21] Aglionby to Prior, Dec 5, 1698, Hist Mss Com, Bath, III, 302

[22] *Reflections on the Stage* (1699), p 101

[23] Cf I, 479

next play, *Iphigenia* (1700), ran five or six nights before it was withdrawn, and although it was vigorously supported by Colonel Codrington and his friends,[24] it suffered a certain amount of damaging criticism [25] Abel Boyer, who was naturally prejudiced in favor of his own tragedy, reported that Dennis's "had miserably balk'd the World's Expectation" [26] The Prologue to Boyer's *Achilles or, Iphigenia in Aulis,* written by Thomas Cheek, is of special interest because it not only pays tribute to Boyer but also, indirectly and by comparison, strikes a blow at Dennis

> He [Boyer] better knows what to your Taste is due,
> And writes well, only when he pleases you
> His Muse in Nature's Majesty appears,
> She has no Sounds *Tremendous* to the Ears

This, it should be noted, is a comment both upon Dennis's claims to regularity, and upon his endeavors to attain passion and sublimity in his writings The *Comparison between the Two Stages* ridiculed Dennis's boast about the moving power of his tragedy [27] Although it succeeded in pleasing a part of the audience, it seems to have left the critics unmoved Dennis's fourth play, the *Comical Gallant* (1702), was a complete failure, the audience, thoroughly dissatisfied, gave vent to their complaints, some of which the playwright tried to answer in his Preface [28] It was the *Comical Gallant* which inspired the sharp advice that Dennis should "stick to his Criticisms and find fault with others, because he does ill himself" [29] Up to 1703, then, not one play by Dennis had succeeded in the theater Yet he retained a small body of supporters and admirers who had faith in his talents and at least one of his plays, *Iphigenia,* had come so close to succeeding that he had no trouble for the next six years in finding a manager willing to stage his subsequent offerings

Up to 1703 only one work by Dennis, the *Danger of Priestcraft to Religion and Government* (1702) had sold widely, [30] not one work had reached a second edition His poems were admired by a small minority, but the reading public in general was indifferent or satirical The general attitude may be illustrated by an ironical passage in a poem that appeared in the early years of the century [31]

> Should *Dennis* fall, whose high Majestick Wit
> And awful Judgment like two Tallies fit,
> Adieu strong Odes and every lofty Strain,
> The Tragick Rant, and proud Pindarick Vein

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[24] *Life of Dennis* (1734), p 20

[25] Cf II, 390

[26] Preface to *Achilles or, Iphigenia in Aulis* (1700)

[27] Pp 37-38

[28] Cf I, 281-286

[29] *Comparison between the Two Stages* (1702), p 182

[30] Cf Paul, *John Dennis,* pp 47-48

[31] "The Confederates or the First Happy Day of the Island Princess," in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1703), II, 248-250

By 1703 Dennis was determined to capitalize on his reputation as a critic. Accordingly he issued proposals for a grandiose undertaking which was to treat of the "works of the most Celebrated English Poets Deceas'd," to lay down the laws of poetry in general and of the various *genres* specifically, to give an account of the lives of the English poets, and to demonstrate withal that poetry depended for its greatness upon a spirit which only religion could provide.[32] Although the thesis had been approved by "several of the best Judges in *England*," [33] the proposals met with no favor, fewer than eighty persons subscribed, and as a result Dennis cut the undertaking short and published the fragment which he had completed as the *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* The failure of his proposals does not indicate that Dennis was obscure or that he lacked prestige as a critic; it merely demonstrates that criticism was of interest only to a small body of literary intellectuals, most of whom resided in London, and that no volume devoted purely to literary criticism could reach the average reader Dennis's following was necessarily small

From the very beginning Dennis was aware of the dangers to which his criticism exposed him. In the Preface to the *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose* he noted the probability that he would be severely examined because he had dared to oppose the opinions of "several great men" [34] In the *Impartial Critick* he dared to find fault with the work of Waller and Dryden, and his apologetic manner shows that he was aware of taking a heavy risk, and Motteux's friendly review in the *Gentleman's Journal* tried to justify Dennis's manner of dealing with Dryden and Waller. The consequence of this daring was that Dennis became known as an unpleasantly independent man, and perhaps a somewhat dangerous one Though Dryden took Dennis's criticism in good part and received the critic among his friends, there were some among his followers who warned him that Dennis might in the days to come dispute his claims to fame [35] Every sign points to the fact that Dennis was conducting a one-man revolution against certain conventions which governed the literary circle of which he was a member. Convention demanded that a critic must not find fault with the literary productions of men whose rank in society was superior to his own (hence the absurd deference paid to the work of Roscommon, Buckinghamshire, Dorset, Halifax, and other noble lords), it frowned upon his attacking the works of famous English wits recently deceased (hence the respectful manner in which the names of Cowley and Waller were mentioned), it discouraged him from making adverse criticism of respected members of his own literary circles, it disapproved of his treating harshly any literary work that appeared sound in its attitude toward church and state, and it looked askance at criticism that was too earnest, too learned, or lacking in urbanity and good nature Good nature, in fact, became a fetish in Augustan England, an ideal so tenaciously held that Dennis

[32] Cf I, 325-333
[33] Cf I, 329
[34] Cf I, 10
[35] Cf II, 400

struggled for many years trying to define it in such a way as to make it consistent with a kind of criticism which detected the frailties of contemporary literature.[36] The passion for urbanity and good nature in criticism tended to drive critics in one of several directions: they might, like Dryden in his later years, turn back to the past in order to escape the unpleasant duty of analyzing and appraising the work of their contemporaries, or they might solve their difficulties by treating contemporaries with florid compliments or with *genteel raillery*,[37] or they might avoid the problem altogether by confining themselves to laying down or explaining the laws of literature without attempting to apply them to contemporary writings.[38] Such conventions provided poor soil for the growth of healthy criticism. Dennis, fortunately, was too independent and too honest to accept them, but his defiance of them brought him contumely and a tarnished reputation.

The *Impartial Critick* apparently escaped serious opposition, although it stepped on the toes of Dryden and Waller, it trod gaily and lightly, and it was written in the fashion of the day, a dialogue in raillery. But the *Remarks on Prince Arthur* did not fare so well. It was long and serious, written in the "Didactique Stile," with only the slightest leaven of wit and humor, moreover, it attacked a poem written in support of the established church and government, a poem admired by a good many serious and honest men. Dennis was aware when he undertook to review Blackmore's epic that there was a strong objection to the sort of thing he was about to do, that this kind of criticism was considered ill-natured or even useless. Yet he proceeded, pausing only long enough to defend criticism in his Preface.[39] His *Usefulness of the Stage*, though largely serious, was pleasing to the wits and writers and gentlemen of the town, for it championed a popular cause. His next important work, the *Advancement and Reformation of Poetry*, was long and earnest and didactic, unobjectionable in the main but scarcely calculated to delight

[36] For example, cf. I, **48-49** and **397**, II, **412-413**.

[37] Shaftesbury, who erected good nature and good breeding into a system of ethics, defended genteel raillery in his *Sensus Communis* (1709). Raillery, whether kindly or cutting, became so much the fashion in Augustan England as virtually to constitute a disease. The author of *An Essay on Gibing, with a Project for Its Improvement* (1727) remarked: "And yet a Spirit of Humour, and Raillery seems to have taken Possession of all Orders and Degrees of Men, it reigns in the Country, as well as in the Town, and the illiterate as well as wise profess themselves Members of this extensive Community, and claim the Privilege of exercising their Skill in this facetious Occupation." Yet this author favored good-natured gibing mixed with humor (raillery), and pointed out that by means of raillery Addison had diverted and amended his age, effecting what tomes of divinity and reams of sermons could not accomplish.

[38] Rapin's *Réflexions sur la Poetique d'Aristote*, Dacier's *La Poétique d'Aristote*, and Le Bossu's *Traité du Poeme Epique* were largely concerned with laying down and explaining the laws of poetry, as, in the main, was Boileau's *l'Art Poétique*. Likewise Roscommon's *Essay on Translated Verse* and Buckinghamshire's *Essay upon Poetry* dealt with the general, and tried to avoid the task of applying their principles to the works of contemporaries. Yet these were the critics in highest esteem among the wits of the 1690's.

[39] Cf. I, **48-52**.

the gay, the fashionable, or the frivolous reader. In the following year, however, he took a fatal step—a step which he undoubtedly would have taken even with a full realization of its import. he published the *Large Account of Taste,* in which he lashed his age for its shallowness and degeneracy. There were many others who felt as Dennis did, and much of what he said was true; but no age will love the critic who sits on a throne of judgment and condemns it. Dennis's age, moreover, was proud and sensitive—proud of having attained a state of superior politeness in its wit and in its writing and of having refined the language and perfected the art of verse, sensitive because it was dimly conscious of the fact it lacked the element of greatness and genius to rival the giants of the previous age, Shakespeare, Jonson, Spenser, and Milton By virtue of the attitude adopted in the *Large Account of Taste* Dennis aligned himself with the critics and against the wits, and excluded himself from the genial society of such groups as the Kit Cat Club and Addison's Little Senate, which thrived on mutual admiration

In the *Tale of a Tub* Swift satirized Dennis, in the first passage designating him and Rymer ironically as "most profound Criticks," and in the second passage listing Dennis, Bentley, Rymer, Wotton, and Perrault as True Criticks, descended in a direct line from Zoilus [40] Apparently Swift thought (erroneously) of Dennis as a champion of the Moderns Possibly he disliked him for his defence of toleration, written against the rabid Leslie. But he did not know Dennis personally, and he took exception to no doctrine or judgment in Dennis's work Dennis was a critic, and that was enough, like Bentley he was despicable

To understand the reputation of Dennis from this time on it is necessary to recall the attitude which writers of his time adopted toward critics. Boileau and a few others among the French critics were commonly held in esteem, as were the English critics Sidney, Roscommon, and Buckinghamshire; these were men who followed the example of Aristotle and Horace in discussing the rules or laws of poetry instead of examining specific modern works. But the great body of critics were despised as ill-natured individuals motivated by malice or envy. Even in Dryden's time this attitude had become traditional. Dryden scolded "the little Hectors of the pit" [41] as a matter of course. He said of them [42]

> They who write ill, and they who ne'er durst write,
> Turn critics, out of mere revenge and spite

He pictured them humorously as hovering over a play like vultures hovering over an army.[43] He wrote [44]

> And malice, in all critics, reigns so high,
> That for small errors they whole plays decry

[40] *Prose Works of Swift,* ed Herbert Davis, I (1939), 22, 57, and 249
[41] Second Prologue to *Secret Love*
[42] Prologue to the Second Part of the *Conquest of Granada*
[43] Prologue to *All for Love*
[44] Prologue to *Tyrannic Love*

Dryden, of course, held the view lightly, but a great many Augustans took it seriously. Criticism destroys the pleasure "of being sensible charmed with the most excellent and refined tractats," said Anstruther [45] Most critics, said Rowe, devote themselves to finding faults, which is the easiest task of knowledge, and therefore men of good judgment who are blessed with good and gentle dispositions abandon this unpleasant province to the tyranny of pedants [46] Samuel Cobb remarked that "Criticism, which was formerly the Art of judging well, is now become the pure Effect of Spleen, Passion and Self-conceit" [47] Modern critics, said Addison, are mostly smatterers who love to vilify instead of finding beauties in the work which they criticize [48] A critic, said the *Guardian,* is a man "who on all occasions is more attentive to what is wanting than what is present" [49] Criticism at present, remarked the *Guardian,* has sunk to such a low level that it consists merely in a knowledge of the mechanical rules [50] Henry Felton expressed contempt for the "Herd of Critics and Commentators," adding smugly, "I shall always be ambitious to think with the Polite, and more Candid Part of Mankind" [51] Until the appearance of the *Tatlers* and *Spectators,* said Felton, criticism was characterized by pedantry, dullness, and ill-nature, it was "a dry sour, verbal Study." [52] Accounting for the apparent malice of critics, Thomas Gordon remarked, "A poor *impotent Animal,* that *stoops* and *drivels,* is naturally provok'd and upbraided at that Force and Fire which *it* cannot reach" [53] The chief equipment needed by a critic, said a correspondent of Gordon's, is a stock of technical terms taken from Aristotle, Horace, Rapin Dacier, Buckinghamshire, and the *Rehearsal* [54] In short, critics are dull, unimaginative, pedantic, impolite, lacking in candor and refinement ill-natured malicious and envious There was no charge made against Dennis as a critic which had not been made against critics in general A recognition of this historical fact would have prevented a great deal of nonsense about Dennis from being written Those who knew nothing whatever about Dennis except that he was a critic applied to him the adjectives *ill-natured, pedantic, malicious,* or *envious,* and they commonly meant nothing more than that he was a critic

Between 1702 and 1710 there are not many comments about Dennis although he is referred to as a prominent man of letters in such works as *The Grove or, the Rival Muses* (1701) and *A Panegyrick Epistle to S. R—B—* (1706) His play *Liberty Asserted* had a reasonably long run, going through eleven performances in 1704 Although it was by far the most

[45] Preface to *Essays, Moral and Divine* (Edinburgh, 1701)
[46] Cf D Nichol Smith, p 10
[47] *Poems on Several Occasions* (1707), sig A4*v*
[48] *Spectator,* no 592
[49] *Guardian,* no 103
[50] *Ibid,* no 78
[51] *Dissertation on Reading the Classics* (4th ed, 1730), p xxvi
[52] *Ibid,* pp xviii-xix
[53] "Of Criticism," in *The Humourist* (3rd ed, 1724), p 121
[54] *Ibid,* p 124

popular play ever written by Dennis, it lacked the power, apparently, of pleasing certain elements in the playhouse Two years later Daniel Defoe, deprecating the fact that sober plays could not succeed on the stage, remarked, "Let such Gentlemen ask Mr *Dennis*, if his *Liberty asserted*, did not want the fashionable Gust to please the Palate of the Town, and all its Regularity of Parts, all its real Beauties of Performance could not supply the Defect" [55] His long poem, the *Battle of Ramillia*, seems to have aroused no great attention, yet it won the approval of a small group. Steele expressed himself as being highly pleased by it, and Addison, who was also present at the reading, apparently concurred.[56] Oldmixon reported in 1707 that many good poems had been inspired by Ramillies, including some by such eminent hands as Congreve, Prior, Dennis, and Rowe.[57] His play *Gibraltar* was a complete failure, being withdrawn after two performances. *Appius and Virginia* fared somewhat better, enjoying a run of four nights Mainwaring thought that *Appius* would be "the best Tragedy that has appear'd these many Years," [58] and the play must have aroused the interest of many others (including Booth and Norton), for Lintot paid twenty-one pounds and ten shillings for the right to print it [59] As a political writer Dennis had some prominence His *Danger of Priestcraft to Religion and Government* enjoyed a wide sale,[60] and his *Proposal for Putting a Speedy End to the War*, together with supplementary proposals for raising revenue, evidently gained him supporters, for Gildon later remarked, deploring the avarice of traders exercised against the national welfare, "Mr *Dennis*'s Design would have obviated all these Difficulties, but the Neglect of that was surprizing to all true Englishmen" [61] During this period Dennis's critical tracts won some admirers and attracted some hostile attention The *Person of Quality's Answer to Collier's Dissuasive* was applauded by such distinguished men as Buckinghamshire, Halifax, and Lansdowne [62] His *Essay on the Operas*, the first extended expression of the English opposition to Italian dramatic music, fell in with the feelings and prejudices of many other writers and critics, though it countered a taste sponsored by some of the wealthiest and most influential men in England (including Dennis's friends Halifax and Mainwaring) Unfortunately Dennis injured his case by overstating it, with the result that Swift, who agreed with him in the main, spoke facetiously of his attempt and his method [63] Dennis's views on the opera evidently became familiar to most intelligent and literate Londoners, for in the *Tatler*, no 4, Steele satirized a certain critic's violent

[55] *Review*, III, no 96 (Aug 10, 1706)
[56] Cf II, 24
[57] *Muses Mercury*
[58] Cf II, 522
[59] Cf Disraeli, *Calamities and Quarrels of Authors* (N Y, 1881), II, 139
[60] Cf Paul, *John Dennis*, p 48
[61] *Post-Man Robb'd of His Mail* (1719), p 104
[62] Cf II, 414
[63] Cf Paul, p 52, n 55

antipathy to the opera, in the clear expectation that his readers would recognize Dennis. William Coward showed his familiarity with Dennis's ideas concerning blank verse, particularly as expressed in the Preface to *Britannia Triumphans,* by heartily disagreeing with them, but he referred to the critic respectfully as the "Ingenious Mr. Dennis." [64]

Before 1710, so far as we can judge on rather scanty evidence, Dennis was accorded some respect as a poet, dramatist, political writer, and critic. His poems were not widely read. The Pindaric odes were too wild and irregular to please the public, and the general taste was not prepared for the later pieces in un-Miltonic blank verse Yet the poems were approved by a small group of estimable gentlemen, whose opinions in some measure justified the author's confidence in his own powers, and he was apparently known as a prominent man of letters, for he was mentioned as one of the chief contenders for the laurel in Coppinger's *Session of the Poets* (1698), in *A New Session of the Poets, Occasioned by the Death of Mr Dryden* (1700), and in *The Tryal of Skill* (1704).[65] Except for one play, *Liberty Asserted,* Dennis had failed as a playwright Yet some of his plays were extravagantly praised by gentlemen as important as Arthur Mainwaring, and even as late as 1709 a business-like bookseller paid a fairly large sum for the right to print one of them As a political writer Dennis achieved some prominence, and made himself objectionable to virulent Tories and rabid churchmen, whether because of his political writings, or his proposals for raising revenue, or his panegyric poems on Marlborough's exploits, or a combination of all three, he was given a small government post As a critic he was probably known to all Londoners who were interested in criticism, and his views on Italian opera, blank verse, the place and nature of the sublime, and the importance of religion in poetry were thoroughly familiar to men of letters

After 1710 Dennis's repute as a poet and a playwright rapidly declined His output was small he wrote only one poem of any consequence, and only one play—far less than enough to keep him in the public mind. His poems could not last They had been occasional, inspired by subjects of a passing interest, which only a genius could have made memorable. His plays had been largely failures, and they lacked the vitality to recommend them to new readers or new audiences, only one, *Liberty Asserted,* was ever revived above three years after its original performance. Although Giles Jacob had a few good words to say about Dennis's poetry in the *Historical Account* (1720),[66]

[64] *Lucenira Poetica* (1709), p 44 n

[65] Cf *A Journal from Parnassus,* ed Hugh Macdonald (1937), Introduction, pp xi-xii

[66] Jacob thought that Dennis had come nearer to Milton in his use of blank verse than any of his contemporaries He expressed particular approval of the *Court of Death, Britannia Triumphans,* and "To Mr Dryden, upon His Translation of the Third Book of Virgil's Georgicks"

and although he made a few guarded comments on his talents as a playwright in the *Poetical Register* (1719),[67] yet his main emphasis fell upon Dennis's critical ideas and his learning. Dennis was "a good Poet," said Jacob, "and the greatest Critick of this Age" Gradually the picture of Dennis emerged, that of an unsuccessful poet and a fierce and independent judge of others' writings[68]

There are only two unmistakable allusions to Dennis in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* in the *Tatler,* no 4, Steele describes the eccentric behavior of a great critic driven frantic by an Italian opera, and in the *Spectator,* no. 47, Addison quotes a humorous couplet from one of Dennis's early poems, possibly with malicious intent since the couplet was a strange product from the pen of a man who for fifteen years had striven so ardently for Miltonic grandeur and the sublime The *Spectator*'s attack upon the "ridiculous doctrine" of poetic justice was, in all probability, an oblique attack on Dennis, the great champion of poetic justice The numerous attacks on critics in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* were not directed specifically against Dennis, but he took them as personal affronts[69] because he was the most prominent critic of the times The fact that Addison wrote at large of Milton and the sublime without mentioning Dennis would seem to indicate that he had no great affection for the critic and no extraordinary respect for his writings, and also that the critic's views on Milton and the sublime were not generally familiar to the large body of readers for whom the *Spectator* was designed

The concerted attack upon Dennis's reputation began with Pope's *Essay on Criticism* in 1711, where Dennis is satirized as a solemn fellow overly given to expounding the rules and as an overbearing person who could not brook contradiction[70] A few months later the *Critical Specimen,* probably by Pope, was devoted to satirizing Dennis under the name of Rinaldo Furioso. Here Dennis is ridiculed for his interest in the sublime, in Milton, and in classical literature and learning, for his woeful face and slovenly dress, for his failures in poetry and the drama, for his dislike of operas, for his fear and dislike of the French, and for his vanity, but above all for his behavior as an unsuccessful author and a critic. In January of 1712 the *Examiner,* accusing him, falsely, of having written *The Englishman's Thanks to the D of Marlborough,* referred to him as "an old sowr dry Critick, and blasted

[67] In comedy, said Jacob, Dennis has shown a good deal of "Justness, and Delicacy of Reflection, a Pleasantness of Humour, a Novelty and Distinction of Characters, an admirable Conduct and Design, and a useful Moral" He avoided praising Dennis's work in tragedy, and his only comment on a specific play is a sentence in praise of *A Plot, and No Plot,* lifted from Gildon's continuation of Langbaine

[68] By 1719 Dennis's former patron, Buckinghamshire, looked upon him as a critic and not a poet, and therefore declared him ineligible for the laurel (cf "The Election of a Poet Laureat in 1719," in *Works* [4th ed., 1753], I, 144)

[69] Cf II, 440-441

[70] *Essay on Criticism,* lines 269-270 and 584-587

Poet."[71] In the same year appeared Gay's *The Mohocks*, with a facetious dedication to Dennis

> There are several Reasons which induce me to lay this Work at your Feet The Subject of it is *Horrid* and *Tremendous*, and the whole Piece written according to the exactest Rules of Dramatick Poetry, as I have with great care collected them from several of your elaborate Dissertations As we look upon you to have the Monopoly of *English* Criticism in your Head, we hope you will very shortly chastise the Insolence of the *Spectator*, who has lately had the Audaciousness to show that there are more Beauties than Faults in a Modern Writer

In 1713 Pope continued the attack in the *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris*, in which Dennis is ridiculed for his slovenly dress, his championship of Aristotle and Longinus, his fierceness, his proneness to suspicion, his use of the conventional jargon of criticism, and his inability to tolerate dissent from his judgment A year later appeared an anonymous poem, sometimes attributed to Swift, called *John Dennis the Sheltering Poet's Invitation to Richard Steele, the Secluded Party Writer, to come and live with him in the Mint*, an unpleasant reminder of the improvidence and penury of both Steele and Dennis. At about the same time, in a poem called "The Book-Worm" Thomas Parnell referred to the plays of Dennis and the pastorals of Philips, as the productions of "mortal Bards" Also in 1714 Swift's *First Ode of the Second Book of Horace Paraphras'd* alludes to Dennis scornfully, grouping him with D'Urfey and Philips as examples of contemptible poets. In 1715 Burnet's *Homerides* named Dennis as a member of "that fault-finding Fraternity," the critics[72] The Preface to Gay's *What D'Ye Call It* (1715), burlesquing "classical" critics and the doctrine of poetic justice, was probably intended to reflect upon Dennis The *Further Account of the Most Deplorable Condition of Mr Edmund Curll, Bookseller* (1716), contains two allusions to Dennis, the first intimating (falsely) that "the old Beetle-brow'd Critick" resided at the Mint, and the second ridiculing his interest in the Sublime Early in 1717 he was satirized as Sir Tremendous Longinus, a furious and eccentric critic, in *Three Hours after Marriage*, by Pope, Gay, and Arbuthnot, and again as Furius, an ignorant and ill-natured critic, in the *Censor* for Jan 5 by Theobald, who may have been a friend of Pope's at this time A few months later there appeared Parnell's *Homer's Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, containing the "Life of Zoilus," which satirized those critics "who judge with an *obscure Diligence*, and a certain *Dryness of Understanding*, incapable of comprehending a figurative Stile, or being mov'd by the Beauties of Imagination," and those "whose natural *Moroseness in general*, or *particular Designs* of Envy, has render'd them indefatigable against the Reputation of others", this work is a retort on Dennis in Pope's behalf. Brereton's *The Criticks* on Jan 6, 1718, condemned Dennis for being "influenced by ill Nature alone"[73]

[71] Cf II, 523

[72] *Homerides or, a Letter to Mr Pope By Sir Iliad Doggrel* (1715), p 9

[73] I am indebted to Professor Sherburn for this reference

The confirmed enmity of Pope and Dennis was recalled by Wesley in a poem written in 1720 or shortly thereafter [74]

> Thee I'll espouse, my Friend, in open Light,
> Careless, tho Curll shou'd print, or Dennis write

In 1719 a new series of explosions was touched off by Dennis's warfare with Richard Steele. Late in the year was published an anonymous pamphlet evidently written by a friend of Cibber or Steele, called *A Critic no Wit or, Remarks on Mr. Dennis's late Play, call'd the Invader of his Country,* which attempted to convict Dennis as an ill-natured, ignorant, and impudent critic Upon the publication of the *Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar* Dennis was beset with enemies *An Answer to a Whimsical Pamphlet, called The Character of Sir John Edgar,* facetiously inscribed to Sir Tremendous Longinus, treated Dennis as a scurrilous and unprincipled fellow, and as a pretender to criticism "Thy fund of Criticism is a set of terms of art, picked out of the French translations this for thy *Intellects*" [75] At about this time there was published *A New Project for the Regulation of the Stage,* supposedly by Dennis and Gildon but actually a satire on the two critics. The *Anti-Theatre,* no 2, though it held no brief for Steele, yet described Dennis as "the sour Longinus of the present times' In the *Theatre,* no 12, Steele angrily described Dennis as a surly and contentious mortal, who "has distinguished himself by no spirit but that of contradiction men the most amiable and unblameable in their persons and conduct, most perfect and correct in their writings and discourse, have been the peculiar objects of this Gentleman's reproof and dislike" Late in 1722 Benjamin Victor's *Epistle to Sir Richard Steele, on His Play, Call'd, The Conscious Lovers* assailed Dennis for his ill-nature, impudence his use of ridicule in literary criticism, his contradictions, and his shamelessness in attacking good authors At least two other pamphlets appearing at this time denounced Dennis for his "vile criticisms" and "scandalous reflections" on Steele's comedy [76] Even the author of *The Censor Censured, or, the Conscious Lovers Examined* (1723), though he found many faults in the play, still thought that Dennis's disapproval was too sweeping and undiscriminating

After 1723 there was a lull in the warfare against Dennis In 1727, however, the hostilities broke out again, this time with Pope as the chief enemy Curll's *Miscellanea* contained two of Pope's squibs on Dennis, the triplet enclosed in a letter to Henry Cromwell [77] and the couplet which introduced the early version of the Atticus portrait [78]

> If *Dennis* writes, and rails, with furious Pet,
> I'll answer *Dennis,* when I am in *Debt*

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[74] "An Epistle from Mr Pope to Mr Gay," in Curll's *Miscellanea* (1727), I, 135
[75] Cf II, 484
[76] Cf II, 496
[77] *Miscellanea,* I, 80
[78] *Ibid,* I, 133

In the following year appeared the *Pen Bathous,* in which Dennis was classified as a porpoise, the porpoises being defined as shapeless and ugly monsters who go in for turmoil and tempest, the same work contained a summary of the satire on Dennis and Gildon called *A New Project for the Regulation of the Stage* The first version of the *Dunciad* (1728) in four different passages tried to label Dennis as a fool and a blockhead.[79] In the first *Dunciad Variorum* (1729) Dennis was ridiculed as a laborious, envious, scurrilous critic eccentrically addicted to the Sublime An article dated Nov. 19, 1730, printed in the *Collection of Pieces in Verse and Prose, Which Have Been Publish'd on Occasion of the Dunciad,* satirized Dennis as a contender for the laurel, and as an obstinate and zealous assertor of his own dignity and worth, he was also represented as being the president of the club of Dunces[80] The same *Collection* contains three epigrams in which Dennis is satirized,[81] as well as a blast from Richard Savage [82]

> Shou'd the Author of the *Dunciad* declare, that the great Mr *Dennis* (the Son of a *Saddler*) had better have been a common Parish Crier, than a Poet or Critick? Have not forty Years, and upwards, witnessed the Truth of this? Is it not evident, that his Poverty results from a Misapplication of his Talents?

James Miller's *Harlequin-Horace or, the Art of Modern Poetry* (1731) satirized him for dullness and venality [83]

> O! *Dennis,* eldest of the scribling Throng,
> Tho' skill'd thy self in ev'ry Art of Song,
> Tho' of thy *Mother-Goddess* Tip-top full,
> By Inspiration *furiously* Dull,
> Yet this one Maxim from my Pen receive,
> To *midling* Bards the World no Quarter give
>
> Old *Dennis,* next, with a good Supper treat,
> He'll like your *Poem* as he likes your *Meat,*
> For give that growling *Cerb'rus* but a *Sop,*
> He'll close his Jaws, and sleep like any Top

As an outgrowth of the *Dunciad* controversy Joseph Spence wrote a mock-epic called the *Charliad,* in which he devoted part of his ridicule to the critical activities of Dennis and Theobald.[84] His candidacy for the laureateship was also derided by the *Grub-Street Journal,* no. 46 (1730), likewise by the anonymous play, *The Battle of the Poets, or, The Contention for the Laurel*

[79] Elwin-Courthope, IV, 273, 284, 286, and 294

[80] *Ibid,* IV, 248

[81] "Certain Epigrams in Laud and Praise of the Gentlemen of the Dunciad," pp 9, 11, and 12

[82] Preface to *An Author To Be Let* Savage has the distinction of having written, while on friendly terms with Dennis, the meanest epigram about him ever printed, attributing to him such vices as dullness, madness, poverty, and old age (cf Johnson's Life of Savage, in *Works,* ed Murphy [1824], VII, 294)

[83] In the third edition (1735), pp 51 and 58-59

[84] Cf II, 517

(1731), in which, under the name of Sulky Bathos, he was satirized for his interest in the Sublime He was ridiculed as a prominent disciple of Milton in the *Grub-Street Journal*, no. 5, and alluded to in an uncomplimentary way in several other issues.[85] Late in 1733 at a performance of *The Provoked Husband*, which was acted for the benefit of the dying critic, Pope contributed a prologue, in which his charity manifested itself by a series of unpleasant references to Dennis's taste for the Sublime, his opposition to popery and the Pretender, and his dislike of the French

From 1709 to the end of his life Dennis was widely known as an unsuccessful author who had turned critic He was known as The Critic to a great many who had never read his treatises of criticism. Partly because a share of infamy fell to the lot of all candid and impartial critics, he suffered under a certain measure of unpopularity. Partly because, in his fierce independence, he kept aloof from such mutual-admiration societies as the Kit Cat Club and the Little Senate at Button's, he lacked a body of organized supporters to maintain his reputation—and this was a serious handicap at a time when literature was the plaything of clubs, factions, and cliques. As a critic he was accused of ill-nature and vindictiveness, of hating all that was new and successful, of being a pedant, of lacking esthetic taste sufficient to discern the beautiful in art, of being excessively given to judging by the Rules, and of having lifted his Rules and the jargon of criticism from the French critics [86] Occasionally he was ridiculed for his passionate devotion to Milton, his distaste for the Italian opera, and his arguments favoring the passionate and Sublime in poetry Those who disliked him were accustomed, with a magnificent lack of discrimination, to ridicule him for his virtues equally as enthusiastically as for his defects Finally, it should be noted that in the main the attacks on Dennis came from Pope and his close friends or from Steele, Cibber, and their active supporters

Those who admired Dennis were less voluble than his enemies. Yet he had followers, and his influence was felt in several directions. We must remember that by a number of people he was looked up to as The Critic, that he was consulted on the merits of contemporary writings, and that many of his productions were composed in response to specific requests [87] Gildon regarded Dennis as his master, and took every opportunity to praise him, characterizing him as the most consummate critic of the age.[88] In view of this fact it is probable that the similarities in their critical opinions are partly the effect of Dennis's influence upon Gildon.[89] Oldmixon, as we have seen, expressed some admiration for Dennis's work in criticism before 1710,

[85] Nos 78, 208, 209

[86] Thus in a manuscript poem called "The Court" (Huntington Library-Ellesmere, 8904), probably written around 1700, we find the line, "Let Crittick Dennis from the ffrenchmen steal "

[87] Cf 1, 397, II, 29, 41, 81, 102, 236, and 349

[88] Cf sect 2, note 169, *supra*

[89] Gildon, like Dennis, commented on the degeneracy of taste in his time, assigning much the same reasons for it as Dennis did (cf *Post-Man Robb'd of His Mail*,

evidently he retained his good opinion of him, for in 1728 he replied to Addison's diatribe against heavy, fault-finding, cold critics, a diatribe which he understood as having been directed specifically against Dennis:[90]

> [The Spectator] himself knew Mr *Dennis* did not want Learning, and as to Fire, he has perhaps rather too much of it, than too little I can't help thinking, that the Ode he writ on *Dryden's* Translation of the 3d Book of the *Georgicks*, in *Tonson's* Fourth Miscellany, deserv'd a kinder Word than illiterate or heavy

Sir Richard Blackmore, who had satirized Dennis in 1699,[91] became one of his most stalwart admirers. In 1716 he paid tribute to Dennis's eminence as a critic, and his discussion of the Sublime exhibited traces of Dennis's influence[92] A few years later he reaffirmed his opinion of Dennis's abilities the while he castigated those critics who held that an epic cannot be constructed on the plan of revealed religion[93]

> And in this Class are Mr *Boileau*, and Sir *William Temple*, and Mr *Dennis*, who has better deserved of the Christian Religion than the last, as he is superior in critical Abilities to the first, seemed once to be of the same Judgement

Thomas Newcomb, minor poet and divine, was well acquainted with Dennis's criticism of Milton He praised the *Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry*, he accepted Dennis's reasons for the failure of most modern epics, he echoed Dennis's very words in describing the effects of the Sublime, and he noted with approval that Dennis had done justice to the sublimity of the Bible[94] His own determination to employ divine subjects in poetry was probably confirmed by the critical views of Dennis. Thomas Purney, a most astonishing and unorthodox composer of pastorals, knew and admired Dennis's critical works Objecting to the unoriginality of French critics, Purney remarked, "Yet where a Poet declares himself one that intends to advance the Art of Criticism, as well as write Poems, (as our *Dryden* and *Dennis*) a Critick has some excuse for following him"[95] For many of his critical ideas Purney was obviously indebted to Dennis, and perhaps even for his prose

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pp 109-113), he inveighed against the Italian opera in a manner suggestive of Dennis (*ibid*, pp 111-112), he fulminated against dramatists who prepared the way for their plays by raising cabals to favor them (*ibid*, p 149), he accused the enemies of the theater of being Jacobites (*ibid*, pp 212-213), he defended the drama by contending that it was the least harmful of all diversions (*ibid*, pp 215-216), he attributed the corruption of the stage to the fact that the management of the theater was in the hands of ignorant players (*ibid*, p 265), he protested against the use of rhyme in English poetry (*Laws of Poetry*, pp 65 and 121), he argued in favor of enthusiasm in poetry (*ibid*, p 75), he attacked Steele for condemning the regularity of the French stage (*ibid*, p 177), he stressed the importance of humour in comedy, and defined it in exactly the same way as Dennis had (*ibid*, pp 251-252) These are but a few of the obvious similarities which indicate how closely Gildon followed his master

[90] *Essay on Criticism*, in the *Critical History of England* (3rd ed, 1728), II, 8

[91] *Satyr against Wit*, in Spingarn, III, 329

[92] *Essays upon Several Subjects*, I (1716), pp 68 and 94

[93] *Alfred* (1723), Preface, p II

[94] Preface to *The Last Judgment of Men and Angels* (1723)

[95] Preface to *Pastorals Viz The Bashful Swain and Beauty and Simplicity*, in *Works*, ed H O White (Oxford, 1933), p 52

style.[96] Giles Jacob, who was no undiscriminating fool, called Dennis "a good Poet and the greatest Critick of this Age"—a judgment which was exactly half right[97] In 1725 Thomas Cooke published his *Battle of the Poets,* in which he devoted a passage to praising the vigor of Dennis, a foe to vice and to bad writers, who had conquered over spurious wit.[98] Although Theobald attacked Dennis in 1717, before he became acquainted with him, by 1726 he was of another mind, remarking of the old critic that, "in my Opinion, no Man in *England* better understands Shakespeare."[99] Aaron Hill paid his respects to the art of criticism in 1716 by dedicating *The Fatal Vision* to Dennis and Gildon Dennis's learning and critical ideas, especially those concerning the relationship of poetry to religion, made a profound impression on Hill, who frequently quoted from his writings and commended the old critic, both in the *Plain Dealer* and in the *Prompter*[100] Writing to Pope in 1731, Hill said of Dennis, " there is often weight in his arguments, and matter, that deserves encouragement, to be met with in his writings "[101] Bishop Atterbury, out of the kindness of his heart and under the impression that Dennis's merits had been unduly neglected by Walpole, sent him a present in 1730 of a hundred pounds[102] Dr. George Sewell criticized Gildon for having said nothing in his *Complete Art of Poetry* about poetic enthusiasm, and recommended that he read Casaubon or Dennis on that subject[103] Writing to Edward Harley on Aug 4, 1726, Dr W Stratford mentioned a report that Dennis's papers had recently been burned, the fire was regrettable, said Stratford, for Dennis was "a curious man and a scholar," and there must have been something valuable in the papers[104] The unfortunate young poet, William Pattison, thought of Dennis as a terror to inept and incompetent scribblers Advising a certain Scottish poet to slink back to the Caledonian plains, he described the happy state of letters in England, secure

> While *Congreve* with a just Politeness warms,
> While easy *Pope* with flowing Music charms,
> While witty *Swift* shall ev'ry Muse adorn,
> And *Dennis* scourge the Fools he does not scorn [105]

These testimonials to Dennis's influence and worth are the more significant in that, with few exceptions, they did not come from his close friends and associates

[96] *Works,* ed White, Introduction, p xxxiv

[97] *Historical Account of the Lives and Writings of Our Most Considerable English Poets* (1720), p 257

[98] Cooke, *Original Poems* (1743), p 31 Cited in Paul, p 209

[99] *Shakespeare Restored* (1726), p 181

[100] Cf above, pp xlii-xliii

[101] Elwin-Courthope, x, 21

[102] *Gentleman's Magazine,* LXV (Feb , 1795), 105-106

[103] Gildon, *Post-Man Robb'd of His Mail* (1719), p 269

[104] Cf Hist Mss Com , Portland, VII, 442

[105] "To Mr Mitchell, on his two Poetical Petitions," in Curll's *Miscellanea* (1727), I, 142-143

Other testimonials to Dennis's worth are to be found in obscure and anonymous writings of the period. The *Full Consideration and Confutation of Sir John Edgar* (Feb., 1720) defended the French theater against Steele's attack, and maintained that Dennis "has plainly confuted all that the Knight has brought against the regularity of the French Tragedy."[106] *The Battle of the Authors Lately Fought in Covent-Garden* (1720) is a defence of critics and the rules, and the hero of the piece is one Horatius Truewit, a transparent disguise for John Dennis. The author of the *Twickenham Hotch-Potch* (1728) spoke of him as "our modern Longinus," and many other works that appeared in the *Dunciad* controversy referred to Dennis approvingly and quoted at length from his writings[107] The author of *Characters of the Times* (1728) took an impartial view of Dennis, deprecating his excessive warmth and vehemence of temper but commending "his Critical Learning and other Knowledge," which, thought this author, greatly entitled Dennis to the regard of men of letters[108] In 1730 or 1731 a boy at Westminster School wrote thus sympathetically on Dennis's failure to win the laureateship:[109]

> John, I advise thee, out of Love,
> To set thy Heart on things above
> One Grain of thy good Sense must know,
> How Distributions pass below,
> Nor to the Swift, nor to the Strong,
> The Battle, or the Race belong
> Value it not, I say, a Rush,
> That Laurel's grown an Ivy Bush,
> Unto thy Learning 'tis no Shame,
> Whilst thy Whig-Merit shares the Fame,
> The Garland which has miss'd Thee now,
> In Heav'n e'er long shall crown thy Brow
> Let this thy noble Soul assuage,
> And be Supporter of thy Age

In 1734 when Dennis died his poems were virtually (and deservedly) forgotten. Most persons who had heard of him knew him as a critic who had engaged in controversies with popular authors With very few exceptions his works had sold badly, and many of his early productions were already scarce in 1717 when he was collecting materials for his *Select Works*[110] At about the time of his death Lintot issued a twenty-eight page catalogue offering for sale, among many other items, copies of the original editions of the *Reflections on An Essay upon Criticism*, the *Essay on Publick Spirit*, the *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry, Remarks upon Cato*, and the *Essay on the Genius and*

[106] Cf II, 477

[107] Cf II, 513

[108] *Ibid*

[109] "To Mr Dennis the Critick," in the *London Medley* A E Case dates this volume 1731 The poems in it are all exercises spoken at Westminster School I am indebted to Dr Richard C Boys, who called my attention to this item

[110] Cf II, 173

Writings of Shakespear, public demand over a period of twenty years had not exhausted the meagre supply. Yet to that small body of men who constituted "the learned World" he was well known for his critical works, as the *Gentleman's Magazine* noted, and he might be called, said that journal, "The last Classick Wit of King Charles's Reign" [111] Hill's poem, "Verses, on the Death of Mr. Dennis," noted the frailties of his temper·

> Th' impatient envy, the disdainful air,
> The front malignant, and the captious stare!
> The furious petulance, the jealous start,
> The mist of frailties that obscur'd thy heart!

But, the poem continued, his reason will live on, and

> The rising ages shall redeem his name,
> And nations *read* him, into lasting fame [112]

Hill's pleasant prophecy was not to be speedily fulfilled For the first fifty years after his death very little glory accrued to the name of Dennis. To many writers he was a symbol of the vain and pedantic critic who enjoyed nothing in modern art Francis Manning, describing a scene at Will's when it was still the seat of the muses, wrote [113]

> There *Dennis*, censuring with dogmatick Tone,
> Was deaf to every Merit but his own,
> While *Rowe*, more courtly, tho' of Judgment sound,
> Extoll'd the Worth, but spar'd the Faults he found!

John Green coined the adjective "Denisian" to designate the type of furious, fault-finding criticism [114] Fielding hated the vernicular, fault-finding critic and he regarded Dennis as a distinguished representative of the class [115] William Warburton in the Preface to his edition of Shakespeare classified Dennis, along with Rymer, Gildon, and Oldmixon, as a mechanical critic nourished on the husks which the French critics had gathered from the feasts of the ancients [116] In October, 1738, and January, 1739, the *Gentleman's Magazine* ran a fanciful sketch, relating the story of an imaginary session of famous poets in Westminster Abbey. Present as the doorkeeper (and therefore as a servant rather than as a member) was John Dennis, a hideous figure in tawdry garments, crowned by a garland of nettles, his natural contentiousness burst into open violence, and he was (as the sketch makes clear) richly

[111] IV (Jan, 1734), 50

[112] *Works* (1754), III, 421 This poem also appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1734

[113] *Poems Written at Different Times* (1752), p 254 Manning was contemporary with Dennis, and was presumably describing what he himself had witnessed

[114] *Beauty a Poem* (1756), Advertisement, p 5

[115] *Covent Garden Journal*, no 46 (June 9, 1752) That Fielding considered Dennis a mechanical and fault-finding critic is clear from several references in the *Tragedy of Tragedies* (1731), Preface and pp 2, 3-4, 7, 20, 24, 25

[116] Cf D N Smith, p 105

entitled to the scorn of the assembled company. In a somewhat kinder mood William Shenstone's *The School-Mistress* pictured Dennis as a terror-inspiring critic [117]

> And this, perhaps, who, *cens'ring* the design,
> Low lays the house which that of cards doth build,
> Shall Dennis be! if rigid fates incline,
> And many an epic to his rage shall yield,
> And many a poet quit th' Aonian field,
> And, sour'd by age, profound he shall appear,
> As he who now with 'sdainful fury thrill'd
> Surveys mine work, and levels many a sneer,
> And furls his wrinkly front, and cries, "What stuff is here?"

Ayre thought of Dennis (few of whose writings he knew) as "often a very good Critick, always an ill-natur'd one often, through Envy and private Pique, a very malicious and false one" [118] *The Compleat List of all the English Dramatic Poets*, affixed to Whincop's *Scanderbeg* (1747), contains a long article on Dennis which is full of errors and of apocryphal anecdotes, and which sums up its subject thus "A very severe Critic on other Mens Writings, but Author himself of many Plays with very little Success" The account of Dennis in the *Lives of the Poets* (1753) dismissed him as a poor poet and incompetent dramatist, deprecated his tendency to make what it took to be unprovoked assaults on successful writers, but expressed a good deal of admiration and approval for his letters, his political tracts, and his earlier critical treatises, [119] it concluded that he was "a good critic, and a man of genius" Baker's *Companion to the Play-House* (1764) dismissed his plays as unworthy of any consideration In verse, Baker thought, Dennis was unequal—*sometimes spirited and harmonious, and sometimes flat, harsh, and puerile*, in prose, however, he was "far from a bad Writer, where Abuse and personal Scurrility does not mingle itself with his Language" "As a Writer," said Baker, "he certainly was possess'd of much Erudition and a considerable Share of Genius " The presence of the apocryphal anecdotes in both the *Compleat List* and the *Lives of the Poets* is a proper reminder of the fact that *Joe Miller's Jests* (1739) contained a number of stories in which Dennis appeared as an uncouth and comic figure His name was familiar during this period to many people who had never read a line of his works That there

[117] *Works in Verse and Prose* (Edinburgh, 1768), I, 310

[118] *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Pope* (1745), I, 67 In another passage Ayre spoke of Dennis as "a very good Critick and Poet," though completely "mistaken in regard to Mr *Pope*" (*ibid*, p 47) The long footnote devoted to the praise of Dennis (*ibid*, pp 47-51) is lifted whole from Giles Jacob

[119] This article approved of the *Danger of Priestcraft*, described the *Essay on the Operas* as a work written with "an irresistable force," characterized the *Essay upon Publick Spirit* as "one of the most finished performances of our author," in which the execution was "equal to the goodness of the design", asserted that the *Grounds of Criticism* was full of "many masterly things" and did great honor to its author, and pointed out that the criticism of *Cato* was conducted in many passages with great justice and critical propriety

was a certain interest attached to his name may be inferred from the fact that the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December, 1768, published "A Letter from the late celebrated Mr. Dennis to Tho Searjent, Esq; upon the Prospect of Leith Hill in Surry" Yet when Joseph Warton wrote the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* he had apparently read nothing by Dennis, not until he had seen Dr. Johnson's Life of Addison was he stimulated to look into Dennis's criticism [120] In his biography of Pope, Owen Ruffhead mentions Dennis in four different passages, but without the slightest indication that he had investigated his writings [121]

The first writer after Dennis's death who reached an opinion of his controversial writings based on an honest and reasonably unprejudiced reading of them was Dr Johnson, who was not deterred by false notions concerning the politeness and good breeding requisite in a critic Johnson apparently interested himself in Dennis's works some years before he began the *Lives of the Poets*, for in 1776 he expressed a desire that his critical writings should be collected and reprinted in spite of the opinion of Davies, the bookseller, that they would not sell [122] To Johnson the *Remarks on Prince Arthur* seemed "more tedious and disgusting" than the epic which it condemned, and the pamphlets written against Pope, though sprinkled with a few just observations, seemed to be the products of impotent rage, marred with coarseness and unreasonableness [123] In the *Remarks upon Cato*, however, Johnson thought that Dennis transcended mere capriciousness, discovering many real faults in Addison's tragedy, "he shewed them indeed with anger, but he found them with acuteness, such as ought to rescue his criticism from oblivion . . ." The *Letters upon the Sentiments of Cato* seemed to Johnson to be given over to "petty cavils, and minute objections" How much more of Dennis's works Johnson knew, is uncertain In the Life of Milton he makes no mention of Dennis's comments on that poet, although he refers occasionally to Addison's In all probability he had read more—at least, he could have done so easily, for his friend Isaac Reed had a considerable collection of Dennis's treatises in his library [124]

[120] Warton remarked (*Works of Pope* [1797], v, 198) "I was induced, by what Dr Johnson has said of Dennis's Criticism on Cato, to look into some of his other works, in which are some remarks not totally contemptible, particularly on Milton, but in a harsh style and rough manner"

[121] *Life of Pope* (Dublin, 1769), I, 79, 101, 149, II, 145-146

[122] Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed G B Hill (N Y, 1891), III, 46

[123] Dr Johnson thought that the *Reflections on An Essay upon Criticism* contained some just criticism but that on the whole it was coarse and indelicate, showing a greater desire than power to do mischief, the *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock*, he thought, was written "with very little force, and with no effect", he regarded Dennis's objection to Pope's attributing motion to sculpture, in the *Temple of Fame*, as the most reasonable comment made in the "Observations upon The Temple of Fame", he dismissed the criticism of Pope's Homer as negligible (cf Life of Pope, in *Works of Johnson*, ed Murphy [12 vols, 1824], VIII, 60-62, 68, 97)

[124] Eighteen titles by Dennis are listed in the sales catalogue of Isaac Reed's library, they include the *Select Works, Original Letters*, and *Miscellaneous Tracts*

Johnson's interest in Dennis had little immediate effect. Indeed, Horace Walpole charged that Johnson inserted long quotations from Dennis in the Life of Addison merely "to save time and swell his pay."[125] Joseph Warton, however, was impelled by Johnson's comments on the *Remarks on Cato* to look into some of Dennis's other works, and he decided that there were "some remarks not totally contemptible, particularly on Milton, but in a harsh style and rough manner"[126] Thomas Davies, the bookseller to whom Johnson had expressed the desire that Dennis's works might be collected, was acquainted with the *Letters upon Several Occasions*, the *Original Letters*, and one or two other volumes, which he combed through for information and anecdotes about dramas and dramatists, for Dennis himself he had little respect, referring to him as "The furious John Dennis" or as "the sour and intractable Dennis"[127] Johnson's learned and antiquarian friends, Reed, Farmer, and Malone, had some interest in Dennis, but apparently their interest was primarily biographical Reed possessed at least eighteen titles by Dennis in his library, Farmer, writing to Reed in 1794, finally established the fact that Dennis had "stabbed" a fellow-student at Cambridge,[128] Malone collected Dennis's works, leaving peculiar symbols in the margins apparently to indicate material which he thought he might use later[129] Malone seems to have had a low opinion of the critic—at least, he referred to Dennis's utterances concerning Pope as mere "ravings" against a great poet[130] Another antiquarian, John Nichols, had gathered information about Dennis, and had developed a violent prejudice against him Concerning the *Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar* Nichols noted [131]

> These Letters were written by John Dennis, whose irritability, acrimony, insolence, and malignity in conversation and writing, subjected him to the chastisements of all the Authors of his time, who have preserved him from oblivion in the pickle of their ridicule, and hung him up to everlasting infamy, bleeding all over with the never-closing gashes that offended Wit and Genius only can give

Discoursing on "the Inconveniences of Narrow Criticism," a minor writer at the end of the century said [132]

> Zoilus no doubt imagined himself superior to Homer, consequently to all mankind Dennis was too incorrigible to be lashed, or laughed out of his imaginary consequence

In general, the antiquarians and anecdotists were interested mainly in Dennis's quarrels, in biographical incidents, and, lacking in knowledge of his significance in the history of criticism, they were inclined to belittle him

[125] Walpole to Mason Jan 27, 1781

[126] Cf note 120, *supra*

[127] *Dramatic Miscellanies* (1784), III, 380 and 410

[128] *European Magazine* for June, 1794, p 412

[129] Malone's copies of Dennis, containing only a few unimportant notations, may be found in the British Museum, the Bodleian, and the South Kensington Museum

[130] *Prose Works of Dryden*, ed Malone, I, i, 540-541, n 7

[131] *The Theatre*, ed John Nichols (1791), p 339

[132] Addison, *Interesting Anecdotes, Memoirs, Allegories, Essays* (1797), I, 141

Perhaps the fairest and most impartial survey of Dennis's works to appear between 1734 and 1800 was that by Kippis in the *Biographia Britannica* (1793). Dennis's poetry seemed worthless to Kippis, deficient in execution and based upon subjects of ephemeral interest. His plays were not allowed to be much better, although Kippis thought that the *Biographia Dramatica* had been too severe upon them. But his political tracts, except for the *Essay on Publick Spirit*, were commended, and much of his criticism was warmly praised [183] He was well qualified as a critic, said Kippis, by his knowledge, learning, and judgment, and he enjoyed a considerable reputation until he began to lash out at men of great eminence In spite of this reasonable and impartial verdict, Kippis displays the prejudice of his times by apologizing for devoting so much space to Dennis and by attempting to justify his course His justification was, in brief, that Dennis's life touched upon that of many an eminent contemporary, and that the unhappy effects of Dennis's vanity constituted an excellent moral.

Although there was a reawakened interest in Dennis through the nineteenth century, the tradition that he was a man of talent whose work had been ruined by an evil disposition persisted for a long time The *Biographia Dramatica* in 1812 merely reprinted Baker's account of Dennis, with two slight additions, [184] and Baker, though granting Dennis a share of erudition and even of genius and admitting that he had been far from a bad writer in prose, had intimated that the critic's "natural peevishness and petulance of temper" had prevented his talents from being realized Chalmers' *Biographical Dictionary* (1813) also emphasized Dennis's ill-nature The *Universal Biographical Dictionary* [185] granted that Dennis was somewhat better as a critic than as a writer, but added.

> Though it is now become fashionable to speak lightly of him, he had qualities enough to recommend him to the acquaintance of some of the most eminent per-

[183] Kippis thought that the *Person of Quality's Answer to Collier's Dissuasive*, though containing some sensible and spirited remarks, was on the whole an unsuccessful attempt at irony He disapproved of the *Essay on the Operas* because it carried a legitimate opinion to extremes Concerning the *Reflections on An Essay upon Criticism* Kippis was of the same mind as Dr Johnson—in fact, he even employed Johnson's phrasing He condemned Dennis's motives in writing the *Remarks on Cato*, but conceded the ability with which the subject was handled Dennis, he thought, had got the better of Addison in the controversy over *Chevy Chase* In the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* it seemed to him that Dennis had drawn the poetical character of the Bard with sagacity and judgment, arriving at the same verdict which Farmer more decisively supported The *Advancement and Reformation of Poetry* appeared to him the result of much study and reflection, a work in which Dennis supported his arguments with ingenuity and ability

[184] The first addition consisted of Farmer's proof that Dennis had "stabbed" a schoolmate The second addition consisted of a remark on Pope's prologue written for Dennis's benefit in 1733, it pointed out that, so far from being a mark of graciousness and benevolence, "this boasted prologue was designed throughout as a sneer on Dennis"

[185] New York, published for subscribers, 1825

> sonages for birth, wit, and learning, of his time, but the black passions were so predominant in him, and his pride, envy, jealousy, and suspicion, hurried him into so many absurd and ridiculous measures, that his life appears to have been nothing but a mixture of folly and madness

John Gorton's *General Biographical Dictionary* (1851) observed that Dennis was better known for his literary quarrels than for the merits of his own works, and it opined that his reputation as a critic had perhaps been overrated Isaac Disraeli, though he conceded that the *Remarks on Prince Arthur* and some of the *Original Letters* "attain even to classical criticism," yet believed that on the whole Dennis's works "deserve inspection, as examples of the manner of a true mechanical critic." [136] William Godwin, who became interested in Dennis for his criticism of Milton in particular, was convinced that "Dennis is indeed to the last degree a bigot in [the criticism of] poetry." [137] William Hazlitt had no great respect for Dennis He knew the *Remarks on Cato,* and noted acutely that its attitude toward the unities had been anticipated by Farquhar, [138] he also observed that *Cato* still retained possession of the stage in spite of Dennis [139] Other references to Dennis in Hazlitt's works have to do merely with his quarrelsome nature [140] Thackeray, who probably had read very little of Dennis's writings, referred to him ironically as "that great critic," [141] and described him as one "who ran amuck at the literary society of his day," and as one "who was neither the friend of Steele nor of any other man alive" [142] Shortly after the middle of the century one of Steele's biographers could still conceive of Dennis as something worse than a common hangman, supposing him to have been motivated by wanton cruelty [143] Obviously the portrait of Dennis painted by his enemies still shone in brilliant colors

Indicative of the renewed interest in Dennis was the attention paid him in the periodicals In 1817, for example, the *Monthly Magazine* printed a letter by Dennis and a portion of an essay which had just turned up in manuscript [144] In 1820 the new *Retrospective Review* presented its ideas on

[136] *Calamities and Quarrels of Authors* (N Y, 1881), I, 80-82

[137] *Lives of Edward and John Philips* (1815), p 293

[138] *Lectures on the English Comic Writers,* Lecture IV, in *Complete Works,* ed P P Howe (London and Toronto, 1932), VI, 89

[139] *Lectures on the Age of Elizabeth,* Lecture VIII *ibid*, VI, 356

[140] *Ibid*, V 322, XI, 318

[141] "Pope," in the *English Humourists* (London and New York, 1904), p 127

[142] "Steele," *ibid*, pp 92-93

[143] Montgomery, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Steele* (Edinburgh 1865), II, 47 Cited in H G Paul, *John Dennis,* p 210

[144] *Monthly Magazine* for June, 1817 The editor prefaced the extract from the *Causes of the Decay and Defects of Dramatick Poetry* with the following notice

> Our readers will perceive that this Essay has great merit as a composition, over and above its claim to their notice as an unpublished production The merit of Mr Dennis was acknowledged even by Pope, notwithstanding he treated him with so much insolence in the "Dunciad", and many persons have ranked him among the best writers of his age

Dennis as a critic, quoting long passages from the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* and the letter to Blackmore *On the Moral and Conclusion of an Epick Poem*.[145] This review is a wildly romantic performance, which glorifies the poet and damns all criticism. It approved of Dennis's political tracts, which, "though not very elegantly finished, are made of sturdy and lasting materials." It applauded those passages in his letters in which he appeared to cherish "a genuine love of nature, and to have turned, with eager delight, to her deep and quiet solitudes, for refreshment from the feverish excitements, the vexatious defeats, and the barren triumphs, of his critical career." But it held him in low esteem as a wit, it considered his poetry dull, and it observed that his canons of criticism, "which he regarded as the imperishable laws of genius, are now either exploded, or considered as matters of subordinate importance, wholly unaffecting the inward soul of poetry." Twenty-two years later *Blackwood's* published an essay on Shakespeare purporting to be the work of Dennis.[146] The essay, of course, is a palpable fraud, a rank forgery, but the individual who wrote it had some knowledge of Dennis's critical methods and, since the tone of the work is reasonable and sensible, probably some respect for his critical ideas.

Symptoms of a changing attitude toward Dennis are numerous in the works of nineteenth-century authors. Bowles, the editor of Pope, felt that Dennis had been unjustly treated. He was a scholar with a liberal education and extensive learning, thought Bowles, and his criticisms were often valid; the sharpness and coarseness of his manner were excusable in view of the heavy disappointments of his life.[147] Byron, who was greatly partial to Pope, mentioned Dennis several times in his letters, but apparently knew little or nothing beyond a few anecdotes and several references to him in the verse and prose of the Twickenhamite.[148] The extent of Southey's interest in Dennis is difficult to gauge. It is certain, at any rate, that he included Dennis's poem "Upon Our Victory at Sea" in the *Specimens of the Later English Poets*, prefacing it with this notice:[149]

> To collect the many excellent anecdotes, and to appreciate fully the merits of this remarkable man would require more space than here can be allotted. An unhappy temper once hurried him to attempt murder, and the same malady provoked and exposed him to the ridicule of his contemporary wits and writings. His critical Works should be collected.

Shelley knew Dennis's *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* at least, his copy

[145] Vol. I, pp. 305-322. This article is the work of T. N. Talfourd.

[146] Vol. LII (Sept., 1842), pp. 368-373. Appended to the article is this editorial note:

> The following piece of criticism professes to be an extract from a rare and forgotten pamphlet, lately discovered, by a collector of such curiosities, in the British Museum. We have not had time ourselves to enquire into its genuineness. There is nothing in the style or matter but might very well have come from Mr. Dennis.

[147] *Works of Pope*, ed. Bowles (1806), IV, 27-28.

[148] *Letters and Journals*, ed. R. E. Prothero, III (1904), 184, 219, 223, and 262.

[149] *Specimens of the Later English Poets* (1807), I, 306.

with his autograph signature, now rests in an American library.[150] De Quincey had no great admiration for Dennis, but he was so well acquainted with his style and manner that he immediately detected the forgery printed in *Blackwood's*.[151] Even James Russell Lowell knew Dennis well enough to realize that he was no mere mechanical critic, that he made a distinction between artifice and art.[152]

There is still more impressive evidence that Dennis's criticism was meeting with approval among distinguished men of letters in the nineteenth century Before the century began, Cowper had written [153]

> Pope and Addison had a Dennis, and Dennis, if I mistake not, held up as he has been to scorn and detestation, was a sensible fellow, and passed some censures upon both those writers, that, had they been less just, would have hurt less

Perhaps the most enthusiastic tribute came from the pen of William Cobbett, who, finding a copy of the *Remarks on Cato* in a remote tavern in America, read it with eager delight and concluded that it was "a most masterly production, one of the most witty things" that he had ever seen "I was delighted with Dennis," said Cobbett, "and heartily ashamed of my former admiration of *Cato*, and felt no little resentment against Pope and Swift for their endless revilings of this most able and witty critic" [154] In the margin of his copy of Addison's *Works* Macaulay wrote "Dennis' criticisms have a good deal of truth in them." [155] With a strange kind of perversity Landor ranked Pope above Dryden as a critic, "while Dryden," he added, "is knee-deep below John Dennis" [156] His prejudice against Dryden's criticism makes it doubtful whether he intended this remark as a great compliment to Dennis Swinburne gradually arrived at a high estimate of Dennis's abilities. His dogmatism, Swinburne thought, was not a fault but, as in the case of Dr Johnson as well, an inevitable result of the desire to give clear and incisive expression to their ideas [157] In 1886 Swinburne admitted to Gosse that he had never seen Dennis's remarks on Milton, but he continued, "I can most

[150] Cf *Catalogue of Early and Rare Editions of English Poetry collected and presented to Wellesley College by George Herbert Palmer* (Boston and New York, 1923) The inscription in the *Grounds of Criticism* reads "P B Shelley, Ireland, 1812"

[151] Cf his letter to Alexander Blackwood printed below, p lxxiii

[152] "Pope," in *Literary Essays* (Boston and New York, 1913), iv, 8

[153] Cowper to the Rev Walter Bagot, July 4, 1786, in *Works of Cowper*, ed T S Grimshawe (Boston, 1854), p 265

[154] *Advice to Young Men*, ii, § 76, in *From Beowulf to Thomas Hardy*, ed R Shafer (Garden City, 1931), ii, 209

[155] Cf ii, 448

[156] "Southey and Landor," Second Conversation, in *Works of Landor* (2 vols, 1846), ii, 165

[157] "Wordsworth and Byron," in *Complete Works*, ed Gosse and Wise, iv (1926), 161.

readily believe in his superiority to Addison on the same subject." [158] By 1895 he was fully converted. In the *Large Account of Taste,* he asserted,

> John Dennis has proved himself as superior a critic to Addison as Coleridge or Lamb is superior to Dennis, and has also proved himself a master of English far more vigorous and spontaneous, while no less classical and lucid, than Addison and Steele [159]

Far more important, however, was the interest taken in Dennis's work by Wordsworth and Coleridge Certain parallels between the critical theories of Dennis and those of Wordsworth have been observed by Professor Paul, but doubt has been expresesd as to whether Wordsworth ever knew the earlier critic's ideas.[160] Yet the fact of Wordsworth's interest may be conclusively established. On Aug. 30, 1842, De Quincey received the September issue of *Blackwood's,* containing an essay purporting to have come from the pen of John Dennis It was a clear case of forgery, and De Quincey recognized it as such Writing to Alexander Blackwood, he said. [161]

> The Mag has just arrived Your correspondt little knows old Dennis I do I once collected his ridiculous pamphlets to oblige Wordsworth, who (together with S T C) had an absurd "craze" about him

The evidence is incontrovertibly good De Quincey was in a position to know Wordsworth's attitude, he had learned it at first-hand, and he himself had been induced to act in consequence of it. That Wordsworth's attitude was one of keen interest and enthusiasm is indicated by De Quincey's phrasing, and this attitude seems to have been fully shared by Coleridge. Precisely how the two great Romantic writers were influenced by Dennis's ideas is the subject for an independent study But it is clear that no comprehensive survey of Wordsworth's or Coleridge's literary theories can be properly conducted without taking into account their knowledge of and enthusiasm for Dennis

For the past sixty years scholarly and critical studies have tended more and more to recognize the value and the historical importance of Dennis's criticism Gosse, who seems to have been partly responsible for bringing Dennis to Swinburne's attention, was impressed by the justness of many of his ideas [162] An article in the *Bookworm* by William Roberts gave a sane

[158] Swinburne to Gosse, Nov 13, 1886, *ibid*, XVIII (1927), 409

[159] *St James's Gazette* for Nov 8, 1895—cited by H G Paul, p 211 I have not seen this item

[160] Cf H G Paul, p 206 Professor C D Thorpe has shrewdly pointed out a few important similarities (*Aesthetic Theory of Hobbes* [Ann Arbor, 1940], pp 228-230 and 257)

[161] De Quincey to Alexander Blackwood, Aug 30, 1842 This letter is printed from a transcript made for me by Professor Horace A Eaton

[162] Gosse found much sound sense in the *Remarks on Prince Arthur,* the *Advancement and Reformation of Poetry,* and the *Grounds of Criticism* (*History of Eighteenth Century Literature* [N Y, 1927], p 185) He praised Dennis not only for having been the first man to comment wisely on the merits of Milton and to give him his

and impartial view of Dennis, based on a fairly thorough study of his works [163] In 1903 the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* was carefully edited and included in D. Nichol Smith's *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare* In 1909 the *Impartial Critick* was included in the third volume of Spingarn's *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, and Spingarn observed that Dennis was the representative critic of the early eighteenth century,[164] and that an edition of his critical works was needed [165] Professor H G Paul published in 1911 a biographical and critical study, an able and judicious performance, in which Dennis's historical importance was for the first time comprehensively treated [166] Two years later there appeared Hermann Lenz's *John Dennis, sein leben und seine werke,* an indifferent monograph concentrating on the first decade of Dennis's literary career In 1715 W H. Durham's *Eighteenth Century Critical Essays* reprinted the *Large Account of Taste,* the *Grounds of Criticism,* and the *Reflections on An Essay upon Criticism,* giving Dennis a larger representation than any other critic of the period In 1922 a popular anthology of critical essays, issued in "The World's Classics" series, reprinted a portion of the *Advancement and Reformation of Poetry* An indication of the feeling among scholars that Dennis's critical works deserved much wider attention than they had received may be found in the fact that three different projects for an edition were in the preliminary stages of preparation when announcement was made of the present edition

Recent scholarship adequately reflects the tendency to recognize Dennis's historical importance Saintsbury, to be sure, after a casual reading which apparently did not include Dennis's two most important treatises, proceeded

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proper rank among the poets of the world, but also for having had a much higher conception of certain types of poetic work than had Rapin, Rymer, or even Dryden (*ibid*, pp 394-395) In *English Literature an Illustrated Record* Garnett and Gosse observed that Dennis in his prime was a writer of excellent judgment, that he was the first English critic to do full justice to Milton and Molière, that he was a vital factor in preparing the public for the reception of Addison's literary criticism, and that for some years after 1700 he was incontrovertibly the best literary critic in England (N Y, 1935, III, 178 and 181-182)

[163] IV (1891), 289-295 and 353-358 Roberts regarded Dennis's criticism as a bold and notable protest against the superficiality of a complacent age He considered the plays, poems, and political essays negligible, but found much to approve of in the literary criticism As a letter-writer, Roberts thought Dennis excelled nearly every other author of his time The *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* struck him as being the best of the critical writings

[164] Spingarn, I, p cii

[165] *Ibid.*, III, 318

[166] Although Paul's work was the first thorough and scholarly study of Dennis, surprisingly little matter of any importance has been added to our knowledge of the critic's life in the thirty years following the publication of his book, and investigations of Dennis's critical ideas and their relations with those of other literary theorists have in many cases followed lines already laid down by Paul The labors involved in the present edition would have been immeasurably greater if it had not been for the help afforded by his discriminating scholarship

with gusto to condemn him as a surly and narrow critic who tottered on the brink of ignorance and incompetence [167] But even Professor Root, whose enthusiasm for Pope is so great that he tends to see through Pope's eyes, and who finds Dennis a dull fellow, concedes that he was the most important literary critic of his generation [168] The point of view which scholarly investigations into the history of literary criticism and theory have for the past twenty years tended to discredit is that Dennis was a member of the school of Rymer, albeit a fairly distinguished member of that school One cannot proceed far in the study of literary criticism in the Augustan period without realizing that Dennis was something far greater than a follower of Rymer Hamelius has gone to the extreme of classifying Dennis as a romanticist in a classical age [169] Others have recognized his originality without distorting his fundamental beliefs. J G Robertson has pointed out that he had good claims to be considered Addison's predecessor, and that his influence can be distinctly felt in the *Spectator* [170] Professor Havens has shown that "The first great protagonist of *Paradise Lost* was not Addison but the forgotten John Dennis" [171] Joseph Wood Krutch has shown the perspicacity with which Dennis found the import of Collier's attack on the stage and with which he set about to answer it, he has affirmed the soundness of Dennis's theory of comedy, and the acuteness and penetration with which he pointed out the weakness in Steele's drift toward sentimental comedy [172] Robert Gale Noyes has pointed out the essential soundness of his remarks on the comedy and tragedy of Ben Jonson.[173] Marvin T Herrick has observed that he was no slave to ancient authority, that he was no stickler for all the rules, and that "Better than Rymer, and possibly as well as Dryden, he perceived the genius of Shakespeare" [174] Samuel H Monk has concluded that he was the

[167] *History of English Criticism* (N Y, 1911), p 164 Cf also pp 165, 166, and 233

[168] *The Dunciad Variorum*, ed R K Root (Princeton, 1929), Introduction, p 17 In his *Poetical Career of Pope* Professor Root goes astray in treating of Dennis (cf pp 21-22, 86-87, and 232) because he is primarily concerned with biographical details rather than with his critical ideas One example of Professor Root's treatment of Dennis deserves comment After remarking that much of Dennis's criticism is mere cavilling and petty fault-finding (*Dunciad Variorum*, Introduction, p 17), he observes the happy judgment and critical sagacity of Pope in singling out the following men for praise Newton, Dryden, Congreve, Wycherley, Garth, Walsh, Buckinghamshire, Addison, and Lansdowne It is a matter of fact that Dennis in his published writings praised all of these men except Garth, and he praised them, for the most part, with shrewdness and discrimination and for definite and valid reasons If it was admirable in Pope to praise them, it was no less admirable in Dennis

[169] *Die Kritik in der englischen Literatur des 17 und 18 Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1897), p 79

[170] *Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1923), p 243

[171] *Influence of Milton on English Poetry* (Cambridge Mass, 1922), p 93

[172] *Comedy and Conscience after the Restoration* (N Y, 1924), pp 136, 245, and 250

[173] *Ben Jonson on the English Stage* (Cambridge, Mass, 1935), pp 52, 182-185, and 312

[174] *The Poetics of Aristotle in England*, Cornell Studies in English, XVII (New Haven, 1930), pp 83-85

first Englishman to perceive that the inquiry into the nature of the sublime must investigate the psychological effects of the experience as well as the nature of the object producing those effects; that he was the first of several writers to anticipate Kant in emphasizing, as part of the experience of the sublime, a sense of the greatness and worth of the human mind, and that an insistence on poetic passion is more prominent in Dennis's thought than in that of any other critic of his time[175] Clarence D Thorpe has shown that he anticipated in several instances important critical ideas later developed by Addison, Shaftesbury, Burke, Wordsworth, and Coleridge,[176] and has concluded that in Dennis's works is to be found the most comprehensive and most satisfactory attempt made, up to that time, "to reduce the phenomena of poetic creation to a sound psychological basis"[177] Clearly Dennis is coming into his own

Just as Dryden succeeded in damning Shadwell, so Pope and his fellow Scribblerians succeeded for many years in making Dennis a symbol of the ill-natured, formal, and pedantic critic Up to the latter part of the nineteenth century most people who had heard of Dennis knew him only in the portrait painted by Pope or in the numerous absurd anecdotes about him which Pope and Joe Miller helped to make current, few had read his works By the time of his death his poems and his plays had lapsed into virtual oblivion But even in the period from 1734 to 1790 there was a small group of men who read his critical treatises with interest and even with pleasure Beginning with Cowper and the Romantics a growing number read Dennis attentively and respectfully, indeed, the greatest of the Romantic poets collected his works and regarded them with enthusiasm Only since the time of Gosse, however, has there been a general recognition of his originality and his critical perspicuity It has gradually dawned upon us that a staunch classical critic who appealed strongly to the best of the Romantics must have something of universal worth We cannot yet say with any assurance how extensive was Dennis's influence on later criticism and literary theory, but we know now that it was far more extensive than anyone has yet dared to suggest His historical significance lies not merely in the fact that he reflects in his writings all of the currents of critical theory present in his own day or in the fact that he anticipates several doctrines that received more notable expression in the words of Addison, Burke, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, but also in the fact that he has appealed to men of diverse ages, schools, and temperaments It seems reasonably clear that a scholar who sneers at or regards condescendingly a man whom Dr Johnson, Cowper, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Cobbett, Landor, and Swinburne thought worthy of their attention, convicts himself as effectively as Dennis himself could have wished.

[175] *The Sublime a Study of Critical Theories in Eighteenth-Century England* (N Y., 1935), pp 45, 46, and 48

[176] *Aesthetic Theory of Hobbes* (Ann Arbor, 1940), pp 228-230 and 257-258.

[177] *Ibid*, p 263

SECTION IV. CRITICAL THEORIES

Dennis's mind was too sharp and his sympathies too broad to be confined in the narrow limits of any school of neo-classical criticism. Of this fact no extensive demonstration is necessary We are told, and many have believed, that he was a critic of the school of Rymer [1] Such a statement means, if it means anything, that Dennis followed Rymer in adopting as his cardinal principles: 1) that the rules of Aristotle, consonant with reason and the practise of the great ancients, are universally applicable and should be strictly adhered to; 2) that the methods of the ancients, including the introduction of a chorus in tragedy, should be employed on the English stage, 3) that the fable is the soul of tragedy, and a good fable requires the exact administration of poetic justice, 4) that characters must be typed, each having the traits commonly attributed to one of his age, sex, occupation, and station, and 5) that the excellence of a great work of art can be determined by common sense. But Dennis was much too wise a man to think that the rules could be applied strictly, in fact, he gloried in the originality of *Paradise Lost,* which rose above the rules, and which by defying some of the rules conformed to the spirit and nature of epic poetry more successfully than the best epics of classical antiquity.[2] Again, he did not believe that the methods of the ancients, suited to a particular climate and to audiences of a certain temperament, could be successfully transferred to different climates with audiences of notably different tempers [3] The doctrine of poetic justice as Dennis developed it was much closer to Aristotle than to Rymer [4] Although he sometimes interpreted the rule concerning the "convenience" or decorum of characters to mean that characters must conform to type,[5] he set much less store by it than did Rymer, for he loved Shakespeare, who broke the rule, whereas Rymer scorned Shakespeare for his negligence.[6] As to the validity of common sense in criticism Dennis diverged sharply from Rymer, though he conceded that common sense might suffice in determining the value of certain obvious features in a work, yet he insisted that to perform the highest function of a critic a man must have genius [7] Dennis was not a member of the school of Rymer, nor of the school of common sense

[1] Cf , for example, Sherburn, *Early Career of Pope,* p 89

[2] Cf I, 331 and 333-334

[3] Cf I, 11-13

[4] Cf II, 436

[5] Cf II, 5

[6] The doctrine of the decorum of manners was connected with the doctrine of verisimilitude, for to gain probability, it was argued, a poet must not imitate a particular historical character, or man as he is, but rather man as he is pictured by philosophy (particularly Aristotle, who in his *Rhetoric* outlined the traits of several types of men) Thus Rymer in the *Short View of Tragedy* (cf Spingarn, II 253-254) Dennis recognised the greatness of Shakespeare's power of characterization in spite of the fact that the Bard did not depict types

[7] Rymer was aware that there are beauties in art not to be appreciated by common sense, but in his own practice he could not rise above the common-sense method His

Nor was he a member of the school of taste, as taste was understood in his period.[8] It is true that he recognized in art a certain indefinable element,[9] an element to be felt rather than to be reasoned upon. It is also true that he wrote a good deal about taste He recognized that a man might have a special taste which would enable him to appreciate painting and carving, but not comedy, or music, or tragedy, and he recognized that taste might prevail in only a small part of the public at any given time.[10] But the conception of taste which was developing in the ages of Dryden and Pope, as a faculty peculiar to gentlemen, compounded of good breeding, good nature, a negligent ease of manner, and an almost instinctive feeling for unassuming elegance of expression, but a faculty sprung full-blown from the brow of gentility, without pain or labor—with such a conception, outlined most explicitly perhaps by Shaftesbury, Dennis had nothing to do He insisted that learning and application were essential to a good taste even in comedy.[11] And in the criticism of the Greater Poetry, he believed, a prime requisite was genius, that is, a great soul, capable of receiving extraordinary conceptions and prompt to take fire from them Dennis's idea of taste was unlike that of any other contemporary English critic. If there was a school of taste in England, Dennis was not a member of it

There has been a tendency of late to regard Dennis as a precursor of romanticism, and one cannot deny that several aspects of his critical thought seem to be inconsistent with the principles of neo-classicism Yet in his fundamental assumptions he belonged clearly to the classical school In the first place, he held without questioning that there is a single standard of excellence in art, and that what is indubitably good in one age will be accepted as good among civilized nations and cultivated men in all subsequent ages The reason why Chaucer failed to please Augustan readers in a high degree, he thought, was not that his language was obsolete and his milieu was no longer understood, but that Chaucer, for one cause or another, had fallen short of excellence in versification, harmony, and diction[12] Although Virgil and Homer, because they wrote for audiences unacquainted with the Christian Revelation, pleased their contemporaries more completely than they can please modern readers of Christian faith, yet, inasmuch as the *Aeneid* and the *Iliad* were based upon universal truths and were wrought with genius and art, they remain among the world's three great epics.[13] In the second place, he held

emphasis on structure and design as the soul of great poetry, and his belief that the art of structure may be understood by a critic gifted only with common sense, almost inevitably threw him back upon that method Dennis, on the other hand, who asserted that the essence of great poetry was great passion, tended to stress the critic's sensibility and capacity for deep emotion

[8] Cf Spingarn, I, pp lxxxviii-cvi

[9] Cf II, 521

[10] Cf I, 288-295

[11] Cf I, 290-291

[12] Cf I, 410-411

[13] Cf I, 265-266

that taste, like reason, is universal and immutable. Concerning any given work of art, all men of taste in all civilized nations and ages will arrive at the same conclusion. He had no doubt as to the fact "That the capacity of imagining and of judging have been in all Ages equal in Mankind"[14] And, as he wrote to Anthony Henley in the dedication of *Liberty Asserted*,[15]

> that which we call Taste in Writing, is nothing but a fine Discernment of Truth But as Truth must be always one, and always the same to all who have Eyes to discern it, he who pleases one of a true Taste at first, is sure of pleasing all the World at last

In the third place, he recognized clear and definite bounds to each of the *genres* of verse, and believed that each *genre* has a specific purpose and aims at a specific effect, and that there is one best way of attaining the purpose and achieving the effect This is the doctrine of the distinction of *genres* Furthermore, he believed that the rules, being wise directions for the successful attaining of these purposes and effects, are eternally valid because they are based upon reason and the unchanging nature of man The raw material of experience becomes art only when it is directed toward a specific end and when it is moulded into the form best suited to the achieving that end Each type of poetry, then, must have a peculiar objective, and there must be certain appropriate means of reaching that objective, otherwise it is not an art, it is an insignificant lump of experience,

> For if Poetry is not an Art, 'tis a meer whimsey and Fanaticism If 'tis an Art it must have a System of rules, as every art has, and that System must be known For there can noe more be an Art, that has a System of Rules which are not known, than there can be a Countrey which hath a Body of Laws that are not promulgated[16]

These are the basic assumptions of Dennis's criticism, all of a uniformitarian complexion, and all repugnant to that complex of principles and tendencies which we call romanticism

The Rules

There is an apparent contradiction between Dennis's belief in the rules and the fact that he glorified Milton, who broke away from many of them with daring and with success An effort to resolve this contradiction is necessary to a proper understanding of the critic and of his age

That Dennis considered himself a champion of the rules is clear from the evidence of his writings, from the letter to Moyle in 1695[17] to a passage in the *Causes of the Decay and Defects of Dramatick Poetry* in 1725[18] His very conception of the universe suggested to him the need for the rules in poetry[19]

> There is nothing in Nature that is great and beautiful, without Rule and Order, and the more Rule and Order, and Harmony, we find in the Objects that strike

[14] Cf I, 291
[15] Cf II, 392
[16] Cf II, 283
[17] Cf II, 386
[18] Cf II, 284-296
[19] Cf I, 202

> our Senses, the more Worthy and Noble we esteem them I humbly conceive, that it is the same in Art, and particularly in Poetry, which ought to be an exact Imitation of Nature

One of the chief causes which he assigned to the degeneracy of taste in his own day was neglect of the rules Yet he was never a rigorous formalist, he knew that it was often the part of discretion to dispense with the rules, and he was fully aware that there were other aspects of poetry of at least equal importance. Why, then, did he so persistently champion the rules?

The answer in part lies in certain developments in Augustan criticism We must remember that enthusiasm for the rules was a comparatively recent thing in England, indeed, many English critics were of the opinion that Corneille had introduced them into France, and that they had been imported thence and thereafter into England. Whatever the origin, the prestige of Corneille, Boileau, and Rapin had much to do with whatever popularity they enjoyed in the Age of Dryden The period of their widest acceptance was probably (and roughly) between 1674 and 1692, the period when Rymer's influence was at its height, even Dryden was strongly influenced by Rymer for a time,[20] and Rymer was the most rigorous of the English Aristotelian formalists. But Dryden soon turned away from Rymer, and Dennis attacked him in *The Impartial Critick* in 1693, and Gildon attacked him in the *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays* of 1694 But there were many signs of revolt against the rules from the beginning of the Restoration period In 1665 Sir Robert Howard objected to transferring the methods of the ancients to the English stage,[21] and in 1668 he objected strongly to those who "have labour'd to give strict rules to things that are not Mathematical" [22] Although Robert Wolseley appeared to accept the rules, he made it clear that he preferred "the loosest Negligence of a great Genius" to the most laborious regularity of a writer who lacked the *furor poeus* [23] Sir William Temple conceded that the fundamental rules of poetry might be helpful in preventing a mediocre writer from going astray, but that the rules as they had been elaborated by the French critics were a millstone around the neck of poetic genius [24] A passage from an essay written by Elkanah Settle in 1698 illustrates the restiveness of the English under the restrictions After a passing shot at the doctrine of verisimilitude,[25] he goes on [26]

> If the *French* can content themselves with the sweets of a single Rose-bed, and nothing less then the whole Garden, and the Field round it, will satisfie the *English*, every Man as he likes *Corneille* may reign Master of his own Revels, but he is neither a Rule-maker nor a Play-maker for our Stage And the Reason is plain

[20] Spingarn, I, p lxxiv
[21] *Ibid*, II, 99
[22] *Ibid*, II, 106
[23] *Ibid*, III, 1
[24] *Ibid*, III, 83-84
[25] *Farther Defence of Dramatick Poetry* (1698), p 31
[26] *Ibid*, p 33

> For as Delight is the great End of Playing, and those narrow Stage-restrictions of *Corneille* destroy that Delight, by curtailing that Variety that should give it us, every such Rule therefore is Nonsense and Contradiction in its very Foundation Even an Establish'd *Law*, when it destroys its own *Preamble*, and the *Benefits* design'd by it, becomes void and null in it self

Many a playwright was aware that he could not provide his audience with the variety which it required and at the same time follow the rules; and, naturally enough, he chose to please his audience [27] The audience's demand for variety, complained Oldmixon, has brought the stage to irregularity and disrepute.[28] Increasingly dramatists came to feel that if one could not please by following the rules, then the rules were at fault "I cou'd . . say a great deal against the too exact observance of what's called the Rules of the Stage," remarked Vanbrugh, whereupon, by way of sample, he took issue with the idea that the chief concern in the drama is with action and catastrophe rather than with characters and dialogue, and with the idea that a double plot in any play is a weakness.[29] For decades the leading dramatists were engaged in belaboring the rules Congreve had a certain respect for Aristotle and the fundamental laws of poetry, but he scorned the over-particularized elaborations of them and the critics who talked "in all the Pedantical Cant of Fable, Intrigue, Discovery, of Unities of Time, Place, and Action." [30] And Farquhar, as is well known, made a brilliant attack upon the doctrine of verisimilitude and upon the unities of time and place [31] Colley Cibber grew hilarious at the expense of old wits who made plays by rule, just as dames made puddings by recipe,[32] and of critics who rage when audiences are charmed "by the lawless Force of Genius" [33] In *Chit-Chat* (1719) Thomas Killigrew drew a sympathetic character who protested strongly against the idea that dramatists should curb the wit in their plays in order to make them regular, for the rules are merely the crutch of wit or a kind of perambulator for lame and rickety geniuses—a remark which gave acute pain to the critic who reviewed Killigrew's play [34] Richard Steele carried on a long warfare against certain rules and the fault-finding critics who tried to uphold them He expressed his contempt for the vernicular critics who thought a breach of the Ten Commandments less serious than a breach of the unities [35] In the *Englishman* he

[27] Thomas Scott, Preface to the *Mock-Marriage* (1696), Mrs Centlivre, Preface to *Love's Contrivance* (1703)

[28] *Reflections on the Stage* (1699), p 169

[29] *Short Vindication of the Relapse* (1698), pp 57 and 60

[30] *Amendments of Mr Collier's False and Imperfect Citations* (1698), p 82

[31] *Discourse upon Comedy*, in *Works*, ed Stonehill (London, 1930), II, 341-343

[32] Epilogue to the *Non-Juror* (1718)

[33] Prologue to *Ximena* (1719)

[34] *Critical Remarks on the Four Taking Plays of This Season By Corinna a Country Parson's Wife* (1719), p 53

[35] *Spectator*, no 270

satirized the little critics who judged by the rules.[36] In the *Theatre* he condemned the regularity of the French stage [37]

> Their best plays are chiefly recommended by a rigid affectation of regularity, within which the genius is cramped and fettered, so as to waste all its force in struggling to perform a work not to be gracefully executed under that restraint

Moreover, his most famous play, *The Conscious Lovers*, broke away from the Aristotelian idea of comedy, to introduce sentiment and tears and to arouse admiration for the hero instead of holding folly and affectation up to ridicule

If the most prominent dramatists of the day were battling for freedom from restraint, so were many of the critics rebelling against the rules Samuel Cobb observed that "an over-curious Study of being correct, enervates the Vigour of the Mind, slackens the Spirits, and cramps the Genius of a *Free Writer*" [38] Joseph Addison devoted several papers to satirizing critics who tried to apply the rules rigorously,[39] and he himself set the pattern of a critic who based his observations upon taste and sense rather than the standard of the rules Accordingly his criticism commended itself to Henry Felton, who found the *Poetics* of Aristotle dry and tedious and who decided that, because the rules were merely generalizations based upon ancient models, they could not possibly command the obedience of modern authors [40] A reviewer of Rowe's *Jane Shore* damned the unities and announced that he would not consider such topics as fable, action, or incidents [41]—elements which the Aristotelian critics regarded as the soul of drama Giles Jacob repeated Temple's remarks concerning the libertine spirit of poetry which could not be fettered by too many rules [42] Leonard Welsted believed that the rules were originally designed merely as comments upon certain great authors, and that therefore they were inadequate standards for new and original works, and he insisted that the true graces and charms of poetry "are of too fine and subtle an essence to fall under the discussion of pedants commentators, or trading Critics"—that is, critics who followed the rules [43]

The revolt was obviously widespread.[44] And concomitant with it was a revolt against the formal critics, those critics who maintained the standard of the rules and who measured all literary works by it [45] A good critic, it was

[36] No 7 (Oct 20, 1713)

[37] No 2 (Jan 5, 1720)

[38] "A Discourse on Criticism and the Liberty of Writing," in *Poems on Several Occasions* (1707), sig [A5]v

[39] Cf, for example, *Spectator*, no 253

[40] *Dissertation on Reading the Classics* (2nd ed, 1715), Preface, pp iv-xi

[41] Cf II, 454

[42] "Introductory Essay," in the *Historical Account of the Lives and Writings of Our Most Considerable English Poets* (1720), p xxi

[43] "Dissertation concerning the Perfection of the English Language," in *Epistles, Odes, &c* (1724), pp xviii-xix

[44] For an account of the revolt against the rules for the epic, cf H T Swedenberg, Jr, "Rules and English Critics of the Epic, 1650-1800," in *Studies in Philology*, xxxv (1938), 567 ff

[45] See above, p liii-liv

felt, was one who could point out the beauties of a work of art, and this required genius or taste rather than a knowledge of Aristotle and his interpreters A good critic, many believed, should be a gentleman, well-bred and good natured, equipped with an almost instinctive sense of the graceful, elegant, and charming in spirit, one who would overlook sins against the rules if a work was agreeable and pleasing The critical papers in the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, with their note of friendly urbanity, their warm commendation of certain contemporary writings, and their scorn of the pedant and "trading critic" seemed models of critical sense Little by little the formal critic came to be regarded as a dull fellow, an ill-natured creature unsuited to the society of gentlemen and men of taste

Against this feeling concerning critics and the rules Dennis firmly took his stand He was convinced that the rules were fundamentally sound and that they were necessary if poetry was to be an art rather than an expression of purposeless and undigested observation The antagonism displayed toward them and toward critics who applied them struck him as a regrettable sign that popular taste, compounded of whims and fads, and sometimes promoted by organized cliques, was supplanting that solid standard erected by Aristotle and approved by succeeding ages The alternative to the rules, it seemed to him, was esthetic chaos, a state in which the untutored desires and pleasures of a heterogeneous populace held sway in art Although he himself recognized that rules under certain circumstances might wisely be disregarded and that many of the "minor rules" were suggestive rather than mandatory, yet, believing that the persistent attacks were undermining all standards in art, he countered them vigorously Many of the passages in which Dennis defends the rules appear in reply to specific attacks upon them Thus his defence in the letter to Moyle was a reply to the preface of Thomas Scott's *Mock-Marriage*, his defence in the *Characters and Conduct* was a reply to Steele's *Theatre*, no 2, and his defence in the *Causes of the Decay and Defects of Dramatick Poetry* was a reply to the dedicatory epistle in Welsted's *Epistles Odes, &c* The persistence with which Dennis justified the rules is not so much a sign of his own faith in them as it is a mark of the strength and success of the opposition—an opposition that included Congreve, Vanbrugh, Cibber, Farquhar, Steele, Addison, and Pope [46]

Because in our own day we are still, more or less unconsciously, affected by assumptions handed down from the romantic period it is hard for us to understand how a sensible and sensitive critic could commit himself to the belief that there are fixed rules, handed down from antiquity, according to which literature should be written and by which it must be judged In order to clarify Dennis's position I shall discuss the question of the authority of the rules and shall attempt to explain what they were and what Dennis's attitude was toward the more significant doctrines comprehended in them

[46] Pope, of course, paid a certain deference to the rules by condescending himself to expound the rules for epic and pastoral poems But for writers who leaned too heavily upon the rules, and for critics who presumed to judge by the rules he had a scathing contempt as witness his "Receit to Make an Epic Poem" (*Guardian*, no 78)

By the time of the Restoration period the revolt against authority had gone a long way, and the intelligent man could no longer accept Aristotle as a rightful sovereign competent to give laws [47] If his precepts were to be saved, they had to be established upon a different foundation. The popular solution to the problem of providing a new basis was that given by Rapin and echoed by Rymer and subsequent English critics.[48]

> That these Rules well considered, one shall find them made only to reduce Nature into Method, to trace it Step by Step, and not suffer the least Mark of it to escape us 'Tis only by these Rules that the Verisimility in Fictions is maintained, which is the Soul of *Poesie* In fine, 'tis by these Rules that all becomes just, proportionate, and natural, for they are founded upon *good Sense* and *sound Reason*, rather than on Authority and Example

If we analyze this explanation, it appears less than clear Of course if Nature (the universe) is characterized by order and operates with mathematical regularity, then poetry, which imitates Nature, should reflect order and regularity. But why should the regularity of Nature be reflected by the particular precepts of Aristotle rather than by a thousand other conceivable systems that would make for regular and orderly art? And how could Aristotle have "methodized" Nature satisfactorily when the true order of Nature was revealed only by the discoveries and writings of such men as Galileo, Descartes, and Newton? The answer to these questions is not to be found in Rapin, and apparently English critics gave it no closer thought

There is a solution suggested in the writings of Dennis In his reply to Welsted he suggested that the rules, because they were founded upon philosophy and a profound investigation into the workings of the human mind, revealed the best and surest way by which an artist might produce in his audience the psychological effect which the *genre* in which he wrote was intended to produce They were based upon a knowledge of great art and an experience of audience-reactions, therefore they were empirical and scientific And because the human mind in its workings remains essentially the same throughout the ages, the observations based upon it are universal and permanently valid, furthermore, they had been tested and approved by succeeding ages One might reject the authority of Aristotle, but his precepts were still sound for they were consistent with what we know of human nature, and reason, interpreting experience, might still determine their soundness.[49] In this view of Dennis's there is no slavish bowing to authority, and no blind acceptance of vaguely apprehended truths It is eminently reasonable and persuasive—provided that one agrees with its leading assumption, namely, that literature is divided into distinct *genres*, each with a specific purpose or effect to achieve, and that certain methods are best adapted for the achieving these effects

[47] R F Jones, "Science and Criticism in the Neo-Classical Age of English Literature," in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, I (1940), 381-412

[48] *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie*, I. XII, in the *Whole Critical Works* (London, 1716), II, 146

[49] Cf II, 503-504

Perhaps no two men in Augustan England, when they used the term *Rules*, had precisely the same meaning in mind. But Dennis's view approximates the general current of intention as well, perhaps, as that of any other individual, and an analysis of his conception will throw light upon the thought of his age.

In the first place, Dennis tended to identify the rules with the precepts of Aristotle, with the "interpretation" of Aristotle as given in Horace's *Ars Poetica*, and, in addition, with certain important inferences drawn from them Consequently the rules had reference primarily to tragedy, secondarily to the epic and to comedy. So far as there were general laws affecting all literature, they were comprised in the doctrine of the distinction of *genres*, the doctrine of verisimilitude, and the doctrine of decorum. According to the doctrine of the distinction of *genres*, literature was divided into distinct types, each with a distinct purpose and with a form peculiar to it The doctrine of verisimilitude demanded that the plot and characters of fiction be developed in such a way as to appear "probable", that is, consistent with what the average person of a given age, sex, occupation, and station would or should do under certain circumstances, and capable of giving an audience the illusion of reality And the doctrine of decorum, never clearly formulated, forbade the introduction of wildly incongruous elements, of unnecessary bloodshed or violence, or unnecessarily evil characters, or pointless obscenity or meanness in act or expression

The chief rule concerning tragedy was that it must contain a fable developed in a unified action, the point being driven home by arousing the emotions of pity and terror Dennis also accepted as a rule the idea that the characters must be portrayed with manners that are good (that is, clearly marked and carefully distinguished), equal (consistent from beginning to end), like (similar in all important respects to those of the historical original), and convenient (proper to the age, sex, occupation, and rank of the character). Besides these major rules there were several of lesser weight, such as those concerning the unities of time and place (and the *liaison des scenes*) the importance of the wonderful and of surprise, the tragic flaw, and purgation

In regard to the epic the main rule required a fable developed in a single illustrious action which ends fortunately, the whole arousing admiration for the heroic virtues of the chief character The rules of tragedy governing the formation of manners were applied to the epic as well The epic must also include machines (or the wonderful). These were the important aspects of the epic. Since Aristotle's directions for writing the heroic poem were relatively few, his precepts were supplemented by some of the rules for tragedy, but Dennis was aware that the precepts for tragedy did not precisely apply to the epic.[50] Le Bossu's elaborate and methodical treatise on the epic, formed upon an observation of Homer and Virgil, was accepted as having something of the authority of rules,[51] and Dennis adopted from it at least the rule of

[50] Cf I, 130
[51] Cf I, 197

the unity of character.[52] Unity of action was required, but much greater freedom in the handling of episodes was allowed to the heroic poem than to tragedy, because of its greater sweep and scope There were no restrictions as to time and place

Aristotle said little of comedy, and as a result there were relatively few rules for it Its characters were of meaner station than those of tragedy, and its purpose, to ridicule folly and minor vices in contemporary society, was to be achieved mainly through the plot and the catastrophe The unities should be more strictly observed in comedy than in tragedy, because the action of comedy was little and therefore easily kept within bounds

These, in brief, were the rules. The Pindaric ode belonged to "the Greater Poetry," but little was added to what Cowley had said of it until Congreve defined the true Pindaric Rapin drew up rules for each of the lesser types but Dennis showed no interest in them, for most forms of the lyric were beneath his notice.

When Dennis championed the rules, precisely what did he intend? In the first place, he meant to assert that "writing Regularly, is writing Morally, Decently, Justly, Naturally, Reasonably," and that following the rules produced in poetry order, harmony, proportion, and symmetry those qualities which were understood to be among the great virtues of classical literature[53] In the second place, he meant to affirm his faith in the fundamental laws of poetry He accepted without question the doctrine of the distinction of *genres*, not because the separate *genres* were determined and limited by authority but rather because their actual and separate existences were facts of history Tragedy comedy, and the epic, to say nothing of the ode, elegy, pastoral, and epigram had been established above two thousand years, each had a special service to render the community and the world of humane letters, and each had justified its existence by giving form to great artistic achievements, in fact, all of the great poetry of Greeks and Romans, of modern civilized European countries had been written within the limits of these types The early masterpieces in each *genre* had set a pattern, and experience had proved the value of the pattern New works, fraught with genius and adapted to new times but bearing no resemblance to any of the established *genres*, might, of course, be written, but there are no sound standards for judging them If such works have a distinct and useful purpose, and a form admirably suited to the attaining that purpose, they may themselves establish a new *genre*, but only posterity can judge of the matter, for the final test of the soundness of a pattern is whether great and successful poetry has been formed within it[54] So far from

[52] Cf 1, 96

[53] Cf 1, 200 and 201

[54] To be sound a pattern must have universal value, and the test of its universality is the success or failure of poems written within the pattern Innovations in the way of new patterns, therefore, can be judged only by posterity, which can view the experience of ages and nations in cultivating the new pattern Cf Le Bossu *Traité du Poeme Epique*, 1, 1

being eccentric and whimsical, this doctrine is implicit in the practise of historical criticism, which investigates the circumstances surrounding a work of art to determine its purpose and effect and the adequacy of the means employed to reach that purpose and effect, but which pronounces esthetic judgment according to standards set by works of comparable purpose and form Dennis followed the doctrine of the distinction of *genres* in condemning tragicomedy,[55] and in condemning *The Conscious Lovers* because it introduced tragic moods into comedy He did not apply the doctrine narrowly and pedantically, however *Paradise Lost,* he thought, was a true epic and a great one even though it differed in several important respects from the established pattern; it had caught the spirit of the epic, it served its purpose greatly and nobly, and that was enough to satisfy him [56]

Dennis accepted the doctrine of verisimilitude, or probability, though not entirely as the stricter Aristotelian formalists understood it In general he held that poetry should imitate the order and regularity of nature, that is, it should represent *la belle nature,* or probability as philosophers describe it, rather than things as they seem Yet he did not follow the formalists in circumscribing probability by rigid and minute precepts The nearest he comes to the strict and formalistic view is a passage in the letter to Moyle, where he explains that verisimilitude requires a rigorous observance of the unities of time and place [57] Even here however, he concedes that probability is a complex thing, and that other factors may not permit of the strictest observance of the unities In the *Remarks upon Cato* he extended his position by showing that probability might be violated by servile obedience to the unities As a matter of fact, he recognized degrees of probability, and felt that different degrees were appropriate to different types, in comedy, for example, there should be a higher degree of verisimilitude than in tragedy,[58] or, presumably, in the epic Verisimilitude does not exclude the use of the wonderful or the marvelous (that is, miracles, or the direct intervention of the deity)[59] provided that these elements appear in works which are elevated and heroic and in which, therefore, the wonderful is in tune with the prevailing mood In short, literature contains several levels of probability, and a work of art must establish its own level and maintain it consistently When Dennis applies the doctrine of verisimilitude, as in his criticism of *Cato* and *The Conscious Lovers,* he concerns himself with pointing out incongruities or violations of plausibility, detectible by common sense [60]

The doctrine of decorum was never clearly defined. It might be applied to action, characters, sentiments, imagery, and diction [61] In general it was

[55] Cf I, **178** and II, **21**
[56] Cf I **331**
[57] Cf II **386**
[58] Cf II, **263** and **337**
[59] Cf II, **47**
[60] Cf for example, I, **11-12**
[61] Rapin, *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie,* I xxxix, in *Whole Critical Works* (London, 1716), II, 178-179

derived from Horace rather than from Aristotle, and it meant merely that an artist should avoid what is unseemly, indecorous, affected, or incongruous Decorum in diction, thought Dennis, meant observing the natural and unaffected and appropriate.[62] As applied specifically to the manners of dramatic and epic characters the doctrine meant that manners must be appropriate to the age, sex, occupation, and rank of the character, this phase of the doctrine was drawn from Horace, and fortified by reference to the second book of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. On occasion Dennis developed the idea of the decorum of manners in as strict and unimaginative a way as had Rymer,[63] but he was fully aware that characters cannot always conform to type or ideal Confronted with this realization, he seems to have arrived at the compromise that, though a man's actions and thoughts belong to himself alone, his speech should be represented in keeping with his rank and station and with general ideas of propriety.[64]

These, then, were the general laws of poetry which Augustan critics commonly accepted and in which Dennis believed. They were principles rather than statutes, directed toward securing order, consistency, and plausibility in the fiction of poetry Except for that phase of the doctrine of decorum which applied to manners and which tended to produce typed characters, they were reasonable and, at least, innocuous These were not fetters to shackle artistic genius.

The rules of tragedy demanded primarily a fable (that is, a universal truth) developed in an unified action, with characters more or less historical and of considerable stature, whose manners are well marked, equal, like, and convenient. Whatever instruction is conveyed should be conveyed chiefly by the action and catastrophe The general effect upon the audience should be to purge them of pity and terror and other similar emotions. Such rules Dennis ostensibly accepted He condemned Dryden's *All for Love* because it lacked a moral and a fable, and could therefore be no tragedy[65] He condemned Shakespeare's historical plays because, lacking fables, they could not be true tragedies.[66] He accepted the idea of purgation even though it was under very heavy attack[67] Even his development of the doctrine of poetic justice conformed with the rules, while he urged that good characters must be rewarded, and evil punished, he still agreed that the best plan for tragedy is to represent the hero afflicted with an involuntary fault (that is, an excess of passion uncontrolled), which sends him to his doom, this being the method most successful in arousing pity and terror.[68] In this he followed Aristotle rather than Rymer. But in spite of this appearance of regularity Dennis gave evidence that he was no slave to a formula He admitted that tragedies which

[62] Cf II, 36
[63] Cf I, 73-74, II, 426
[64] Cf I, 423-424
[65] Cf II, 163-164
[66] Cf II, 5-6
[67] Cf I, 472
[68] Cf II, 436

depend mainly upon brilliant characterization may often attain the great end of tragedy more successfully than those which, obedient to the rules, depend upon action.[69] Although the doctrine of verisimilitude was supposed to apply to tragedy as much as to any other form, Dennis, as we have seen, thought that tragedy required less probability than comedy. Apparently he felt that strict regularity demanded a continuity of scenes, or *liaison des scenes,* but he barely refers to this device for supporting unity of action.[70] Certainly he showed no interest in D'Aubignac's absurdly particularized account of how continuity of scenes might be obtained. The *liaison des scenes* he classified with the unities of time and place as "mechanical rules," which might be broken if the design of the whole work did not allow of strict regularity.[71] Regularity, as Dennis saw it, was not an absolute necessity in tragedy. If a tragedy employed universal tragical characters and achieved the proper end established for the *genre,* no matter how irregular it happened to be, it was still a true tragedy in his eyes.[72] When he said that "a Play which is regularly Written, *ceteris Paribus,* must please more than a Play which is written against the Rules," [73] he meant to assert only that a play must be written as regularly as its subject and design permit.

Dennis's attitude toward the epic tended to be conventional partly because the theory of the epic in England from 1690 to 1730 was relatively shallow and uninspired, no epics of any consequence being produced during these decades. In the main Dennis followed Le Bossu, whose idea of the unity of character he adopted. The chief rules pertaining to the *genre* are drawn up in Dennis's letter to Blackmore.[74] On one controversial question Dennis expressed himself strongly, taking issue with Boileau, he declared that epic machines must be based upon the religion of the country in which the epic is written. In this position, of course, he was amply supported by previous French and English critics. His chief contribution to epic-theory was his contention that compassion or terror should be aroused in addition to admiration.[75] Undoubtedly prompted by his reading of *Paradise Lost,* he emphasized the importance of the Sublime in the epic as no previous critic had done. He prized originality of subject and treatment, and greatness of spirit, above all other qualities in the epic, and he believed that Milton, by daring to be original and to break some of the rules, had captured the true spirit of the epic better than any other writer.[76]

On the whole Dennis thought that comedy, because its scope and subject is smaller, should be more regular than tragedy. Yet he acknowledged that

[69] Cf. II, 425.
[70] Cf. I, 39 and 145.
[71] Cf. II, 453-454.
[72] Cf. II, 164.
[73] Cf. II, 386.
[74] Cf. II, 109-110.
[75] Cf. I, 127.
[76] Cf. I 331.

regularity in comedy signified little or nothing without diversion [77] Whereas Aristotelian formalists considered plot the fundamental thing in comedy, Dennis tended, like many of his contemporaries, to emphasize characters.[78] Whereas classicists stressed the universal, Dennis tended to stress the local and temporary, he defended the *Man of Mode* because its presentation of a gentleman reflected accurately the manners and customs peculiar to the time of Charles II.

With these facts in mind as to Dennis's attitude toward the fundamental laws of poetry and toward the rules of tragedy, the epic, and comedy, it becomes difficult to think of him as a mechanical critic The indispensable rules, as he conceived them, were few in number and, except for the doctrine of the distinction of *genres,* vague in nature, the minor rules were numerous and precise, but not obligatory There was no formula which could be mathematically applied to all works of literature Regularity was an ideal which could never be perfectly attained, and it was far more important to catch the spirit of the rules than to follow the letter of them. Regularity was valuable in that it produced a sense of order, continuity, and concentration, but a work of literature might be completely regular in all its outward aspects and still be worthless. When Dennis said that only a great genius could observe the rules strictly,[79] he meant that it required extraordinary talent to create a poem in which an original design is nobly and spiritedly directed toward the effect which works of that *genre* aim to produce, and in which by artistic order and economy the means are exactly proportioned to the end proposed

It is proper at this point to ask precisely what was the issue between Dennis, who championed the rules, and those contemporary critics and poets who attacked them The difference is not so great as it appears on the surface Many of the attacks were directed specifically against the unities, and Dennis admitted that the unities were mechanical rules which might be broken if the great design of the poem did not permit them to be observed Sir William Temple and others of his opinion, such as Giles Jacob, thought that there were too many rules, that they had been over-particularized in such a way as to impede the artist's freedom and originality Again Dennis agreed, knowing that servile and unimaginative adherence to all the rules was likely to produce a mere copy But while many of his contemporaries chafed under the restrictions of the minor rules, speaking with irritable impatience of them as fetters around the ankles of genius, Dennis believed that they applied to the average case, and, since few writers are geniuses, it was better and safer for a poet to follow than to neglect them In brief (to lapse into jargon), the burden of proof rested upon the poet; only a successful and effective and artistic handling of an admirable design could justify a breach of the rules Dennis did not consider it proper that Tom, Dick, and Harry should assume the privileges of genius As for those who broke the rules because they were

[77] Cf I, 145
[78] Cf II, 245
[79] Cf I, 96

too careless, lazy, or hurried to write in a regular, orderly manner, or who responded to popular and current whims to gain the plaudits of the populace, Dennis regarded them as versifiers rather than poets. Furthermore, Dennis was aware that objections to critics who applied the rules and who employed the conventional phraseology of criticism often proceeded from dislike of all criticism The early eighteenth century was an era of complacent minor poets, accustomed to being flattered by their friends and fellow club-members, who assumed that fault-finding grew out of low breeding and ill nature. Against such individuals Dennis maintained the importance of the rules, upholding the idea of artistic discipline

In the main, however, Dennis was at one with his age in believing that there are standards, clear and definable, for art, and that the major rules of poetry can be disregarded only at the writer's peril Not until after 1720 do we find in England a broad and sweeping attack upon all rule, law, precedent, and standards in art, and when Dennis encountered such an attack in the dedicatory epistle attached to Welsted's *Epistles, Odes, &c*, he floundered helplessly before it, unable to comprehend the revolution in taste which it heralded.

Poetry Genius, the Sublime, Imagination, and Reason

His ideas concerning the rules occupied no more than one corner in Dennis's esthetic philosophy, which he had formulated with reasonable completeness some time before 1700 And since his esthetics were closely intertwined with his ethics, it will be well to examine his ethical philosophy

The chief end and design of man, said Dennis, is to make himself happy, and the essence of happiness is pleasure [80] Self-love is the basis of our actions and desires, and self-love operates by dangling the bait of pleasure before us Furthermore, said Dennis, "Nothing but Passion, in effect, can please us," [81] and the more strongly we are moved by passion, the more deeply we are pleased. Since reason is an instrument for distinguishing truth from error and since there is no error or falsehood in heaven, reason will be unnecessary in the celestial life, in which the "very Height and Fulness of Pleasure" will proceed from the enjoyment of passion [82] But because man on earth is a reasonable creature, he cannot enjoy passion unless it is raised in such a manner as to be consistent with reason. "If Reason resists, a Man's Breast becomes the Seat of Civil War, and the Combat makes him miserable." [83] In his original state, ensconced in the bliss of paradise, man had great passions the exercise of which brought him unalloyed pleasure because, the natural passions of love, joy, and desire having as their sole object God and his wondrous works, they were fully approved of by the reason (and therefore by the understanding and the will) [84] But upon the fall of man the natural passions were turned aside

[80] Cf i, **148**
[81] Cf i, **149**
[82] Cf i, **150**
[83] *Ibid*
[84] Cf i, **256-258**

from their lawful object, and the accidental passions of anger, envy, indignation, and desire of revenge were introduced into the spirit of man, and of these reason could not approve. The *summum bonum* for man thenceforth became passion reconciled with reason, for that alone could create pleasure. Christianity, the true religion, has for its chief end the happiness of man, and it gains its end by enjoining love and charity, the most pleasing of all the passions, comprehending all the joys and duties of life as well It reconciles passion and reason, for

> Charity gently restraining those tumultuous Passions which disturb and torment the Mind, exalts all the pleasing Affections which are natural and congenial to the Soul, and exalts the very Reason of Mankind, by exalting those charming Passions [85]

And reason, in turn, no longer troubled by the conflict of misdirected emotions, excites and confirms and augments the force of the passions, which themselves exalt reason until it becomes "a luminous lively Intelligence" Philosophers had failed to discover the way to happiness because, while some tried to still the conflict by subduing reason and others by subduing passion, none had hit upon a way of reconciling both powers [86] Through the true religion, then, or through whatever other means offer themselves, man pursues happiness in pleasure and pleasure in the enjoyment of such passions as are approved by reason [87]

[85] Cf I, **260-261**

[86] Cf I, **258**

[87] The ethical view which Dennis presents in this philosophy of pleasure is probably compounded of many ingredients When he defines happiness in terms of pleasure and delight, he follows the lead of the school of Epicurus, which also taught that the highest pleasure is the perfect harmony of body and mind, or reason and desire That happiness consists of pleasure was also taught by a group of distinguished French writers of the seventeenth century such as Malebranche in his *Reflexions Philosophiques et Theologiques* (cf Pierre Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary* [4 vols, London, 1700], II, 1190-1191) and Pascal, whom Dennis quoted on this subject (cf I, 149) The egoistic theory, or the idea that man is primarily motivated by self-love and the desire for pleasure he found in the *Maximes* of La Rochefoucauld, which he had read attentively and which he quoted from on divers occasions, and in the writings of Pascal as well, it was also a basic assumption in innumerable Anglican sermons of the Restoration period The tendency to stress the incalculably great importance of the passions in actual life, together with the virtual impotence of reason, is clear in the works of La Rochefoucauld and Pascal The idea that all the passions are delightful and that nothing is sweeter to the mind than agitation, or violent emotion, Dennis had read in Rapin (*Réflexions*, Pt I, sect VII) Professor C D Thorpe has pointed out that in the whole of Dennis's philosophy of pleasure there is virtually nothing that cannot be found in the writings of Hobbes (*Aesthetic Theory of Hobbes* [Ann Arbor, 1940], p 245) There is no doubt that Dennis was acquainted with Hobbes, certainly with the *Leviathan*, and he was undoubtedly influenced by him But one must avoid attaching too much weight to the effect of Hobbes, for that is a way of minimizing unwarrantedly the extent of Dennis's reading and the clearness and subtlety of psychological observations made by French essayists and philosophers and by John Locke

Around this ethical philosophy Dennis wove his esthetics of poetry. The great aim and object of all the arts, he believed, "is to restore the Decays that happen'd to human Nature by the Fall, by restoring Order." [88] Poetry restores order by effecting the complete harmony of all the human faculties Other arts may reconcile reason with passion, or passion with the senses

> But in a sublime and accomplish'd Poem, the Reason, and Passions, and Senses are pleas'd at the same Time superlatively The Reason in the Soundness and Importance of the Moral, and the Greatness and Justness of an Harmonious Design, whose Parts, so beautiful when they are considered separately, become transporting upon a View of the whole, while we are never weary of contemplating their exact Proportion, and beautiful Symmetry, and their secret wonderful Dependance, while they are all animated by the same Spirit, in order to the same End The Reason further finds its Account, in the exact perpetual Observance of Decorums, and in beholding itself exalted, by the Exaltation of the Passions, and in seeing those Passions, in their fiercest Transports, confin'd to those Bounds, which that has severely prescrib'd them [89]

Of the power in poetry to effect the reconciliation Dennis gives examples. In tragedy the passions are raised by just degrees to a preconceived end, and since they are controlled by the design (or reason) the mind gives assent both to their agitation and to their subsidence,[90] and therefore they produce pleasure uncontaminated Again, there are objects which, as experience indicates, create unpleasant emotions such as terror when they appear in actual life, but which create pleasure when they are used in poetry, for even terror gives delight when it is controlled by the poet's art [91]

By 1701 Dennis had formulated his definition of poetry "Poetry then is an Imitation of Nature, by a pathetick and numerous Speech" [92] Numbers make for harmony, which distinguishes poetry outwardly from prose, but passion distinguishes its very nature and character from that of prose, therefore "Passion is the Characteristical Mark of Poetry" For a discourse which is everywhere passionate is certainly poetry even if it lacks numbers [93] But passion alone is not poetry and, as we have seen, it is not even a source of pleasure until it is brought in harmony with reason and the senses The art of poetry is the art of controlling passions in accordance with a preconceived aim The end of poetry is twofold first, to give pleasure, second, to enlist the passions, which are the means to pleasure, on the side of virtue, thereby bringing about a reform of manners If one accepts Dennis's ethical view of the nature and function of the passions, then his idea of the necessary ethical import of poetry follows as a matter of course His appeal for regularity in poetry is no less logical. The experience of centuries has indicated (so his argument would run) that there are certain patterns of verse in which the

[88] Cf I, **336**
[89] Cf I, **263-264**
[90] Cf I, **150-151**
[91] Cf I, **264**
[92] Cf I **215**
[93] *Ibid*

end of pleasure and ethical instruction is most successfully achieved, Aristotle, a brilliant psychologist who understood the mind of men, observed that certain elements, manipulated in certain ways, could within each of the greater patterns afford greater pleasure than others These observations, confirmed by the experience of succeeding ages (and therefore having an empirical value), make up the rules For the average poet, following the rules is the surest way of effecting that harmony of the faculties which his art designs

Had Dennis proceeded no further, he would still deserve the credit of being the first Englishman to give a reasonably full and coherent account of the nature and function of poetry, an account based upon an ethical view of man But he carried his esthetic philosophy toward a point of much greater significance. Sometime before 1696 he became interested in a famous critical document commonly known as *Longinus on the Sublime,* which enjoyed a considerable popularity in England after 1674, the date of Boileau's translation. By Longinus (or whoever the author of the treatise may have been) Dennis's attention was directed to those rapturous and transporting emotions which in poetry appear to be the result of supernatural inspiration. Two problems immediately forced themselves upon him. In the first place, since he was a rationalist and demanded a naturalistic explanation, he was interested to know how the "sublime" passions were engendered in the human mind In the second place, he wanted to know the relationship between the sublime and the ordinary passions Longinus, he felt, had failed to make clear what the sublime actually is because he had merely set before us the effects of it [94] Dennis therefore set out to explain the sublime by examining its causes He set out, then, to reduce certain elements in esthetic experience to a psychological basis, naturalistic and empirical In so doing he was the first English critic to apply comprehensively the results of psychological speculation during the seventeenth century to an understanding of the poetic mind and its creations Many of his psychological ideas he probably drew from Hobbes (as Professor Thorpe has shown in *The Aesthetic Theory of Hobbes*), and others may have been suggested to him by Aristotle, Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Malebranche, Locke, or Longinus In any event, the structure which Dennis erected was an adaptation of sundry ideas, never a direct borrowing,[95] and it displays certain characteristic marks of his own personality

In 1688 while crossing the Alps Dennis experienced intense emotions which he described in terms reminiscent of Longinus [96] By 1696 he had analyzed this and similar esthetic experiences of the sublime, and had come to a tentative definition The sublime was the product of poetic genius, and genius in poetry "was the expression of a Furious Joy, or Pride, or Astonishment, or all of them caused by the conception of an extraordinary hint" [97] The extraordinary hints might be hints of thoughts or images, the images must be of objects

[94] Cf I, 223
[95] Thorpe, *Aesthetic Theory of Hobbes,* p 230
[96] Cf II 380-381
[97] Cf I, 47

vast and mighty, and the thoughts must be such as discover the greatness of mind, or reach of soul, or unusual capacity in him who conceives them In this analysis there is a certain vagueness concerning the sources of the passions experienced in the sublime The emphasis is rather upon the element of reflection occurring in the poet's mind simultaneously with the images and passions The soul stands aside, as it were, to contemplate its own capacity for extraordinary agitation, and "is transported upon it, by the consciousness of its own excellence" [98] The furious pride of spirit produced by this reflection in turns augments the force of the passions and the elevation of the expression

By 1704 Dennis had clarified his ideas He now recognized explicitly two kinds of esthetic emotions ordinary, or vulgar, passions, and enthusiastic passions [99] Ordinary passions are those which are aroused by the mere images of objects or by such ideas concerning objects as occur in the ordinary course of life Enthusiastic passions are aroused by ideas that occur to us in meditation or reflection, that is, ideas of objects not as they actually appear to the senses but as they are shaped and altered and expanded by the mind To illustrate the distinction Dennis gives us an example [100]

> So Thunder mention'd in common Conversation, gives an Idea of a black Cloud, and a great Noise, which makes no great Impression upon us But the Idea of it occurring in Meditation, sets before us the most forcible, most resistless, and consequently the most dreadful Phænomenon in Nature So that this Idea must move a great deal of Terror in us, and 'tis this sort of Terror that I call Enthusiasm

The chief enthusiastic passions are admiration, terror, horror, joy, sadness, and desire, each heightened by, and heightening, the furious pride and joy of the mind in beholding its own capacity for exalted reflection Apart from the presence of that furious joy and pride of the mind "at the conscious View of its own Excellence," Dennis provides two other ways of identifying enthusiastic passion It proceeds from a cause that is not fully comprehended, that is, the mere image in its ordinary aspects, unaltered by reflection, is insufficient to account for the passion resulting Second, enthusiastic passion is greater and more intense than ordinary emotions [101]

In his study of the sublime Monk intimates that Dennis paid relatively little attention to the beautiful, and failed to see that the sublime and the beautiful constituted two separate categories of esthetic experience [102] It is true that in a few passages Dennis seems to suggest that the enthusiastic passion is distinguished from ordinary passions rather by intensity than by quality And although he clearly recognized the object of enthusiastic passion as the sublime, he did not explicitly define the object of ordinary passion in art as the beautiful Yet he carefully distinguished the different sources of the two kinds of passion, and he tried to define the peculiar quality, contributed by

[98] Cf I, 46 The source of this idea is Longinus
[99] Cf I, 338
[100] Cf I, 339
[101] Cf I, 217
[102] *The Sublime* (N Y, 1935), p 54

reflection, which made the enthusiastic unlike the ordinary esthetic emotions. By implication, at least, he acknowledged two separate categories. And in a letter written in 1717 he attached names to the categories. the *pulchrum* describes the experience in which enthusiastic passion (or passion colored by reflection) is involved, and the *dulce* describes that in which ordinary passion is involved.[103] The categories existed in Dennis's critical thought before Addison designated them as the sublime and the beautiful

The idea of poetical genius gave Dennis some trouble Proceeding on the assumption that there are no innate ideas and that all knowledge comes through sense-impressions, he held that nearly all normal men are potentially capable of experiencing that which any one man may experience. He denied that genius had anything of the supernatural about it. What then made it so extraordinary? In the first place, it demands excellent organs of perception and memory and conception, able to form extraordinary thoughts and images In the second place, it demands in poets "a degree of Fire sufficient to give their animal spirits a sudden and swift agitation" Possessed of both virtues, a man is receptive to enthusiastic passion, he is a genius As reflected in poetry, genius is "the expression of a Furious Joy, or Pride, or Astonishment, or all of them[,] caused by the conception of an extraordinary hint." [104] In 1701, however, Dennis altered his definition. At this time he said that genius is "the Power of expressing great Passions, whether ordinary or enthusiastick" [105] The reason why he included the ordinary passions in the scope of genius is his realization that tragedy, which obviously is a field suited to the operations of genius, is chiefly concerned with the ordinary passions, having little or nothing to do with the marvellous. One other point should be noted In the new definition genius becomes not merely the capacity for great passion, but the power of expressing great passion suitably and adequately It was Dennis's theory that in the moment of poetic inspiration the passion and the expression of it were inseparably linked in the poet's mind—that there was a kind of organic unity between the idea and the words and figures which clothed it [106] As Dennis himself expressed the theory, "as Thoughts produce the Spirit, the Spirit produces and makes the Expression" And in the meaning of the term *expression* he included even harmony

Thus far the theory of genius seems to imply that poetic composition for the genius is a spontaneous act Yet Dennis was careful to point out that genius is not enough For though it is by genius that a poet treats a subject with dignity equal to its greatness, "yet 'tis Art that makes a Subject very great, and, consequently, gives Occasion for a great Genius to show itself." [107] Of course there is no contradiction between these ideas Though it is conceivable that pure genius might, with no aid from art, achieve a good poem of

[103] Cf II, 401-402
[104] Cf I, 46-47
[105] Cf I, 229, also I, 222
[106] Cf I 222
[107] Cf I, 229

ten or fifteen lines, it is improbable that pure passion and spontaneous expression could by themselves succeed in the epic or in tragedy, works requiring sustained effort. Judgment and art must provide the form in which the spirit conceived by genius must be embodied. The spirit must be directed to a legitimate artistic end, and managed artfully so it may achieve the desired effect as clearly and forcefully as possible. Within the form erected by the judgment there is still room for spontaneous expression, for passion and genius But without the form (that is, without skilful direction toward an artistic end) we have only surrealistic gibberish, energy misapplied and befuddled Such is the tenor of Dennis's thought on the subject of genius His remarks are scattered here and there over several essays, and they lack the strict coherence that a finely logical mind could have given them The apparent contradictions, which are not contradictions at all, were never explicitly resolved or explained in his own writings Probably for these reasons, in part, he has attracted far less attention as a critic than other men who wrote better and thought less [108]

Imagination to Dennis was, in brief, the power which set before the mind images of objects not present to the senses And "the warmer the Imagination is, the more present the Things are to us of which we draw the Images" [109] The strongest images are furnished by the senses of sight and hearing,[110] and the most admirable and affecting are those drawn from the sight of objects in motion [111] Wit is a quality compounded of imagination, a lively faculty of the mind which quickly summons up diverse images for comparison with that in the center of attention, but in conversation, unless it is seasoned with judgment and discretion, it presents its owner as an "impertinent extravagant Blockhead" [112] A poor imagination results in barrenness of invention [113] In poetry a lively, warm, and strong imagination is desirable, but it must be controlled by the judgment [114] To say that imagination must be guided by reason or judgment is not to depreciate the imagination, but merely to assert that imagery employed in art should be adequate and appropriate to the place it occupies When the imagination is completely uncon-

[108] Dennis's conception of poetical genius, though based on the psychological speculation of Hobbes and others, seems to have been original with him It bears no resemblance to the idea of original genius which was developing in connection with the idea of the Bard, a wild untutored spirit of great natural powers, who profited by living in a more or less primitive society, in which the refinement of art could not sully the purity of his instinctive and spontaneous song Nor does it bear any resemblance to another idea current in Dennis's age, the concept of genius as a *vis ingenita*, an inborn force which impelled each man along a definite and special path, giving him a small but unique function in the society of which he was a member (cf *The Occasional Paper*, vol III, no x [1719], p 16)

[109] Cf I, 218

[110] Cf I, 490

[111] Cf I, 218

[112] Cf II, 397, also 383

[113] Cf II, 383

[114] Cf I, 290

trolled, as in fevers or dreams, the mind is unaware of the distinction between what is sensed and what is imagined [115] But the poetic mind must direct the imagination, to make it serve the purpose of the poem. Dennis clearly did not conceive of the imagination as merely a picture-making faculty, it had a creative force as well The transformation of images, colored by reflection and raised in significance until they became a source of enthusiastic passion, was a form of creative imagination that played a most important part in his system of esthetics He recognized the force of poetic suggestion, which impelled the imagination to build upon the slightest hints [116] And in recognizing "the piercing Force of those aspiring Thoughts, which are able to pass the Bounds that circumscribe the Universe," [117] though he attributed the force to reason, he was describing an activity of the mind which we are accustomed to assign to imagination

In accordance with the conventional faculty-psychology Dennis looked upon reason as a distinct power of the mind, separate from passion, memory, and imagination, universal and immutable. It was the key to truth, and a shield to guard one from error Reason exists in all men, but in different degrees Not one man in forty has a reason strong enough to comprehend the proofs offered by Deism of God's existence and of the world's dependence upon His will, therefore Deism lacks universality and cannot be the true religion [118] Reason is the power which is active in logic and mathematics In art it may appear as judgment or good sense, and the moral, design, and structure of great poetry is the contribution of reason Accepting the Cartesian idea of the universe as of an orderly mechanism, the operations of which are as precise as the laws of mathematics, and reason as the power which reveals to us the order of the universe, Dennis held that poetry, which is an imitation of nature, must reflect something of the same order, an order manifest in the laws of reason [119] Because reason is the organ of truth, it may even plunge beyond the borders of experience and discover something of the nature of the unknown And, because reason is forever separated from the imagination, the latter faculty must be wild and licentious unless it submits to control The modern attitude toward imagination was obviously impossible as long as the faculty-psychology prevailed [120] But the important thing to note is that the imaginative qualities which we today expect in great literature were also demanded by Dennis and the Augustans, though they often thought of these qualities as the work of reason

One additional explanation may be given for the steady insistence in Dennis's criticism upon order and regularity Since 1800 the theory of poetry has been largely concerned with lyrics, very short poems in which passion and

[115] Cf I, 218
[116] Cf I, 105
[117] Cf I, 202
[118] Cf I, 259
[119] Cf I, 202
[120] Cf II, 507-508

apparent spontaneity of expression are of paramount importance. In the lyric an emotional unity and structure, or even continuity and coherence of imagery, may be enough to satisfy the reader's desire for form. But Dennis had little taste for the lyric, and believed that a little poem was beneath the serious attention and heavy labor of a critic He was primarily interested in tragedy, comedy, the Pindaric ode, and the epic—the major types of poetry—and his theory of literature was built to apply to them. In long poems requiring sustained effort over a period of time, form and structure will not be the result of unconscious will but of artistic planning toward definite goals, it will be the work of *reason, deliberate and meticulous* Since structure and design give effectiveness to passion and imagination, a theory of poetry which neglects form is bound to fail And to Dennis, as we have seen, the most effective structure was as regular as the subject permitted.

Dennis was not inclining toward romantic principles when he asserted that a poet must have a strong and warm imagination, that passion was the essence of poetry, and that poetry must speak to the heart It is true that certain of his attitudes, such as the stress upon terror and the recognition that good characterization in drama might attain a value equal or even superior to good design,[121] foreshadowed later developments that paved the way for the romantic movement But in his steady belief in standards and in the value of form he proved his essentially classical outlook That he insisted strongly on passion and imagination in poetry indicates that he was an intelligent classicist, who was fully aware that the great art of Greece and Rome was not marked by cold formality

Poetry Nature and the Gothic, Originality and Imitation, Style Language and Versification

Poetry is an imitation of nature So far all Augustans were agreed. But nature had many meanings[122] It might refer to the regular workings of the physical universe, as pictured in the Cartesian philosophy Like most of his contemporaries Dennis was affected by the work of Descartes and Newton,[123] and he thought of the universe as a mechanism governed by law as precise as the laws of mathematics and having a special correspondence with reason, the order revealed by logic and mathematics "As Nature is Order and Rule, and Harmony in the visible World, so Reason is the very same throughout the invisible Creation"[124] The works of God, said Dennis, "tho infinitely various, are extremely regular"[125] By this he meant not that each object presented to our senses is well proportioned and symmetrical but that each

[121] Cf II, 425

[122] A O Lovejoy, 'Nature as Aesthetic Norm," in *Modern Language Notes*, xlii (1927), 444-450

[123] Cf II, 208

[124] Cf I, 202

[125] Cf I, 335.

object obeys natural physical laws and fits into the scheme of *things*, "*the* Harmony of Universal Nature," ordained by God Behind this belief lies, not merely the Cartesian philosophy, but the idea of the Chain of Being, descended in an irregular line from Plato.[126] According to the idea of the Chain of Being, as Dennis seems to have accepted it,[127] all species of living creatures are *arranged in regular order, ascending by degrees from the lowest* form of life up to the angels and God himself, each species having an unique place and function in the entire system, and the whole system being a necessary expression of the plenitude of God and the harmony of His nature The works of God, therefore, however various and irregular in appearance, fit into an universal pattern and help to complete the fullness and harmony of nature There was one further influence upon Dennis's conception of the universe the philosophy of Plato as modified by Christian thought Reality may be defined in terms of absolute ideas which we, dependent upon sense-impressions, comprehend only vaguely from their partial and imperfect manifestations in the objects which surround us. Such ideas Dennis describes as "the Original Idea's of things, which in a Sovereign manner are beautifull " [128]

[126] Cf A O Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Mass, 1936)

[127] In the *Plain Dealer*, no 57 (Oct 5, 1724), Aaron Hill printed a long letter from John Dennis, which the critic was then using as a specimen to promote his proposed *Miscellaneous Tracts*, and which I have reprinted in this edition (cf II, 223-227) Attached to the letter in the *Plain Dealer*, however, was a Postscript which was never reprinted This Postscript, which bears the evidence of Dennis's style and probably was written by him, contains an interesting statement of the idea of the Chain of Being It runs as follows

> I have been so long conversant with you, and have so just a knowledge of you, that I make no Doubt but that you are charm'd with these sovereign and immortal Beauties of *Milton* But if any one into whose Hands this Letter may happen to fall, should think, that these vast Conceptions of so great a Genius, are rather extravagant and temerarious, than noble and sublime, I desire, that he would consider the Gradation of animal Beings which we find here below, what a prodigious, what an indefinite Distance is there, between a Mite and a Man? Yet, Man, who is a Creature, so frail, so impotent, so ignorant of himself, compar'd to a Mite, is a God, for Greatness, for Wisdom, for Power Now can there be such a monstrous Chasm in Creation, as that there should be no Degrees of thoughtful Beings, between such an impotent, ignorant, wretched Creature as Man, and an eternal, independent infinite, omnipotent Being? No, certainly, there are Degrees of thinking Creatures between us and Infinity, which as much excel our Species in Wisdom, in Goodness, in Beauty, in Power, as a Man surpasses a Mite And 'tis reasonable to believe, that even among those glorious and powerful Beings, there are unutterable Degrees of Wisdom and Greatness, and Beauty, and Glory, and Power As God, by his Vicegerents governs this sublunary World, so 'tis highly reasonable to believe, that by other Vicegerents, he rules other Parts of the Universe, Vicegerents which are as far transcendent to these Earthly ones, as these surpass the Worm In short, if there is such a Thing as an infinite Being, of which, nothing but Stupidity can doubt, there must be something next to Infinity, and there must be something next to That Let any one but consider what sort of Beings those must be, Let any one but follow that Gradation, and that will justify *Milton*

[128] Cf I, 73.

In paradise man presumably knew things in their full truth and beauty, but after the fall, when corruption set in, humanity at least appeared debased and man could only recreate by reason, based upon observation of the imperfect and unsatisfying present, what at the outset had existed in perfect truth and beauty Therefore in imitating nature the poet should aim

> not to draw after particular Men, who are but Copies and imperfect Copies of the great universal Pattern, but to consult that innate Original, and that universal Idea, which the Creator has fix'd in the minds of ev'ry reasonable Creature, and so to make a true and a just Draught [129]

This is the notion of nature idealized, or *la belle nature,* the "great universal Pattern," expressed in Platonic phraseology From these three sources, in the main, Dennis's conception of the universe was formed, and all three bore out the conclusion that nature, or the universal system, was characterized by order, regularity, and harmony. The Stoic belief in the existence of an ideal world-order to which the individual must conform strengthened the conception of nature as meaning rule, order, and harmony, [130] but it is not clear that Dennis was influenced by Stoicism for he speaks disparagingly of it when he has occasion to mention it

The universal order also meant to Dennis a system of natural religion and of natural morality In the theoretical state of nature which existed before the formation of organized societies there were natural laws, such as the law of justice, to govern the conduct of men, and natural laws persisted in force under organized government when certain situations arose not provided for by statute [131] Natural religion was not the true religion because it was not universal, and it could not be universal because (so Dennis's argument ran) only a few men had reason and application strong enough to discover the being and nature of God [132] Yet the principles and laws of religion lay embedded in nature, to be discovered by the strong of intellect. The law of nature, however, Dennis generally identified with moral philosophy [133] Even natural morality was not a system patent to all men It could be revealed only by the exercise of pure reason Socrates introduced it to the civilized world, [134] and it was confirmed by the Christian Revelation Natural morality served as another illustration of the reign of law and order in the universe

Another important meaning of nature occurs in the *Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* Nature, said Dennis, is identical with Genius, "and Genius and Passion are all one" [135] Thus nature means passion The

[129] Cf I, 418 On the use of Platonic phraseology in neo-classical criticism, cf L I Bredvold, "The Tendency toward Platonism in Neo-Classical Esthetics," in *ELH*, I (1934), 91-119 Dennis elsewhere denies the existence of innate ideas

[130] Cf I, 531

[131] Cf II, 257

[132] Cf I, 237

[133] Cf II, 110

[134] Cf I, 237, 240-241

[135] Cf I, 245-246

idea expanded would probably run thus: "a Poet ought always to speak to the Heart,"[136] and he speaks to the heart best when he expresses that which is most natural to the heart, passion. The poet of nature, then, working in the drama, would be he who depicts well the passions of his characters and gives them suitable passionate expression, rather than he who is able to construct a firm and well-knit action. That this is approximately Dennis's meaning is clear from his criticism of Shakespeare.

A third meaning of nature occurring in Dennis's critical writings is simplicity, or the absence of artifice. Artifice to enhance the natural beauty of the human form and features he found strongly objectionable.[137] The simple and natural beauty of the out-of-doors he preferred by far to the most beautiful effects of the landscape architect, such as gardens and canals.[138] Nothing but what is simple and natural, he said, can go to the heart.[139] On this principle he ruled against wit, point, and conceit in poetry. Nature teaches man to express grief in a simple, unaffected way, and on this principle he objected to the sort of love poetry which was witty, fanciful, and laden with conceits.[140] But that simplicity which nature dictates, as Dennis saw it, was a relative term as it applied to literary style. A simple style, he thought, was one precisely adapted to the spirit and subject matter of a piece, a style which fell below the demands of its subject "shews not a Simplicity but an Imbecility of Expression."[141] In this sense simplicity meant simply appropriateness.

According to the doctrine of verisimilitude (or probability), as Dennis developed it, nature was found at different levels in literary composition. The epic is an imitation of human nature exalted, and comedy is an imitation of human nature corrupted and depraved.[142] In the epic, therefore, nature is *la belle nature*, whereas in comedy it is a realistic depiction of ordinary manners and customs. Tragedy, which is raised above the ordinary level of existence, reflects nature ennobled by high position, power, and responsibility, and consequently it is not strictly realistic.

Dennis's attitude toward external nature is a striking illustration of the fact that the Augustan did not lack a feeling for the beauty of the out-of-doors. Dennis enjoyed external nature in all of its aspects, mild or terrible. He was carried away by rapture and transport at the sight of the Alps,[143] he was delighted with the "prospect of Hills and Valleys, of flowry Meads, and murmuring Streams,"[144] and the sight of mountains, meadows, and natural winding streams pleased him more than beautiful buildings or the most finely designed

[136] Cf. I, 127.
[137] Cf. II, 332-334.
[138] Cf. II, 401.
[139] Cf. I, 127.
[140] Cf. I, 2.
[141] Cf. II, 445.
[142] Cf. II, 30.
[143] Cf. II, 380-381.
[144] Cf. II, 381.

gardens.[145] Throughout his entire life he took frequent opportunity to refresh himself by long sojourns in the country. Something near to mysticism was kindled in him when he spoke of the kinship between the soul and the unspoiled beauties of rural England. In a manner strongly reminiscent of Wordsworth he described one who forsook the town, going out in quest of country solitude [146]

> With more than common pleasure he beholds
> The Woods, the Lawns, the Valleys, and the Folds,
> Natures bright Beauties every where he meets,
> His Soul, which long had been confin'd in streets,
> With Rapture now her kindred objects greets
> These rural Scenes like pleasure may impart
> To those who value Nature more than Art,
> And who have Souls to taste the Language of the Heart

Despite these facts external nature did not appeal to him as a proper subject for poetry to imitate In the first place, external nature is relatively static, and Dennis held that the images which affect us most strongly are those of objects in motion [147] In the second place, since the essential mark of poetry is passion and since passion, as he knew, exists not in external nature but in the human mind, humanity rather than the beauty of the out-of-doors should be the subject of poetry In the third place, Dennis's criticism is primarily concerned with tragedy, comedy, and the epic, three *genres* in which men and manners must always occupy the center of the stage, all three are mainly concerned with the actions, characters, and passions of mankind Description in any one of these is a false note, unless it be description of action [148] External nature, then, has little place in the major types of poetry It may serve in a pastoral, but Dennis was convinced that he had more important matters to attend to than pastoral poetry

Just as nature to Dennis stood for order, harmony, symmetry, and proportion, those virtues which he took to be finely exemplified in classical art, so Gothic stood for qualities exactly opposite to these [149] Buildings in the Gothic style he considered both less beautiful and less useful than those constructed according to the taste of Greece and Rome [150] Like Addison, he styled "Gothic" those poems which displayed sparkle, pointed wit, and conceit, devices that gave a false glitter to the parts and helped to conceal the bad construction of the whole [151] He condemned the obstinacy of the English writers who adhered to "our Gothick and Barbarous Manner" instead of reforming the structure of their poems on the model of the classics [152] In the form and structure of art, Gothic represented everything that was bad

[145] Cf II, 401
[146] Cf II, 387
[147] Cf I, 218
[148] Cf I, 464
[149] Cf I, 391
[150] Cf II, 197
[151] Cf II, 31-32
[152] Cf I, 203

Although he insisted that poetry must imitate nature and that the structure of a work of art should in some way be formed upon the model of the ancient classics, Dennis was equally sure that the greatest works of art must be original. Absolute originality, of course, is impossible in civilized philosophy or art.[153] He had no interest in the idea of the original genius, the wild and untutored spirit, clad in skins and glory, who sang from the inspired depths of a primitive soul. the idea would have shocked him He realized, moreover, that translations and more or less imitative works may have a genuine literary value.[154] But he never would have granted them merit of the first order He did little translation himself, and he owned to no very high opinion of translations.[155] In spite of the fulsome praise showered upon certain well-publicized renditions into English of Greek and Latin masterpieces, the Augustans were seldom fooled into believing that the English versions could surpass or even equal the originals A copy, said Dennis, has neither the free spirit nor easy graces of an original.[156] The glory of Milton was that he had not copied other epics but had written a poem full of "his own Thoughts, his own Images, and his own Spirit."[157] The brightest lustre of Shakespeare was derived from the fact that his beauties were "entirely his own, and owing to the Force of his own Nature."[158] The fact that Blackmore in his epic *Prince Arthur* followed Virgil as to his moral, fable, and arrangement of incidents was alone sufficient to damn the work in Dennis's judgment.[159] One may profit by observing the art of a master, but one must not attempt to tread in his footsteps Dennis knew that a work of art is a product of the age in which it takes shape, and what is suited to one age will not, because of "the vastly different Circumstances of Time, Places, Persons, Customs, Religions, and common received Opinions," be suitable to another age.[160] In all important respects a great work of art must be original, a growth of its own times, directed to an audience of certain definite tastes and needs, though still with universal meaning

Dennis also brought psychology to bear in supporting his case for the necessity of originality The mind, he thought, grew languishing from dwelling too long upon any one object, and a languishing mind is subject to "mortifying Reflections." Only agitation can save the spirit from ennui.[161] And the agitation is produced in large measure by variety and surprise "It is impossible," said Dennis, speaking of the delights of the mind, "that any Pleasure can be very great that is not at the same time surprizing."[162] The importance

[153] Cf II, 296-297
[154] Cf II, 285
[155] Cf II, 433-434
[156] Cf II, 178
[157] Cf I, 333
[158] Cf II, 4
[159] Cf I, 59-60
[160] Cf I, 60
[161] Cf I, 109
[162] Cf I 123

of variety in subjects and style had been impressed upon him by Boileau,[163] and probably by Rapin as well.[164] Imitation of existing literary works was an evil practise, he thought, because imitation destroys surprise and therefore kills delight.[165] He recognized the value of variety in versification,[166] and the need for variety of incidents in the epic.[167] The comic spirit cannot exist without surprise, and the best modern comedy provides surprise more successfully than ancient comedy because it has greater variety in incidents, characters, and style.[168] The poet without originality is a cold versifier.

Perhaps the most interesting of Dennis's views concerning poetic style is one which in a way anticipates Coleridge. that in great poetry we find an organic unity of subject, spirit, and expression. The poet who is "wrapt with Enthusiasm or ordinary Passion," provided that he is master of the language, will lack neither words nor harmony.[169] In the major types of poetry, where passion and imagination are always warm, nature herself often dictates the expression.[170] He believed that the poet's thoughts produced the spirit, and the spirit in turn produced the expression.[171] For that reason he defined genius not merely as the capacity for great conceptions but also the power of expressing such conceptions adequately. In the moment of poetic inspiration the thing to be expressed is inseparable from the manner in which it is to be expressed. One corollary of this doctrine is that, since natural expression is unrhymed, the major types of poetry must be composed in unrhymed verses; for to maneuver words until they rhyme is to destroy the organic unity of spirit and expression.[172] A second corollary is that, since style goes hand in hand with spirit and subject, good style should be simple when its subject is simple, and elevated when its subject is elevated. Therefore Dennis concluded that the truly simple and natural style is not that which is low and plain but that which is entirely appropriate to its subject.[173]

Poetry is distinguished from prose by virtue of being more passionate and more sensuous. Since there is no special poetic vocabulary in English such as Homer had in Greek,[174] English poetry must distinguish itself from prose by being bold and figurative, especially by the use of metaphor.[175] It is made more passionate and sensuous by the skilful use of imagery, and particularly

[163] Cf. I, 110.
[164] Thorpe, *Aesthetic Theory of Hobbes*, p. 243.
[165] Cf. I, 123.
[166] Cf. I, 3.
[167] Cf. I, 109 ff.
[168] Cf. I, 224.
[169] Cf. I, 359.
[170] Cf. I, 375.
[171] Cf. I, 222.
[172] Cf. I, 376.
[173] Cf. II, 32-40. Dennis's thoughts on style in this passage are obviously suggested by Rapin, whom he quotes in this connection.
[174] Cf. II, 123.
[175] Cf. II, 34 and 123.

by images of objects in motion, which affect the mind most strongly.[176] Mere imagery, however, is not enough. As in the experience of the sublime the mind, subjecting the image to reflection, transforms it to something vaster and more significant than the object which produced the image, so in poetic expression the poet transforms the images into something greater than the data of experience by the employment of figures of speech.[177] By such figures the poet is enabled "to give Force to the Passions, Brightness to the Diction and to the Periods, Weight to his Arguments, and Charms to all that he says" But figures without passion and understanding to sustain them are flat and ineffective.[178] Elaborate figures are not proper to a man whose soul is in agony, therefore such a figure as the simile is more proper to the epic, in which the poet himself narrates the story, than to tragedy, in which characters speak in passion.[179] Points, conceits, and turns of wit are always out of place in serious poetry, for these glittering trifles appeal to the mind rather than to the heart In comedy the style should, so far as possible, be characterized by a charming simplicity, an unaffected ease and grace, but also by a certain naiveté which flows from the apparently artless rendering of the conversational modes and rhythms of actual persons, each of whom converses in a manner so peculiar to himself that the dialogue of good comedy can seldom be successfully copied.[180]

Dennis was not one of the numerous herd who demanded the establishment of an English Academy to determine the standard of language and to fix it for all time He did not share the silly fear prevailing in his age that the English language was in the process of decay.[181] He recognized the fact that language changes, and he believed that at some one point in its course it reaches its highest point of development, the Greek language, he thought, had reached its peak of perfection in the time of Sophocles, and the Roman, in the time of Augustus.[182] But he was sensibly aware that it required a long perspective to determine the state of one's own language, and he did not profess to know what the future might decide about the quality of Augustan English.[183] The individual poet must use the language of his own age, and the standard is usage,[184] not an arbitrary criterion fixed by an academy usurping the powers of a law-giver

The English language, because of the relative paucity of vowels, struck Dennis as less capable of lending beauty and sweetness to poetry than the Greek and Roman tongues (particularly the Greek).[185] Yet, though it dis-

[176] Cf I, **218**
[177] Cf II, **35**
[178] Cf II, **38-39**
[179] Cf I, **424**
[180] Cf II, **161**, I, **486**
[181] Cf I, **529**
[182] Cf I, **246**
[183] Cf I, **410**
[184] Cf II, **157**
[185] Cf II **236**

played less softness and music than the Italian,[186] English possessed more force and harmony than French.[187] Partly by virtue of the multiplicity of consonants which characterize it, English has a superior force and vigor.[188] It is, in fact, a thoroughly masculine language, sinewy and mighty, blessed with harmony, plenty, and strength.[189] Because of its peculiar character it is better adapted to the major types of verse which require strength and passion, such as epic and tragedy, than to the minor types such as erotic poetry and opera libretti, which require primarily sweetness and softness

Dennis was not the first advocate of blank verse in non-dramatic poetry, but after Milton he was certainly among the strongest and most persistent advocates of it Undoubtedly he was influenced largely by the example and success of Milton Yet it must be noted that his preference for blank verse grew out of his theories of genius and style As we have seen, he believed that the genius in moments of passion conceives of subject, spirit, and expression simultaneously, and the expression, being natural and spontaneous, is distorted when the poet changes diction and word-order for the sake of rhyming Harmony in poetry is not the tinkle of recurring sounds but the adequate expression of passion in metre ("numbers") fashioned to please the ear and in language that is sweet or forceful as the occasion demands Numbers distinguish poetry outwardly from prose, but if a discourse is everywhere passionate and its style bold and figurative, it is poetry even without numbers[190] On measures, numbers, and cadence, the usual constituents of harmony in verse, Dennis says little that is original or noteworthy He tended, however, to base his precepts not upon *a priori* grounds of rightness but upon the sound practise of English poets. Thus he recognized the importance of variety in numbers, and he saw the value of the supernumerary syllable in the heroic line[191] Altogether Dennis says relatively little about prosody, not because, like Dryden, he preferred to keep his principles a carefully guarded secret but because he was far more interested in other aspects of poetry. Yet he still realized that a skilful handling of prosodical effects, well attuned to a good ear, could help to insure a poet of immortality even after his language became obsolete[192]

THE FUNCTION AND APPROACH OF A CRITIC MORAL AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, COMMON SENSE, TASTE, AND GENIUS, THE WEIGHING OF BEAUTIES AND FAULTS, THE PRAGMATIC TEST, THE HISTORICAL VIEWPOINT, STYLE

Like Shaftesbury Dennis looked upon criticism as essential to the health and welfare of literature[193] As long as criticism remains sound and vigorous

[186] Cf I, **392**
[187] Cf I, **298**
[188] Cf I, **389**
[189] Cf I, **4**, **9-10**, **204-205**, and **389**
[190] Cf I, **215**
[191] Cf II, **237**
[192] Cf I, **410-411**
[193] Cf II, **255 257**

the practise of literary composition is likely to reflect its excellence, whereas bad criticism may debauch the taste of the people and consequently debase the literature by which they are entertained [194] Since literature flourishes most when public taste is best, a critic should watch over public taste, to correct it when it is bad and to expose the causes of its corruption Sometimes it is corrupted by false standards embodied in specific works of art, and then it is the critic's duty to analyze these works of art so as to demonstrate the falseness of their standards by showing their esthetic inadequacy Of course only thoroughly popular works, like *Prince Arthur, Cato,* and the *Conscious Lovers,* demand such treatment Sometimes literary taste is corrupted by non-literary causes, such as luxury, the opera, unwise patronage, or the spirit of factionalism, and then it is the critic's duty to expose the causes, rendering them hateful or ridiculous. That it is possible to alter public taste Dennis firmly believed, he cited as examples the change in the taste for heroic tragedies brought about by the *Rehearsal,* and the change in the attitude toward the *Plain Dealer* brought about by the approbation of a small group of men blessed with taste [195]

Besides standing guard over the general taste a critic has another duty to his public: to make it capable of greater pleasure in literature When criticism damns a popular work of art because it is false and hollow, it tends to restrict the pleasure of many readers But the undiscriminating pleasures of such readers, who are in some measure pleased by anything that is printed, are ephemeral and of little subtlety or intensity Being false, they cannot endure By turning his readers' attention to the true and lasting beauties of art, and shaping their taste for sound artistry, the critic helps them to obtain intenser pleasure of a more lasting sort "For Delicacy augments the Pleasure which it retrenches" [196]

But good criticism serves the artist as well as the public By laying down the grounds of criticism, and by examining the nature and end of art together with the best means for attaining that end, by showing why some have failed and others have succeeded, the critic rescues art from the errors which have accrued to it in practise and restores it to its original purity [197] Thus, by advancing the art and by making past experiences available and readily understandable to the artist, the critic enables him to give as much genuine pleasure as his nature and talents allow [198]

Good criticism serves to advance polite learning, and therefore it constitutes a service to the state "For Arts and Empire in Civiliz'd Nations have generally flourish'd together" [199] Government, as Dennis often observed, depends for its stability upon the established religion and upon a sound ethical system Since

[194] Cf II, 280-281
[195] Cf II, 277
[196] Cf I, 51
[197] Cf I, 328-333
[198] Cf I, 51
[199] Cf I, 10

piety and virtue are the very basis of poetry, which aims to reconcile the soul of man to the pleasures of virtue,[200] then criticism by insisting that poetry should fulfill its proper aim upholds morality and helps to provide for the security of the state The political side of criticism is frequently seen in Dennis's own writings, he defended the stage partly on the grounds that it was useful to government, he urged that "the Instructions which we receive from the Stage ought to be for the Benefit of the lawful establish'd Government," [201] and he attacked the opera not merely because its success deflected public support from poetry to a much less worthy object but also because it tended to undermine public spirit and, consequently, the state [202] A good critic is a patriot as well as a man of learning and virtue

To fulfill so important a function, it is evident, the critic must be a person of considerable abilities He must, in fact, as Dennis thought, be possessed in some measure of the same talents as were required to produce the sort of works which he criticizes [203] And since the first requirement in the poet who writes in the major *genres* of verse is genius, so the critic himself must have a share of genius [204] Ideally he should, like Longinus, be able to deal sublimely with subjects that are sublime,[205] but Dennis never insisted strongly upon this qualification—wisely enough, since many of his own essays are hasty and careless specimens of writing More essential, since genius is passion,[206] he must have a capacity for great passion and for appreciating works that display great passion Inasmuch as genius in a poem is manifested not so much in the moral, fable, or action as in the "manners" (characters), thoughts, and expression, the critic of genius will have special gifts for discerning the beauties of character and expression Dennis associated critical genius with the ability to discover the beauties of a poem, and this ability seemed to him of a distinctly higher order than the talent of finding faults (that is, of discovering the material irregularities of a poem) [207] With Dennis, as with many of his contemporaries, "beauties" came to signify the non-structural and less rational elements of a poem [208] Thus in a discussion of Shakespeare the critic of genius would be able to reveal his talent for characterization and for portraying human passions as well as his magic power of expression, the beauties which Shakespeare could achieve as the poet of nature. The purely rational critic, on the other hand, would be restricted to pointing out Shakespeare's violations of art his frequent disregard of the moral, his structural weaknesses, and the inconsistency between his historical characters and their

[200] Cf I 329-330
[201] Cf I, 320
[202] Cf II, 393-396
[203] Cf I, 290
[204] Cf I, 13 and 71
[205] Cf I, 409
[206] Cf I, 222
[207] Cf I, 13
[208] Cf I, 440-441

originals Dennis himself, it is true, only too often played the part of the rational critic, the critic guided by common sense and a knowledge of the rules of art, but one cannot understand his critical theory without recognizing the fact that he held in greater esteem the part of the critic possessed of genius.

Good sense, or common sense, is an ingredient in the make-up of the critic, though not of the first importance Dennis distinguished good sense from judgment Judgment in a critic implies both a knowledge of the art, its purpose and the means of attaining that purpose, and experience in the masterpieces of that art Good sense, however, may exist independent of experience and taste [209] Good sense may suffice in detecting the faults, or the material irregularities, of a poem, [210] that is, in noting gross faults in construction and the more obvious violations of verisimilitude. Dennis himself employed the method of good sense in pointing out wild improbabilities, such as Hoel's long speech of greeting to Prince Arthur,[211] the action of a chorus in the tragedy planned by Rymer,[212] or the finicky love-making that was carried on by Marcia, Lucia, Portia, and Juba [213] But Dennis was convinced that good sense, even when it was combined with experience, an inclination for poetry, and a certain measure of taste, is not enough to enable a critic to judge of the greater types of poetry.[214]

Taste, as Dennis used the term, was much more inclusive than genius or good sense "Taste in Writing," he said at one point, "is nothing but a fine Discernment of Truth" [215] Yet he knew that a fine discernment of esthetic truth is the contribution of various abilities In his clearest treatment of this subject, the *Large Account of the Taste in Poetry,* he pointed out that the three things required of a man to succeed in poetry, or to judge of poetry properly, are 1) "Great parts," 2) a "generous Education," and 3) a "due Application" [216] By great parts he meant a lively, warm, and strong imagination and a sound and penetrating judgment By a generous education he meant learning, comprising philosophy, a knowledge of things, and an acquaintance with the best ancient and modern authors, together with a knowledge of the world and of mankind By a due application he meant that concentration, attended with the necessary leisure, which is required if one is to enter into the spirit of poetry [217] These are the components of a general taste for poetry With such equipment one may judge of elegies, songs, love poems, and Bacchanalian odes—in short, of the "little Poetry," but to judge of the major types of poetry one must have a knowledge of the rules, and

[209] Cf I, **70-71**
[210] Cf I, **13**
[211] Cf I, **91**
[212] Cf I, **11-12**
[213] Cf II, **54-66**
[214] Cf I, **70-71**
[215] Cf II, **392**
[216] Cf I, **290**
[217] Cf I, **290-291**

genius as well [218] Taste for tragedy, the epic, and the Pindaric ode, then, is the possession of a small minority As one may gather from the above description, Dennis did not regard it as a strange and mystical property, a mysterious sixth sense unaccountably present in only a few men Nor did he regard it as a product of good breeding and genteel company, the blessed birthright of gentlemen Rather, he looked upon it as a normal development of experience and learning in certain individuals with superior natural faculties, especially good judgment, lively imagination, and a capacity for deep passion. A man endowed with such taste, no matter how genuine his respect for the rules, is no carpenter stolidly laying a wooden measure upon a work of art to estimate its scope, breadth, and depth The ideal of the Augustan critic is no less sound than that of critics in any other period

One interesting problem confronted Dennis and his contemporaries as a result of their notion of taste if taste is the possession of a small minority, how could it be consistent with the *consensus gentium,* or the general consent of mankind, which was accepted as the stamp of truth or of esthetic excellence? Although Dennis believed that few men in any age or nation were gifted with good taste, yet, because in taste as in truth there is but one standard, he was sure that a verdict based upon good taste in one age will be valid in all other ages even as truth itself remains precious and immutable for all time [219] And the *consensus gentium,* accordingly, he conceived not as the common opinion of all mankind but as the enlightened opinion of men of taste in the most polite nations, past and present, of the civilized world [220] Thus the problem was resolved

It is already apparent that the task of a critic in estimating the worth of a given poem is not, as Dennis saw it, a simple and mechanical one He is to point out its beauties as well as its faults But that is not all Part of his obligation is to weigh the beauties against the faults And if the beauties are more and greater than the faults, he must not be severe upon the poem's weaknesses, [221] in the main, the work is good If genius appears in a literary performance the critic must not discourage its author "Wherever Genius runs thro' a Work," remarked Dennis, "I forgive its Faults, and wherever that is wanting no Beauties can touch me" [222] It appears from this statement that there are two kinds of literary beauties those marked by the signs of genius, and those devoid of genius How is one to distinguish the two? Not by rule or measure but by their effects As Dennis often pointed out, the sign

[218] Cf I 71

[219] Cf II, 392

[220] Cf I, 458-459

[221] Cf I, 49

[222] Cf II, 400 His attitude toward the faults of genius may be illustrated by his remarks on Wycherley (cf II, 235) If he was unduly severe upon the faults of Shakespeare, he could defend himself by pointing out that Shakespeare's faults were commonly mistaken for beauties and were therefore a cause of bad taste which demanded correction

of genius is its power to ravish and transport the reader. Thus the question of whether a poem contains beauties of the highest order is made subject to a pragmatic test In the average sort of poem, where genius does not blind us to the author's weaknesses, we must weigh the beauties against the faults. But how can the two be compared? There is no quantitative measure, and Dennis does not explain how the weighing is to be performed On the basis of his own psychology of esthetics, however, one would assume that his explanation would be something as follows· if the faults of a work are so numerous or so great as to force themselves upon the attention of the mind, the mind languishes and is therefore incapable of receiving pleasure from the performance, and since a poem can accomplish its design only by giving pleasure, a work of obtrusive faults is an esthetic failure. Alongside of this should be set Dennis's belief that if the beauties of a poem are great and overpowering, the mind is not aware of the poem's faults during the reading of it and the poem, consequently, is able to produce its designed effect. In any event the final judgment of value must be based upon an observation of the poem's effects, and we are driven back upon the pragmatic test

Dennis explicitly recognized the need of submitting literature to the pragmatic test Discussing sublimity and fustian, he noted that a poet could distinguish them in a given poem by submitting the work to his friends, if it struck them forcibly and warmed them, it undoubtedly contained the true sublime, for fustian cannot arouse the emotions [223] Before he trusted his own judgment he often read poems to men of taste among his friends, and if they were touched as he was by the passages he concluded that such works had genuine esthetic value [224] When he recognized the existence in art of certain "Secret, Unaccountable, Enchanting Graces," [225] he showed his awareness of qualities that must be judged by their effects rather than by any conceivable objective standards. It never occurred to him that the pragmatic test could result in as many judgments, and reveal as many different standards in art, as there are individual human beings The test was valid, he believed, only when it was conducted by men of taste, and he was convinced that the judgments of men of taste concerning any given poem would invariably coincide There were universal standards even when there were no rules

The moral responsibility of the critic followed from Dennis's belief that one of the prime objects of poetry is to reconcile the passions to virtue The moral element is a fundamental part of poetry [226] Of the various *genres* of poetry the drama is best adapted to serve as a school of public virtue [227] So intimate is the connection between morality and the drama, in fact, that in the past the drama and moral philosophy have risen and fallen together.[228]

[223] Cf I, 43
[224] Cf, for example, I, 1
[225] Cf II, 384
[226] Cf I, 329-330
[227] Cf II, 310
[228] Cf I, 159

In tragedy the moral lies embedded in the action and catastrophe, in comedy and the epic, in both action and characters. If the moral of an epic is not sound, or if it is not fully borne out by the action, then the poem is fundamentally weak.[229] A bad moral in the drama may be of pernicious influence, in which event a critic is duty-bound to protest against it,[230] as Dennis protested against Dryden's *All for Love*.[231] For the most part Dennis's ideas about the relationship of poetry and morality were mature and sane He demanded not that the various parts but that the total effect of the poem should be morally sound Immodest language he deprecated, but commonly on the grounds that it violated the consistency of manners [232] Evil and vicious characters might be introduced in the drama and the epic, and might be shown in their true colors Especially in comedy there was a place for corrupt characters, realistically depicted in all the baseness of their natures. Dennis even enjoyed a touch of salacity in his literature provided that it was managed with finesse and art [233] As for the general moral contained in the total effect of a poem, Dennis looked for nothing more than a universal truth consistent with good morality [234] But he expected it to be so clear as to be unmistakable even though it was never put in so many words

Although the subtle concept of *Zeitgeist* was not yet developed, Dennis and his contemporaries were familiar with the idea that literature depends on many factors, that each poem is in some sense a product of the manners, customs, beliefs, and temperament peculiar to the people among whom it has its rise The term *historical viewpoint* had not yet been coined, but most of the things which it signifies were commonplace Dennis showed a constant awareness of the fact that a critic cannot judge a poem properly without being acquainted with the temper and *mores* of the audience for whom it was written In its simplest form the historical viewpoint appears in his contention with Steele over Etherege's *Man of Mode* to Sir Richard's argument that the comedy was unsound because the hero, though represented as a fine gentleman, was very far from being so in fact, Dennis replied that the hero represented admirably what a fine gentleman was taken to be in the court of Charles II and that the character of Dorimant therefore was justly and artistically drawn.

[229] Cf I, 59-69

[230] Cf II, 398

[231] Cf II, 162-164

[232] Cf I, 423-424

[233] Cf II, 402-403

[234] The moral effect of tragedy, according to Dennis, is produced chiefly by the observance of poetic justice, but as he defines poetic justice, that means simply that tragedy demonstrates to us that a lack of self-discipline, a giving way to certain unrestrained passions, will produce calamity When Dennis asserts that the soul of tragedy, epic, and comedy is the fable (the moral of universal application), he means approximately what Mr W H Auden intends when he affirms that good works of art are relevant to one's own experience and that an Anglican bishop should be able to see in the *Grapes of Wrath* a parable of the problems in his diocese ("Criticism in a Mass Society," in *The Intent of the Critic*, ed D A Stauffer [Princeton, 1941], p 133)

Manners change, and that which suits one age will not entirely suit another The complaint of Antigone was understood in Greece, where women mature early and where they were less subject to scruples, but in northern countries, where women mature at a later age, and in modern times, when virginity bears a sacred approval, the complaint would be ridiculous.[235] Climate is the most important condition governing manners and customs,[236] but differences in religion,[237] systems of government,[238] and social circumstances (such as luxury)[239] will create differences in the manners and the attitudes of men Since the poet writes for men of certain manners and attitudes, the critic must understand the people and times for which the poem is composed if he would judge its effect and its value. Certain episodes in Virgil which are completely probable and reasonable would, if they were copied by a modern poet, become highly improbable "by reason of the vastly different Circumstances of Times, Places, Persons, Customs, Religions, and common received Opinions" [240] A poem may have a higher value for its own age than for any succeeding age. Homer and Virgil, for example, had a greater effect upon their contemporaries than they can have upon a modern audience, for modern readers have no faith in the pagan religion on which the great epics of Greece and Rome were based Unless a critic understands the manners, customs, and beliefs of different periods and nations, he cannot judge properly of the reasonableness or effectiveness of the literature which developed in those periods or nations [241]

Being a critic, to Dennis, appeared a grave and responsible occupation, and he thought that a critic should write in a manner in keeping with his position. In treating of a sublime subject he might well write in a sublime style, as had Longinus [242] But for ordinary purposes he should hold to the didactic style, which is "pure, perspicuous, succinct, unaffected and grave" [243] Since a critic's function is to instruct he must reveal the truth, and truth is plain, simple, and natural, being hidden only by ornament [244] Ridicule and levity of tone struck Dennis as being positively objectionable in the style of criticism,[245]

[235] Cf I **12**
[236] Cf I, **436-437**
[237] Cf I, **369**
[238] Cf I, **323**
[239] Cf II, **395**
[240] Cf I, **60**
[241] The historical viewpoint was compounded of many ingredients, and was familiar to critics long before the work of Montesquieu appeared The relationship between literature and political liberty Dennis had seen developed in Milton, among others The effect of climate and peculiar national traits upon literature had been treated by Aristotle, Bodin, Bacon, Sprat, Fontenelle, Bouhours, St Évremond, and many others (cf Spingarn, I, cii) Dennis was undoubtedly influenced by Aristotle, Horace, Boileau, and various other writers, in addition to St Évremond
[242] Cf I, **409**
[243] Cf I, **16**
[244] Cf I, **315**
[245] Cf I, **16**

and he strongly disliked the colloquialism, affectation, and rhetorical flourish in the writings of Collier and Law [246] In a long and formal treatise it was sometimes desirable, he recognized, to divert the reader with raillery or verse,[247] and in his own critical essays, notably in the *Remarks upon Cato*, he indulged freely in raillery after the manner of Rymer. But in these later treatises in which he employed raillery he was confessedly taking his revenge upon authors who had injured him, and therefore he mingled satire with criticism The style of these essays, therefore, did not represent his idea of the style appropriate to true criticism

Although Dennis did not go to the extreme of asserting that only a good poet is qualified to judge of poetry,[248] he believed that a critic must possess in some degree the same qualities which go to the making of a poet Besides a share of learning and a knowledge of the masterpieces a critic must have sensibility, a capacity for passion and imagination, and a rare discernment and judgment The qualities which he demanded of a critic are the qualities which good critics have displayed in all ages The mark of neo-classicism appears mainly in two assumptions that, since art is the result of a conscious process, a more or less deliberate selection of means to attain a definite and clearly conceived end, the good critic will be able invariably to detect the author's purpose and to estimate accurately the effectiveness of the means employed, and that, since there is but one standard of truth and excellence, all good critics will agree in their judgments

Miscellaneous Primitivism and the Idea of Progress, Ancients vs Moderns, the Battle of the Books

Like many of the orthodox, Dennis looked back upon a Golden Age when all was good and beautiful When he crossed the Alps and viewed the terrible and transporting prospects which they afforded, he was moved to speculate concerning the origin of mountains It was possible that they were coetaneous with the world, and part of nature's original design, it was more likely, however, that they were but the ruins of a fairer, more seemly creation

> But if these Mountains were not a Creation, but form'd by universal Destruction, when the Arch with a mighty flaw dissolv'd and fell into the vast Abyss (which surely is the best opinion) then are these Ruines of the old World the greatest wonders of the New For they are not only vast, but horrid, hideous, ghastly Ruins [249]

Though Dennis gave a tentative assent to this view, which he had undoubtedly read in Dr Thomas Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth*,[250] he was able to find endless pleasure in the physical aspects of nature Like Burnet, who

[246] Cf I, 299, 313, 315, II, 316
[247] Cf I, 441
[248] Cf I, 398
[249] Cf II, 381
[250] For a convenient summary of Burnet's *Sacred Theory* cf Basil Willey, *The Eighteenth Century Background* (London, 1940), pp 27-34

discovered that mountains and sea, the greatest objects of nature, inspired the mind "with great thoughts and passions," he was ravished by the horrible beauty of the Alps They were still the works of God, and symbols of the dread power of the Creator Face to face with external nature, Dennis usually forgot his theory that the earth was but a corruption of the fair original design. He enjoyed to the full the sight of hills and valleys, flowery meadows, and murmuring streams, between these and the human heart, in fact, he saw a certain mystic kinship [251] So great were the natural beauties of the earth that they could not be improved The most beautifully designed garden, in which nature is regularized by the hand of man, is inferior to the untouched and unspoiled mountain, meadow, or winding stream.[252] So far as physical nature was concerned, Dennis evinced no desire for a return of the Golden Age

In human nature, on the other hand, he saw evidences of a thorough and lamentable corruption Before the Fall men walked before God in simplicity and truth, their minds completely happy in a state of unified consciousness because their passions were turned solely upon the objects proper to them, after the Fall, when the passions were diverted from their natural objects, an eternal conflict between passion and reason sprang up in man's soul, and he became an unhappy, tormented thing [253] In describing the nature of man after the Fall, Dennis adopted the "self-love" theory as he found it in Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Hobbes, and other seventeenth-century thinkers All of man's actions and desires are motivated by self-interest, and egocentric concern for his own pleasure, even his love of family and country is dictated by the needs of his own body and mind [254] But Dennis did not consider the ingrained selfishness of man to be shameful, to be a stigma fixed upon him as a result of original sin Rather, he thought of self-love as a universal principle established by God, a providential arrangement to maintain the harmony, order, and quiet of society [255] The horrible effect of the Fall upon the spirit of man was the misery entailed by the conflict which raged in his breast between reason, passion, and the senses And since human nature is always the same, its chief faculties remaining constant in all ages,[256] the conflict is eternal and misery is the lot of man For fallen man there is no true happiness, even of a passing sort, except through Christianity or poetry, both of which serve to reconcile the conflicting faculties of the soul Apart from paradise in the dawn of the world, therefore, there was no Golden Age in which all men were happy and virtuous, and no such age will ever appear on earth.

One of the chief bulwarks of what has been called "cosmic toryism" in the Augustan period was the acceptance of the idea of the Great Chain of Being, according to which all species of creatures from the lowest to the highest were

[251] Cf above, p cm
[252] *Cf* II, *401*
[253] Cf I, **256-259**
[254] Cf I, **94**
[255] Cf I, **148**
[256] Cf I, **291**

supposed to be arranged in a fixed order, the bounds of which could never be transcended. Those who accepted the view were inclined to regard any movement toward the improvement of man's estate as pride and presumption, a rebellion against the order which God and nature had established. Dennis apparently incorporated the idea of the Chain of Being into his own philosophy, but his only expression of the idea served merely to defend Milton's conception of hierarchies of angels.[257] It is uncertain what implications, if any, he drew from the idea. We have already noticed his belief that the faculties of men are essentially the same in all ages. Yet he was aware that men have increased in knowledge through the ages, that institutions have developed, and that such human tools as language are capable of development. The question of whether he had any notion of what we call progress may here be raised.

He apparently accepted the contract-theory of the origin of government. Concerning the British government he remarked, "The Original Contract, then, between the Prince and the People, is the very Life and Soul of the Constitution . . ."[258] In return for the power to maintain order and security, the prince granted to his people all the liberties that are compatible with the welfare of the group. William III had restored the liberties of the English people, and Queen Anne undertook to maintain them. A limited monarchy such as England enjoyed adequately served the ends of government.[259] Nowhere does Dennis indicate that a better form of government is likely, or even possible. On the other hand, he granted that the people might enjoy as much liberty, and therefore be just as happy, under a commonwealth such as that of the Athenians.[260] In short, the political system of ancient Greece answered the needs of men as well as the government of England under Queen Anne, and the government of England under Queen Anne attained the end of political institutions as well as any other conceivable government might.

Dennis was a steadfast champion of the Church of England. He was a notorious enemy of "popery," and the Reformation appeared to him strictly necessary. The religion of the established church, he thought, was the true religion.[261] In at least one passage in his writings, however, there is a hint of the Hobbesian idea that we are obliged to accept the doctrines of the established church precisely because it is established by the government.[262] And in truth he was inclined to regard religion as valuable largely because it provided the only sound basis for morality, and sound morality was necessary

[257] Cf. above, p. c.

[258] *Vice and Luxury Publick Mischiefs* (1724), Preface, p. xi.

[259] Cf. I, 322. "... it is self-evident," said Dennis, "that the Happiness of those who are governed, is the very End and Design of all regular Government ..." (I, 163). He assumed that political liberty was a necessary condition to happiness. Submission to unlimited power exposes a people to great vices, and renders them odious and despicable (I, 323).

[260] Cf. I, 320.

[261] Cf. I, 307.

[262] Cf. I, 53.

to the security of the state Like orthodox churchmen of his time he accepted Revelation, with its attendant belief in the genuineness of the miracles therein related, but he saw difficulties in the way of founding doctrines upon Scripture For one reason, he was not certain whether the story of the Bible was to be taken literally or allegorically [263] His approach to religious truth was in the main rationalistic, distinctly more so than that of Dryden in the *Religio Laici* For whereas Dryden had urged that the Scriptures

> Are uncorrupt, sufficient, clear, entire,
> In all things which our needful faith require ,

and that reason may serve to illuminate us where the Scriptures are dark and uncertain, Dennis turns the idea around and states more positively that "Reason is given us by God for our Guide, where we have no Revelation to contradict it." [264] The essential truths of religion can be discovered by reason alone, provided that the searcher has a very strong reason or a very good education, yet Deism cannot be the true religion because it lacks universality of appeal and because it fails to enlist the senses and passions on the side of truth and virtue [265] True religion is found only in the Christian Revelation But there is no progressive revelation of religious truth Miracles ceased in the early days of the Christian church,[266] and Revelation was finished The simple folk who first listened to the Gospel, therefore, were as fully equipped with the means to happiness and salvation as the most learned divine in the Church of England Dennis himself had little or no interest in the intricacies of doctrine and dogma, and like other latitudinarians he stood for religious toleration The only signs of a true Christian, he believed, are charity, humility, and meekness, and he judged of men's devotion "not by the Errors of their Understandings, but by the Sincerity of their Hearts" [267] These qualities and attitudes essential to the Christian are not the gift of any organization or sect, but exist wherever Christianity may be found In the great truths of religion there had been no development since the days of the Apostles, neither progress nor regression. And because Revelation was finished, no progress in the future could be foreseen. Sects and organizations might distort or conceal the truth, but they could not expand or deepen it

Dennis's attitude toward language will illuminate from another angle his attitude toward development in human tools and institutions He knew that all languages are subject to the process of change, but he discerned no general laws of change or growth Each language alters in its own way and in its own time At some point in its course it reaches its highest peak of perfection, after which it may decline But the process of development may continue for centuries, and only from the vantage-point of a far-off age can one detect

[263] Cf I, 257
[264] Cf I, 188
[265] Cf I, 259
[266] Cf I, 53
[267] Cf I, 312

the period when a language has reached its height.[268] In this attitude there is a specious resemblance to the idea of progress and to the idea of decay as well—only specious, however, for Dennis never conceived of endless growth toward perfection nor of endless decay, he saw no general tendency at work. As one language declines, another rises, just as one civilization may spring up when another is falling It is change without direction

I have attempted to indicate by the foregoing illustrations that Dennis neither believed in progress nor accepted the idea of the decay of nature[269] Except for the brief period at the dawn of the world when our first parents walked in the Garden of Eden, he recognized no Golden Age Since the Fall man's powers and faculties have remained static Political institutions of the modern world are no better (and no worse) than those of classical antiquity, and since the Christian Revelation, no further religious truths of consequence have emerged, and those which exist are independent of the fate of any particular religious organization Men may become happier not by growth in knowledge or through the development of human institutions but by a more complete fulfillment of their Christian duties and responsibilities Yet, so great is human depravity that only a relatively small number of men at any one time are capable of enjoying the earthly bliss which Christianity affords[270]

[268] Cf above, p cvi

[269] Cf I, 213-214 Though he specifically rejected the idea of the decay of nature, Dennis gave way at one point to an expression of pessimism the corruption of mankind, he said, grows greater as the world grows older (I, 213-214) This is evidently an expression of cultural primitivism As civilization grows older, wealth and luxury increase, and luxury brings with it vice and corruption Such a belief is opposed to many other aspects of Dennis's thought Morality was never fully understood, he thought, until the Christian Revelation, and only Christianity provided the proper emotional incentive to good conduct His chief aim as a critic was to establish poetry on a basis on which it might surpass the masterpieces of the ancients His spiritual onslaughts on luxury and vice indicate a practical conviction that mankind was not sinking irretrievably into corruption

[270] Mere increase of knowledge did not appear to Dennis the equivalent of progress Though he had a great respect for the work of Descartes, Locke, and Newton, he did not assume that men led better lives or were made happier by their discoveries Though most of the men of letters in Dennis's time were inclined, like Dennis, to view the advance of science and knowledge as an interesting development that had little or no bearing upon the fullness and adequacy of human life, yet it is difficult to escape the conviction that an optimistic view of progress ran like a strong current through the age Welsted's contempt for ancient critics and thinkers, his praise of the wisdom of the moderns, and his emphasis on the importance of originality in thought and expression suggest a belief that mankind is moving, or capable of moving, toward a wiser and fuller existence—a view which seems to have been widespread, for a certain author calling himself "Alexis," writing in 1726, spoke of the prevailing "*vulgar* Notion, *that every Age grows wiser and wiser*" (cf II, 503) There is no trace of this facile optimism in Dennis He was a public-spirited subject of Britain, and he interested himself in various reforms he advocated a temperate life free of the corrupting influence of luxury, he advocated a reform in the sad conditions of English sailors, and he defended charity-schools against Mandeville But his motive was, apparently, a belief that men

From what has been said, Dennis's stand in the controversy of Ancients vs. Moderns will be reasonably clear. In understanding and imagination the moderns are the equal of the ancients, he believed. As for men of extraordinary talents, they are present in every age, genius is no monopoly of the ancients.[271] In some respects, perhaps, the moderns are superior to the ancients they have arrived at religious and moral truth which the ancients did not have, and they enjoy the benefits of knowledge which has accumulated through the ages and therefore presumably understand the virtues, vices, and passions of men better than did the ancients, their imaginations *may* have greater force than those of the ancients.[272] But in the fundamental powers of the mind ancients and moderns stand upon the same plane.

Dennis agreed with Boileau in thinking that the ancient poets, on the whole, succeeded more admirably than the moderns, but disagreed with his contention that the ancients were superior by nature; he blamed Perrault for denying the actual artistic superiority of the ancients, but commended him for disdaining to own their natural superiority.[273] Certain of the moderns such as Molière and Ben Jonson, have surpassed the ancient comic poets, he believed, but in the greater forms of poetry, tragedy and epic, except for portions of *Paradise Lost*, the ancients are supreme. The cause of their supremacy, he thought, lay in their sublimity, which was largely the result of their using religious subjects. One of Dennis's chief aims as a critic was to urge upon English poets the value of subjects based upon the Christian Revelation because they were best adapted to producing that sublimity of spirit which might give modern poets preeminence over Virgil and Homer, Sophocles and Euripides.

In this survey of Dennis's critical theories I have, because of the necessary limitations of space, treated them as though they were rigid and static. Such a treatment is misleading, but perhaps not dangerously so, since a corrective is supplied in the Explanatory Notes, where the modifications in his ideas are traced in some detail. On the whole, however, his views seem to have undergone comparatively slight changes. During the period of 1692 to 1701 his esthetic philosophy was in the process of formation, and thereafter it remained relatively fixed. There was small shifts in emphasis, depending on the occasions which called forth the various critical letters and essays, but so far as we can judge from the evidence available Dennis did not change his mind concerning the fundamental principles of the esthetics of poetry, concerning the meaning of nature, the definition of poetry, the significance of

could be rescued from evil and corruption, and not that they were to be nudged along on the fair paths to perfectibility.

[271] Cf. I. 213.

[272] Cf. I, 213-214.

[273] Cf. I. 206.

genius and the sublime, the relative importance of art and talent or genius, the importance of standards in art and in taste, the relationship of poetry to religion and to government, and the authority and usefulness of the rules.

It is futile to look for a complete logical unity in Dennis's critical theory His was no philosophic mind His views of art, and of poetry in particular, were drawn from no one tradition of thought, from no one school of criticism, they were made up of heterogeneous materials, and yet they were given a kind of coherence and they still give the impression of having a singleness of direction His esthetic philosophy is more complex, woven together of more diverse ingredients, than that of any earlier English critic.

His knowledge of, or interest in, previous literary theory and criticism, appears much less extensive than one would expect Of writers in the classical tongues he revered Aristotle and Horace, and he was acquainted with Quintilian, Hermogenes, Petronius (in whose *Satyricon* there appears a well-known piece of criticism), and the critic commonly known as Longinus [274] With Italian critics, however, he seems to have had little to do He knew something of Boccalini's *Irragguagli di Parnasso*,[275] a sprightly work that indulges in a good deal of wit at the expense of the rules, and of Tasso,[276] one of whose critical opinions he quotes, other Italians he fails to mention though he was certainly familiar at least with their names, for he had seen them mentioned in the works of French critics whom he read Of early French criticism he knew nothing, or perhaps he considered it too negligible to mention At any rate he was guilty of a mistake commonly made in the Augustan period, of asserting that Corneille had introduced the rules into France [277] Although he undoubtedly read Corneille's Discourses with care, he made no certain use of ideas contained in them He cites one of Racine's prefaces, and refers to an opinion of Moliere on the subject of comedy, but he regarded their practise as considerably more valuable to criticism than their occasional remarks. Of the French critics his favorite was, without doubt, Boileau, whose *Art Poëtique* and whose remarks on Longinus influenced him greatly Rapin's *Réflexions sur la Poetique d'Aristote* and Le Bossu's *Traité du Poeme Épique* probably stood at his elbow as he wrote, for he consulted them often On several occasions he referred to Dacier's remarks on the *Poetics* of Aristotle, for which he had a goodly respect His interest in St Évremond was apparent

[274] I take little or no account here of the commentators, whom Dennis appears to have esteemed less than critics Twice he cites opinions of Julius Scaliger (cf I, **220**, II, **218**) He makes one reference to Lipsius, Heinsius, and Rigaltius (cf II, **218**) The only work by Grotius with which he displays any acquaintance is the commentary on the New Testament (cf I, **325**) He knew Segrais's remarks on Virgil, and also the Dauphin's Virgil edited by Ruaeus (cf I, **109**, II, **402**), likewise Dacier's commentary on Horace and Madame Dacier's edition of Terence and her comments on Homer Vossius he does not refer to

[275] Cf II, **170**

[276] Cf II, **324**

[277] Cf II, **197**

as early as 1693, and it reappeared later at various times.[278] D'Aubignac he cites only once,[279] and he quotes only once from the work of Father Bouhours.[280] These are the critics whom he knew best Of course he followed the controversy in France concerning the relative merits of Ancients and Moderns Of the position taken by Perrault, La Motte, and Terrasson, who exalted the Moderns at the expense of the Ancients, he thoroughly disapproved,[281] but he read Perrault with a certain sympathy,[282] and La Motte only with contempt[283] Fontenelle took the side of the Moderns in the *Digression sur les Anciens et les Modernes*, which Dennis probably knew, but he does not mention it nor the popular *Discours sur la Nature de l'Églogue*.

Sidney and Jonson were the only early English critics whom Dennis mentions, and it is unlikely that he knew any more His list of sound English critics includes Jonson, Milton, Dryden, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, Rymer, and Roscommon[284]—certainly a sad showing. He had a deep respect for Jonson's learning and critical sagacity, and for the occasional critical remarks thrown out by Milton To Dryden's opinions he professed submission and deference,[285] but for the most part he was likely to cite them for the purpose of disagreeing with them With Rymer he disagreed on many points, though he had a high opinion of that gentleman's learning Buckingham's satire on the heroic tragedy appeared to him to be sound criticism, and he enjoyed the raillery of the *Rehearsal* so much that he quoted from or alluded to it frequently As for the precepts of Roscommon and Buckinghamshire, few men of taste were impolite enough to dispute the vague and conventional generalizations sponsored by such illustrious names

Dennis was interested in relatively few literary critics, and he was a follower of no one of them What he found in them that suited his own needs and purposes, he made part of his own system His eclectic method may be seen in his treatment of French critics of the age of Dryden In one of his later essays he remarked that Le Bossu's treatise on the epic, Rapin's *Reflexions* Dacier's commentary on Aristotle, and Boileau's *Art Poétique* were all given to approving, explaining, confirming, and extolling the rules of Aristotle and Horace,[286] and he praised them heartily for their endeavor He approved heartily of Le Bossu, and yet his own theory of the epic was a much more flexible instrument and he praised Milton enthusiastically for disregarding some of those very rules which Le Bossu had so meticulously expounded He knew Rapin as a defender of the rules, and he quoted his assertion that an observance of the three unities is necessary to convey the impression of

[278] Cf I, 13, 31, 152, 287, II, 119
[279] Cf II, 166
[280] Cf I, 405
[281] Cf II, 363
[282] Cf I, 206
[283] Cf II, 347
[284] Cf II, 280
[285] Cf I, 8
[286] Cf II, 293-294

verisimilitude[287]—a principle which, as he himself realized, needed many qualifications But he also knew Rapin as a critic who demanded of a good ode the qualities of elevation and violence, sublimity, an exalted genius, and a daring imagination,[288] and who required of great poetry that it display ardor and vehemence in a style at once strong, lively, daring, and audacious[289] That the same critic could defend the rules and admire the literature which produced agitation and transport caused not one flicker of surprise in Dennis's mind Boileau, with whom Dennis disagreed on the important question of the use of Christian machines in the epic, asserted the necessity of the rules, but he also provided Dennis with a new critical terminology, the terminology employed to describe the effects of the sublime—rapture, fury, and transport, and he suggested to Dennis the importance of variety and surprise in the subjects and style of poetry[290] And Boileau's attitude toward the rules seemed to Dennis entirely consistent with his attitude toward variety and the sublime Dacier's commentary on Aristotle reflected a somewhat formal and legalistic reverence for the Stagyrite, yet Dennis cited his opinions where they were appropriate, and displayed no awareness of his insufficiencies as a critic All four critics were valuable in their different ways, all four were sound in doctrine If they defended the rules, they did well, for, though he believed that the elaborated rules might often be disregarded, Dennis felt, as we have seen, that the *spirit* of the rules was the prop and mainstay of those standards in literature and taste for which he did battle throughout his life When Boileau and Rapin pointed out the value of those qualities of ardor vehemence, imagination, daring, and elevation which produced the effects of agitation, rapture, and transport, they did not, in Dennis's judgment, convict themselves of heresy, for he knew that the great poets of antiquity had combined passion with discipline, imagination with a sense of form, and genius with a conscious artistic purpose Boileau's remarks on the sublime fitted into Dennis's esthetic system as comfortably as Le Bossu's exposition of the rules The fact that Dennis emphasized genius and passion as well the spirit of the rules indicates not that he was a precursor of romanticism but that he was a sensitive and intelligent classicist

The measure of Dennis's stature as a critic, however, is not so much his ability to assimilate the best of Boileau, Rapin, Dacier, and Le Bossu as it is his ability to adapt the best thought of his time to his own esthetic philosophy. In 1698, as J W Krutch has pointed out,[291] Dennis, perceiving that the fundamental question involved in the Collier-controversy was that of the value of pleasure, took pains to formulate a moral philosophy to justify the stage Drawing upon ethics, philosophy, and theology, he arrived at his definition of the *summum bonum* that kind of pleasure in which both mind and heart

[287] Cf II, **282**
[288] Cf I, **42-43**
[289] Cf II, **35-36**
[290] Cf I, **110**
[291] *Comedy and Conscience after the Restoration* (N Y, 1924), p **136**

are satisfied. From Epicureanism, from Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Hobbes, and perhaps Anglican theologians he derived suggestions for his theory of self-interest as the basic motive of all men, and to this theory he added his unusually interesting ideas about the nature of the passions and their importance in the good life Pursuing this inquiry, he came to investigate the relationship of the good life (and of poetry, in which he found that balance of passion and reason in terms of which he defined the good life) to Christianity and to the state. The aims of the Christian Revelation and of poetry, he found, were in regard to man identical. both provided a means whereby men might indulge their passions with the full assent of reason and virtue And the state, he concluded, could best maintain its stability by granting subjects (especially subjects so obstinate and independent as the English) the liberty of pursuing their pleasures, and since poetry satisfied the passions in the highest degree (passions which might otherwise surge in discontent against the government), the pleasures afforded by poetry were of inestimable service to the state and should be indulged Thus Dennis's ethical and his political philosophy went into the service of his literary theory, and thus he met the attack on the stage He was by far the most formidable of Collier's opponents, but, of greater importance, he was the first English literary critic who, by developing the relationship between ethics and esthetics, gave full meaning to the dull maxim that poetry must both instruct and delight

Of still larger significance is the fact that Dennis was driven to psychological investigation to unravel some of the perplexities which developed in his literary theory Early in the 1690's he began to worry about the meaning of the sublime Longinus, he felt, had carefully explained the effects which the sublime produced in the minds of readers of poetry, but had not explained the causes, or the nature of the sublime Even Boileau gave him no help in solving the question. Therefore he launched his own investigation When the effects of the sublime are present in the mind, he discovered, the mind is agitated by uncommon emotions, which he called the enthusiastic passions Then he began his analysis of the objects which produce the enthusiastic passions. At this point he was confronted by two problems precisely how do the enthusiastic differ from the ordinary passions? and why is it that certain objects that arouse ordinary emotions in some minds will stir up the enthusiastic emotions in other minds? The first question he answered readily, the second was more difficult, because the best psychological thought available assumed that all minds were essentially similar in structure. Denominating that power or capacity of the mind which made it susceptible to enthusiastic passions as genius, he set out to define the nature of poetical genius This evidently appeared to be the central problem, and it was to this problem that he addressed himself in 1696 [292] Inspired by Aristotle and Longinus, by Bacon, Hobbes, and Locke, and by the unsystematic psychological speculations of such men as La Rochefoucauld, he formulated a theory which would explain

[292] Cf I, 46-47

how certain minds, capable of being aroused by "extraordinary hints," were able to compose poetry that caused agitation, rapture, and transport. On the basis of this theory he discussed genius and the sublime, and he redefined poetry The fact that in his theory of poetry and of the sublime Dennis consistently stressed the importance of the passions, and the fact that he steadily advocated religious subjects as best fitted to produce the effects of the sublime, are less significant than that he was the first English critic to discuss the nature of poetry, genius, and the sublime in the light of a reasonably adequate account of the workings of the human mind.

When Wordsworth, whose critical theory is marked by a strong interest in psychology, came to define poetry, it was natural that he should turn back to John Dennis Dennis had remarked, "Passion is the Characteristical Mark of Poetry," [293] and Wordsworth echoed, "Poetry is passion." [294] Dennis had distinguished two kinds of poetic passions the ordinary and the enthusiastic, [295] and Wordsworth made the same distinction, using the same terms in essentially the same sense [296] Other resemblances between Dennis and Wordsworth have already been pointed out, and many more could be shown, but they are apart from our purpose I should wish to avoid giving the impression that the criticism of Dennis is important because it affected the ideas of the greatest of the romantic poets It is more pertinent to note that when Wordsworth was formulating his critical theory, Dennis's was still the most comprehensive treatment in English of the esthetics of poetry, and of the relationship between the poetic object and the operations of the poetic mind

SECTION V CRITICAL OPINIONS

We are accustomed to assume that the test of critical theories should in most instances be the wisdom and discernment shown in their application to particular works of art It would not be just, however, to measure Dennis too strictly by this standard. His function, as he understood it, was not to pronounce judgment upon contemporary poems, plays, essays, and narratives. Aristotle and Horace had discussed the principles of good art, commenting on specific works only occasionally and incidentally Dennis proposed as his prime objective the restoration of the glory of poetry by setting it upon its proper foundation, making it possible for the moderns to equal or surpass the ancients, his means were investigation and analysis of the nature of poetry, its purpose, sources, and effects Criticism of particular works was not essential to this undertaking, unless perhaps by way of pertinent illustration of principles. Beyond this primary aim Dennis had as his object to defend the English stage and to safeguard public taste In his capacity as a watchdog

[293] Cf I, 215

[294] Cited in R D Havens, *The Mind of a Poet* (Baltimore, 1941), p 30

[295] Cf I, 216

[296] Havens, *op cit*, pp 33-34 For Wordsworth's endorsement of Dennis's views on poetry and the passions, cf the *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth the Middle Years* (Oxford, 1937), II, 617

it was his duty, as he saw it, to warn the town against popular works that were unsound in their art and their moral intents. Partly for this reason some of Dennis's remarks upon specific works, especially those written in the second half of his career, appear unbalanced, or even a bit perverse, for they are to a large extent attacks upon authors whom Dennis conceived to be of pernicious influence, and in attempting to ward off their baneful effects he countered by deliberately mingling satire with his criticism. Obviously we cannot evaluate as a sober critical judgment that which was intended to be satirical

Critics contemporary with Dennis did not consider it an important part of their duty to publish reviews of current writings Dryden, traditionally regarded as the greatest critic of the period, discussed the literary merits of amazingly few English authors who flourished in his day, his remarks only too often consist of amiable compliment to his friends and unamiable contempt for his enemies Yet there was no dearth of opinions concerning books and authors In the circle of the coffee house and tavern new works were passionately discussed and criticized (with perhaps more tact than candor if the author or his friends were members of the circle), but the results of these discussions seldom found their way into print After all, literary London was small and tight, and an authoritative opinion dropped in a coffee house might wing its way through the town before a printer could fasten it down in type publication ordinarily seemed unnecessary Dennis, as the chief professional critic of his age, was constantly being consulted about the merits of particular new and old publications, and he dutifully rendered his verdict, sometimes orally, sometimes in a letter, and sometimes in an essay Only a small proportion of such judgments were ever published In estimating the wisdom of his opinions concerning English men of letters we must base our conclusions upon fragments of his thought—and fragments which he did not consider vital to his chief intent as a critic

Certain limitations were imposed upon Dennis by his theory, or perhaps, more remotely, by the prevailing literary tastes and distastes The only *genres* of poetry which he took into account in his critical theory were epic, tragedy, comedy, the Pindaric ode, and satire, other *genres* belonged to the "lesser poetry," which he tended to regard as negligible Consequently he was more or less blind, like most of his contemporaries, to the beauty of the English lyric. He had no interest in and probably no knowledge of, the sonnet Shakespeare's non-dramatic poems left him untouched, as did those of Ben Jonson, and if he knew the lyric poetry of Donne, Herbert, and Herrick, he considered it unworthy of mention The minor poems of Milton evidently did not appeal to him In his early years he was given to admiring Suckling, who had something of a vogue during the Restoration period, but by 1694 he was already cured of this taste[1] The lightness and delicacy of Prior's verse seem to have escaped his attention, for he does not mention Prior as a

[1] Cf II, 384

poet. He read the epistles and satires of Horace with enjoyment and respect, but paid little attention to his lyrics Catullus pleased him, though not to the highest degree [2] His own Pindaric odes (all after the fashion of Cowley) are heavy, strained performances, completely lacking in the melody, spontaneity, and lift which the true lyric possesses. Although he once took pleasure in Cowley, Waller, and Denham, all of whom wrote short poems, by 1694 he was somewhat out of humor with them [3] Several years later he still spoke with respect of Denham's *Cooper's Hill*,[4] and he continued to regard Waller as a great writer,[5] but his liking was not inspired by the lyric qualities in their verse That Dryden wrote lyrics of some merit one would not gather from Dennis's critical remarks, which refer only to *Alexander's Feast* [6] Among writers of odes and songs he mentioned Sedley, Rochester, and Dorset, and he included Rochester and Dorset in his list of writers flourishing in the reign of Charles II who were "excellent in their Different manners." [7] Of all English authors who wrote short poems, Waller seems to have been his chief favorite. This is a sufficient illustration of one serious limitation in Dennis's taste—the less reprehensible, however, in that he was in substantial agreement with most critics and writers of his time

The ballad was a *genre* unknown to classical criticism, and Dennis would have none of it *Chevy Chase*, which Addison found so admirable, aroused only contempt in Dennis Its naiveté and simplicity were distasteful to him, and the style was so far below the demands of the subject as to seem imbecile He does not discuss any other ballads, but there is no doubt that he despised them In this he lagged behind the best taste of his day, for Dryden was interested in the ballad Dorset collected specimens, Addison championed them in the *Spectator*, and both Prior and Charles Montagu apparently shared Dorset's interest

One of the most notable deficiencies in Dennis's taste appears in his criticism of prose writings Most of the modern prose writers whom he admired greatly he approved of for their thought and not for their style His respect for Descartes, Montaigne, Bacon, Ralegh, Hooker, Sidney, Harrington, Locke, and Newton was great, but he gives no sign that he recognized any of them as prose artists He says nothing of the prose of Cowley or Dryden. The only novelist whom he refers to is Scarron [8] Not by a single word does he show any awareness of the remarkable achievements in prose of Swift and Defoe, he displays no interest in the fine, sinewy prose of English translations by Urquhart, Motteux, Ozell, Burnaby, and others. Bunyan he regarded as vir-

[2] Cf I, 400
[3] Cf II, 384
[4] Cf II, 135-137
[5] Cf II, 401
[6] Cf II, 355
[7] Cf II, 275 and 237
[8] Cf I, 7

tually beneath contempt.[9] For Joseph Addison he had a few kind words,[10] but no clear recognition of his distinction as a prose writer. He objected to the erratic, colloquial style of Collier, although he himself in his more informal prose frequently adopted a somewhat similar manner Upon the colloquially flavored styles of Rymer and Eachard he made no comment except to protest against Rymer's misplaced raillery.[11] As letter-writers he admitted certain merits in Balzac and Voiture, but he proposed serious objections to their styles[12] Two writers whom he singled out for praise were Wilkins and Tillotson, whose "clear, chaste, noble, and masculine Styles" impressed him.[13] If this may serve as a reliable indication of his tastes, we may conclude that he required of prose something of the same simplicity, strength, and elevation which he looked for in great poetry.

For Dennis's failure to perceive the artistic excellence of much of the prose that was being written in his day some explanation is in order His blindness was in large measure the blindness of his age Bunyan was regarded by gentlemen and men of taste as a puritan fanatic fit only for the rabble to peruse, and Swift was a witty but dangerous fellow who had made free with all religion Defoe was a rude pamphleteer, a hireling of ministers, whom Pope dismissed with a sneer[14] None of the prose translations, however vigorous and sprightly, was taken seriously as literature Partly because the best classical prose took the form of history, oration, and familiar letter, little of the prose of the Augustan period was recognized as having artistic value except these forms and, perhaps, the literary essay Sprat, Tillotson, and Temple were widely admired, and, later the essays of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* But because his more interesting and important prose was written as prefaces and dedications Dryden himself was not valued as a prose writer by his contemporaries, the first important recognition of his gifts was that of Congreve in the preface to the 1717 edition of Dryden's dramatic works Dennis was not less discerning than other men of taste in his age Moreover, his main concern as a critic was the re-establishment of poetry Apart from his very brief treatment of the friendly letter his critical theory did not deal with prose more than to distinguish it from poetry For the most part prose was the language of reason and business, and that very fact prevented it from reaching the heights of artistic excellence, for nature spoke to the heart and poetry was the voice of nature The great critics of the past had all dealt with poetry rather than prose, and Dennis saw no good reason to break the tradition

As a judge of contemporary poetry Dennis's most conspicuous failure was his estimate of Pope In the little gentleman of Twickenham Dennis admitted no excellence of any kind except that he had "got a notable knack of Rhiming

[9] Cf II, 29 and note
[10] Cf II, 415
[11] Cf I, 16-17
[12] Cf II, 382
[13] Cf I, 303
[14] Pope, *Works*, ed Elwin-Courthope, X, 370

and Writing smooth Verse"—but, he added, "without either Genius or Good Sense, or any tolerable Knowledge of *English*."[15] Pope's writings, he asserted, were servile imitations the *Pastorals*, an imitation of Virgil, the *Essay on Criticism*, of Buckinghamshire and Roscommon, the *Temple of Fame*, of Chaucer, and the *Rape of the Lock*, of Boileau.[16] The translation of Homer, he asserted, failed to convey the spirit of Homer, and it was often flat, obscure, affected, and stiff, and abounding in solecisms and barbarisms.[17] Although his criticism of Pope was undoubtedly inspired by resentment and a desire for revenge, many of his remarks on the *Essay on Criticism*, the *Temple of Fame*, and *Windsor Forest* are sound. His contention that the translation of the *Iliad* sounded like Pope rather than Homer was, of course, well founded, but his comments on the style showed far more malice than truth. In his objections to the lack of action and to the presence of nastiness in the *Dunciad* he was clearly justified, but the roughness with which he was treated prevented him from seeing, or from admitting, the brilliance of satiric passages. But in his criticism of the *Rape of the Lock* he floundered badly; so obtuse are his remarks that they appear on the whole inept—or even perverse. The grace, the delicacy, the gay humor, the light satire of the poem, all escaped him, as, indeed, the grace, deftness, and infinite variety of Pope's couplets were hidden from him. If he saw nothing more in Pope's verse than in Waller's, he lacked an ear for the music of poetry. The fine poetic epistle, "Eloisa to Abelard," may not have come under his eye, if he had seen it, he would not have praised it anyhow, for even if he had had the good taste to like it he would not have given comfort to the enemy.

There is no satisfactory reason to excuse Dennis for overlooking the genius of Pope, though there are certain mitigating circumstances. We must remember that, apart from the *Rape of the Lock* and "Eloisa to Abelard," Pope's finest work was composed after Dennis had succumbed to the infirmities of age and sickness. We should remember, also, that Dennis, having been severely—and often unjustly—treated by Pope and his friends, retorted upon Pope with pamphlets which he described as satire mingled with criticism, and we have no right to expect a just appraisal embedded in satire. Moreover, the great popularity of Pope struck our critic as a menace, as both the symbol of and a cause of a decline in public taste, the admiration of the town being lavished upon glittering trivialities, translations and imitations, playful extravagances, and indecent or impious *jeux d'esprit*. As a critic Dennis felt called upon to attack the evil, and he did it, savagely and not fairly. Not one of Pope's works written during Dennis's active career was composed in the *genres* which constituted the "greater poetry", under ordinary circumstances Dennis did not see fit to devote attention to the little poetry. Having set out to re-establish poetry and to clarify the grounds of criticism to the end that English poets might surpass the

[15] Cf. II, 108.
[16] Cf. II, 104.
[17] Cf. II, 123.

ancients, he was disturbed to find his efforts set at naught by the glory reaped by Pope—a glory which, he thought, belonged only to the creators of poetry that was noble, passionate, and sublime

Another weakness in his practise as a critic is illustrated by his later opinion of Sir Richard Blackmore. In 1696, reviewing Blackmore's *Prince Arthur,* he had correctly observed that the general idea was imitative, the narration broken by unnecessary episodes and by tedious description and declamation, the characters imperfectly realized, and the whole epic lacking in variety and spirit Good sense abounds in the review, shining out from behind the somewhat formidable array of critical principles and neo-classical terminology Twenty years later, however, having entered upon terms of friendship with Blackmore, he proclaimed that the physician-bard's philosophical poem, *Creation,* equalled Lucretius in the beauty of its versification and surpassed him in the soundness and strength of its reasoning.[18] The fact that many other Augustans, including Addison,[19] were misled into praising this heavy and pretentious work merely indicates that Dennis shared in a popular error. Not only was Blackmore a good man, a firm whig, and a warm friend, but his poem was austere, elevated at least in intention, and—most important to Dennis—based upon the Christian religion That the poem appeared to be a demonstration of one of his most cherished principles probably had something to do with leading Dennis into error.

In his attitute toward Chaucer Dennis lagged behind the best taste of his age. Dryden had read Chaucer with vast pleasure, though without that veneration and regard for the poet's language which his patron Philip Sidney, third Earl of Leicester, and certain "old Saxon friends" felt.[20] Already men were beginning to suspect that Chaucer's verse might have been regular and melodious, and his language far from rude. But Chaucer's great understanding of manners and passions and his gifts of characterization—gifts which had delighted Dryden—failed to stir Dennis's enthusiasm. Judging by his remarks on Pope's *Temple of Fame,* one is certain that he knew virtually nothing of the *Hous of Fame*, and one suspects that he had paid little attention to the *Troilus* or the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer, he decided, "thro' the Rudeness of the Language, or want of Ear, or want of Experience, or rather perhaps a mixture of all," had failed to attain "that Justness of Numbers, and Truth of Harmony and of Versification" which stand as enduring charms in poetry [21]

Most Augustans knew shockingly little of the great Elizabethans, and Dennis shared the prevailing ignorance He was familiar with the plays of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, with a good part of the work of Spenser, and with Sidney's *Defence,* and he expressed admiration for Ralegh, Hooker, and Bacon, but he went very little beyond this. He mentions Thomas Tusser's *Husbandrie,*[22] and he refers by title to Drayton's *Barrons Warres, The Owle,* and

[18] Cf II, 120 and 107
[19] *Spectator,* no 339
[20] *Essays of Dryden,* ed Ker, II 262-267
[21] Cf I, 410-411
[22] Cf II, 284

The Man in the Moone,[23] but he evinces no further interest in them He knew two poems by Thomas Heywood, but thought that Shakespeare had written them [24] Of the early seventeenth-century playwrights he mentions Fletcher and Shirley,[25] but does not bother to discuss their works. Of the translations of poetry published before 1660 he evidently knew Barten Holyday's version of Horace and Persius,[26] and he quoted from Fairfax's Tasso [27] and from Fanshawe's rendition into English of Guarini's *Pastor Fido*.[28] He was acquainted with two or three translations of Ovid's Passion of Byblis,[29] probably that of George Sandys in addition to that of John Oldham But he mentions not one Elizabethan sonnet, he makes no reference to the poetry of Sidney, Marlowe, or Donne, and he shows no acquaintance with Lyly, Peele, Greene, Marlowe, Marston, Chapman, Dekker, Webster, Ford, Middleton, or Massinger.

There is no reason to question Dennis's love of Shakespeare, whom he greatly admired and whose plays he read over and over with undiminished satisfaction [30] In all probability he knew all of the plays, but he specifically mentioned or quoted from *Caesar, Coriolanus, Hamlet, Troilus, Antony and Cleopatra, Macbeth, Lear, Othello, Merchant of Venice, Richard II, Comedy of Errors, Merry Wives, 1 Henry IV*, and *2 Henry IV*. This list includes few of the comedies, and it is not surprising to find that Dennis, like most of his contemporaries, thought that the Bard had displayed his greatest talents in tragedy [31] The Augustans did not care for the romantic comedies, and Dennis had no taste for the "fairy way of writing" Yet he believed that on the whole Shakespeare had succeeded very well in comedy,[32] and he had a lively appreciation of the character of Falstaff although he objected to scenes in which the fat knight "does nothing but talk"[33] From his adaptation of the *Merry Wives* and from his silence concerning other comedies we are led to the suspicion that the sheer gaiety and high spirits of the brighter comedies did not greatly appeal to him, in fact, he apparently did not see far beyond the more obvious excellences of plot and characterization As to the tragedies his judgment was unquestionably better Even if he objected to their violating poetic justice,[34] even if he protested against their failing to observe decorum of manners,[35] he was still able to recognize the essential greatness of Shake-

[23] *Ibid*
[24] Cf II, 432
[25] Cf II, 409 and 403
[26] Cf II, 218
[27] Cf I, 346
[28] Cf I, 26-27
[29] Cf I, 3
[30] Cf II, 17
[31] Cf II, 432-433
[32] Cf II, 13
[33] Cf I, 279-280
[34] Cf II, 6-7
[35] Cf II, 5

speare. When he asserted that Shakespeare lacked art, he meant mainly that the plays were weak in their plot-structure—and in this he was not altogether wrong. At the same time he realized fully that Shakespeare possessed a different kind of art in a very high degree the art of characterization and of depicting human passions[36] Even in the control of sentiments and expression, Dennis thought, Shakespeare was a master.[37] Despite his championing the rules, despite his belief that Shakespeare lacked the art of plot-construction (one of the most important elements in tragedy), Dennis was able, like Dryden, to transcend his own theory. He applied the pragmatic test to Shakespeare, and he concluded on the basis of this test that, even though he lacked the fine art of manipulating plot, the Bard was so completely a master of the passions "that they often touch us more without their due Preparations, than those of other Tragick Poets, who have all the Beauty of Design and all the Advantage of Incidents."[38] In brief, Shakespeare succeeded in the fundamental aim of tragedy, often more brilliantly than those who followed carefully the rules of construction If Dennis insisted that Shakespeare would have done better had he known the rules, he was merely urging the counsel of perfection, knowing full well that of all the plays in the world only the *Oedipus* of Sophocles approached the perfection of form that Aristotle had prescribed for tragedy;[39] and he intended thereby to serve warning on lesser writers that they were ill advised in following the example of Shakespeare, relying on genius to overcome the handicap of faulty construction He altered two of Shakespeare's plays partly because the sad state of contemporary taste made such tinkering profitable, and he was always in need of money But it would be difficult to find any writer before 1750 whose praise of Shakespeare was more glowing, honest, and discriminating than that of Dennis[40] And though he was no scholar in the modern sense, his remarks on Shakespeare's learning were the shrewdest and most penetrating comments on that subject published before Farmer's well-known essay. It is worth noting that in the by-no-means negligible judgment of Theobald, no man in England better understood Shakespeare than did John Dennis[41]

As one would expect of an Augustan writer and critic, Dennis had read Ben Jonson attentively, and considered him one of the greatest comic poets the world had seen, superior to the ancients, to other English poets, and probably to Molière as well Only three of Jonson's comedies apparently interested him greatly, the *Alchymist*, *Volpone*, and *Epicoene*, which he held to be the best (and the most regular) examples of English comedy.[42] Even in these three plays, however, he found certain defects, which he pointed out with

[36] Cf II, 424-425
[37] Cf II, 4
[38] *Ibid*
[39] Cf II, 287
[40] Cf especially II, 4-5 and 17
[41] *Shakespeare Restored* (1726), p 181
[42] Cf II, 196

the penetration and originality of an exemplary critic[43] He knew *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, but he was not overly impressed by them for he thought, quite rightly, that they were founded on erroneous notions of tragedy.[44] His contention that their subjects were incapable of arousing either compassion or terror formed the basis of subsequent criticism of these two works.[45] As with Shakespeare, Dennis devoted more space to observing Jonson's faults than to proclaiming his beauties, but perhaps he was justified in view of the universal esteem in which these poets were held. At any rate, his criticism of Jonson was both original and penetrating, and probably shrewder than any other utterance on the subject in his time[46]

He apparently thought of Spenser as one of the four chief English poets, the other three being Shakespeare, Jonson, and Milton[47] But he considered Spenser the least successful of the four. Though he never discussed him at any length or in any detail, yet one remark that he made indicates that he had read the *Faerie Queene* with close attention,[48] and he seems to have known something of *Mother Hubbards Tale* and *Colin Clouts Come Home Again*[49] The Spenserian stanza appeared to him, as to most of his contemporaries, an essentially lyrical measure, unsuited to long or lofty poems[50] The *Faerie Queene*, he thought, because it broke the rules without showing evidence of sufficient genius or sublimity to compensate for the breach, fell far short of the excellence of the ancient epics[51] In all of his writings Dennis showed no trace of a knowledge or understanding of medieval romance, and had no taste for the fabulous elements of literature. Spenser's elaborate use of allegory would only have perplexed him, for he thought of literary allegory as a means of asserting an ethical proposition by means of unified plot or action, or of demonstrating the social or moral value of certain universal traits by embodying them in specific characters His interests lay in observing the manners and characters of civilized men, and the monsters of the *Faerie Queene* must have appeared to be the products of a profligate, uncurbed fancy, not of reason Whether he was aware of the variety and brilliance of Spenser's metrical effects we do not know, even if he had been, he would not have considered them of primary importance He never wrote the criticism of Spenser which he originally proposed to include in the *Grounds of Criticism*, but his scattered

[43] Cf II, **521**
[44] Cf II, **16**
[45] Cf II, **435**
[46] Professor Noyes has marked the soundness of Dennis's reflections concerning Jonson's comedies (*Ben Jonson on the English Stage, 1660-1776* [Cambridge, Mass, 1935], pp **52** and **185**) Jonson's *Timber* and Sidney's *Defence* are the only critical treatises of the English renaissance with which Dennis shows any acquaintance For his references to *Timber*, cf II, **15** and **117**
[47] Cf I, **205**
[48] Cf I, **358**
[49] Cf II, **284**
[50] Cf II, **237**
[51] Cf I, **331**

remarks indicate clearly enough that it would have been imperceptive and inadequate. That flexibility of mind, or sensitivity, displayed by John Hughes, who recognized that supernatural and allegorical creatures were justified in poetry if they are "amusing to the Imagination,"[52] and who felt that poems might properly be based upon standards peculiar to their times, even if they differed widely from those of classical antiquity, that openness of mind which Matthew Prior showed in discussing the unity of the *Faerie Queene*—these are virtues which Dennis lacked in his approach to Spenser

As a critic of Milton Dennis merits the highest commendation. He was not the first Englishman, nor even the first critic, to recognize the genius of the great puritan poet but, as Professor Havens remarks, "The first great protagonist of *Paradise Lost* was . . John Dennis"[53] His was the first extensive and discriminating body of observations on Milton's epic, and he was the first writer who measured it by the criteria of the Sublime, recently popularized by Boileau's translation of Longinus, and pronounced it to be of surpassing excellence. He was the first critic who noted Milton's power of stimulating the imagination by suggestion,[54] and he was the first who approached Milton with a thoroughly formulated esthetic philosophy, which related such concepts as genius, imagination, variety, and the Sublime to the cardinal principles of art *Paradise Lost,* said Dennis, was "the greatest Poem that ever was written by Man,"[55] surpassing even the epics of Homer and Virgil in sublimity, elevation, and terrible majesty Because of deficiencies in his scholarship Dennis overestimated the extent of Milton's originality, but his admirable critical sense enabled him to triumph notably over theory, for he was led to the conclusion that the very boldness of Milton in breaking away from the rules helped him to achieve the end of epic poetry even "better than the best of the Ancients"[56] That Dennis's taste for the beauties of *Paradise Lost* was genuine and excellent is easily demonstrated The passages which he admired most are unquestionably among the finest in Milton, and he was the first to extol many of them[57] Incidentally, it is a nice piece of irony that Dennis, who has been held up as an example of the formal critic of the school of Rymer, devotes most of his criticism of Milton to expounding his beauties, whereas Addison, who professed scorn for the formal, fault-finding critic, displayed a somewhat academic turn of mind in measuring Milton by the example of Homer and Virgil and according to the formal method of Le Bossu. Dennis's ability to appreciate Milton, however, had its limitations He knew *Il Penseroso,*[58] but he expressed no opinion of any of the minor

[52] Hughes, Preface to *Calypso and Telemachus,* in *Poems on Several Occasions* (1735), vol II

[53] *Influence of Milton* (Cambridge, 1922), p 93

[54] Cf I, **462-463**

[55] Cf I, **351**

[56] Cf I, **331**

[57] Cf I, **512-513**

[58] Cf I, **512**

poems. *Paradise Regained* struck him as being a failure, and he apparently did not care for *Samson Agonistes*.[59] Of Milton's prose works he was apparently most familiar with the tractate *Of Education*, which he quoted respectfully. On the whole, it is probably safe to say that his taste for the noble and sublime in Milton was excellent but that his taste for the lyric beauty and subtle harmony of the poems was deficient. He expressed an almost boundless admiration for Milton's blank verse, but his own imitations of it fail to indicate a full understanding or appreciation. Yet his observations on Milton are the most adequate and satisfying before the publication of the commentary by the Richardsons.

In spite of his admiration for Dryden he never ranked him with the greatest English men of letters. Of the excellence of Dryden's prose he seems to have been unaware, and he seldom referred to Dryden's critical opinions unless to differ with them. He thought of Dryden as one of the eight writers flourishing in the reign of Charles II who produced good and diverting comedies,[60] but he never praised him as a comic poet so warmly as he praised Congreve, Wycherley, and Etherege. The bawdiness of *Limberham* disgusted him. Apparently he thought more highly of the tragedies, though certainly not of the earlier ones, for he had a profound distaste for the rhymed heroic play. In 1693, in the very act of condemning the *Oedipus* of Dryden and Lee, he acknowledged Dryden's great dramatic talents.[61] In 1719, while objecting to the moral of *All for Love*, he observed that the play had a noble first act and that Dryden had a genius for tragedy, though it was inferior to Shakespeare's.[62] On the whole, he probably respected Dryden chiefly as a non-dramatic poet.[63] His first letter to Dryden, in fact, compared him with Suckling, Cowley, Waller, and Denham,[64] and expressed an excited interest in the translation of Virgil, omitting any mention of the plays. Sometimes he objected to the way in which Dryden had employed his poetic gifts, for he had no sympathy with the poet's castigation of the whigs in *Absalom and Achitophel* and he thought that *MacFlecknoe*, though a beautiful work, was still a libel.[65] It speaks well for Dennis's critical acumen that he thought the comedies fell short of excellence, and that, while admiring the poet's great talents, he was inclined to regret their having often been squandered recklessly on trivial or unworthy objects. As for his appreciation of Dryden's talents, there is no brief criticism at once so eloquent and so just as Dennis's tribute to his departed friend, whom, he says,

> I infinitely esteem'd when living for the Solidity of his Thought, for the Spring, the Warmth, and the beautiful Turn of it, for the Power, and Variety, and Fulness

[59] *Ibid.*
[60] Cf. II, 120.
[61] Cf. I, 19-22.
[62] Cf. II, 162-164.
[63] Cf. II, 121.
[64] Cf. II, 384.
[65] Cf. II, 201.

> *of his Harmony, for the Purity, the Perspicuity, the Energy of his Expression; and* (whenever the following great Qualities are requir'd) for the Pomp and Solemnity and Majesty of his Style [66]

The most striking example of Dennis's ability to detect merit in a poem which fell entirely outside the scope of classical criticism is his profound admiration for Butler's *Hudibras*, which he placed in the category of burlesque poems, a type that was not held in high esteem during Dennis's lifetime.[67] His good sense prevented him from falling into the silly error of Dryden and Addison, who felt that the poem would have been better if it had been written in heroic couplets He saw that the rough and ready wit of *Hudibras* was of a piece with the rough and tumble tetrameter and the sometimes grotesque double or treble rhymes It is somewhat extraordinary that he should so far have overcome the prejudice of his age which favored a rather tame and colorless poetic diction as to praise the "vivacity and purity" in Butler's language "wherever it was fit it should be pure," [68] for to most of his contemporaries the vigorous, idiomatic English of *Hudibras* smacked of lowness and buffoonery The peculiar combination of wit, shrewd and realistic observation of men, good sense and homely wisdom, Dennis thought, raised *Hudibras* to the level of comedy, and on that level it was surpassed only by Wycherley's *Plain Dealer*.[69] His recognition of the literary merits of the poem may have been facilitated by the prestige of Boileau's *Lutrin*, but his admiration for it was genuine beyond doubt Much of it he knew by heart, and throughout his whole career an appropriate passage seems always to have been on the tip of his pen whenever he required an illustration

About John Oldham he says little, but what he does say goes straight to the point. Oldham, he thought, possessed wit and genius, and lacked delicacy and a good ear [70] Oldham's essentially manly spirit was born to lash the vices of his age, his rugged verse was suited to his masculine temper, and he disdained softness and tenderness, which would have required a smoother verse [71] Within his self-imposed limitations he succeeded admirably.

In the mode of the day Dennis showered lavish compliments upon certain of the noble lords and literary patrons who dabbled in poetry Praise con-

[66] Cf II, 400 To this tribute should be added another passage, perhaps less eloquent but even more discerning (II, 121)

> Mr *Dryden*, who had so many great Qualities, who refin'd the Language of our Rhyming Poetry, and improv'd its Harmony, who thought often, so finely, so justly, so greatly, so nobly, who had the Art of Reasoning very strongly in very elegant Verse and who of all our Rhyming Poets wrote beyond comparison with most Force, and with most Elevation, was often sacrific'd to his worthless Contemporaries

[67] Cf I, 432

[68] Cf I, 7

[69] *Ibid*

[70] Cf I, 29

[71] Cf I, 5

tained in dedicatory addresses was conventionally fulsome, and can hardly be regarded as literary criticism Accordingly we are entitled to discount some of the fervor in Dennis's praise of Buckinghamshire,[72] Lansdowne,[73] and Dorset.[74] Even in dedications he shows a little discrimination, however, for he compliments Dorset upon his taste and generosity (the latter of which was unquestionably one of his lordship's virtues) rather than his achievements in literature But his praise of Buckinghamshire was at least in part sincere, for he frequently quoted from the *Essay on Poetry* and he defended it vehemently against Welsted's attack[75] Equally extravagant and unfounded was his liking for Roscommon's *Essay on Translated Verse* and translation of Horace's *Ars Poetica*.[76] Both Roscommon and Buckinghamshire were famous for strings of stale commonplaces which passed for criticism and which were conveyed in mediocre (and somewhat pretentious) verse, the fact that most of Dennis's contemporaries were deceived about the merits of the poems does not entirely excuse his bad taste

Dennis's personal likes and dislikes were capable of leading his critical judgment astray, as we have seen in the case of Sir Richard Blackmore His long friendship with Rowe probably had something to do with his enthusiasm for that gentleman's translation of Lucan,[77] and his friendly relations with Theobald probably affected his judgment of the latter's translation of Aeschylus[78] No doubt his whiggish sympathies disposed him favorably toward Ambrose Philips, but in this instance his critical faculties did not desert him, he merely asserted that Philips "has excelled his Contemporaries, both *French* and *English*, in Pastoral"[79]—a judgment in which many sensible individuals would have concurred More serious than his overestimating weak or mediocre poetry is his disregard of good poetry For a few years, at least, he was on amiable terms with Prior, but he says nothing of the finished art of Prior's verse He expressed contempt for everything that Pope wrote, granting him only a certain knack of making smooth verses. He saw nothing of merit in the poetry of John Gay On the whole, his taste for the non-dramatic poetry of his contemporaries, with the exception of Milton, Dryden, Butler, and Oldham, leaves something to be desired

But if his taste for prose was weak, and his taste for non-dramatic verse was not always good, his taste for the drama was extraordinarily good. It is doubtful if any of his contemporaries approached Dennis's excellence in determining the worth of dramatists flourishing from 1660 to 1723

He was correct in feeling that his age was a period of comedy rather than tragedy. Only a few tragedies pleased him to a height, whereas there were

[72] Cf I, **201**
[73] Cf I, **294-295** and II, **2**
[74] Cf II, **379-380**
[75] Cf II, **290-292**
[76] Cf II, **289** and I, **4**
[77] Cf II, **135**
[78] Cf II, **376**
[79] Cf II **120**

many comedies which he admired. Of all the tragic poets he professed the greatest respect for Otway, though he recognized his limitations Otway, he said, "had a Faculty in touching the softer Passions beyond both Ancients and Moderns, if you except only *Euripides.*" [80] While he was greatly impressed by "the moving melting Tenderness" of Otway,[81] he was never tempted to rank him with Shakespeare, who was master of terror, one of the chief passions in the experience of the Sublime The *Orphan,* which he considered one of the best, as well as one of the most regular, of English tragedies,[82] excelled in its power of raising compassion, not terror.[83] His attitude toward Otway becomes clear in a comparison of Otway and Shakespeare Shakespeare had a genius for tragedy and a very good talent for comedy, Otway had a talent for both tragedy and comedy.[84] The distinction is a good one.

One quality which Otway lacked as a tragic poet Dennis found and admired in the works of Nathaniel Lee fire and enthusiasm [85] Lee's gifts for tragedy were as natural and unmistakable as were Etherege's for comedy [86] But though Dennis praised Lee's talents as a tragic poet he did not overestimate the virtues of Lee's tragedies *Caesar Borgia* appeared to him a lamentable performance,[87] Dryden was given credit for the chief virtues of the *Oedipus,*[88] and the *Rival Queens* seemed marred by false fury and fustian [89] Lee's very considerable abilities were manifest in occasional flashes rather than in the sustained power of an entire play This is by no means obtuse criticism

Concerning Nicholas Rowe as a dramatist, strangely enough, Dennis says nothing at all except that Cibber had unwisely rejected his *Ambitious Step-Mother,* which the critic presumably admired.[90] He mentions no plays by Southerne, apart from one somewhat disparaging reference to the *Spartan Dame,* but commends "that admirable Talent for touching the Passions which he has shewn in his Tragedies" [91] Lansdowne's *Heroick Love,* which he considered one of the best and most regular of English tragedies,[92] deserves rather less praise than Dennis was inclined to grant it, but it is not without genuine merit. As for Addison's *Cato,* regardless of his motives for attacking it, Dennis was fundamentally in the right It was pretentious and hollow. He saw no virtue in its observing the unities because it lost thereby the impression of probability Its chief character, Cato, was unsuited to the requirements of

[80] Cf II, **121**
[81] Cf II, **122**
[82] Cf II, **196**
[83] Cf II, **67**
[84] Cf I, **403**
[85] Cf II, **122**
[86] Cf II, **219**
[87] Cf II, **165**
[88] Cf I, **19**
[89] Cf II, **131**
[90] Cf II, **278**
[91] Cf I, **324**
[92] Cf II, **196**

tragedy, for as a more or less successful Stoic he had trained himself to be indifferent to the slings and arrows of fortune Moreover, the incidents relating to the loves of Lucia and Marcia, according to Dennis, were unnecessary and improbable, laden with delicate scruples and finicking sentiments ridiculously out of place The tragedy failed to move pity or terror

For having recognized the talents and limitations of Otway, for having discerned the gifts as well as the shortcomings of Dryden and Lee, for having commended the abilities in tragedy of Southerne and—by inference—of Rowe, and for having sounded the hollowness of *Cato,* as well as its dangerous excursions into sentimentality, Dennis is entitled to a large measure of credit Those whom he admired most for their achievements in tragedy were probably the ablest tragic poets of his age

His good judgment and sensitivity in criticising contemporary comedies and comic poets are no less noteworthy The authors of comedy whom he especially approved of were Wycherley, Dryden, Etherege, Buckingham, Shadwell, Crowne, Otway, Sir Robert Howard, Congreve and Vanbrugh With the possible exception of Sedley Farquhar Cibber, and Steele, one would not care to add to this list

His prime favorite was probably Wycherley, whose *Plain Dealer* he constantly referred to Although none of his contemporaries, he thought, had attained the excellence of Jonson in comedy [93] he still spoke of Wycherley with the deepest respect, admiring his command of wit and satire [94] The sharpness of Wycherley's satire, the almost savage earnestness found in certain passages of his plays, undoubtedly appealed to the critic's essentially stern and sober mind, but he was also aware of the playwright's gifts of realistic portrayal, of differentiating characters, and of composing dialogue characterized by sparkle and liveliness. He analyzes only one comedy by Wycherley, the *Plain Dealer,* but his brief comments upon this are so just and penetrating that we are convinced he understood the comic spirit and art of its author To the charge that Wycherley had confounded his characters by making them all equally witty Dennis replied that the playwright was obliged to make them witty because wit was a prevailing disease during the reign of Charles II, that there are different kinds of wit, and that Wycherley had given his fools, coxcombs, and men of sense each a kind of wit appropriate to his character [95] In his shrewd analysis of the famous scene between Olivia and Novel Dennis provides us with an approach to the Restoration comedy of manners which we cannot afford to overlook Although the scene appears to be charged with wit, a close inspection reveals that all the wit comes from the mouth of Olivia, yet by such devices as interruptions and quick retorts the effect of energy and vivacity is so well established that even Novel seems witty [96]

[93] *Ibid*
[94] Cf II, 122
[95] Cf II, 234
[96] *Ibid*

In 1695 Dennis wrote to Congreve, assuring him that he was, after Wycherley, the best writer of comedy then living.[97] His opinion of Congreve apparently was not altered by the dramatist's subsequent work. He honored Congreve for "the Humour and Spirit, and Art and Grace" of his plays.[98] In 1717 he paused in his *Remarks upon Pope's Homer* to pay his respect to *The Way of the World*,

> which besides that it was equal to most of the former [comedies of Congreve] in those pleasant Humours which the Laughers so much require, had some certain Scenes in it, which were writ with so much Grace and Delicacy, that they alone were worth an entire Comedy.[99]

It is clear from these few remarks alone that he was aware of signal differences between the two comic poets. The distinctive traits of Wycherley were wit, satire, and vivacity, those of Congreve, humour, grace, and delicacy. It was characteristic of Dennis that he should prefer the sober realism and the lively satire of Wycherley to the grace and delicacy of Congreve's art Though grace and delicacy, together with ease and elegance of dialogue, were elements of comedy that Dennis admired, they were not sufficient to compensate for a lack of moral purpose in the satire

It is a mark of Dennis's good sense that he recognized the excellence of Shadwell as a comic poet. As we have seen, he described *MacFlecknoe* as a beautiful libel, but a libel none the less Shadwell, he thought, "could not but have a true Taste of Comedy, since he was so just a Writer of it."[100] The "filth" of *Epsom Wells* was distasteful to him,[101] but he praised the *Squire of Alsatia* as a very good and entertaining comedy.[102] As a critic who proclaimed that humour is more important in comedy than wit, as an admirer of the didactic tone and the satiric earnestness of Ben Jonson, Dennis naturally inclined toward Shadwell, the champion of Jonson and the comedy of humours At a time when Shadwell was sunk in reputation Dennis maintained a characteristic independence of judgment, asserting that in comic poetry hasty Shadwell "was certainly very much superiour to Dryden."[103]

For Etherege Dennis felt a strong, but discriminating, admiration His defense of the *Man of Mode* was based upon three main contentions that the chief characters of the play were true to nature, that their manners reflected realistically the actual manners of their day, and that in its development of the *ridiculum*, especially in the character of Sir Fopling, the play held to the proper spirit of comedy Etherege, he admitted, displayed one serious deficiency, having little or no talent for managing a plot,[104] but to offset this

[97] Cf II, **385**
[98] Cf II, **122**
[99] Cf II, **121**
[100] Cf II, **232**
[101] Cf I, **303**
[102] Cf II, **261-262**
[103] Cf II, **201**
[104] Cf II, **245**

lack he came nearer than any other modern writer to achieving the charm and grace of Terence's dialogue [105] In 1722 Dennis saw no reason for abandoning the judgment which men of taste in the reign of Charles II had formed of Etherege, that his most distinguished gift was the art of dialogue—dialogue characterized by purity and simplicity, elegance, force and vivacity, together with the utmost grace and delicacy [106]

These four poets, Wycherley, Congreve, Shadwell, and Etherege, appeared to Dennis as the finest writers of comedy in his age It is possible that modern students of the Augustan drama would add a name or two to this list, but they would hardly subtract a name from it. And the list is the more imposing in that the reasons which Dennis gives for admiring the work of each writer are reasons that still appear valid

His short biographical account of John Crowne contains incidental comments on two of that author's comedies *City Politiques* struck him as an agreeable play, and with *Sir Courtly Nice* he was enraptured [107] The latter, though he saw in it neither the masculine satire of Wycherley nor the grace and charm of Etherege, still impressed him as being worthy of the greatest comic poet in any age On the subject of Colley Cibber he was heavily prejudiced and unfair, underestimating the future laureate's talents, yet he recognized that *Love's Last Shift,* probably Cibber's best, was an excellent comedy, good in structure, characterization, and dialogue [108] He credited Dryden and Otway with talents in comedy, but no one work of theirs in that *genre* seems to have impressed him, he mentions only Otway's *Souldiers Fortune,* and that merely for its bawdiness [109] Buckingham's *Rehearsal* was drawn upon frequently for quotation or illustration, but he seems to have regarded it primarily as an effective piece of criticism demonstrating his lordship's well-known wit He commended Vanbrugh as the author of several "very agreeable" comedies,[110] but said nothing more of them. His omission of Sedley from the list of good comic poets is somewhat surprising, he apparently thought of him as a wit and a man of taste,[111] and a lyric poet [112] For the omission of Farquhar's name no obvious explanation presents itself

In his criticism of Steele's work in comedy Dennis was as clearly prejudiced as in his remarks on Sir Richard's periodical essays Yet his shrewdness and good judgment are manifest in the midst of his prejudices Despite the fair face of the *Conscious Lovers* there is a disease rotting its bones, and Dennis saw the symptoms and diagnosed the disease. As Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch has observed, Dennis showed a good measure of penetration and sensitivity in

[105] Cf II, 161
[106] Cf II, 243
[107] Cf II, 405-406
[108] Cf II, 408
[109] Cf I, 303
[110] Cf II, 252
[111] Cf I, 279 and II, 118
[112] Cf II, 237

pointing out that the sort of comedy represented by the *Conscious Lovers* was neither realistic nor funny, and that therefore it was fundamentally bad [113] He confessed that he found the catastrophe of the play very moving,[114] but not even this consideration could blind him to the fact that Steele had proceeded on false ideas of virtue and false ideas of comedy Other contemporaries objected to Sir Richard's mingling tears with laughter, but none expressed the objections so clearly and cogently as Dennis

From this brief survey of Dennis's critical judgments of English men of letters a few noteworthy conclusions present themselves In the first place, he was, as I have intimated above, deficient in his feeling for good prose—and that in spite of the fact that his own prose was often bold, sinewy, clear, and vigorous, full of those virtues which the colloquially flavored, highly idiomatic prose of Eachard, Rymer, and Collier offer us In the second place, though he paid no attention to the true lyric, either because he had no ear for it or because he thought it was of trivial consequence, though he was blind to the value of the folk ballad, he was not lacking in taste for non-dramatic poetry as a whole Of the writers who flourished in his age he admired Milton, Dryden, Butler, Cowley, Waller, Denham, Rochester, Dorset, Oldham and Ambrose Philips Undoubtedly he overestimated the charms of Philips, just as he was overly impressed with the poems of Blackmore Roscommon, and Buckinghamshire Undoubtedly he was blind to the merits of Pope and Gay, and possibly of Prior Yet in the main he did well, and the fact that he wrote penetratingly and discriminatingly of poets so great and so different as Milton and Dryden testifies to his competence and to a reasonable breadth in his tastes In the third place, he was specially qualified by interest and by training as a critic of the drama, especially of comedy, and in this realm he was admirable Although his remarks on individual writers and on specific works were incidental to his chief purposes (to lay down and establish the principles of good writing, to defend the stage, and to shield the public taste from false lights), he has said enough to convince us that he could distinguish merit in the contemporary drama and, what is more, that he could define adequately the qualities which made up the excellence of particular writers In his criticism of non-dramatic poetry he was perhaps excessively attentive to such matters as rational intent, ethical purpose, form and construction, but in his criticism of comedy he was keenly aware of the artistic values of grace, charm, and delicacy—the more intangible values of art It is highly doubtful if another Augustan could be found who approaches Dennis as a dramatic critic in soundness and sensitivity

In the previous section I have tried to indicate that Dennis championed the rules not as a set of inviolable laws which every author must follow but as a set of principles designed to give direction, form, and compactness to a work of art In the review of his critical judgments of English men of letters it

[113] Cf II, 496 and 499
[114] Cf II, 267

should be apparent that he was not appreciably hampered by the rules. The rules were primarily concerned with dramatic poetry, and it was in his criticism of the drama that Dennis's finest talents as a critic were manifest Where Dennis was notably deficient (as in his feeling for prose, for the true lyric, and for the fairy way of writing), the best taste of his age was notably deficient. He did not, for the most part, diverge sharply from the taste of his age, but the aspects of Augustan taste and critical theory reflected in his writings do not suggest that his age was generally obtuse or insensitive.

Finally, one is entitled to observe that the picture of Dennis as a sour, snarling fellow so devoted to his picayune rules that he denounced the best art produced in his time is not even an amusing caricature It is a work of imagination, compounded of whimsey and a blissful disregard of the facts

AN ESSAY ON THE GENIUS AND WRITINGS OF SHAKESPEAR

1712

To the Right Honourable GEORGE GRANVILLE, *Esq*, Secretary at War.

SIR,

AN Address of this nature, made upon your Advancement to one of the principal Employments of the State, and made by one who has had the Honour to be known to you so many Years, might be pretended by malicious People to be a Homage rather to your Fortune and Power, than a due Respect to your Merit and Virtue, if it were not publickly known, that I formerly applied my self to you in the same manner, when you were much more distinguished by Merit and Virtue, than by Fortune and Power

But if any one farther maliciously urges, that, even when I formerly applied my self to you, by the distinguishing Qualities of your Mind and Person, I foresaw your Fortune and Power, to him I answer, in order to vindicate the Reputation of my Sincerity and my Disinterestedness, that tho' I saw very well that those great Qualities fitted Mr *Granville* for the most illustrious Employments, yet who could have ever imagin'd that any Man living had Merit enough to raise him in spight of so many unfortunate Virtues with which that Merit was attended, in spight of not only a true Poetical Genius, but a Frankness, a Probity, a matchless Integrity, a Sincerity worthy of Heroick Times, and a most untainted Honour?

But tho' your Character were less conspicuous, and what I had formerly done were intirely forgot, the numerous and powerful Obligations I have to you, would more than justify this Address, and the omitting the first Opportunity of making you a publick Acknowledgment would look like black Ingratitude You have taken such Care of my Interest with others at a most seasonable Conjuncture, and have your self made me a Present so noble, and so extraordinary, at a time when I stood most in need of it, that how few alive have Spirit and Magnanimity to do any thing like it? At least I defy any one to name that living Man, who in a private Capacity has done any thing like it

I know very well indeed that you are very far from desiring such a publick Acknowledgment, that you aim at nothing by doing daily good, but the God-like Pleasure which results from your Actions; and that others perhaps may censure me for sacrificing your Modesty to my own Vanity For to publish to the World that I have been oblig'd in an extraordinary manner by a Person so universally esteem'd and distinguish'd, that one of the very few Things in which the most violent of both Parties agree, is the Character of Mr. *Granville*, will be thought to be the Result of uncommon Vanity, by those who have not Goodness enough to believe it to be the Effect of a lively Gratitude.

But tho', Sir, I had no Obligation to you, and you had no other Merit but that of perfectly understanding an Art which you have perfectly practis'd

viz. the Art which is the Subject of the following Treatise, that Treatise would be by Right of Nature yours. For to whom can an Essay upon the Genius and Writings of *Shakespear* be so properly address'd, as to him who best understands *Shakespear*, and who has most improv'd him? I would not give this just Encomium to the *Jew of Venice*, if I were not convinc'd from a long Experience of the Penetration and Force of your Judgment, that no Exaltation can make you asham'd of your former noble Art; that you know it to be a Weakness barely to imagine, that the most noble and most exalted of all Arts, and the most difficult to excel in, can render a Man less qualified for publick Business, or for the first Employments of the State; that all the great Statesmen who have best succeeded in Affairs of Government, have either writ Poems, or Treatises concerning Poetry. The most ancient of Historians and Legislators, *Moses*, at least of those whose Laws and Histories remain, has given us a pathetick and a lofty Poem upon the Passage of the *Red Sea*.

The *Athenian* Legislator *Solon* thought it not in the least below his Dignity to render Moral Virtue lovely by the Charms of Verse And *Lacedemonian Lycurgus*, even the rigid and the austere *Lycurgus*, thought it an Employment worthy of his Wisdom and Virtue, to restore and publish the immortal Works of *Homer* Having the same Opinion of that Prince of Poets that *Horace* afterwards had, that his Poems would better instruct Mankind in Virtue than they could be possibly taught by Prose The most illustrious Writers of Politicks among the *Grecians, Plato* and *Aristotle*, one of them had a figurative a lofty and a Poetick Prose, and the other, who may be call'd the Legislator of *Parnassus*, wrote the Laws of Tragedy so exactly and so truly in Reason and Nature, that succeeding Criticks have writ justly and reasonably upon that Art no farther than they have adhered to their great Master's Notions *Tacitus*, the very Oracle of Modern Statesmen, has a Stile that is warm, and daring, and figurative, that is to say Poetick *Machiavel* the Prince of Modern Politicians, if we except but one of our own Country-men, wrote more than one Comedy, and more than one Poem has been attempted by our *British* Politician *Harrington* The two Princes of Poets may easily be proved to've been great Statesmen; *Homer* particularly made choice of a Moral, which in his Time, when *Greece* with the Islands of the *Ægæan* was divided into petty Sovereignties, was the fundamental Maxim of their Politicks and their true Interest, which Moral was, as *Sallust* afterwards express'd it, *Concordiâ res parvæ crescunt, Discordiâ maxima dilabuntur*, from whose noblest Poem you formerly gave us a Tragedy, in which, in Imitation of *Homer*, you are daring yet just, fiery yet regular, sublime yet natural and perspicuous, chast yet alluring, and easie yet strong and powerful.

But to come to the more active Part of Government, the greatest Monarchs and Captains and Ministers of State that ever were known in the World, either were or would have been great Poets When *Athens* flourish'd in all her Glory, their Poets and their famous Writers were they who directed their Counsels, and led their Armies to Battel *Alexander* read nothing but the Works of

Homer while he conquer'd the Orient. In *Rome*, the greatest Captain that flourish'd in the Time of the Commonwealth vouchsafed his Assistance to a Comick Poet And the two first *Cæsars* were proud to write Tragedies with those fatal Hands that were victorious over the Universe. *Mecænas*, at the Time that he was first Minister to the Emperor of the World, was not only the greatest Patron of the Muses that ever was, but endeavour'd to be himself a Poet. If we descend to Modern Times, *Richlieu*, who laid the Foundation of the *French* Greatness, wrote more than one Dramatick Poem, with that very right Hand which dictated to the Cabinets of so many Sovereign Princes, and directed the successful Motions of so many conquering Commanders. And that Greatness, which upon a *French* Poetick Foundation was in the Space of less than one Century rais'd to an insupportable Height, was in less than twenty Years sapp'd and undermin'd and overturn'd by a *British* Poetick Ministry It being undeniable, that several of the Persons who made the chief Figures in both the old and the new Ministry were Poets I make no doubt, Sir, but the time will come when you will be distinguish'd by the Wisdom and Reach of your Counsels, as much as you were formerly by the Spirit and Justness of your Writings For the very Virtues which we once were afraid would hinder your Advancement even in the most virtuous Court, are now like to preserve and support your Interest since you have had an Opportunity of publickly practising them so long 'Tis impossible to behold that Ardor, that Sincerity and that Alacrity, with which you every Day endeavour to do good to your Fellow-Creatures, without loving you, and without wishing, as well as hoping, that you may be the peculiar Care of Providence, which by advancing you to one of the most eminent Stations would provide for Thousands. But when we behold that Ardor, and that Alacrity, attended with such an attractive Sweetness, and such a manly Grace, and with a Nobility which God and Nature seem to have imprinted both on your Mind and Person, we have no longer Power over our selves, but give up all our Affections to you, and not only wish, but firmly believe that since God and Nature have given you those several Excellencies which were the undoubted Original of all Political Nobility, they have determin'd you to succeed to the most extensive Fortunes and Titles of your Noble Ancestors, which is warmly desir'd and earnestly expected by all who have the Honour to know you, but more especially by,

SIR,

Your most Oblig'd,
most Humble, and
most Faithful Servant,
JOHN DENNIS

On the Genius and Writings of SHAKESPEAR.
To Mr. ———

LETTER I

Feb. 1. 17$\frac{1}{4}$

SIR,

I Here send you the Tragedy of *Coriolanus*, which I have alter'd from the Original of *Shakespear*, and with it a short Account of the Genius and Writings of that Author, both which you desired me to send to you the last time I had the good Fortune to see you But I send them both upon this condition, that you will with your usual Sincerity tell me your Sentiments both of the Poem and of the Criticism

Shakespear was one of the greatest Genius's that the World e'er saw for the Tragick Stage Tho' he lay under greater Disadvantages than any of his Successors, yet had he greater and more genuine Beauties than the best and greatest of them And what makes the brightest Glory of his Character, those Beauties were entirely his own, and owing to the Force of his own Nature, whereas his Faults were owing to his Education, and to the Age that he liv'd in. One may say of him as they did of *Homer*, that he had none to imitate, and is himself immitable His Imaginations were often as just, as they were bold and strong He had a natural Discretion which never cou'd have been taught him, and his Judgment was strong and penetrating. He seems to have wanted nothing but Time and Leisure for Thought, to have found out those Rules of which he appears so ignorant His Characters are always drawn justly, exactly graphically, except where he fail'd by not knowing History or the Poetical Art He has for the most part more fairly distinguish'd them than any of his Successors have done, who have falsified them, or confounded them, by making Love the predominant Quality in all He had so fine a Talent for touching the Passions, and they are so lively in him, and so truly in Nature, that they often touch us more without their due Preparations, than those of other Tragick Poets, who have all the Beauty of Design and all the Advantage of Incidents His Master-Passion was Terror, which he has often mov'd so powerfully and so wonderfully, that we may justly conclude, that if he had had the Advantage of Art and Learning, he wou'd have surpass'd the very best and strongest of the Ancients His Paintings are often so beautiful and so lively, so graceful and so powerful, especially where he uses them in order to move Terror, that there is nothing perhaps more accomplish'd in our *English* Poetry. His Sentiments for the most part in his best Tragedies, are noble, generous, easie and natural, and adapted to the Persons who use them His Expression is in many Places good and pure after a hundred Years, simple tho' elevated, graceful tho' bold, and easie tho' strong He seems to have been the very Original of our *English* Tragical Harmony, that is the Harmony of Blank Verse, diversifyed often by Dissyllable and Trissyllable Terminations For that Diversity distinguishes it from Heroick Harmony, and bringing it nearer to common Use, makes it more proper to gain Attention, and more fit for Action and

Dialogue. Such Verse we make when we are writing Prose, we make such Verse in common Conversation

If *Shakespear* had these great Qualities by Nature, what would he not have been, if he had join'd to so happy a Genius Learning and the Poetical Art For want of the latter, our Author has sometimes made gross Mistakes in the Characters which he has drawn from History, against the Equality and Conveniency of Manners of his Dramatical Persons Witness *Menenius* in the following Tragedy, whom he has made an errant Buffoon, which is a great Absurdity For he might as well have imagin'd a grave majestick *Jack-Pudding,* as a Buffoon in a *Roman* Senator *Aufidius* the General of the *Volscians* is shewn a base and a profligate Villain. He has offended against the Equality of the Manners even in his Hero himself For *Coriolanus* who in the first part of the Tragedy is shewn so open, so frank, so violent, and so magnanimous, is represented in the latter part by *Aufidius,* which is contradicted by no one, a flattering, fawning, cringing, insinuating Traytor

For want of this Poetical Art, *Shakespear* has introduced things into his Tragedies, which are against the Dignity of that noble Poem, as the Rabble in *Julius Cæsar,* and that in *Coriolanus*, tho' that in *Coriolanus* offends not only against the Dignity of Tragedy, but against the Truth of History likewise, and the Customs of Ancient *Rome,* and the Majesty of the *Roman* People, as we shall have occasion to shew anon

For want of this Art, he has made his Incidents less moving, less surprizing, and less wonderful He has been so far from seeking those fine Occasions to move with which an Action furnish'd according to Art would have furnish'd him, that he seems rather to have industriously avoided them He makes *Coriolanus,* upon his Sentence of Banishment, take his leave of his Wife and his Mother out of sight of the Audience, and so has purposely as it were avoided a great occasion to move

If we are willing to allow, that *Shakespear* by sticking to the bare Events of History, has mov'd more than any of his Successors, yet his just Admirers must confess, that if he had had the Poetical Art, he would have mov'd ten times more For 'tis impossible that by a bare Historical Play he could move so much as he would have done by a Fable

We find that a Romance entertains the generality of Mankind with more Satisfaction than History, if they read only to be entertain'd; but if they read History thro' Pride or Ambition, they bring their Passions along with them, and that alters the case Nothing is more plain than that even in an Historical Relation some Parts of it, and some Events, please more than others. And therefore a Man of Judgment, who sees why they do so, may in forming a Fable, and disposing an Action, please more than an Historian can do For the just Fiction of a Fable moves us more than an Historical Relation can do, for the two following Reasons First, by reason of the Communication and mutual Dependence of its Parts. For if Passion springs from Motion, then the Obstruction of that Motion or a counter Motion must obstruct and check the Passion And therefore an Historian and a Writer of Historical Plays

passing from Events of one nature to Events of another nature without a due Preparation, must of necessity stifle and confound one Passion by another The second Reason why the Fiction of a Fable pleases us more, than an Historical Relation can do, is, because in an Historical Relation we seldom are acquainted with the true Causes of Events, whereas in a feign'd Action which is duly constituted, that is, which has a just beginning, those Causes always appear. For 'tis observable, that both in a Poetical Fiction and an Historical Relation, those Events are the most entertaining, the most surprizing, and the most wonderful, in which Providence most plainly appears. And 'tis for this Reason that the Author of a just Fable, must please more than the Writer of an Historical Relation The Good must never fail to prosper, and the Bad must be always punish'd Otherwise the Incidents, and particularly the Catastrophe which is the grand Incident, are liable to be imputed rather to Chance than to Almighty Conduct and to Sovereign Justice The want of this impartial Distribution of Justice makes the *Coriolanus* of *Shakespear* to be without Moral 'Tis true indeed *Coriolanus* is kill'd by those Foreign Enemies with whom he had openly sided against his Country, which seems to be an Event worthy of Providence, and would look as if it were contriv'd by infinite Wisdom, and executed by supreme Justice, to make *Coriolanus* a dreadful Example to all who lead on Foreign Enemies to the Invasion of their native Country, if there were not something in the Fate of the other Characters, which gives occasion to doubt of it, and which suggests to the Sceptical Reader that this might happen by accident For *Aufidius* the principal Murderer of *Coriolanus,* who in cold Blood gets him assassinated by Ruffians, instead of leaving him to the Law of the Country, and the Justice of the *Volscian* Senate, and who commits so black a Crime, not by any erroneous Zeal, or a mistaken publick Spirit, but thro' Jealousy, Envy, and inveterate Malice, this Assassinator not only survives, and survives unpunish'd, but seems to be rewarded for so detestable an Action, by engrossing all those Honours to himself which *Coriolanus* before had shar'd with him But not only *Aufidius,* but the *Roman* Tribunes, *Sicinius* and *Brutus,* appear to me to cry aloud for Poetick Vengeance For they are guilty of two Faults, neither of which ought to go unpunish'd The first in procuring the Banishment of *Coriolanus* If they were really jealous, that *Coriolanus* had a Design on their Liberties, when he stood for the Consulship, it was but just that they should give him a Repulse, but to get the Champion and Defender of their Country banish'd upon a pretended Jealousy was a great deal too much, and could proceed from nothing but that Hatred and Malice which they had conceiv'd against him, for opposing their Institution. Their second Fault lay in procuring this Sentence by indirect Methods, by exasperating and inflaming the People by Artifices and Insinuations, by taking a base Advantage of the Open-heartedness and Violence of *Coriolanus,* and by oppressing him with a Sophistical Argument, that he aim'd at Sovereignty, because he had not delivered into the Publick Treasury the Spoils which he had taken from the *Antiates.* As if a Design of Sovereignty could be reasonably concluded from any one Act; or any one could think of bringing to pass

such a Design, by eternally favouring the Patricians, and disobliging the Populace. For we need make no doubt, but that it was among the young Patricians that *Coriolanus* distributed the Spoils which were taken from the *Antiates*; whereas nothing but caressing the Populace could enslave the *Roman* People, as Cæsar afterwards very well saw and experienc'd So that this Injustice of the Tribunes was the original Cause of the Calamity which afterwards befel their Country, by the Invasion of the *Volscians*, under the Conduct of *Coriolanus*. And yet these Tribunes at the end of the Play, like *Aufidius*, remain unpunish'd. But indeed *Shakespear* has been wanting in the exact Distribution of Poetical Justice not only in his *Coriolanus*, but in most of his best Tragedies, in which the Guilty and the Innocent perish promiscuously, as *Duncan* and *Banquo* in *Mackbeth*, as likewise Lady *Macduffe* and her Children, *Desdemona* in *Othello*, *Cordelia*, *Kent*, and King *Lear*, in the Tragedy that bears his Name, *Brutus* and *Porcia* in *Julius Cæsar*, and young *Hamlet* in the Tragedy of *Hamlet*. For tho' it may be said in Defence of the last, that *Hamlet* had a Design to kill his Uncle who then reign'd, yet this is justify'd by no less than a Call from Heaven, and raising up one from the Dead to urge him to it The Good and the Bad then perishing promiscuously in the best of *Shakespear*'s Tragedies, there can be either none or very weak Instruction in them For such promiscuous Events call the Government of Providence into Question, and by Scepticks and Libertines are resolv'd into Chance. I humbly conceive therefore that this want of Dramatical Justice in the Tragedy of *Coriolanus*, gave occasion for a just Alteration, and that I was oblig'd to sacrifice to that Justice *Aufidius* and the Tribunes, as well as *Coriolanus*

Thus have we endeavour'd to shew, that for want of the Poetical Art, *Shakespear* lay under very great Disadvantages At the same time we must own to his Honour, that he has often perform'd Wonders without it, in spight of the Judgment of so great a Man as *Horace*.

> *Naturâ fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,*
> *Quæsitum est ego nec studium sinè divite venâ,*
> *Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium, alterius sic*
> *Altera poscit opem res, & conjurat amicè*

But from this very Judgment of *Horace* we may justly conclude, that *Shakespear* would have wonderfully surpass'd himself, if Art had been join'd to Nature There never was a greater Genius in the World than *Virgil* He was one who seems to have been born for this glorious End, that the *Roman* Muse might exert in him the utmost Force of her Poetry And his admirable and divine Beauties are manifestly owing to the happy Confederacy of Art and Nature It was Art that contriv'd that incomparable Design of the *Æneis*, and it was Nature that executed it. Could the greatest Genius that ever was infus'd into Earthly Mold by Heaven, if it had been unguided and unassisted by Art, have taught him to make that noble and wonderful Use of the *Pythagorean* Transmigration, which he makes in the Sixth Book of his Poem? Had *Virgil* been a circular Poet, and closely adher'd to History, how could the

Romans have been transported with that immitable Episode of *Dido*, which brought a-fresh into their Minds the *Carthaginian* War, and the dreadful *Hannibal*? When 'tis evident that that admirable Episode is so little owing to a faithful observance of History, and the exact order of Time, that 'tis deriv'd from a very bold but judicious Violation of these; it being undeniable that *Dido* liv'd almost 300 Years after *Æneas* Yet is it that charming Episode that makes the chief Beauties of a third Part of the Poem. For the Destruction of *Troy* it self, which is so divinely related, is still more admirable by the Effect it produces, which is the Passion of *Dido*

I should now proceed to shew under what Disadvantages *Shakespear* lay for want of being conversant with the Ancients. But I have already writ a long Letter, and am desirous to know how you relish what has been already said before I go any farther For I am unwilling to take more Pains before I am sure of giving you some Pleasure. I am,

SIR,

Your most humble, faithful Servant

LETTER II

Feb 6, 17$\frac{1}{11}$.

SIR,

UPON the Encouragement I have receiv'd from you, I shall proceed to shew under what Disadvantages *Shakespear* lay for want of being conversant with the Ancients But because I have lately been in some Conversation, where they would not allow, but that he was acquainted with the Ancients, I shall endeavour to make it appear that he was not, and the shewing that in the Method in which I pretend to convince the Reader of it, will sufficiently prove, what Inconveniencies he lay under, and what Errors he committed for want of being conversant with them But here we must distinguish between the several kinds of Acquaintance A Man may be said to be acquainted with another who never was but twice in his Company, but that is at the best a superficial Acquaintance, from which neither very great Pleasure nor Profit can be deriv'd. Our Business is here to shew, that *Shakespear* had no familiar Acquaintance with the *Græcian* and *Roman* Authors For if he was familiarly conversant with them, how comes it to pass that he wants Art? Is it that he studied to know them in other things, and neglected that only in them, which chiefly tends to the Advancement of the Art of the Stage? Or is it that he wanted Discernment to see the Justness, and the Greatness, and the Harmony of their Designs, and the Reasonableness of those Rules upon which those Designs are founded? Or how come his Successors to have that Discernment which he wanted, when they fall so much below him in other things? How comes he to have been guilty of the grossest Faults in Chronology, and how come we to find out those Faults? In his Tragedy of *Troylus* and *Cressida*, he introduces *Hector* speaking of *Aristotle*, who was born a thousand Years after the Death of *Hector* In the same Play mention is made of *Milo*, which is another very great Fault in Chronology. *Alexander* is mention'd in *Corio-*

lanus, tho' that Conqueror of the Orient liv'd above two hundred Years after him. In this last Tragedy he has mistaken the very Names of his Dramatick Persons, if we give Credit to *Livy.* For the Mother of *Coriolanus* in the *Roman* Historian is *Vetturia,* and the Wife is *Volumnia* Whereas in *Shakespear* the Wife is *Virgilia,* and the Mother *Volumnia.* And the *Volscian* General in *Shakespear* is *Tullus Aufidius,* and *Tullus Attius* in *Livy.* How comes it that he takes *Plutarch's* Word, who was by Birth a *Grecian,* for the Affairs of *Rome,* rather than that of the *Roman* Historian, if so be that he had read the latter? Or what Reason can be given for his not reading him, when he wrote upon a *Roman* Story, but that in *Shakespear's* time there was a Translation of *Plutarch,* and there was none of *Livy?* If *Shakespear* was familiarly conversant with the *Roman* Authors, how came he to introduce a Rabble into *Coriolanus,* in which he offended not only against the Dignity of Tragedy, but the Truth of Fact, the Authority of all the *Roman* Writers, the Customs of Ancient *Rome,* and the Majesty of the *Roman* People? By introducing a Rabble into *Julius Cæsar,* he only offended against the Dignity of Tragedy For that part of the People who ran about the Streets upon great Festivals, or publick Calamities, or publick Rejoicings, or Revolutions in Government, are certainly the Scum of the Populace But the Persons who in the Time of *Coriolanus,* rose in Vindication of their just Rights, and extorted from the Patricians the Institution of the Tribunes of the People, and the Persons by whom afterwards *Coriolanus* was tried, were the whole Body of the *Roman* People to the Reserve of the Patricians, which Body included the *Roman* Knights, and the wealthy substantial Citizens, who were as different from the Rabble as the Patricians themselves, as qualify'd as the latter to form a right Judgment of Things, and to contemn the vain Opinions of the Rabble. So at least *Horace* esteems them, who very well knew his Countrymen.

> *Offenduntur enim, quibus est equus, aut pater, aut res,*
> *Nec si quid fricti ciceris probat aut nucis emptor,*
> *Æquis accipiunt animis donantve Corona?*

Where we see the Knights and the substantial Citizens are rank'd in an equal Degree of Capacity with the *Roman* Senators, and are equally distinguish'd from the Rabble

If *Shakespear* was so conversant with the Ancients, how comes he to have introduc'd some Characters into his Plays, so unlike what they are to be found in History? In the Character of *Menenius* in the following Tragedy, he has doubly offended against that Historical Resemblance. For first whereas *Menenius* was an eloquent Person, *Shakespear* has made him a downright Buffoon And how is it possible for any Man to conceive a *Ciceronian Jack-pudding?* Never was any Buffoon eloquent, or wise, or witty, or virtuous All the good and ill Qualities of a Buffoon are summ'd up in one Word, and that is a Buffoon. And secondly, whereas *Shakespear* has made him a Hater and Contemner and Villifier of the People, we are assur'd by the *Roman* Historian that *Menenius* was extremely popular. He was so very far from

opposing the Institution of the Tribunes, as he is represented in *Shakespear*, that he was chiefly instrumental in it. After the People had deserted the City, and sat down upon the sacred Mountain, he was the chief of the Delegates whom the Senate deputed to them, as being look'd upon to be the Person who would be most agreeable to them In short, this very *Menenius* both liv'd and dy'd so very much their Favourite, that dying poor he had pompous Funerals at the Expence of the *Roman* People

Had *Shakespear* read either *Sallust* or *Cicero*, how could he have made so very little of the first and greatest of Men, as that *Cæsar* should be but a Fourth-rate Actor in his own Tragedy? How could it have been that seeing *Cæsar*, we should ask for *Cæsar*? That we should ask, where is his unequall'd Greatness of Mind, his unbounded Thirst of Glory, and that victorious Eloquence, with which he triumph'd over the Souls of both Friends, and Enemies, and with which he rivall'd *Cicero* in Genius as he did *Pompey* in Power? How fair an Occasion was there to open the Character of *Cæsar* in the first Scene between *Brutus* and *Cassius*? For when *Cassius* tells *Brutus* that *Cæsar* was but a Man like them, and had the same natural Imperfections which they had, how natural had it been for *Brutus* to reply, that *Cæsar* indeed had their Imperfections of Nature, but neither he nor *Cassius* had by any means the great Qualities of *Cæsar* neither his Military Virtue, nor Science, nor his matchless Renown, nor his unparallell'd Victories, his unwearied Bounty to his Friends, nor his Godlike Clemency to his Foes, his Beneficence, his Munificence, his Easiness of Access to the meanest *Roman*, his indefatigable Labours, his incredible Celerity, the Plausibleness if not Justness of his Ambition, that knowing himself to be the greatest of Men, he only sought occasion to make the World confess him such In short, if *Brutus*, after enumerating all the wonderful Qualities of *Cæsar*, had resolv'd in spight of them all to sacrifice him to publick Liberty, how had such a Proceeding heighten'd the Virtue and the Character of *Brutus*? But then indeed it would have been requisite that *Cæsar* upon his Appearance should have made all this good And as we know no Principle of human Action but human Sentiment only, *Cæsar* who did greater Things, and had greater Designs than the rest of the *Romans*, ought certainly to have outshin'd by many Degrees all the other Characters of his Tragedy. *Cæsar* ought particularly to have justified his Actions, and to have heighten'd his Character, by shewing that what he had done, he had done by Necessity, that the *Romans* had lost their *Agrarian*, lost their Rotation of Magistracy, and that consequently nothing but an empty Shadow of publick Liberty remain'd That the *Gracchi* had made the last noble but unsuccessful Efforts, for the restoring the Commonwealth, that they had fail'd for want of arbitrary irresistible Power, the Restoration of the *Agrarian* requiring too vast a Retrospect to be done without it, that the Government, when *Cæsar* came to publick Affairs, was got into the Hands of a few, and that those few were factious, and were contending among themselves, and if you will pardon so mean an Expression, scrambling as it were for Power That *Cæsar* was reduc'd to the Necessity of ruling, or himself obeying a Master, and that

apprehending that another would exercise the supreme Command, without that Clemency and Moderation which he did, he had rather chosen to rule than to obey. So that *Cæsar* was faulty not so much in seizing upon the Sovereignty, which was become in a manner necessary, as in not re-establishing the Commonwealth, by restoring the *Agrarian* and the Rotation of Magistracies, after he had got absolute and uncontroulable Power And if *Cæsar* had seiz'd upon the Sovereignty only with a View of re-establishing Liberty, he had surpass'd all Mortals in Godlike Goodness as much as he did in the rest of his astonishing Qualities I must confess, I do not remember that we have any Authority from the *Roman* Historians which may induce us to believe, that *Cæsar* had any such Design Nor if he had had any such View, could he, who was the most secret, the most prudent, and the most discerning of Men, have discover'd it, before his *Parthian* Expedition was over, for fear of utterly disobliging his Veterans And *Cæsar* believ'd that Expedition necessary for the Honour and Interest of the State, and for his own Glory

But of this we may be sure, that two of the most discerning of all the *Romans*, and who had the deepest Insight into the Soul of *Cæsar*, *Sallust* and *Cicero*, were not without Hopes that *Cæsar* would really re-establish Liberty, or else they would not have attack'd him upon it, the one in his Oration for *Marcus Marcellus*, the other in the Second Part of that little Treatise *De Republicâ ordinandâ*, which is address'd to *Cæsar* *Hæc igitur tibi reliqua pars*, says *Cicero*, *Hic restat Actus, in hoc elaborandum est, ut Rempublicam constituas, eâque tu in primis compositâ, summa Tranquillitate & otio perfruare* *Cicero* therefore was not without Hope that *Cæsar* would re-establish the Commonwealth, and any one who attentively peruses that Oration of *Cicero*, will find that that Hope was reasonably grounded, upon his knowledge of the great Qualities of *Cæsar*, his Clemency, his Beneficence, his admirable Discernment, and that avoidless Ruine in which the whole Empire would be soon involv'd, if *Cæsar* did not effect this *Sallust* urges it still more home to him and with greater vehemence, he has recourse to every Motive that may be thought to be powerful over so great a Soul He exhorts him by the Memory of his matchless Conquests, not to suffer the invincible Empire of the *Roman* People to be devour'd by Time, or to be torn in pieces by Discord, one of which would soon and infallibly happen, if Liberty was not restor'd

He introduces his Country and his Progenitors urging him in a noble Prosopopeia, by all the mighty Benefits which they had conferr'd upon him, with so little Pains of his own, not to deny them that just and easy Request of the Restoration of Liberty He adjures him by those Furies which will eternally haunt his Soul upon his impious Refusal He implores him by the foresight of those dismal Calamities, that horrible Slaughter, those endless Wars, and that unbounded Devastation, which will certainly fall upon Mankind, if the Restoration of Liberty is prevented by his Death, or his incurable Sickness And lastly, he entreats him by his Thirst of immortal Glory, that Glory in which he now has Rivals, if he has not Equals, but which, if he

re-establishes Liberty, will be acknowledg'd by consenting Nations to have neither Equal nor Second.

I am apt to believe that if *Shakespear* had been acquainted with all this, we had had from him quite another Character of *Cæsar* than that which we now find in him He might then have given us a Scene something like that which *Corneille* has so happily us'd in his *Cinna*, something like that which really happen'd between *Augustus, Mecænas* and *Agrippa*. He might then have introduc'd *Cæsar,* consulting *Cicero* on the one side, and on the other *Anthony,* whether he should retain that absolute Sovereignty, which he had acquir'd by his Victory, or whether he should re-establish and immortalize Liberty. That would have been a Scene, which might have employ'd the finest Art and the utmost force of a Writer That had been a Scene in which all the great Qualities of *Cæsar* might have been display'd I will not pretend to determine here how that Scene might have been turn'd, and what I have already said on this Subject, has been spoke with the utmost Caution and Diffidence But this I will venture to say, that if that Scene had been manag'd so, as, by the powerful Motives employ'd in it, to have shaken the Soul of *Cæsar,* and to have left room for the least Hope for the least Doubt, that *Cæsar* would have re-establish'd Liberty, after his *Parthian* Expedition, and if this Conversation had been kept secret till the Death of *Cæsar,* and then had been discover'd by *Anthony,* then had *Cæsar* fall'n, so belov'd and lamented by the *Roman* People, so pitied and so bewail'd even by the Conspirators themselves, as never Man fell. Then there would have been a Catastrophe the most dreadful and the most deplorable that ever was beheld upon the Tragick Stage Then had we seen the noblest of the Conspirators cursing their temerarious Act, and the most apprehensive of them, in dreadful expectation of those horrible Calamities, which fell upon the *Romans* after the Death of *Cæsar* But, Sir, when I write this to you, I write it with the utmost Deference to the extraordinary Judgment of that great Man, who some Years ago, I hear alter'd the *Julius Cæsar* And I make no doubt but that his fine Discernment, and the rest of his great Qualities have amply supply'd the Defects which are found in the Character of *Shakespear's Cæsar*

I should here answer an Argument, by which some People pretend to prove, and especially those with whom I lately convers'd, that *Shakespear* was conversant with the Ancients But besides that the Post is about to be gone, I am heartily tir'd with what I have already writ, and so doubtless are you, I shall therefore defer the rest to the next opportunity, and remain

Your, *&c.*

LETTER III

Feb. 8

SIR,

I Come now to the main Argument, which some People urge to prove that *Shakespear* was conversant with the Ancients. For there is, say they, among *Shakespear's* Plays, one call'd *The Comedy of Errors,* which is undeniably an

Imitation of the *Menechmi* of *Plautus* Now *Shakespear*, say they, being conversant with *Plautus*, it undeniably follows that he was acquainted with the Ancients; because no *Roman* Author could be hard to him who had conquer'd *Plautus* To which I answer, that the Errors which we have mention'd above are to be accounted for no other way, but by the want of knowing the Ancients, or by downright want of Capacity But nothing can be more absurd or more unjust than to impute it to want of Capacity For the very Sentiments of *Shakespear* alone are sufficient to shew, that he had a great Understanding And therefore we must account some other way for his Imitation of the *Menechmi* I remember to have seen among the Translations of *Ovid*'s Epistles printed by Mr. *Tonson*, an Imitation of that from *OEnone* to *Paris*, which Mr. *Dryden* tells us in his Preface to those Epistles was imitated by one of the Fair Sex who understood no *Latin*, but that she had done enough to make those blush who understood it the best There are at this day several Translators, who, as *Hudibrass* has it,

> *Translate from Languages of which*
> *They understand no part of Speech.*

I will not affirm that of *Shakespear*, I believe he was able to do what Pedants call construe, but that he was able to read *Plautus* without Pain and Difficulty I can never believe Now I appeal to you, Sir, what time he had between his Writing and his Acting, to read any thing that could not be read with Ease and Pleasure We see that our Adversaries themselves acknowledge, that if *Shakespear* was able to read *Plautus* with Ease, nothing in Latinity could be hard to him How comes it to pass then, that he has given us no Proofs of his familiar Acquaintance with the Ancients, but this Imitation of the *Menechmi*, and a Version of two Epistles of *Ovid*? How comes it that he had never read *Horace*, of a superiour Merit to either, and particularly his Epistle to the *Piso's*, which so much concern'd his Art? Or if he had read that Epistle, how comes it that in his *Troylus* and *Cressida* [we must observe by the way, that when *Shakespear* wrote that Play, *Ben Johnson* had not as yet translated that Epistle] he runs counter to the Instructions which *Horace* has given for the forming the Character of *Achilles*?

> *Scriptor Honoratum si forte reponis Achillem,*
> *Impiger, Iracundus, Inexorabilis, Acer,*
> *Jura neget sibi nata*

Where is the *Impiger*, the *Iracundus*, or the *Acer*, in the Character of *Shakespear's Achilles*? who is nothing but a drolling, lazy, conceited, overlooking Coxcomb, so far from being the honour'd *Achilles*, the Epithet that *Homer*, and *Horace* after him give him, that he is deservedly the Scorn and the Jest of the rest of the Characters, even to that Buffoon *Thersites*.

Tho' *Shakespear* succeeded very well in Comedy, yet his principal Talent and his chief Delight was Tragedy. If then *Shakespear* was qualify'd to read *Plautus* with Ease, he could read with a great deal more Ease the Transla-

tions of *Sophocles* and *Euripides* And tho' by these Translations he would not have been able to have seen the charming colouring of those great Masters yet would he have seen all the Harmony and the Beauty of their great and their just Designs He would have seen enough to have stirr'd up a noble Emulation in so exalted a Soul as his How comes it then that we hear nothing from him, of the *OEdipus,* the *Electra,* the *Antigone* of *Sophocles,* of the *Iphigenia's,* the *Orestes,* the *Medea,* the *Hecuba* of *Euripides*? How comes it that we see nothing in the Conduct of his Pieces, that shews us that he had the least Acquaintance with any of these great Master-pieces? Did *Shakespear* appear to be so nearly touch'd with the Affliction of *Hecuba* for the Death of *Priam,* which was but daub'd and bungled by one of his Countrymen, that he could not forebear introducing it as it were by Violence into his own *Hamlet,* and would he make no Imitation, no Commendation, not the least Mention of the unparallell'd and inimitable Grief of the *Hecuba* of *Euripides*? How comes it, that we find no Imitation of any ancient Play in Him but the *Menechmi* of *Plautus*? How came he to chuse a Comick preferably to the Tragick Poets? Or how comes he to chuse *Plautus* preferably to *Terence,* who is so much more just, more graceful, more regular, and more natural? Or how comes he to chuse the *Menechmi* of *Plautus,* which is by no means his Master-piece, before all his other Comedies? I vehemently suspect that this Imitation of the *Menechmi,* was either from a printed Translation of that Comedy which is lost, or some Version in Manuscript brought him by a Friend, or sent him perhaps by a Stranger, or from the original Play it self recommended to him, and read to him by some learned Friend In short, I had rather account for this, by what is not absurd than by what is, or by a less Absurdity than by a greater For nothing can be more wrong than to conclude from this that *Shakespear* was conversant with the Ancients, which contradicts the Testimony of his Contemporary, and his familiar Acquaintance *Ben Johnson,* and of his Successor *Milton*,

> *Lo* Shakespear, *Fancy's sweetest Child,*
> *Warbles his native Wood-notes wild*

and of Mr *Dryden* after them both, and which destroys the most glorious Part of *Shakespear's* Merit immediately For how can he be esteem'd equal by Nature, or superior to the Ancients, when he falls so far short of them in Art, tho' he had the Advantage of knowing all that they did before him? Nay it debases him below those of common Capacity, by reason of the Errors which we mention'd above Therefore he who allows that *Shakespear* had Learning and a familiar Acquaintance with the Ancients, ought to be look'd upon as a Detractor from his extraordinary Merit, and from the Glory of *Great Britain* For whether is it more honourable for this Island to have produc'd a Man, who without having any Acquaintance with the Ancients, or any but a slender and a superficial one, appears to be their Equal or their Superiour by the Force of Genius and Nature, or to have bred one who knowing the Ancients, falls infinitely short of them in Art, and consequently in Nature it self? *Great*

Britain has but little Reason to boast of its Natives Education, since the same that they had here, they might have had in another place But it may justly claim a very great share in their Nature and Genius; since these depend in a great measure on the Climate, and therefore *Horace* in the Instruction which he gives for the forming the Characters, advises the noble *Romans* for whose Instruction he chiefly writes to consider whether the Dramatick Person whom they introduce is

Colchus an Assyrius, Thebis nutritus an Argis

Thus, Sir, I have endeavour'd to shew under what great Disadvantages *Shakespear* lay, for want of the Poetical Art, and for want of being conversant with the Ancients

But besides this, he lay under other very great Inconveniencies. For he was neither Master of Time enough to consider, correct, and polish what he wrote, to alter it, to add to it, and to retrench from it, nor had he Friends to consult upon whose Capacity and Integrity he could depend And tho' a Person of very good Judgment, may succeed very well without consulting his Friends if he takes time enough to correct what he writes, yet even the greatest Man that Nature and Art can conspire to accomplish, can never attain to Perfection, without either employing a great deal of time, or taking the Advice of judicious Friends Nay, 'tis the Opinion of *Horace,* that he ought to do both

Si quid tamen olim
Scripseris, in Metii descendat Judicis aures,
Et Patris, & nostras, nonumque prematur in Annum

Now we know very well that *Shakespear* was an Actor, at a time when there were seven or eight Companies of Players in the Town together, who each of them did their utmost Endeavours to get the Audiences from the rest, and consequently that our Author was perpetually call'd upon, by those who had the Direction and Management of the Company to which he belong'd, for new Pieces which might be able to support them, and give them some Advantage over the rest And 'tis easie to judge what Time he was Master of, between his laborious Employment of Acting, and his continual Hurry of Writing As for Friends, they whom in all likelihood *Shakespear* consulted most, were two or three of his Fellow-Actors, because they had the Care of publishing his Works committed to them Now they, as we are told by *Ben Johnson* in his *Discoveries,* were extremely pleas'd with their Friend for scarce ever making a Blot, and were very angry with *Ben,* for saying he wish'd that he had made a thousand The Misfortune of it is, that *Horace* was perfectly of *Ben's* mind

Vos O,
Pomplius sanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod non
Multa dies, & multa litura coercuit, atque
Præsectum decies non castigavit ad unguem

And so was my Lord *Roscommon.*

> *Poets lose half the Praise they should have got,*
> *Could it be known what they discreetly blot*

These Friends then of *Shakespear* were not qualify'd to advise him. As for *Ben Johnson,* besides that *Shakespear* began to know him late, and that *Ben* was not the most communicative Person in the World of the Secrets of his Art, he seems to me to have had no right Notion of Tragedy. Nay, so far from it, that he who was indeed a very great Man, and who has writ Comedies, by which he has born away the Prize of Comedy both from Ancients and Moderns, and been an Honour to *Great Britain*, and who has done this without any Rules to guide him, except what his own incomparable Talent dictated to him, This extraordinary Man has err'd so grossly in Tragedy, of which there were not only stated Rules, but Rules which he himself had often read, and had even translated, that he has chosen two Subjects, which, according to those very Rules, were utterly incapable of exciting either Compassion or Terror for the principal Characters, which yet are the chief Passions that a Tragick Poet ought to endeavour to excite So that *Shakespear* having neither had Time to correct, nor Friends to consult, must necessarily have frequently left such faults in his Writings, for the Correction of which either a great deal of Time or a judicious and a well-natur'd Friend is indispensably necessary

> *Vir bonus & prudens versus reprehendet inertes*
> *Culpabit duros, incomptis allinet Atrum*
> *Transverso calamo signum, ambitiosa recidet,*
> *Ornamenta, parum claris lucem dare coget,*
> *Arguet ambigue dictum, mutanda notabit*

There is more than one Example of every kind of these Faults in the Tragedies of *Shakespear,* and even in the *Coriolanus* There are Lines that are utterly void of that celestial Fire, of which *Shakespear* is sometimes Master in so great a Degree And consequently there are Lines that are stiff and forc'd, and harsh and unmusical, tho' *Shakespear* had naturally an admirable Ear for the Numbers But no Man ever was very musical who did not write with Fire, and no Man can always write with Fire, unless he is so far Master of his Time, as to expect those Hours when his Spirits are warm and volatile *Shakespear* must therefore sometimes have Lines which are neither strong nor graceful For who ever had Force or Grace that had not Spirit? There are in his *Coriolanus,* among a great many natural and admirable Beauties, three or four of those Ornaments which *Horace* would term ambitious, and which we in *English* are apt to call Fustian or Bombast. There are Lines in some Places which are very obscure, and whole Scenes which ought to be alter'd

I have, Sir, employ'd some Time and Pains, and that little Judgment which I have acquir'd in these Matters by a long and a faithful reading both of Ancients and Moderns, in adding, retrenching and altering several Things in the *Coriolanus* of *Shakespear,* but with what Success I must leave to be deter-

min'd by you. I know very well that you will be surpriz'd to find, that after all that I have said in the former Part of this Letter, against *Shakespear's* introducing the Rabble into *Coriolanus*, I have not only retain'd in the second Act of the following Tragedy the Rabble which is in the Original, but deviated more from the *Roman* Customs than *Shakespear* had done before me. I desire you to look upon it as a voluntary Fault and a Trespass against Conviction 'Tis one of those Things which are *ad Populum Phaleræ*, and by no means inserted to please such Men as you

Thus, Sir, have I laid before you a short but impartial Account of the Beauties and Defects of *Shakespear*, with an Intention to make these Letters publick if they are approv'd by you, to teach some People to distinguish between his Beauties and his Defects, that while they imitate the one, they may with Caution avoid the other [there being nothing of more dangerous Contagion to Writers, and especially to young ones, than the Faults of great Masters] and while with *Milton* they applaud the great Qualities which *Shakespear* had by Nature, they may follow his wise Example, and form themselves as he assures us that he himself did, upon the Rules and Writings of the Ancients

Sir, if so candid and able a Judge as your self shall happen to approve of this Essay in the main, and to excuse and correct my Errors, that Indulgence and that Correction will not only encourage me to make these Letters publick, but will enable me to bear the Reproach of those, who would fix a Brand, even upon the justest Criticism, as the Effect of Envy and Ill-nature, as if there could possibly be any Ill-nature in the doing Justice, or in the endeavouring to advance a very noble and a very useful Art, and consequently to prove beneficent to Mankind As for those who may accuse me of the want of a due Veneration for the Merit of an Author of so establish'd a Reputation as *Shakespear*, I shall beg leave to tell them, that they chuse the wrongest time that they could possibly take for such an Accusation as that For I appeal to you, Sir, who shews most Veneration for the Memory of *Shakespear*, he who loves and admires his Charms and makes them one of his chief Delights, who sees him and reads him over and over and still remains unsatiated, and who mentions his Faults for no other Reason but to make his Excellency the more conspicuous, or he who pretending to be his blind Admirer, shews in Effect the utmost Contempt for him, preferring empty effeminate Sound to his solid Beauties and manly Graces, and deserting him every Night for an execrable *Italian* Ballad, so vile that a Boy who should write such lamentable Dogrel, would be turn'd out of *Westminster*-School for a desperate Blockhead, too stupid to be corrected and amended by the harshest Discipline of the Place

I am,

SIR,

Yours, &c

TO THE SPECTATOR, UPON HIS PAPER ON THE 16th OF APRIL

[ON POETICAL JUSTICE]

1711, 1712

YOU know, Mr. *Spectator,* that Esquire *Bickerstaff* attack'd the Sharpers with Success, but *Shadwell* is of Opinion that your Bully with his Box and his false Dice is an honester Fellow than the Rhetorical Author, who makes use of his Tropes and Figures, which are his High and his Low-runners, to cheat us at once of our Money and of our Intellectuals.

I would not have you think, Mr. *Spectator,* that this Reflection is directed to you 'Tis only intended against one or two of your Correspondents, and particularly the *Inns-of-Court*-man, who, as you told us in your Second Paper, supplies you with most of your Criticism who seems to me so little to understand the Province that he has undertaken, that you would do well to advise him to do by you as he has done by his Father, and make a Bargain in the gross with some honest Fellow to answer all your Occasions Which wholesome Advice if he proves too obstinate or too proud to take, I am confident at least that he is too gallant a Person to take it ill if once a Week or once a Fortnight I should shew so much Presumption as to cause a Writ of Error to be issued out to reverse his *Temple*-Judgment

I cannot wonder that Criticism should degenerate so vilely at a time when Poetry and Acting are sunk so low. For as *Hobbes* has observ'd, that as often as Reason is against a Man, a Man will be against Reason, so as often as the Rules are against an Author, an Author will be against the Rules Men first write foolish ridiculous Tragedies, which shock all the Rules of Reason and Philosophy, and then they make foolish extravagant Rules to fit those foolish Plays 'Tis impossible that your Gentleman of the Inns-of-Court could have sent you so much wrong Sense as there is in your Paper of the 16*th,* if he had not formerly writ an absurd Tragedy There are as many Bulls and Blunders, and Contradictions in it almost as there are Lines, and all deliver'd with that insolent and that blust'ring Air, which usually attends upon Error, and Delusion, while Truth, like the Deity that inspires it, comes calmly and without noise

To set a few of his Errors in their proper Light, he tells us in the beginning of that Paper, *That the English Writers of Tragedy are possess'd with a Notion, that when they represent a virtuous or innocent Person in Distress, they ought not to leave him till they have deliver'd him out of his Trouble, and made him triumph over his Enemies.*

But, Mr *Spectator,* is this peculiar to the *English* Writers of Tragedy? Have not the *French* Writers of Tragedy the same Notion? Does not *Racine* tell us, in the Preface to his *Iphigenia,* that it would have been horrible to

have defil'd the Stage with the Murther of a Princess so virtuous and so lovely as was *Iphigenia*?

But your Correspondent goes on, *This Error*, says he, with an insolent and dogmatick Air, *they have been led into by a ridiculous Doctrine in modern Criticism, that they are oblig'd to an equal Distribution of Rewards and Punishments, and an impartial Execution of poetical Justice*

But who were the first who establish'd this Rule he is not able to tell. I take it for granted, that a Man who is ingenuous enough to own his Ignorance, is willing to be instructed Let me tell him then, that the first who establish'd this ridiculous Doctrine of modern Criticism, was a certain modern Critick, who liv'd above two thousand Years ago, and who tells us expresly in the thirteenth Chapter of his critical *Spectator*, which Pedants call his Poetick, *That since a Tragedy, to have all the Beauty of which it is capable, ought to be Implex and not Simple*, (by the way Mr *Spectator*, you must bear with this critical Cant, as we do with your Speculations and Lucubrations) *and ought to move Compassion and Terror, for we have already shewn that the exciting these Passions is the proper Effect of a tragical Imitation, it follows necessarily, that we must not choose a very good Man, to plunge him from a prosperous Condition into Adversity, for instead of moving Compassion and Terrour, that on the contrary would create Horrour, and be detested by all the World*

And does not the same deluded Philosopher tell us in the very same Chapter that the Fable to which he gives the second Preference, is that which has a double Constitution, and which ends by a double Catastrophe, a Catastrophe favourable to the Good, and fatal to the Wicked? Is not here, Mr *Spectator*, a very formal Recommendation of the impartial and exact Execution of poetical Justice? Thus *Aristotle* was the first who establish'd this ridiculous Doctrine of modern Criticism, but Mr *Rymer* was the first who introduc'd it into our native Language, who notwithstanding the Rage of all the Poetasters of the Times, whom he has exasperated by opening the Eyes of the Blind that they may see their Errors, will always pass with impartial Posterity for a most learned, a most judicious, and a most useful Critick. Now is not your Correspondent a profound and a learned Person? and ought he not to own himself oblig'd to me for this notable piece of Erudition?

But he goes on in his dictatorian way *This Rule*, says he, *whoever establish'd it, has, I am sure, no Foundation in Nature, in Reason, and in the practice of the Ancients* But what will this dogmatick Person say now, when we shew him that this contemptible Doctrine of poetical Justice is not only founded in Reason and Nature, but is it self the Foundation of all the Rules and ev'n of Tragedy itself? For what Tragedy can there be without a Fable? or what Fable without a Moral? or what Moral without poetical Justice? What Moral, where the Good and the Bad are confounded by Destiny, and perish alike promiscuously Thus we see this Doctrine of poetical Justice is more founded in Reason and Nature than all the rest of the poetical Rules together For

what can be more natural, and more highly reasonable, than to employ that Rule in Tragedy, without which that Poem cannot exist? Well! but the Practice of the Ancients is against this poetical Justice! What, always, Mr. *Spectator*! will your Correspondent have the Assurance to affirm that? No, but sometimes Why then sometimes the Ancients offended against Reason and Nature. And who ever believ'd that the Ancients were without Fault, or brought Tragedy to its Perfection? But I shall take another Opportunity to shew that the Practice of the Ancients, in all their Masterpieces, is exactly according to this fundamental Rule. I have not time to do that in this short Letter, because that would necessarily oblige me to shew that poetical Justice is of a much larger Extent than this profound Critick imagines, but yet I shall give the discerning Reader a hint of it in that which follows.

Poetical Justice, says your Correspondent, *has no Foundation in Nature and Reason, because we find that good and evil happen alike to all Men on this side the Grave* In answer to which he must give me leave to tell him, that this is not only a very false but a dangerous Assertion, that we neither know what Men really are, nor what they really suffer.

'Tis not always that we know Men's Crimes, but how seldom do we know their Passions, and especially their darling Passions? And as Passion is the Occasion of infinitely more Disorder in the World than Malice, [for where one Man falls a Sacrifice to inveterate Malice a thousand become Victims to Revenge and Ambition, and whereas Malice has something that shocks human Nature, Passion is pleasingly catching and contagious] Can any thing be more just, than that that Providence which governs the World should punish Men for indulging their Passions, as much as for obeying the Dictates of their most envenom'd Hatred and Malice?

Thus you see, for ought we know, Good and Evil does not happen alike to all Men on this side the Grave. Because 'tis for the most part, by their Passions, that Men offend, and 'tis by their Passions, for the most part, that they are punish'd But this is certain, that the more Virtue a Man has the more he commands his Passions, but the Virtuous alone command them The Wicked take the utmost Care to dissemble and conceal them, for which reason we neither know what our Neighbours are, nor what they really suffer. Man is too finite, too shallow, and too empty a Creature to know another Man throughly, to know the Creature of an infinite Creator, but dramatical Persons are Creatures of which a Poet is himself the Creator And tho' a Mortal is not able to know the Almighty's Creatures, he may be allow'd to know his own, to know the utmost Extent of their Guilt, and what they ought to suffer, nay, he must be allow'd not only to know this himself, but to make it manifest and unquestionable to all his Readers and Hearers The Creatures of a poetical Creator have no Dissimulation and no Reserve We see their Passions in all their Height, and in all their Deformity; and when they are unfortunate, we are never to seek for the Cause.

But suppose I should grant that there is not always an equal Distribution of Affliction and Happiness here below. Man is a Creature who was created

immortal, and a Creature consequently that will find a Compensation in Futurity for any seeming Inequality in his Destiny here. But the Creatures of a poetical Creator are imaginary and transitory; they have no longer Duration than the Representation of their respective Fables; and consequently, if they offend, they must be punish'd during that Representation. And therefore we are very far from pretending that poetical Justice is an equal Representation of the Justice of the Almighty

We freely confess that 'tis but a very narrow and a very imperfect Type of it, so very narrow, and so very imperfect, that 'tis forc'd by temporal to represent eternal Punishments, and therefore when we shew a Man unfortunate in Tragedy, for not restraining his Passions, we mean that every one will for such Neglect, unless he timely repents, be infallibly punish'd by infinite Justice either here or hereafter

If upon this Foot we examine the Tragedies of *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, we shall find that in their most beautiful Pieces, they are impartial Executors of Poetick Justice And 'tis upon this Foot that *Aristotle* requires that we should examine them. Your Correspondent I must confess is in the right when he says that that Philosopher declares for Tragedies, whose Catastrophes are unhappy with relation to the principal Characters But then what Instructions does he give us for the forming those principal Characters? We are neither to make them very virtuous Persons on the one side, that is Persons who absolutely command their Passions, nor on the other side Villains who are actuated by inveterate Malice, but something between these two, that is to say Persons who neglecting their Passions suffer them to grow outragious, and to hurry them to Actions which they otherwise would abhor And that Philosopher expressly declares, as we have shewn above, that to make a virtuous Man unhappy, that is a Man who absolutely commands his Passions, would create Horror instead of Compassion, and would be detested by all the World And thus we have shewn that *Aristotle* is for Poetical Justice, notwithstanding that he is for unhappy Catastrophes. And so one would think was your Correspondent. For when he enumerates and commends some *English* Tragedies, which have unfortunate Catastrophes, there are not two of those which he commends, whose principal Characters can be said to be innocent, and consequently there are not two of them where there is not a due Observance of poetical Justice

Thus, Mr. *Spectator*, I have discussed the Business of poetical Justice, and shewn it to be the Foundation of all Tragedy; and therefore whatever Persons, whether ancient or modern, have writ Dialogues which they call Tragedies, where this Justice is not observ'd, those Persons have entertain'd and amus'd the World with romantick lamentable Tales, instead of just Tragedies, and of lawful Fables.

'Tis not my Business at present to take any farther Notice of the Errors of your Correspondent, perhaps I no more approve of Tragi-Comedies, or Tragedies with double Plots, then he does; But I hope he will not take it ill

if I put him in mind that several of the Plays which he recommended before are Tragi-Comedies, and that most of them have double Plots. But he is vilely mistaken if he thinks that Tragi-Comedy is of the Growth of our *English* Theatres.

I shall take another Opportunity to shew him that he is as much mistaken in what he has said of Humours, as in what he dictates concerning poetical Justice

I am

Your very humble, &c

TO THE SPECTATOR UPON HIS PAPER ON THE 24th OF APRIL

[ON CRITICISM AND PLAGIARISM]

1711, 1712

SIR,

I Have read over your Paper of the *24th* with a great deal of Satisfaction, and here return you my Acknowledgments for the Honour you have done me in quoting two of my Verses with Applause I think my self oblig'd in Gratitude, *my worthy* Friend, to do as much Honour to your Judgment as you have done to my Imagination, and as you have the Goodness to allow me to be an humourous Poet, I am bound in Justice to celebrate you for a wonderful Critick, and to make it appear that, contrary to the Observation of the Author of a late Rhapsody, one who has shewn himself no great Poet may be a prodigious Judge Indeed the Observation of that Author is so far from being true, that most of the Criticks Ancient and Modern have been no Poets, and most of the Poets Ancient and Modern have been no Criticks I cannot find out that any but *Homer*, and *Virgil*, and *Horace*, and *Sophocles*, and *Euripides* among the Ancients were great Criticks Fo. who can believe, that has read them, that *Apollonius Rhodius*, *Nonnus*, *Lucan*, *Statius*, and *Silius Italicus* ever so much as heard that Nature, and the Philosophers her Interpreters and Commentators, had laid down Rules for an Epick Poem? And who that has read the Moderns could imagine, that most of their Dramatick Poets had ever so much as heard that there were such things as the Rules? As *Boileau* has observ'd of the *French*, that some Persons among them had distinguish'd themselves by their Rhymes, who never knew how to distinguish *Lucan* from *Virgil*, so some among our own Rhimers have been renown'd for versifying, who never so much as knew that *Horace* and *Milton* were good Poets. And I can on the other side name several who never distinguished themselves by Poetry, who yet have oblig'd the World with Criticisms which have been Non-pareillo's, and the very Top-Critick of all those Criticks is my worthy Friend the *Spectator*

Tho' who the Devil could have ever expected to have found my worthy Friend a Critick, after he had treated Criticks with so much Contempt in two or three of his Immortal *Tatlers*, and particularly in the *29th* and the *246th*, where they are pronounc'd to be the silliest of Mortals, Creatures, forsooth. who profess Judgment, tho' by the way, Mr *Spectator*, he who professes or practises Poetry, and does not profess Judgment in it, professes himself an Ass. It was from those *Tatlers*, and one or two more, Mr. *Spectator*, that I guess'd that you had a mortal Aversion to Criticism, but now I find plainly that they were none of your own, but were sent you by two or three damn'd Poets, who are a sort of Offenders that have not half the Charity which other Malefactors are wont to shew, but bear eternal Malice to their Executioners.

Thus the Invectives against Criticks and Criticism were other Peoples, you were too wise to write any such thing, as knowing that Tast which declines so fast is only to be restor'd and maintain'd by Criticism. And therefore instead of writing Invectives against it, you have oblig'd the World with the thing it self, with Criticism upon Criticism, and such Criticism ——— As those *Tatlers* were the Off-spring of some certain Poets, which is manifest by their insipid Satyr, like the faint Eagerness of Vinegar decay'd· nothing is more clear than that the Criticisms could be none but yours. For as you may discover *ex ungue Leonem, & ex pede Hercules,* so in this Case the prodigious Off-spring speaks and confesses the Gigantick Father

In your very Folio of the *24th* of *April,* how have you shewn the Fineness of your Discernment, and the Profundity of your Penetration, by your Encomium of two Verses of my Translation of the Fourth Satyr of *Boileau*? 'Tis now thirty Years since I translated that Satyr, and consequently was a very Boy at the Time of that Translation, yet from that Time to this the stupid Age has been ignorant of the Beauty of that Couplet How very flegmatick a Wretch have I been, and how illegitimate an Off-spring of Mr. *Bays,* not to know any thing of my own Excellence till I heard of it from you?

How little did I imagine when I translated that Couplet, that the great Critick was then in Embrio who thirty Years afterwards should declare it to be a charming Couplet, by giving it a place in his never-dying Speculations

I am perfectly convinc'd, my most worthy and most ingenious Friend, that we Authors are as blind and as partial Judges of our own Works, as we are unrighteous ones of other Peoples. I was apt to imagine, before I submitted my own Opinion to the decisive Authority of your Judgment, that you would have done more for the Credit of my Genius and of your own Discernment, by commending the following Verses of the Fourth Book of the Poem upon the Battel of *Ramelies,* when you had so fair an occasion of taking notice of them, as you had at the writing the *56th Tatler* If I begin the Verses a little higher than the couching of the Cataracts which is the Subject of the *56th Tatler,* I am confident you will have the Goodness to pardon me, and the rather because you discover'd more than a common Satisfaction when you were present with your Friend Mr *A.* at the reading those Verses in Manuscript A celestial Spirit visits the Duke of *Marlborough* in a Vision the Night before the Battel of *Ramelies,* and after he has said several other things to him, goes on thus

A wondrous Victory attends thy Arms,
Great in it self, and in its Sequel vast,
Whose ecchoing Sound thro' all the West shall run
Transporting the glad Nations all around,
Who oft shall doubt, and oft suspend their Joy,
And oft imagine all an empty Dream,
The Conqueror himself shall cry amaz'd,
'Tis not our Work, alas we did it not,
The Hand of God, the Hand of God is here!
For thee, so great shall be thy high Renown,

That Fame shall think no Musick like thy Name,
Around the circling Globe it shall be spread,
And to the World's last Ages shall endure,
And the most lofty, most aspiring Man,
Shall want th' Assurance in his secret Pray'rs
To ask such high Felicity and Fame,
As Heav'n has freely granted thee, yet this
That seems so great, so glorious to thee now,
Would look how low, how vile to thy great Mind,
If I could set before thy astonish'd Eyes,
Th' Excess of Glory, and th' Excess of Bliss,
That is prepar'd for thy expiring Soul
When thou arriv'st at everlasting Day
O could embodied Mind but comprehend
The Glories of the Intellectual World,
Or I the blissful Secret were allow'd,
But Fate forbids, to Mortals to reveal
O I could lay a Scene before thy Eyes
Which would distract thee with transporting Joy,
Fire the rich Blood in thy illustrious Veins,
Make ev'ry Nerve with fierce Convulsions start,
Blast all thy Spirits, and thy Life destroy,
Thou could'st not taste th' Ecstatick Bliss and live
As one who has liv'd thirty tedious Years,
And ever since his wretched Birth been dark,
His visual Orbs with cloudy Films o'ercast,
And in the Dungeon of the Body dwelt
In utter Ignorance of Nature's Works
And Wonders of this vast material World,
And has no Notion e'er conceiv'd of Light
Or Colours, or the verdant flowry Earth,
Or the stupendous Prospect of the Sky,
If then he finds some Artist whose nice Hand
Couches the Cataracts and clears his Eyes,
And all at once a Flood of glorious Light,
And this bright Temple of the Universe,
The crystal Firmament, the blazing Sun,
All the amazing Glories of the Heav'ns,
All the Great Maker's high Magnificence
Come rushing thro' his Eyes upon his Soul,
He cannot bear th' astonishing Delight,
But starts, exclaims, and stamps, and raves, and dies
So the vast Glories of the upper World,
If they were set before embodied Mind,
Would oppress Nature and extinguish Life

These are the Verses, my most discerning Friend, that I thought might have been preferr'd to the forementioned Couplet, especially since they would as it were have introduced themselves, whereas the Couplet is dragg'd in by extreme Violence But I submit to your infallible Judgment, not in the least suspecting that my worthy Friend can have any Malice in this Affair, and insert that Couplet in his immortal Speculations only on purpose to expose me, no, far be it from me to entertain any such Jealousie of my dearest Friend, who is so

good, so kind, so beneficent, and who has so often given himself the glorious Title of the Lover and Benefactor of Mankind. Who could imagine that one who hath given himself that glorious Appellation, could e'er be prompted by Malice, or Passion, or Interest thus slily and hypocritically to abuse one whom he had call'd his Friend?

I have been apt to believe likewise, my worthy Friend, that you would have been kinder to your self and to me, if instead of commending the forementioned Couplet you had taken some notice of the following Verses which are in my Paraphrase upon the *Te Deum*, especially when you had so fair an occasion to mention them as you had at the writing the 119*th Tatler* The Couplet of the translated Satyr was introduced by Violence But how very naturally would the following Verses of the Paraphrase have been mention'd either before or after the last Paragraph of the forementioned Paper, where a Spirit is introduc'd, who after he has spoke of that part of the Creation which is too little for human Sight, comes afterwards to speak of the immense Objects of Nature after this manner.

I must acknowledge for my own Part, that altho' it is with much Delight that I see the Traces of Providence in these Instances, I still see greater pleasure in considering the Works of the Creation in their Immensity, than in their Minuteness. For this Reason, I rejoice when I strengthen my Sight so as to make it pierce into the most remote Spaces, and take a view of those Heavenly Bodies, which lye out of the reach of Human Eyes tho' assisted by Telescopes, what you look upon as one confus'd White in the milky way, appears to me a long Tract of Heav'ns, distinguish'd by Stars, that are ranged in proper Figures and Constellations While you are admiring the Sky in a starry Night, I am entertain'd with a variety of Worlds and Suns plac'd one above another, and rising up to such an immense Distance that no created Eye can see an end of them *

Upon the writing this Paragraph, how could you avoid the making mention of Verses which had the very same Ideas, and Verses which you had formerly mention'd with Applause in private Conversation? I know you will answer that you had intirely forgot them, and therefore I take the Liberty here to refresh your Memory The Angels are introduc'd in that Paraphrase speaking to God, and saying, after other things, that which follows.

Where-e er at utmost stretch we cast our Eyes,
Thro' the vast frightful Spaces of the Skies,
Ev'n there we find thy Glory, there we gaze
On thy bright Majesty's unbounded Blaze,
Ten thousand Suns, prodigious Globes of Light
At once in broad Dimensions strike our sight,
Millions behind in the remoter Skies,
Appear but Spangles to our wearied Eyes,

* Tatler 119

And when our wearied Eyes want farther strength
To pierce the Void's immeasurable Length,
Our vigorous tow'ring Thoughts still farther fly,
And still remoter flaming Worlds descry,
But ev'n an Angel's comprehensive Thought
Cannot extend so far as thou has wrought,
Our vast Conceptions are by swelling brought,
Swallow'd and lost in Infinite to nought

How glad am I that the forementioned Verses were writ before the abovenam'd *Tatlers*? Otherwise I should have been thought to have borrow'd from my worthy Friend, without making any manner of acknowledgment, only adding or endeavouring to add to what I borrow'd a little of that Spirit, and Elevation and Magnificence of Expression which the Greatness of the Hints requir'd.

'Tis for this Reason that I am glad the Verses were printed some Years before the Prose For you know, my dear Friend, that a Plagiary in general is but a scandalous Creature, a sort of a spiritual Outlaw, and ought to be treated as such by all the Members of the Commonwealth of Learning. But a Plagiary from living Authors is most profligately impudent, and in so slow and splenatick a Nation as ours most unjust and barbarous For among us any thing that is admirably good is twenty or thirty Years before it comes to be understood And how infinitely base is it in the mean while to deprive an Author of any thing that is valuable in him, and to intercept his coming Praise? As Laws are made for the Security of Property, what pity 'tis that there are not some enacted for the Security of a Man's Thoughts and Inventions, which alone are properly his? For Land is alienable, and Treasure is transitory, and both must at one time or other pass from him, either by his own voluntary Act, or by the Violence and Injustice of others, or at least by Fate And therefore nothing is truly and really a Man's own

——————— *Puncto quod mobilis Horæ*
Nunc prece, nunc pretio, nunc vi, nunc sorte suprema
Permutet Dominos, & cedat in altera Jura

'Tis only a Man's Thoughts and Inventions that are properly his being alone Things that can never be alienated from him, neither by Force nor Persuasion, nor by Fate it self, and tho' another may basely usurp the Honour of them, yet they must for ever rightfully belong to their first Inventor. Thus even the richest and the happiest of Men have nothing that is truly and really their own, but their Thoughts and Inventions But Authors for the most part, and especially Poets, have nothing that can so much as be call'd their own but their Thoughts 'Tis for those alone, and the Glory which they expect from those, that they entirely quit their Pretensions to Riches, and renounce the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World, and therefore to endeavour to deprive them of those is exceedingly inhuman What a Joy 'tis to think that the Precedence of Times sets me free from the Imputation of this Injustice? Had I been capable of doing this, and doing it to my worthy Friend, of wrong-

ing my dearest Friend in this manner, who knows how far that Barbarity might have extended it self? I might have proceeded to have upbraided him with some weak place in his never-dying Folio's; and having forcibly depriv'd him of his Silver and his Gold, have pelted him with his Brass and his Copper, out of counterfeit Anger or pretended Scorn, because they were of no richer Metal.

But the Case of my dear Friend is vastly different You have that Reputation, and the World has that Opinion of your Merit, that they will be so far from believing that you have Obligations to a living Author which you have not, that tho' you had really made thus bold with me, it would have been impossible to have convinc'd above forty or fifty People of it. And here, my dear Friend, at the same time that I acknowledge your uncommon Merit, I cannot but congratulate your incomparable Felicity, it being plain that you have got more Reputation in three Years time than *Milton* has done in fifty Years, or than *Shakespear* has in an hundred I shall therefore judiciously conclude with the generality of your Readers, that you have a Merit paramount to that of all *British* Authors both living and dead, and that you have not only more Merit than any one Moralist either Ancient or Modern, but that if you continue your Paper three Years longer, you will have as much Merit as they have all together.

I am, my dear Friend,
With great Respect and Fidelity,
Your, &c

TO H—— C—— ESQ;

OF SIMPLICITY IN POETICAL COMPOSITIONS, IN REMARKS ON THE 70th SPECTATOR

1711, 1721

SIR,

BY your last of the 26th you desire to know my Opinion of the notable Critick upon *Chevy Chase* in the *Spectator* of the 21st and that of the 25th of this Instant; that is, you desire to know whether I believe the Author of those two Papers to be in Jest or in Earnest To which I answer, that he is neither in Jest nor in Earnest; not in Earnest, because he does not believe what he says, nor in Jest, because he does strenuously endeavour to convince the Reader of the Excellence of that old Dogrel. His Design is to see how far he can lead his Reader by the Nose. To give my Reasons for this Opinion, I shall send you an Examen of those two *Spectators* in as little Compass as I can

When I travelled, says he, *I took a particular Delight in hearing the Songs and Fables that are come from Father to Son, and are most in Vogue among the common People of the Countries thro' which I passed, for it is impossible that any thing should be universally tasted and approved by a Multitude, tho' they are only the Rabble of a Nation, which hath not in it some peculiar Aptness to please and gratify the Mind of Man.*

Now is there any thing that has the least Air of a Jest? On the other side, do you think that the Author could be capable of meaning and thinking what he pretends to affirm here? Is it not plain by the last Words which I have quoted, *viz the Mind of Man,* that he intended a Fallacy? For to affirm this of the Mind of Man, as 'tis cultivated and instructed, is not only absurd and ridiculous, but contradictory of himself Has not he himself observed in the 134th *Tatler,* that there are Exercises and Diversions which universally please the Rabble, which yet Men of Quality or Education either despise or abhor? Such are the *Shrove-Tuesday* and *Bear-Garden* Diversions, which he there particularizes I have known a Country Fidler who has been the Delight of three Counties, tho' he could never play the Truth of one Tune, and a Sign-Post Painter, who has been the Admiration not only of the Rabble, but even of most of the Squires of the North of *England.* I appeal to the Booksellers, who in this Case ought to be Judges without Appeal, whether more of the common People do not approve of *Quarles* and *Bunyan* than esteem *Chevy Chase* Therefore 'tis plain that Author could not design that the Period above-mentioned should run thus,

For 'tis impossible that any thing should be universally tasted and approved of by a Multitude, tho' they are only the Rabble of a Nation, which has not

in it some peculiar Aptness to please and gratify the Minds of Men of Quality and Education.

And less can he design to make it run as follows: *For it is impossible that any thing should be universally tasted and approv'd of by a Multitude, tho' they are only the Rabble of a Nation, which has not in it some peculiar aptness to please and gratify the Minds of the Rabble* For to mean this would make, not only what he says, but what he is, a Jest So that the Author, by *the Mind of Man,* meaning neither the Mind of Man as it is rude and untaught, nor the Mind of Man as 'tis cultivated and instructed, can mean nothing in the World but to try how far he can impose upon his Reader But he goes on

Human Nature is the same in all reasonable Creatures, and whatever falls in with it, will meet with Admirers among Readers of all Qualities and Conditions. Moliere, *as we are told by* Boileau, *us'd to read all his Comedies to a little old Woman, who was his House-Keeper, as she sate at her Work by the Chimney Corner, and could foretel the Success of his Play in his Theatre, from the Reception it met at the Fire Side For he tells us the Audience always follow'd the old Woman, and never failed to laugh in the same Place*

Now can you, Sir, or any Man of good Sense believe that the Author does not know better what belongs to a Jest, than to take false Reasoning for one, and that he does not know better what belongs to false Reasoning than to mean what he says here? Can he be so dull and so absurd as not to know how to distinguish between what Human Nature is, and what Human Nature should be? Human Nature was Human Nature before the Fall, and 'tis Human Nature now 'tis degenerated from that perfect Virtue and that unclouded Knowledge, which it enjoy'd before 'Tis the Business and Design of Education to endeavour to retrieve in some measure the Loss that Human Nature has sustain'd by the Fall, and to recover some Measure of Knowledge and Virtue Now Heroick Poetry is an Imitation of Human Nature exalted, and Comedy is an Imitation of Human Nature depraved What can be more absurd than to conclude, that because the Rabble, that is, such as never had any Education, are tolerable Judges of Human Nature depraved, that therefore they are Judges of Human Nature exalted, of which none can be Judges but they who have had the best Education? And therefore not only the Rabble, but an universal Nation has been mistaken in their Judgments of Poets and Poetry, when the Judgments have been made, before that Nation came to be sufficiently cultivated

> *Recte, necne crocum floresque perambulet Attæ*
> *Fabula, si dubitem clament perusse pudorem,*
> *Cuncti pene patres, ea quum reprehendere coner,*
> *Quæ gravis Æsopus, quæ doctus Roscius egit,*

Vel quæ nil rectum, nisi quod placuit sibi, ducunt
Vel quæ turpe putant parere minoribus, & quæ
Imberbes didicere, senes perdenda fatetur
Hor Ep 1 L 2

So that we see it was the Opinion of *Horace*, that the People of Quality were sometimes mistaken as well as the Rabble, nay, that both Rabble and People of Quality were sometimes mistaken ev'n in their Judgments of Comedy

At nostri proavi Plautinos & numeros, &
Laudavere sales, nimium patienter utrumque
Ne dicam stultè, mirati si modò ego & vos
Scimus inurbanum lepido seponere dicto
Legitimumque sonum digitis callemus, & aure
Horat de Arte Po

And to shew you that 'tis impossible the *Spectator* can mean what he says here, *Horace* declares in the very Verse which the *Spectator* has chosen for the Motto of his Paper, that the Multitude is as often mistaken as it is in the Right.

Interdum Vulgus rectum videt, est ubi peccat

And he says particularly, that they are often mistaken in their Judgments of Verses which have been writ by their Forefathers.

Si veteres ita miratur laudatque poetas,
Ut nihil anteferat, nihil illis comparet, errat
Si quædam nimis antiquè, si pleraque durè
Dicere credit eos, ignave multa fatetur,
Et sapit, & mecum facit & Jove judicat æquo

Now is not here a Motto very judiciously chosen? For from these Verses of *Horace*, we may justly make this Observation, that a Man by his real Approbation and Impertinent Commendation of superannuated Rhimes, not only puts himself upon an equal Foot with the Rabble, but ev'n of the most injudicious and foolish part of the Rabble?

In fine, *Horace* was so far from being of Opinion, that the universal Approbation of the Multitude was the Taste and Touchstone of good Poetry, that in the last Satyr of his first Book, he advises the Poet of his Formation to take no manner of Care about pleasing them

——Neque Te, ut miretur turba labores
Contentus paucis lectoribus

Now this Advice of *Horace* must either be impertinent and wrong, or the Approbation of the Multitude is a Sign of an ill Poem. But 'tis time to see how this judicious Author goes on

I know nothing that more shews the essential and inherent Perfection of Simplicity of Thought, above that which I call the Gothick *manner in writing, than this, that the first pleases all kinds of Palates, and the latter only such as have formed to themselves a wrong artificial Taste upon little fanciful Authors*

and Writers of Epigrams. Homer, Virgil, *or* Milton, *so far as the Language of their Poems is understood, will please a Reader of plain common Sense, that would neither relish nor comprehend an Epigram of* Martial, *or a Poem of* Cowley, *so on the contrary, an ordinary Song or Ballad that is the Delight of the common People, cannot fail to please all such Readers as are not unqualified for the Entertainment by their Affectation or their Ignorance, and the Reason is plain, because the same Paintings of Nature which recommend it to the most ordinary Reader, will appear beautiful to the most refin'd*

Now, Sir, can any thing be more plain, than that the *Spectator* here cannot mean what he says? Because 'tis impossible for a Man of common Sense, much less for one of his notable Parts, to be guilty of so many Absurdities as there are in this little Paragraph I will make no Objection at present about the *Gothick* Taste I think I have call'd it somewhere so my self, tho' 'tis certain that the pointed conceited way of Wit was in Fashion long before the *Goths* were either a Name or a Nation For you find it not only in *Florus*, in *Martial*, in *Seneca*, in *Tacitus*, but even in some of the Writers of *Augustus Cæsar's* Age, as *Ovid* and *Paterculus* But here are more Important Errors to be taken Notice of For first, the *Spectator* would make us believe that all People are Judges of Simplicity of Thought, and that the Rabble are better Judges of it, than they who have had a generous Education That more People comprehend the Excellency of *Homer*, and *Virgil*, and *Milton*, than the Beauties of *Martial* and *Cowley*, tho' perhaps there are not ten Persons living who know all the Merit of *Virgil*, and *Milton's Paradise Lost* had been printed forty Years before it was known to the greatest Part of *England*, that there barely was such a Book He would further insinuate, that all those Songs or Ballads, which are the delight of the Rabble, cannot fail to please all such Readers as are not unqualified for the Entertainment by their Affectation or their Ignorance, as if Men of Education in *Great Britain* were more ignorant than the Rabble, or it requir'd an extraordinary Stock of Knowledge to comprehend the Excellence of old Dogrel. The Reason which he gives for this, and which he says is plain, is, because the same Paintings of Nature which recommend it to the most ordinary Reader, will appear beautiful to the most refin'd, as if some faint and imperfect Touches of Nature might not recommend a thing to those who by reason of their Ignorance or their Stupidity, know not how far an Author ought to go in such a Case to express the Truth of Nature, which faint and imperfect Strokes would by no means satisfy those who are able to judge of that Truth

Sir, the *Spectator* imagines here, that there is nothing contrary to Simplicity of Thought, but that pointed conceited way of writing which we mention'd above, whereas Simplicity of Thought, is Thought which naturally arises from the Subject, Ideas which bear a just Proportion to the Things they represent, and which the Subject seems of it self as it were to offer to us, instead of our obtruding them upon that. If we truly consider what Simplicity of Thought in Poetry is, we shall find that there are three things which are

equally distant from it, and those are, Imbecility, Affectation and Extravagance; Imbecility, when a Man wants Force to come up to the Truth of Nature, Affectation, when a Man goes beside it, thro' Error, Luxury and Wantonness of Soul, and Extravagance, when a Man goes beyond it, thro' a false and ill-tim'd Effort to shew his Strength and Excellence. We shall find too that Simplicity of Thought is not sufficient to make what we call Metre Poetry, that there must be likewise a Simplicity of Expression, that a Simplicity of Expression is an Expression which is according to Nature, that is, an Expression proportion'd to the Ideas, as they are to the Things, and that consequently then the Expression in great Subjects, and in great Thoughts is simple, when it is passionate, figurative, sounding and harmonious; and that an Author, who in great Subjects and in great Thoughts shews an Expression, which comes short of this, shews not a Simplicity but an Imbecility of Expression In short, as all the Heroick Virtues are compatible with Simplicity of Heart, so all the Magnificence of the most pompous Eloquence is on some Occasions consistent with Simplicity of Style. But now let us see a little how the *Spectator* goes on

The old Song of Chevy Chase, says he, *is the favourite Ballad of the common People of* England, *and* Ben Johnson *us'd to say, he had rather have been the Author of it, than of all his Works Sir* Philip Sidney, *in his Discourse of Poetry, speaks of it in the following Words. I never heard the old Song of* Piercy *and* Douglas, *that I found not my Heart more mov'd than with a Trumpet, and yet it was sung by some blind Crowder with a Voice as rough as his Style, which being so evil apparrelled in the Dust and Cobweb of that uncivil Age, what would it work trimm'd in the gorgeous Eloquence of* Pindar? *For my own part,* says the *Spectator, I am so professed an Admirer of this antiquated Song, that I shall give my Reader a Critick upon it, without any further Apology for so doing*

Now, Sir as I shew'd you before by his Sophistry, that the *Spectator* is not in earnest, so here it may appear by the Authorities he brings that he is not in Jest I am so very well convinced of the solid Judgment of *Ben Johnson*, that if *Ben* ever talk'd at that rate, (which I will not absolutely pretend to deny, tho' I very much doubt it) he only did it to laugh, and to ridicule some of the sottish Admirers of that obsolete Song. As for Sir *Philip Sidney*, do but observe the Expression which that noble Gentleman uses, he tells us not that his Heart was moved by the Song of *Piercy* and *Douglas* as often as he read it, or heard it read, but as often as he heard it sung, nay, tho' it was sung by an old Crowder I shrewdly suspect that there were some martial Notes in this old *Gothick* Tune, which very much contributed to the working that Effect upon Sir *Philip Sidney* But instead of affirming that Sir *Philip Sidney* has gone too far, he pretends to insinuate that he falls too short, for the *Spectator* vindicates the very Expression of *Chevy Chase*, in which one thing. I must confess, he does seem to me to come something near to a Jest, and to

make a fine ironical Ridicule upon Sir *Philip Sidney* But be these things as they will, besides that thro' the whole Course of this Criticism I have and shall oppose greater Authorities to these, I shall confound them by invincible Reason, before which no Authority could ever stand, and by shewing the Nature of Poetry, and what it is that constitutes the Difference between that and Prose, shall make it appear that the Writer of this old Song, in spight of the Applause of so many Ages, never knew what Poetry was In order to which, let us give very near the same Account of it that we formerly did in the *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry.*

Poetry then is an Art, by which a Poet excites Passion, (and to that very end entertains Sense) by a bold and figurative Language, and by measur'd harmonious Periods, in order to satisfy and improve, to delight and reform the Mind, and so to make Mankind happier and better

Poetry therefore is Poetry, because 'tis more passionate and sensual than Prose A Poet has two ways of exciting Passion. The one by the Figurativeness, and the other by the Harmony of his Expression, but the Figures contribute more to the exciting of Passion than Harmony. A Discourse that is writ in smooth and tolerable Numbers, if 'tis not figurative can be but measur'd Prose, but a Discourse that is every where bold and figurative, and consequently every where extremely pathetick, is certainly Poetry without Numbers Besides, this alone is a convincing Proof that a Figurative Expression is more essential to Poetry than Harmony, *viz* that Harmony it self, if 'tis any thing perfect, depends upon a figurative Expression, there being no Example among the Antients themselves of a Ravishing Poetical Musick, without figurative Language But as the Language of Poetry in general is to be bold and figurative, the Language of great and exalted Poetry is to be very bold and figurative The Doctrine of *Horace* is exactly answerable to this

Primum ego me illorum, dederim quibus esse poetas,
Excerpam numero neque enim concludere versum
Dixeris esse satis, neque si quis scribat, uti nos,
Sermoni propiora, putes hunc esse poetam
Ingenium cui sit, cui mens divinior, atque os
Magna sonaturum des nominis hujus honorem
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

For he tells us here three things in a very conspicuous manner First, that poetical Measures are not sufficient to constitute a Man a Poet.

——Neque enim concludere versum
Dixeris esse satis

Secondly, that there must be great Passion, and a bold and a figurative Language, nay very bold and very figurative.

Ingenium cui sit, cui mens divinior, atque os
Magna sonaturum des nominis hujus honorem

And Thirdly, That it was to be questioned whether any thing but the great and exalted Poetry was properly Poetry.

Idcirco quidam, Comœdia necne poema
Esset quæsivere quod acer Spiritus, ac vis,
Nec verbis, nec rebus inest

Boileau is exactly of the same Opinion, and has in his Ninth Satyr as it were interpreted part of this Passage of *Horace.*

Mais Repondez un peu, quelle verve indiscrete
Sans l'aveu des neuf sœurs vous a rendu Poete?
Sentez vous dites moy ces violens transports,
Qui d'un Esprit Divin, font mouvoir les ressorts

And in his Eighth Reflection upon *Longinus,* he tells us plainly that Monsieur *Perrault* having translated the beginning of the first Ode of *Pindar* without Figures, has translated it without Poetry.

Rapin is exactly of the same Mind in his Twenty Ninth Reflection upon Poetry in general For having told us that *Virgil* in the Fourth of his Georgicks, speaks of the Bees every where in the metaphorical Terms of Court, Legions, Armies, Combats, Fields of Battel, Kings, Captains, Soldiers, that by this figurative and lofty manner he may exalt the Lowness of his Matter, he adds,

C'est ainsi qu'un grand Ouvrier comme Virgile, ne dit presque rien dans le propre, & c'est en quoy consiste le grand art de la Poesie, de dire Figurement presque tout ce qu'elle dit Car d'ordinaire les Figures fournissent des plus grands images que les choses mêmes Enfin le Poete doit scavoir sur toutes choses, ce que l'Eloquence a d'art & de methode pour les Figures. Ce n'est que par les Figures qu'il donne de la Force aux Passions, de l'eclat aux Discours, du poids aux Raisons, & de l'agreement a tout ce qu'il dit. Et ce n'est que par les Figures les plus vives de l'Eloquence, que tous les movemens de l'ame deviennent ardens & passionnez Which is in *English* thus

Thus a great Master like *Virgil* scarce says any thing in plain Language, and the great Art of Poetry consists in saying almost every thing that is said figuratively For the Figures generally supply us with Images greater than the Things themselves In short, a Poet ought to be possessed of all that Art and that Method in which Eloquence is design'd to instruct us with regard to the Figures They are the Figures that enable him to give Force to the Passions, Brightness to the Diction and to the Periods, Weight to his Arguments, and Charms to all that he says And 'tis only by the liveliest Figures of Eloquence that all the Motions of the Soul become ardent and pathetick.

As for Simplicity, of which the *Spectator* boasts so much, the foresaid *Rapin* has remarkably told us, in his Twenty Seventh Reflection, that the Simplicity of Thought and even Simplicity of Expression in great Subjects is not incompatible with the greatest Pomp and Magnificence. For Simplicity

of Thought and Simplicity of Expression is nothing but such Thought and such Expression, as Nature in such and such Cases voluntarily suggests and dictates to us.

La Troisieme qualité de la Diction, says *Rapin*, *est qu'elle soit naturelle, sans affectations, selon les Regles de la Bienseance & du bon sens. Les Phrases trop etudiées, un Style trop fleury, les Manieres trop compassées, les Beaux mots, les termes trop recherchées, & toutes les Expressions extraordinaires, sont insupportable a la veritable Poesie. La seule Simplicité luy convient, pourveue qu'elle soit soutenue de noblesse & de grandeur mais cette simplicité n'est connue que des grandes ames C'est le chef d'oeuvre de la Poesie, & le caractere de Homere & de Virgile Les ignorans y cherchent de l'Esprit & des Beaux Sentimens, parce qu'ils sont ignorans La Diction doit etre relevée & eclatante, c'est sa quatrieme qualité Car tout ce qui est commun & ordinaire dans les Termes, ne luy est pas propre Il faut des paroles, qui n'ayent rien de Bas, & de Vulgaire, une Diction noble & magnifique, des expressions fortes, des couleurs vives, des traits hardis. Enfin, il faut un Discours qui puisse egaler la grandeur des Idées d'un Ouvrier, qui doit etre le Createur de son ouvrage La cinquieme qualité de la Diction est d'etre nombreuse pour soutenir cet air grand & Majesteux dont se sert la poesie, & pour exprimer toute la Force, toute la Dignité des grandes choses qu'elle dit Il ne luy faut que des Termes propres a Remplir la Bouche, & a contenter les oreilles, pour venir a ce merveilleux, qu'elle recherche en toutes choses Mais ce n'est pas assez qu'il y a de la grandeur, & de la magnificence dans l'Expression, il doit y avoir aussi, de la Chaleur, & de la Vehemence, & il faut sur tout, qu'il regne dans les Discours, un certain Air de Grace & de Delicatesse, qui en fasse le principal ornement, & la Beauté la plus universelle* Which most remarkable Passage is render'd thus

The Third Quality of the Diction is that it ought to be natural, without any manner of Affectation, according to the Rules of Decorum and of good Sense Phrases that appear too much studied, a Style that is too florid, a Manner that is too nicely wrought, Things that are finely said, Terms that are too far fetch'd, and all Expressions that are windy and swell Us, are insupportable to the true Poetry. Only Simplicity can agree with it, provided that Simplicity be sustain'd by Nobility and by Greatness But that is a Simplicity with which only great Souls are acquainted 'Tis the Master-work of Poetry, and the Character of *Homer* and *Virgil* The Ignorant look for what they call Wit and fine Thoughts, because they are ignorant The fourth Quality of the Diction is, that it be exalted and sonorous. For every thing that is vulgar in the Expression is below it. It requires Words which have nothing that is base and common in them, a Diction that is noble and magnificent, Expressions that are strong, and Colours that are lively, and daring and audacious Strokes It requires, to say all, a Discourse that is able to come up to the Greatness of that

Workman's Ideas, who ought to be the Maker and Creator of his own Works. The fifth Quality of the Diction is that it be harmonious, that it may maintain that great and majestick Air, with which Poetry is wont to adorn it self, and may express all the Force and the utmost Dignity of the great Things which it utters. It ought to reject all Terms but those that are proper to fill the Mouth and content the Ear, that it may attain to that Sublime and that Wonderful, which it always and every where aims at But 'tis not sufficient that there be Greatness and Magnificence in the Expression, there ought to be likewise Ardor and Vehemence, and there ought especially to reign throughout the Discourse, a fine, a graceful, and a delicate Air, which ought to appear its principal Ornament, and its most universal Beauty.

Now what one of these great Qualities has the old Ballad of *Chevy Chase*? Of all the Lines which the Captain has quoted, 'tis remarkable, that there is but one which has any thing like a Figure in it Now tho' the Subject of that Song is noble, yet there being nothing figurative in it, 'tis plain by consequence that there is nothing great, nothing noble in it, no Magnificence, no Vehemence, no Painting, no Poetry To compare any of the Passages in it to *Virgil* is ridiculous, and a Man may as well compare a dead Man to a living For Example, what manner of Comparison is there between these two Passages

The Hounds ran swiftly thro' the Wood
The nimble Deer to take,
And with their Cries the Hills and Dales
An Eccho shrill did make

And that of *Virgil,*

——vocat ingenti clamore Cithæron
Taygetique canes, Domitrixque Epidaurus equorum
Et vox assensu nemorum ingeminata remugit

What is there in the first but what is vile and trivial? What Ploughman, what Tinker, what Trull is not capable of saying the like? But that of *Virgil,* where he gives Voice to the Mountains, and Voice, Consent and Soul to the Words, is so bold, so figurative, so pompous, so harmonious, that a Man must be *Virgil* himself to say it. What can be more ridiculous, nay more monstrous, than to find any thing resembling in the following abominable Dogrel,

Sir Charles Martell *of* Ratcliffe *too,*
His Sister's Son was he,
Sir David Lamb *so well esteem'd,*
Yet saved could not be

And the following Verses of *Virgil,*

—— Cadit & Ripheus, justissimus unus
Qui fuit in Teucris & servantissimus Æqui
Dus aliter visum

Where the divine Harmony is the Result of uncommon Passion, and productive of no vulgar Passion. Thus we see, that in spight of the pretended Resemblance,

the old Dogrel is contemptible, and *Virgil* is incomparable and inimitable. One might with a great deal more Justice pretend, that there is a Resemblance between the 148th Psalm of *Sternhold,* and that admirable Hymn of *Milton* in the Fifth Book of *Paradise Lost* And yet we need only transcribe them both, and place them together here, to convince the Reader, that the one is bald, and vile, and wretched, and the other great and exalted Poetry. Let us begin with the Psalm of *Sternhold*

Give laud unto the Lord
From Heav'n that is so high,
Praise him in Deed and Word
Above the starry Sky
And also ye
His Angels all,
Armies Royal,
Praise joyfully
Praise Him both Sun and Moon,
Which are so clear and bright,
The same of you be done,
Ye glittering Stars of Night
And ye no less,
Ye Heav'ns fair,
And Clouds o' th' Air,
His Laud express
For at his Word they were
All formed as we see,
At his Voice did appear
All things in their Degree
Which he set fast,
To them he made
A Law and Trade
Alway to last
Extol and praise God's Name
On Earth, ye Dragons fell
All Deeps do ye the same,
For it becomes ye well
Him magnify,
Fire, Hail, Ice, Snow,
And Storms that blow
At his Decree
The Hills and Mountains all
And Trees that fruitful are,
The Cedars great and tall
His worthy Praise declare
Beasts and Cattel,
Yea Birds flying,
And Worms creeping
That on Earth dwell

Thus have we laid before the Reader the contemptible Dogrel of *Hopkins*, a Version which is despicable Dogrel in spight of its being figurative. For every Line here is a different Apostrophe. But these are Figures which are another Person's, which the Transverser repeats like a Parrot, without understanding

them, and without being mov'd by them, and which consequently have neither Passion nor Sublimity to sustain them. For 'tis a just Observation which is made by *Longinus*, that as the Figures support the pathetick and the sublime, they are wonderfully supported by each of them. Let us now see how the Force of *Milton*'s Genius hides and conceals the Assistance of Art, while these lofty Figures, at the very time that they raise and transport his exalted Soul, are lost in his Enthusiasm and his Sublimity, as the glittering of numberless Stars is swallow'd and lost in the blaze of Day, and that golden Deluge of Light which on every side overwhelms them The following Hymn is spoken by our first Parents, in the Morning, at what time they first come out of the Bower in *Paradise*, and survey the Works of God which the springing Day has restor'd to them

These are thy glorious Works, parent of Good,
Almighty, Thine this universal Frame,
Thus wondrous Fair, Thy self how wondrous then!
Unspeakable, who sit'st above these Heav'ns
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works, yet these declare
Thy Goodness beyond thought and pow'r divine
Speak, ye who best can tell, ye Sons of Light
Angels, for ye behold him, and with Songs
And Choral Symphonies, day without night
Circle his Throne Rejoycing, ye in Heav'n,
On Earth joyn all ye Creatures to extol
Him first, Him last, Him midst, and without End
Fairest of Stars, last in the Train of Night,
If better Thou belong not to the Dawn,
Sure pledge of Day, that crownst the smiling Morn
With thy bright Circlet, praise him in thy Sphere
While Day arises, that sweet Hour of prime
Thou Sun, of this great World both Eye and Soul,
Acknowledge Him thy Greater, sound his Praise
In thy eternal Course, both when thou climbest,
And when high Noon hast gain'd, and when thou fall'st
Moon, that now meet'st the orient Sun, now flee'st
With the fix'd Stars, fix'd in their Orb that flies,
And ye five other wand'ring Fires, that move
In mystick Dance not without Song, resound
His Praise who out of Darkness call'd up Light
Air and ye Elements, the eldest Birth
Of Nature's Womb, that in Quaternion run
Perpetual circle multiform, and mix
And nourish all things, let your ceaseless Change
Vary to our great Maker still new Praise
Ye Mists and Exhalations, that now rise
From Hill or steaming Lake, dusky or grey,
Till the Sun paint your fleecy Skirts with Gold
In Honour to the World's great Author rise,
Whether to deck with Clouds th' uncolour'd Skie,
Or wet the thirsty Earth with falling Showers,
Rising and falling still advance his praise

His praise ye Winds that from four Quarters blow
Breath soft or loud, and wave your Tops ye Pines
With ev'ry Plant, in sign of Worship wave
Fountains and ye that warble as ye flow
Melodious Murmurs, warbling tune his Praise
Joyn Voices all ye living Souls, ye Birds
That singing up to Heav'ns Gates ascend
Bear on your Wings, and in your Notes his Praise
Ye that in Waters glide, and ye that walk
The Earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep,
Witness if I be silent Morn or Even,
To Hill or Valley, Fountain or fresh Shades,
Made vocal by my Song, and taught his praise
Hail universal Lord, be bounteous still,
To give us only Good, and if the Night
Has gather'd ought of evil or conceal'd
Disperse it as now Light dispels the Dark

Now I think nothing can be more plain than that notwithstanding the same Psalm of *David* is the groundwork both of *Milton* and *Sternhold,* and notwithstanding a vain Appearance which may delude those who are not able to distinguish, there is no more Resemblance between the Hymn of *Milton,* and the Version of *Sternhold,* than there is between Light and Darkness, Heat and Cold, Life and Death, Heaven and Earth, the Graces and Deformity, no, notwithstanding they both make use of the very same Figures, but those Figures in *Sternhold* are dead, and he himself seems dead and while he pretends to give Life and Soul, and Thought, and Spirit, and Motion, even to the insensible and inanimated Parts of the Universe, he is himself without Spirit, or Life, or Soul, or Thought, or Motion, while *Milton's* matchless Genius, animating the several Figures, appears to give Life, and Soul, and Motion to their several Objects, and seems to equal these several mighty Objects in their distinguishing Qualities, to be lofty as the Heav'n and solid as the Earth, firey as the Sun, and changing as the Moon, swift as the Winds, and strong, and terrible, and sonorous as the Arms and Mouths of the great Deep Since then there is no manner of Resemblance between the Hymn and the Version, which seem to have several things in common, what Shadow of Likeness can there be between *Virgil* and *English* Dogrel, where there is nothing common between them, nor Ground-work, nor Figure, nor Harmony, the Dogrel being utterly destitute both of Figure and Harmony, and consequently void of the great Qualities which distinguish Poetry from Prose

I am,
Your, &c.

REMARKS UPON CATO, A TRAGEDY

1713

INTRODUCTION

'TIS now for some Weeks that my Friends have been urging me to make some Remarks upon the Tragedy of *CATO*, and 'tis for some Weeks that I have deliberated, whether Prudence would allow me to take such a Step as that is I have maturely consider'd both the general and the violent Applause with which that Tragedy has been receiv'd, That it was acted Twenty Days together, That Ten thousand of 'em have been sold since the Time it was printed, That ev'n Authors have publish'd their Approbation of it, who never before lik'd any thing but themselves, That Squire *Ironside*, that grave Offspring of ludicrous Ancestors, has appear'd at the Head of them, and, That things have been carry'd to that amazing Height, either by *French* Extravagance, or by *English* Industry, that a *Frenchman* is now actually translating this Play into *French*, which is a thing beyond Example, That a great deal of Deference is to be paid to a general Applause, That a Writer can expect nothing by attacking so successful a Piece, but the Character of an envious and an ill-natur'd Man, and perhaps of an arrogant, an insolent and presumptuous one, That it would look with a worse Grace in me than in most People, in me who have all my Life-time been an Asserter of Liberty, to endeavour to ruin the Reputation of a Play, which seems writ with a Design to augment the Love of Liberty, That what would make it look still worse is, that it has been my Misfortune more than once to have been engag'd in Disputes of this Nature formerly, by which, tho' I had Reason still on my Side, I have made my self numerous Enemies, That Truth now a-days is but a very feeble Defence against Passion and Prejudice, That I pass for a Man, who is conceitedly resolv'd to like nothing which others like, and that I have still endeavour'd to undeceive others at too cruel an Expence of my own

To all which my Friends have reply'd, That they are willing to own that a Deference is to be paid to a general Applause, when it appears that that Applause is natural and spontaneous, but that little Regard is to be had to it when it is affected and artificial, That they have a long time made this unlucky Remark, that of all the Tragedies which in their Memory have had vast and violent Runs, not one has been excellent, few have been tolerable, most have been scandalous, That there is a Reason to be given for this in the Nature of the thing; That when a Poet writes a Tragedy, who knows he has Judgment, and who feels he has Genius, that Poet presumes upon his own Merit, and scorns to make a Cabal, That People come coolly to the Representation of such a Tragedy, without any violent Expectation, or delusive Imagination, or invincible Prepossession, That such an Audience is liable to receive the Impressions which the Poem shall naturally make in them, and to judge by

their-own Reason and their own Judgments, and that Reason and Judgment are calm and serene, not form'd by Nature to make Proselytes, and to controul and lord it o'er the Imaginations of others But that when an Author writes a Tragedy, who knows he has neither Genius nor Judgment, he has Recourse to the making a Party, and endeavours to make up in Industry what is wanting in Talent, and to supply by Poetical Craft the Absence of Poetical Art; That such an Author is humbly contented to raise Mens Passions by a Plot without Doors, since he despairs of doing it by that which he brings upon the Stage, That Party, and Passion and Prepossession are clamorous and tumultuous things, and so much the more clamorous and tumultuous, by how much the more erroneous, That they domineer and tyrannize over the Imaginations of Persons who want Judgment, and sometimes too of those who have it, and like a fierce outrageous Torrent, bear down all Opposition before them, That a Man of Judgment is calm and patient under Contradiction because he knows he is in the right, while Passion, Prejudice and Prepossession grow violent and furious by being oppos'd, because then they begin to doubt that they are in the wrong, That Audiences are often pack'd as well as Juries, and that therefore it sometimes happens, that while the Innocent are condemn'd the Guilty are acquitted by a Verdict of *Ignoramus*

That as for the Authors who have publish'd their Encomiums of *Cato*, which they nickname Criticisms, those Authors appear to have been retain'd, and so, like conscientious Lawyers, believe it their Duty to say all that they can for their Client, and not one Word against him, that they may honestly earn their Fees, but that the Author of *CATO Examin'd* has behav'd himself like an errant Wag, and at the same time that he has prais'd him expresly, has implicitly damn'd him to the Pit of Hell, and has acted the Part of *Sempronius*, who while he openly bullies for *Cato*, is his mortal Enemy in his Heart

That as for Squire *Ironside*, he comes of a Race that has been most unfortunate in their Talents for Criticism, That his Grand-Father, Squire *Bickerstaff*, who was sometimes entertaining in other things, was almost never in the right when he pretended to judge of Poetry, That his Father, Mr *Spectator*, had been so merrily in the wrong, as to take Pains to reconcile us to the old Doggrel of *Chevy-Chase* and the *Three Children*, and to put Impotence and Imbecillity upon us for Simplicity, That he had publish'd a certain Criticism upon *Milton*, in which the Reverse of almost every thing that he has affirm'd is true, That he has had the Assurance to say in it, That *The Paradise Lost* of *Milton* has an Unity of Action, whereas in that Poem there are most apparently two Actions, the War of the Angels being an Action by it self, and having a just Beginning, a Middle and an End, That he has affirm'd with still greater Assurance, That the *Ilias* of *Homer* has a Duplicity of Action, and has cited the Authority of *Aristotle* as a Proof of that Assertion, whereas *Homer* in that Poem has given the World a Pattern, which for Unity and Simplicity of *Epick* Action never had any Parallel, and that *Aristotle* has commended him for it no less than three times in his little Treatise of Poetry,

That the said Mr *Spectator* had arraign'd and condemn'd the Poetical Justice of the Stage, and had publish'd a great deal of false and abominable Criticism, in order to poison his gentle Reader, and prepare the way for *Cato*

That the Attempt of that undertaking *Frenchman*, who is at present translating *Cato*, has made the writing of a Criticism upon it necessary, which before was highly reasonable, because the translating this Play into *French* being without Precedent or Example, will, together with the violent and general Applause it has met with, make it pass for our Nonparello among foreign Nations; which will expose our own to the Rallery of all *Europe*, unless we shew, at the same time, that we are not all so ignorant or mistaken.

That as for the Objection of ill Nature, if I am in the right in my Criticisms, I may laugh at those who make it, That right Reason can never pass for ill Nature, unless with those who are destitute of right Reason, That 'tis a senseless thing to cherish Libellers and Lampooners, who defame the Virtues of others to the publick Detriment, and at the same time to brand those with the Character of ill Nature who discover the Errors of an Author's Understanding, only in order to that Author's Improvement, and the Advancement of a noble Art, That those fulsome Panegyrists are rather to be esteem'd envious and ill-natur'd, who by nauseously flattering a very defective Author, and soothing him in his Errors and in his Ignorance, do, as it were, politickly fix him in his Follies, and render him proud and incorrigible.

That *Cato*'s being writ with a Design to support Liberty, is an Objection of no manner of Force, That let the Design be what it will, the Effect is sure to be contrary, That the shewing a Man of consummate Virtue unfortunate only for supporting Liberty, must of Necessity in a free Nation be of pernicious Consequence, and must justly raise the highest Indignation in all true Lovers of Liberty

That my having made a great many Enemies by former Disputes of this Nature, is a certain Proof that I have been in the right in those Disputes, and that they who hate me for asserting Truth are resolv'd to remain in the wrong, That I enter'd into those Disputes, partly to advance the publick Good by advancing a noble Art, and partly to retort private Injuries, That either Cause in it self is good and just, and that both together are strong and powerful, and that I shall have both together to apologize for my present Undertaking

That if I have made numerous Enemies, I have made a few Friends, of which each singly will outweigh all those numerous Enemies, That all reasonable Men, who by others Artifices, and their own Indolence, have been surpriz'd into an Approbation of this Play, will be glad to be undeceiv'd, as knowing well that 'tis their own Reason and their own Discernment that makes another Man's take Place with them. That the very Tragick Stage appears to be sinking, since the great Success of one very faulty Play prognosticates its Ruin more than the Miscarriage of twenty good ones, That a good Tragedy may miscarry by the ill Performance of the Actors, by Prejudice, by Malice, by

Squeamishness, but that a very faulty one can have great Success from almost nothing but the general Interest of the People, That this general ill Taste is partly the Effect of the *Italian* Opera; that a People accustom'd for so many Years to that, are as ill-prepar'd to judge of a good Tragedy, as Children that are eating Sugar-plumbs are to taste *Champaign* and *Burgundy*, That nothing but a wholsome Criticism can have Power to retrieve our Taste, and, That the Errors of *Cato* must be set in a true Light by me or some other Person, or the Tragick Muse must be banish'd from this Island, That it is set up for a Pattern, and extoll'd by some Authors, who are famous for their want of Judgment, not only before all our own, but above all ancient Tragedies, That the Interest of the Common-wealth of Learning lies at Stake, and the Reputation of *Great-Britain*, and, That he must be a pleasant Lover of his Country, and a worthy Member of the Common-wealth of Learning, who is afraid to assert the Interest of the one, and to defend the Reputation of the other, least he should make some mistaken Men his Enemies.

That as to my Resolution to approve of nothing which is lik'd by others, 'tis a Falshood which carries its own Evidence with it, that I have writ whole Volumes which may shew the contrary, and that the contrary may easily be made to appear in the Remarks which I may make upon *Cato*

Remarks upon CATO

THE 'foresaid Remonstrances of my Friends have at length so far prevail'd with me, that I have taken a resolution to make some Remarks upon this Tragedy in the following Method

First, I shall endeavour to shew the Faults and Absurdities which are to be found in this Tragedy

Secondly, I shall attempt to expose the Artifices which made way for its great Success.

First, I shall endeavour to shew its Faults and Absurdities, and here I design to do Three Things

1 I shall shew *what* perfections are wanting to it, thro' the not observing several of the Rules of *Aristotle*

2. I shall shew with what Absurdities it abounds, thro' the observing several of the Rules without any manner of Judgment or Discretion.

3. I shall shew some Faults and Absurdities, which are such in Themselves without any relation to the Rules.

Among the perfections which are wanting to this Tragedy, thro' the not observing the Rules, is first and chiefly the Fable, there being no Fable to this Tragedy. The Action of it which is the Death of *Cato,* is a particular Historical Action, a relation of something which *Cato* did and suffered, and not

an action Allegorical and Universal That it is not Allegorical, appears from hence, that it carries no moral Instruction with it. For the Moral which is foisted in at the latter end of this Play, is wholly Foreign to it, and is not deriv'd from the Action of it, which is the Death of *Cato.*

From hence let Fierce contending Nations know,
What dire effects from civil Discord flow,
'Tis this that shakes our Country with Alarms,
And gives up Rome *a Prey to* Roman *Arms,*
Produces Fraud, and Cruelty, and Strife,
And Robs the guilty World of Cato's *Life*

Let us suppose for once, that the Action of this Tragedy is the whole Civil War it self, yet I cannot discern what knowledge Moral or Intellectual can be drawn from the 'foregoing Lines. The dire effects of Civil discord were known to all Mankind, long before *Cato* was writ, and the only instruction that can be drawn from them, since in this Tragedy, the Invaders of Liberty are seen to Triumph, and the Defenders of it to Perish, must be this, That Fools and Knaves should have a care how they invade the Liberties of their Country, lest Good and Wise Men suffer by it, or that Good and Wise Men should have a care how they defend those Liberties, lest Fools and Knaves should Triumph

As the Action of this Play is the Death of *Cato,* no Instruction but one of these Three can be possibly drawn from it That a Man of consummate Virtue, must expect to end unfortunately Or that if a Man of an accomplish'd virtue happens to be unfortunate, 'tis his duty to put an end to his Misfortunes by a Dose or a Dagger, or that if such a one presumes to resist the Invaders of his Country's Liberties, he must expect to fall in the Attempt.

Thus, the Action of this Play is so far from carrying a Moral, that it carries a pernicious instruction with it Now I appeal to the Reader, which is most commendable, to make a Poetical Person of consummate Virtue end unfortunately, and by that means to discourage People from aiming at Perfection, or to shew a Man of accomplish'd Virtue driven to lay violent Hands upon himself, only for supporting Liberty, which must needs be a notable Lesson to People in a free Country, or to an Island so notorious as ours for the frequency of self Murder

As the Action of this Tragedy cannot be Allegorical, because it is not Moral, so is it neither General or Poetical, but Particular and Historical A general thing, says *Aristotle,* is what ev'ry Man of such and such a Character, would do upon such and such an occasion, as a particular thing is what such a particular Person, as for Example *Alcibiades,* did and suffer'd. Now that a Tragical Action ought at the Bottom to be thus general, ev'n after the Poet has nam'd his Characters, is the Doctrine of the same Philosopher The principal quality of *Cato's* Character, is the Love of his Country, as has been observ'd by others Now the question is, Whether 'tis necessary or probable, that a Man, the predominant quality of whose Character is the Love of his Countrey, should fall by his own Hand, as long as his Life is necessary to the good of his Coun-

trey. Now that this was the Case of *Cato*, may be prov'd from what the Poet has put into the Mouths of the other Dramatick Persons. For says *Portius* to his Sister in the Fifth Act

> *O* Marcia, *O my Sister, still there's hope*
> *Our Father will not cast away a Life*
> *So needful to us all and to his Country* P 58

Nay, if we believe what *Lucius* says in the Fourth Act, the Life of *Cato*, nay, not only his Life, but his submitting to *Cæsar* was necessary, not only for the good of his Country, but for the welfare of Mankind.

> *While Pride, Oppression, and Injustice reign*
> *The World will still demand her* Cato's *presence,*
> *In pitty to Mankind submit to* Cæsar,
> *And reconcile thy mighty Soul to Life*

So that *Cato*, the Predominant quality of whose Character, was the Love of his Country, killing himself at a time, when his Life was necessary to the good of his Country, and to the welfare of Mankind, did not do, what any Man of the same Character would necessarily or probably do upon the like occasion, and therefore *Cato's* killing himself, is not a general and Tragical Action, but a particular thing which *Cato* did and suffer'd

Now since 'tis undoubtedly the Fable, which is of the greatest importance in Tragedy, for as some body has well observ'd, 'tis the making of the Fable alone, which belongs peculiarly to the Art of the Poet, for 'tis History and Philosophy which teaches him to form his Characters, and Rhetorick and Grammar, his Sentiments and Expressions, and since there can be no Fable, where the Action is neither Allegorical nor Universal, and the Action in this Tragedy of *Cato*, is neither Allegorical nor Universal, I appeal to the Impartial Reader, whether this Tragedy of *Cato* having no Fable, can justly be said to be a fine Tragedy

As the Action of this Tragedy is neither Allegorical nor Universal, so neither can it be said to be one. The Action of this Play is the Death of *Cato*, and the Time of that Action is a natural Day, during which Day the Sons of *Cato* knew very well, that their Father's Life and the Liberty of *Rome*, were in the utmost Danger, as appears by the first four Lines of the Play, where *Portius* says to *Marcus*

> *The Dawn is overcast, the Morning low'rs,*
> *And heavily in Clouds brings on the Day,*
> *The great, the important Day, big with the Fate*
> *Of* Cato *and of* Rome

Now the Question is, whether the Amorous Passions of Two such noble *Romans* and such dutiful Sons, as *Marcus* and *Portius* are describ'd to be, upon that very Day, which in their own Opinions is like to be the last both of *Rome's* Liberty and of their Father's Life, are either necessary or probable Parts of the Action of the Play, which is the Death of their Father, and whether if

they are neither necessary nor probable Parts of it, they do not corrupt the Unity of that Action, and not only corrupt its Unity, but render it improbable, Romantick and incredible

The Rivalship between the Two Brothers, has no manner of Influence upon the Action of the Play, and therefore corrupts its Unity, nor has it any Consequence in its self, but the Author to make way for one of the Rivals knocks the other on the Head, and kills Him not by any Effect of his Rivalship, but by the common Fortune of War. How gross a Copy of the celebrated Rivalship of *Polidor* and *Castalio,* which has such a fatal Influence upon the Action of the Play, and causes such a moving Distress, and such a Deplorable and truly Tragical Catastrophe

Probability ought certainly to reign in every Tragical Action, but tho' it ought every where to predominate, it ought not to exclude the wonderful, as the wonderful which ought every where to predominate in *Epick* Poetry, ought not to exclude the probable We shall then treat of the Improbabilities of this Tragedy, when we come to speak of the Absurdities with which it throughout abounds, from the indiscreet and injudicious Observance of some of the Rules of *Aristotle* We are at present shewing what Beauties are wanting to it from the not observing others of those Rules Here then are none of those beautiful Surprizes which are to be found in some of the *Grecian* Tragedies, and in some of our own, and consequently here is nothing wonderful, nothing terrible or deplorable, which all three are caus'd by Surprize Now as Tragedy is the Imitation of an Action which excites Compassion and Terror, and as that alone can be justly accounted a very fine Tragical Scene, which excites one of those two Passions or both, in a very great Degree, and as it is impossible either of 'em can be excited in a very great Degree, without a very great Surprize, and there is in this Tragedy no very great Surprize, we find there is not in this Tragedy, no not so much as one very fine Tragical Scene, no not so much as one Scene with which we are extremely mov'd I sit with Indolence from the opening of the Play to the very Catastrophe, and when at length the Catastrophe comes, instead of vehemently shaking with Terror, or dissolving with melting Pity, I rather burn with Indignation, and I shudder with Horror. When I behold *Cato* expiring by his own Hand. 'tis difficult to tell at which Indecency and which Inconsistency I am shock'd the most, at a Philosopher's acting against the Light of Nature, or at a *Stoick*'s yielding to ill Fortune without the last Necessity, or at the unjust and unfortunate End of a Man of accomplish'd Virtue, or at a Lover of Liberty and of his Country deserting both by his Death.

That Esteem which we conceiv'd for *Cato* at the reading of the ancient Poets, immediately vanishes when we behold his Death, and I begin to wonder what those Poets meant I begin to think that their Encomiums arose from want of considering this Matter aright, and I find, upon Reflection, that the greatest of them all, both for Genius and Judgment, tho' in his *8th Æneid* he places

Cato at the Head of his Demi-Gods, in the *Elysian* Fields, yet he damns him in his *6th*, in the Number of those who fall by their own Hands

We are enclin'd to believe, that it was rather a Mixture of Pride and Ignorance, than any Degree of Heroick Virtue, that induc'd *Cato* to be his own Destroyer. We cannot understand the Suicide of one, who was under no Necessity to die; for the Cause of Liberty was as yet not entirely lost, and it appears from the Beginning of the *Second Act*, that a Way lay open to him and his for their Escape by Land.

> Numidia's *spacious Kingdom lies behind us,*
> *Ready to rise at its young Prince's Call*

And 'tis manifest from the latter End of the *Fourth*, that the Sea lay open to his Passage; 'tis *Cato* himself that tells us so.

> *Farewell my Friends, if there be any of you*
> *That dare not trust the Victor's Clemency*
> *Know there are Ships prepar'd by my Command,*
> *(Their Sails already opening to the Wind)*
> *That shall convey you to the wish'd-for Port*

Who then can extremely pity a Man, who rashly dy'd by his own Hands, when there was no Necessity for Dying, and who deserted the Cause of Liberty and of his Country, thro' Stubborness and thro' Ignorance, or sacrifis'd them to his Stoical Pride? If the Sons of the Great *Pompey* had follow'd the Example of *Cato*, had there ever been that noble Contention that there was afterwards in *Spain* for Liberty, which was within an Ace of reducing *Cæsar* to follow the Example of *Cato*? And what might not have been the happy Event of that desperate Conflict, had *Cato* animated those Troops by his Presence and sustain'd them by his Authority? Even *Portius* takes Notice, in the *Fifth Act*, of the auspicious Influence that his Father's Presence might have o'er those Assertors of Liberty

> Port *As I was hasting to the Port, where now*
> *My Father's Friends, impatient for a Passage,*
> *Accuse the lingring Winds, a Sail arriv'd*
> *From* Pompey's *Son, who thro' the Realms of* Spain
> *Calls out for Vengeance on his Father's Death,*
> *And rouzes the whole Nation up to Arms*
> *Were* Cato *at their Head, once more might* Rome
> *Assert her Right, and claim her Liberty*

I am apt to think that *Brutus* and *Cassius* shew'd more Spirit and more Wisdom, by the magnanimous Choice which they made to destroy *Cæsar*, rather than kill themselves, and when those two last of the *Romans* were constrain'd to do at last what *Cato* had done before them, I find their Deaths to be much more excusable than his, for they were compell'd by dire Necessity to do what *Cato* had done by Choice, for they who were the principal Conspirators against *Cæsar*, might expect to be us'd with Severity, if not with the utmost Cruelty, by *Anthony* and *Octavius*, who had sworn to revenge his Death. Besides, *Brutus*

and *Cassius* did not fall, 'till the Cause of Liberty was utterly and entirely lost, whereas we have shewn that there were two noble Conflicts for it after the Death of *Cato*

I am apt to think that this Action of *Cato* would not have had the Approbation even of those *Romans* themselves, who liv'd in the Vigour of the Commonwealth, and in the Height of the *Roman* Virtue, and who, after the deplorable Rout at *Cannæ*, caus'd publick Thanks to be return'd to *Terentius Varro*, for not despairing of the Common-wealth

'Tis certainly the Duty of every Tragick Poet, by an exact Distribution of a Poetical Justice, to imitate the Divine Dispensation, and to inculcate a particular Providence 'Tis true indeed upon the Stage of the World the Wicked sometimes prosper, and the Guiltless suffer But that is permitted by the Governour of the World, to shew from the Attribute of his infinite Justice that there is a Compensation in Futurity, to prove the Immortality of the Human Soul, and the Certainty of future Rewards and Punishments But the Poetical Persons in Tragedy exist no longer than the Reading or the Representation, the whole Extent of their Entity is circumscribed by those, and therefore during that Reading or Representation, according to their Merits or Demerits they must be punish'd or rewarded If this is not done, there is no impartial Distribution of Poetical Justice, no instructive Lecture of a particular Providence and no Imitation of the Divine Dispensation And yet the Author of this Tragedy does not only run counter to this, in the Fate of his principal Character, but every where throughout it, makes Virtue suffer and Vice triumph, for not only *Cato* is vanquish'd by *Cæsar*, but the Treachery and Perfidiousness of *Syphax* prevails over the honest Simplicity and the Credulity of *Juba* and the sly Subtlety and Dissimulation of *Portius* over the generous Frankness and Open-heartedness of *Marcus*

But setting aside for a Moment the Rules of the *Drama*, which are the Rules of exact Reason, there is not with all its Improbability so much as any thing in this Tragedy of that Art and Contrivance, which is to be found in an entertaining Romance or agreeable Novel, that Art and Contrivance, by which their Authors excite our Curiosities, and cause those eager Longings in their Readers to know the Events of things, those Longings which by their pleasing Agitations, at once disturb and delight the Mind, and cause the prime Satisfaction of all those Readers who read only to be delighted Instead of that this Author has found out the Secret, to make his Tragedy highly improbable, without making it wonderful, and to make some Parts of it highly incredible without being in the least entertaining

But now let us come to the Characters, and let us shew that they are not proper for Tragedy *Cato* himself, who is the principal Person, is a *Stoick*, and therefore a very improper Heroe for Tragedy The Author of *CATO Examin'd* says, "That he was once of the same Opinion, because being a "*Stoick* by Profession, he is suppos'd to be without Passion, for Passion, says "he, is the very Characteristick of that Poem, *violenta Tragedia*, but, says he,

"in reviewing the Life of that *Roman*, I found that the Love for his Country "was not without Passion, and that of great Violence, as his bursting into "Tears, in going over the Field where the Conflict of *Dyrrachium* was, and in "doing the same whenever Mention was made of the Battel of *Pharsalia*"

But here the Mistake of this Gentleman lies, *viz* in affirming that therefore a *Stoick* is an improper Heroe for Tragedy, because he is suppos'd to be without Passion, for who ever doubted that a *Stoick* is a Man, and consequently that he has Passions, even Grace it self does not go so far as to divest a Man wholly even of worldly Passions, much less can any Philosophical Discipline pretend to reach that Length A *Stoick* is therefore an improper Heroe for Tragedy, not because he is suppos'd to be actually without Passion, but because he is believ'd to do his utmost Endeavours to be without them, because he places his Pride, his Glory, his Excellence in subduing them, because his great and principal Aim is to make his Reason, not only the Ruler, but the very Tyrant of them, because his chief Design is not to regulate, but to extirpate and extinguish them From which it is manifest, that an old *Stoick*, as *Cato* was, has by long Exercise got some Habits which make him a very improper Hero for Tragedy For his Philosophy has taught him to check his Passions, to conceal them, and to shorten them, so that a *Stoick*, if his Manners are made convenient, can never be shewn, as *Oedipus* and some other principal Characters of Tragedy are shewn, *viz* agitated and tormented by various violent Passions, from the opening of the Scene to the very Catastrophe

Besides, 'tis to no purpose to affirm, that *Cato* had Passions, and violent ones, because he is no where in this Tragedy drawn in a violent Passion, as this Author has himself observ'd, *p* 19 where he tells us, "That he finds by "History that *Cato* was of a sedate Temper, and at the same time finds by "the Tragedy that the Poet has every where drawn him so" So that here is another Reason why *Cato* is an improper Hero for the Stage, because his natural Temper, as well as his Philosophy was repugnant to Passion And this Author, in his 9th Page, has given another Reason why *Cato* is an improper Heroe for Tragedy "Because, says he, the Characters that are to compose a Tragick "Fable or Plot must not be sovereignly virtuous or innocent, for to make a "perfect virtuous and innocent Character unhappy excites Horror, not Pity "nor Terror"

If this Author by these perfect Characters, means the principal Characters of such Tragedies, as end unfortunately with relation to those principal Characters, he is in the right of it, or *Aristotle* must be in the wrong But then I appeal to the impartial Reader, what this Author would get by it, if I should allow that a *Stoick* may be a proper Heroe for Tragedy

Besides this, there is an Inequality in the Manners of *Cato*, and therefore they are ill mark'd likewise, for his Behaviour in the Fourth Act, is by no means answerable to that Character that is given of him, and that Expectation that is rais'd of him by *Portius* in the First

How does the Lustre of our Father's Actions,
Thro' the dark Clouds of Ills that cover him,

Break forth, and burn with more triumphant Brightness!
His Sufferings shine, and spread a Glory round him,
Greatly unfortunate he fights the Cause
Of Honour, Virtue, Liberty and Rome

And afterwards by *Juba* in the same Act.

Where shall we find the Man that bears Affliction,
Great and Majestick in his Griefs like Cato?
Heav'ns! With what Strength, what Steddiness of Mind,
He triumphs in the midst of all his Sufferings!
How does he rise against a Load of Woes,
And thank the Gods that threw the Weight upon him

And by what he says himself in the Second Act.

Fathers, I cannot see that our Affairs
Are grown thus desperate We have Bulwarks round us,
Within our Walls are Troops inur'd to Toil,
In Africk's *Heats, and season'd to the Sun,*
Numidia's *spacious Kingdom lies behind us,*
Ready to rise at its young Prince's Call
While there is Hope, do not distrust the Gods,
But wait at least while Cæsar's *near Approach*
Force us to yield 'Twill never be too late
To sue for Chains, and own a Conqueror
Why should Rome *fall a Moment e'er her Time?*
No let us draw her Term of Freedom out
In its full Length, and spin it to the last,
So shall we gain still one Day's Liberty
And let me perish, but in Cato's *Judgment,*
A Day, an Hour of virtuous Liberty
Is worth a whole Eternity in Bondage

Let us now see whether his Behaviour in the Fourth Act is answerable to all this

When the Conspiracy of *Syphax* and *Sempronius* broke out, by the Mutiny of those *Romans*, who had been seduced by *Sempronius*, tho' that part of the Conspiracy was quickly quell'd, by the general Repentance of those engag'd in it, by the Deaths of the Leaders, and of *Sempronius* himself, *Cato*, as soon as he hears of the Death of the latter, cries out *Act* 4. *p.* 50

O Lucius, *I am sick of this bad World,*
The Day-light and the Sun grow painful to me

Now what Reason has a Man of his Character to exclaim thus, and to fall into Desperation, because Heaven has discover'd his secret Enemy, and Divine Vengeance has overtaken a Villain? His Affairs, as yet, are not in a jot worse Posture than when he shew'd so much Resolution in the Second Act.

And when he hears of the other part of the Conspiracy, which is the Attempt of *Syphax* to force his way with his *Numidians* thro' the Southern Gate, as

soon as he hears of this Attempt, without expecting the Success, or in the least waiting for the Event, he cries out,

> Lucius, *the Torrent bears too hard upon me,*
> *Justice gives way to Force The conquer'd World*
> *Is* Cæsar's, Cato *has no Business in it*

Is this, after all, his boasted Firmness? Is this the Courage of a valiant Soldier, or the Magnanimity of a *Roman* General, or the Impassiveness of an habitual *Stoick*, or the undaunted invincible Resolution of an admired Assertor of Liberty? Did ever weak Woman despair sooner, or yield more tamely to a threatning Accident, before she knew the Event of it?

There seems likewise to be an Inequality in the Manners of *Cato*, from the Advice which he gives to *Portius*, in the latter End of the Fourth Act.

> Portius, *draw near, my Son, thou oft hast seen*
> *Thy Sire engag'd in a corrupted State*
> *Wrestling with Vice and Faction, now thou seest me*
> *Spent, overpower'd, despairing of Success*
> *Let me advise thee to retreat betimes*
> *To thy Paternal Seat, the* Sabine *Field,*
> *Where the great Censor toil'd with his own Hand*
> *And all our frugal Ancestors were bless'd*
> *In humble Virtues, and a Rural Life,*
> *There live retir'd, pray for the Peace of* Rome,
> *Content thy self to be obscurely good*
> *When Vice prevails, and impious Men bear Sway,*
> *The Post of Honour is a private Station*

Does this look like the Advice of a Man, the predominant Quality of whose Character is the Love of his Country, and who in the preceding Page saw with Tranquility his other Son actually dead, and wept immediately afterwards at the bare Prospect of his Country's Ruin? Is such a Man consistent with himself, when he advises this Son to desert his Country while 'tis in the utmost Danger, and instead of joining the young *Pompey*, and the Remainder of the Republican Party, basely to retire to Solitude, and to submit to the Conqueror? Is there any Consistency between this Advice, and that which in the preceding Page he gives to this very *Portius*, upon viewing the Body of *Marcus*?

> Portius, *behold thy Brother, and remember*
> *Thy Life is not thy own when* Rome *demands it*

When ever could *Rome* demand more loudly that *Portius* should venture his Life for her, than at this present Juncture? *Portius* himself is so sensible of his Duty in this Case, that he makes his Father a fitting Answer, which leaves no room for a Reply

> *I hope my Father does not recommend*
> *A Life to* Portius *which he scorns himself*

The Father actually dies rather than take that Advice which he gives to his Son; and he would have his Son so base as to take that Advice, rather than bravely venture his Life for his sinking Country

Thus it is plain that there is an Inconsistency and an Inequality in the Manners of *Cato* And for the same Reason too there is an Inconvenience, for the 'foresaid Advice is by no means becoming of a faithful Lover of his Country Besides, as we observ'd above, if the Manners of *Cato* are unequal, they are for that Reason ill mark'd And if the Manners in so known a Character are ill mark'd, it follows that they are not resembling. But if 'tis objected here, That there really was this Inconsistency and this Inequality in the Character of *Cato*, that he did actually give that Advice to his Son, and therefore that the Character is resembling To that I answer, That the Poet either ought not to have brought that Character on the Stage, or to have sunk that Quality, or those Qualities in it which made the Manners inconvenient

As the Character of *Cato* is too virtuous for perfect Tragedy, those of *Sempronius* and *Syphax* are too scandalous for any Tragedy, Perfect or Imperfect The Author of *Cato Examin'd*, says after *Aristotle, That there is a sort of Satisfaction in the Punishment of the Wicked, but*, says he, *it is neither Terror nor Pity, and therefore not Tragical* He complains that such scandalous Villanies are brought upon our Stage, as are fitter for the Hangman's Correction than that of the Muse I would fain know whether the Villanies of *Sempronius* and *Syphax*, which are Mutiny, Desertion and Treason are not of that Number, and whether the Author of the Observations upon *Cato* is not of that Opinion, when Page 13 he calls them Traytors and Villains

Besides, The Character of *Sempronius* is an Usurpation upon Comedy For as Hypocrisy it self is by its Nature comical, and must be nicely manag'd at any Time to be otherwise, the Counterfeiting a great Passion after *Sempronius* his manner, *viz* with Mouthing and Bellowing, Page 7, is undoubtedly very Ridiculous, and then for a Villain to charge the Treason which he is apparently guilty of himself, upon one whom he and every one knows to be Honest, as *Sempronius* in the second Act does his upon *Lucius*, is certainly the very Height of Impudence, and is therefore perfectly Comical

Now that which agravates the Faults of this Character is, that the gross Dissimulation, join'd to the gross Affectation that appears in *Sempronius*, is so far from being necessary to the carrying on the Action of the Play, that it has directly a Tendency to the producing an Effect quite contrary to that for which *Sempronius* designs it, which is to conceal himself from the *piercing Eyes of Cato* For gross Dissimulation join'd to gross Affectation is enough to discover the Hypocrite, not only to *piercing Eyes*, but even to common Discernments

Nor is the Transcendent Villany of his Behaviour in the third Act, towards the Leaders of the Mutiny, in the least necessary for carrying on the Action of the Play, but has so direct a Tendency to the discovering the Villany, that one would think it impossible it should have any other Effect, so that there

are two gross Faults apparent in this one Character, the Manners of it being in some Places unnecessarily Villanous, and in others perfectly Comical.

As we have shewn above, that *Cato* is not the fittest Character for Tragedy, because he is an old *Stoick*, so I would fain know whether *Portius*, *Marcus*, *Juba*, and *Marcia*, are so very proper for it, because they are young ones, or at least are introduc'd as such. *Portius* and *Marcus* are represented as such in the very second Page of the Play, where *Marcus* says

By Heaven! such Virtues joyn'd with such Success
Distract my very Soul, our Father's Fortune
Would almost tempt us, to renounce His Precepts

And what is the Character that in the third Page *Portius* gives of *Juba*

Behold, young Juba, *the* Numidian *Prince,*
With how much Care he forms Himself to Glory,
And breaks the fierceness of his native Temper,
To copy out our Father's bright Example

And the like Character does *Juba* give of *Marcia*, Page 12

The virtuous Marcia *tow'rs above her Sex,*
True, She is Fair, (Oh how divinely Fair!)
But still the lovely Maid improves her Charms,
With inward Greatness, unaffected Wisdom,
And sanctity of Manners Cato's *Soul*
Shines out in ev'ry Thing She acts or speaks,
While winning Mildness and attractive Smiles,
Dwell in Her Looks, and with becoming Grace
Soften the Rigour of Her Father's Virtues

Now I should be apt to think, that a Nest of *Stoicks* could supply us, with no more proper Persons for an excellent Tragedy, than a Nest of Fools can do for an excellent Comedy But here if any of the Author's Friends should urge in his Behalf, that tho' these Persons are introduc'd as *Stoicks*, yet the Poet has given them nothing but the Name, and that in the Sequel, they act more Termagantly, than any Persons in the World besides themselves, *Stoicks* or others, would do in their Circumstances, I must allow that they are in the Right, but then this Question is liable to be ask'd, Is there not upon this account, some Inequality, some Inconsistency, and some Poetical badness of the Manners in them? Is it convenient, is it consistent, or is it expected, that Persons who at first are introduc'd as Philosophers, as *Romans*, as Lovers of their Country, as dutiful and affectionate Children to the best of Fathers, should play the whining Amorous Milk-Sops, upon that very Day, when Reason is about to yeild to Force, Liberty to Tyranny, *Rome* to *Cæsar*, and the sacred Life of their Father to that universal Tyrant, Death? when *Portius* in the first Act of this Play, gives *Sempronius* so good a Character of his Sister *Marcia's* Dutifulness, and her filial Affection and Tenderness

Alas! Sempronius, *wou'dst Thou talk of Love*
To Marcia, *while Her Father's Life's in Danger,*

Thou might'st as well court the Pale Trembling Vestal,
When She beholds the Holy Flame expiring

Does he not at the same time give a very wretched one of his own and his Brother *Marcus's*? Was it not their Duty to shew as much Concern for their Father's Danger as their Sister *Marcia* did? Was it not their Duty at the same time to shew that they were still less than their Sister in the Pow'r of soft effeminate Passions, as being stronger both by Education and Nature, and far more capable both of *Roman* Resolution and of *Grecian* Philosophy

There likewise appears to me to be a very great Inequality and Inconsistency in the Character of *Marcia*, who is certainly in the Right in what She says Act 1 p 14 to *Lucia*

How Lucia, *would'st Thou have me sink away*
In pleasing Dreams, and lose my self in Love,
When ev'ry Moment Cato's *Life's at Stake?*
Cæsar *comes Arm'd with Terrour and Revenge,*
And aims his Thunder at my Father's Head,
Should not the sad Occasion swallow up
My other Cares, and draw them all into it

Yes, certainly, The sad Occasion ought to do this These are reasonable Sentiments, and becoming a dutiful and affectionate Daughter, Tho' She has chosen strange Words to express these Sentiments, of which in another Place The Question here is, whether She is not more in the Wrong in her next Speech, than She is in the Right here

Lucia, *Disburthen all Thy Cares on me,*
And let me share Thy most retir'd Distress,
Tell me who raises up this Conflict in Thee
Luc *I need not blush to name Them when I tell Thee,*
They're Marcia's *Brothers and the Sons of* Cato
Marc *They both behold Thee with their Sister's Eyes,*
And often have reveal'd their Passion to me
But tell me whose Address Thou favour'st most,
I long to know, and yet I Dread to hear it

Now here, as I said before, The Question is, whether She, who was so much in the Right in laying aside the Thoughts of her own Cares and Passions, when Her Fathers Life was ev'ry Moment in Danger, is not infinitely more in the Wrong than She was in the Right before, in enquiring and entring into another Person's Cares and Passions. For if She had yeilded at such a time to the Violence of her own Affections, there had been, according to Poetical Reckoning, a kind of Constraint upon her, and the Action had been Involuntary, but the entring in her Circumstances into another Person's Passions and Cares is most certainly choice, and a more extravagant and blameable Choice than hers could not possibly be made If She had yeilded to a Passion for *Juba*, that Passion, tho' ill tim'd, had yet been natural, tho' it had not been reasonable

But the Concern which she shew'd for her Brother's Passion is affected and fantastical.

But tell me whose Address thou favour'st most,
I long to know, and yet I Dread to hear it
Luc *Which is it* Marcia *wishes for?*
Marc *For neither*
And yet for both, The Youths have equal Share
In Marcia's *Wishes, and divide their Sister,*
But tell me which of them is Lucia's *Choice?*
Luc Marcia, *They both are High in my Esteem,*
But in my Love — why wilt thou make me name Him?
Thou know'st it is a blind and foolish Passion,
Pleas'd and disgusted with it knows not what
Marc *O* Lucia *I'm perplex'd O tell me which*
I must hereafter call my Happy Brother
Luc *Suppose 'twere* Portius, *could you blame my Choice,*
O Portius! *Thou hast stol'n away my Soul —*
Marcus *is over-warm —*

Now, there is not One Lady in Twenty that would have found that Fault in a Lover, any more than in a Bed-fellow

Marc *Alas! Poor Youth! How can'st thou throw him from thee?*
Lucia, *Thou know'st not half the love he bears thee*
Luc *You seem to plead*
Against your Brother Portius
Marc *Heav'n forbid!*
Had Portius *been the unsuccessful Lover,*
The same Compassion would have fal'n on him

Now, is not this a very whimsical Distress for a Gentlewoman in her Circumstances, and are not these Sentiments very Different from what She utter'd in the foregoing Page?

How Lucia, *would'st thou have me sink away*
In pleasing Dreams, and lose my self in Love?
When ev'ry Moment Cato's *Life's at Stake?*
Should not the sad Occasion swallow up
My other Cares, and Draw them all into it

Could any thing have been more reasonable, or more natural, than to have applied the Sense of these five Lines to her Brothers as well as her self?

But as *Marcia* is thus Different from her self, there is still another strange Inequality, and a whimsical Inconsistency in her lusty Lover *Sempronius*, which we forgot when we mention'd his Character before. The first time *Sempronius* appears he discovers himself to be a Traytor and a Lover. At his first Entrance he says, p 4.

Conspiracies no sooner should be form'd
Than executed

In the next Page, he shews himself a Lover

> O *my* Portius!
> *Could I but call that wond'rous Man my Father,*
> *Would but thy Sister* Marcia *be propitious*
> *To thy Friends Vows, I might be bless'd indeed*

But Love appears to be his predominant Inclination. For when he is alone in the 6th Page, he declares that the chief Reason why he is a Traytor is, because he is a Lover

> Cato *has us'd me ill, he has refus'd*
> *His Daughter* Marcia *to my ardent Vows*

This Traytor in the second Act appears likewise very Amorous

> Syphax, *I now may hope thou hast forsook*
> *Thy* Juba's *Cause, and wishest* Marcia *mine*
> Syph *May she be thine as fast as thou can'st wish her*
> Semp Juba, *I love that Woman, tho' I curse*
> *My self and her, yet spight of me I love her*

And yet the poor Girl has given him not so much as an ungentle Word, or a mortifying Look, since he mention'd her with so much fondness. But what says *Syphax* to this?

> *Make* Cato *sure, and give up* Utica,
> Cæsar *will ne'er refuse thee such a Trifle*

In the fourth Act, p 43 We find *Sempronius* still prosecuting his Plot against *Cato,* and still harping upon his Daughter.

> *Confusion! I have fail'd of half my Purpose*
> Marcia, *the charming* Marcia's *left behind*

By the way, what he means by behind is hard to imagine, for he says this in her own House. Perhaps by behind, he means behind the Scenes But what says old *Syphax* to this?

> *How? will* Sempronius *turn a Woman's Slave*

Methinks this is a different Language from what *Syphax* us'd in the second Act.

> *May she be thine as fast as thou would'st wish her*

Could the Reader expect that he who talk'd at that rate in the second Act, should shew this Surprize that he now discovers? But let us hear what *Sempronius* answers

> *Think not thy Friend can ever feel the soft*
> *Unmanly Warmth, and Tenderness of Love*
> Syphax, *I long to clasp that haughty Maid,*
> *And bend her stubborn Virtue to my Passion,*
> *When I have gone thus far I'll cast her off*

Thus we see to our great Surprize that *Sempronius* is no Lover at last, that he is and ever has been incapable of the Soft

Unmanly Warmth, and Tenderness of Love

And 'tis very much for the Credit of the God of Love that he is so. But would any one have thought when he said to her Brother in the first Act,

O my Portius!
Could I but call that wond'rous Man my Father,
Would but thy Sister Marcia *be propitious*
To thy Friends Vows, I might be bless'd indeed

That he aim'd at nothing but a single Assignation with her? Would one have Thought that by being *bless'd indeed,* he meant nothing, as Mrs *Frail* said to Mrs. *Foresight,* but the being happy in a Hackney-Coach with her? Is this the Blessing that *Cato,* as he tells us in the first Act, had refus'd to his ardent Vows? Is it for the refusal of this Blessing that he turns Traytor to *Cato* and to his Country? And is this the Trifle which *Syphax* tells him in the second Act, that *Cæsar* would not refuse him? Is it not strange, since Bully *Sempronius* was so rampant, that nothing but *Cato*'s Daughter would serve his Turn? And that no less a Pimp would serve him than *Cæsar* and her own Father? *Syphax* and *Sempronius* have worthy Sentiments of the great *Cæsar* indeed, who expected that he should abandon the Daughter of *Cato,* to be ravish'd by the very Villain who had betray'd her Father that would have been wonderfully agreable to that Popularity which *Cæsar* so much affected, and which was so much his Interest *Lucius* it seems, and the rest of his Enemies, had more advantagious Opinions of *Cæsar,* than his two worthy Friends here For see what he says to *Cato*

The Victor never will impose on Cato
Ungenerous Terms, his Enemies confess
The Virtues of Humanity are Cæsar's Act 4 p 51

Sempronius and his Friend *Syphax* seem very inconsistent with themselves, and with the other Characters in what they say or do in relation to *Juba* in the several Parts of this Tragedy In the third Scene of the first Act *Sempronius* says to *Syphax,*

But tell me, hast thou yet drawn o'er young Juba?
That still would recommend thee more to Cæsar,
And challenge better Terms

To which *Syphax* answers,

Alas! he's lost,
He's lost, Sempronius, *all his Thoughts are full*
Of Cato's *Virtues, but I'll try once more*
Semp *Be sure to press upon him ev'ry Motive*
Juba's *Surrender since his Father's Death*
Would give up Africk *into* Cæsar's *Hands,*
And make him Lord of half the burning Zone

And *Cato* says in the second Act, in order to animate the assembled Senate,

> Numidia's *spacious Kingdom lies behind us,*
> *Ready to rise at its young Prince's Call*
> *While there is Hope do not distrust the Gods*

And *Syphax* likewise tells *Juba* in the same Act

> Juba *commands* Numidia's *hardy Troops,*
> *Mounted on Steeds unus'd to the restraint*
> *Of Curbs or Bits, and fleeter than the Winds*
> *Give but the Word we'll snatch this Damsel up,*
> *And bear her off*

By all this now would not one imagine that this *Juba* was a mighty Prince, of most formidable Interest, and able to raise up a very powerful Confederacy against *Cæsar*? And yet this very *Sempronius* in the second Act, p 31. tho' nothing had happen'd since his high Opinion of *Juba*'s Power, that could weaken his Interest mentions him as one of no Significancy

> Sempr *Is* Juba *fix'd*?
> Syph *Yes, but it is to* Cato
> Sempr *Come, 'tis no matter, we shall do without him*

And *Syphax* in the 28th Page, treats him with the utmost Contempt, upon which *Juba* puts this Question to him,

> *Is it because the Throne of my Fore-fathers*
> *Still stands unfix'd, and that* Numidia's *Crown*
> *Hangs doubtful yet whose Head it shall enclose,*
> *That thou presum'st to treat thy Prince with Scorn?*

So that here not only *Syphax* considers him, but he regards himself as a King *de Jure* only, and of no manner of Power How unlike to him, who was describ'd before in the First Act as the Prince.

> Juba's *Surrender since his Father's Death*
> *Would give up* Africk *into* Cæsar's *Hands,*
> *And make him Lord of half the burning Zone*

And I would fain know whether *Sempronius* does not treat him as a Wretch of no manner of *Consequence,* when in the Fourth Act he attempts to kill him with his own Guards, in the very Hall of the Governour, and yet in that very Place, when *Sempronius* lies dead in *Juba*'s Garb, *Marcia* mistakes him for that young Prince, because of his Regal Ornaments

> *Ha! a* Numidian! *Heavens preserve the Prince,*
> *The Face lies muffled up within the Garment*
> *But, Ha! Death to my Sight! A Diadem*
> *And purple Robes, O Gods! 'tis he, 'tis he*

And *Cato* expiring has the same Opinion of him that he had in the assembled Senate

> *A Senator of* Rome, *while* Rome *survive'd,*
> *Would not have match'd his Daughter with a King,*
> *But* Cæsar's *Arms have thrown down all Distinction*

Nor is *Juba* more consistent with himself in the Scene between him and *Cato* in the Second Act, where he says to *Cato,*

> Jub *I'm charm'd whene'er thou talk'st, I pant for Virtue,*
> *And all my Soul endeavours at Perfection*

By the way, *panting for Virtue* is a pretty brisk Metaphor. Virtue, they say, lies in the Middle, now the Question is, whether the Virtue for which *Juba* pants is not in the Middle of *Cato*'s Daughter? But that we shall see immediately *Cato* answers,

> Cat *Dost thou love Watching, Abstinence and Toil,*
> *Laborious Vertues all, learn them from* Cato,
> *Success and Fortune must thou learn from* Cæsar

Now let us see what this young *Numidian* replies,

> Jub *The best good Fortune that can fall on* Juba,
> *The whole Success at which my Heart aspires,*
> *Depends on* Cato

Cato, who does not in the least dream that *Marcia* is the Virtue that *Juba* pants for, immediately gives him *Charte Blanche*

> Cat *What can* Juba *ask that* Cato *can refuse?*
> Juba *I fear to name it —*
> Marcia *inherits all her Father's Virtue*
> Cat *What wou'dst thou say?*
> Jub Cato, *thou hast a Daughter*

Thus we see that *Juba* is for a Virtue that is not very consistent with Abstinence, some Watching, indeed, and Toil there may be in it But *Cato,* in my Opinion, makes him a very reasonable Reply

> Cat *Adieu, young Prince, I would not hear a Word*
> *Shou d lessen thee in my Esteem, Remember*
> *The Hand of Fate is over us, and Heav'n*
> *Exacts Severity from all our Thoughts,*
> *It is not now a time to talk of ought*
> *But Chains or Conquest, Liberty or Death*

This *Numidian*'s Desire to solace himself with the Daughter, at a Time when the Knife was at the Throat of the Father, is, methinks, something absurd, but the doing a thing that is something absurd is one certain Sign of a Lover

Thus have we endeavour'd to shew, That the Characters in this Play are not proper for Tragedy, That the Manners of them are for the most part ill mark'd, inconvenient, inconsistent and unequal, and, That the Passions are sometimes not agreeable to the Characters. We now come to shew, That the Passions for the most part are not Tragical, and that they are sometimes false

And first we shall shew, That the Passions in this Play, for the most part are not Tragical. No Passion can be justly esteem'd a Tragical Passion, but what is the Cause or the Effect of a real Tragical Distress, that is, of some-

thing which is in it self terrible or deplorable. The Love therefore that reigns throughout the Tragedy of *Cato* is not a Tragical Passion, because it produces no real Tragical Distress, but a Distress which proceeds only from the Whimsies or extravagant Caprices of the Lovers.

We have made it appear above, that *Sempronius* is no Lover; and the Death of *Marcus* is by no means to be imputed to Love, but to his Duty, to his Bravery, to his Thirst of Glory We are prepar'd for it from this last Quality, in the first Scene of the Play, where he says to *Portius*,

> *Bid me for Honour plunge into a War*
> *Of thickest Foes, and rush on certain Death,*
> *Then shalt thou see that* Marcus *is not slow*
> *To follow Glory, and confess his Father*

And in the Fourth Act, *p* 51 when *Cato* hears that *Marcus* is engag'd with *Syphax*, he says to *Portius*,

> *Haste, my Son, and see*
> *Thy Brother* Marcus *acts a* Roman's *Part*

That is, that he should conquer or die And *Cato* says in the very next Page, upon hearing that *Marcus* was kill'd without quitting his Post,

> *Thanks to the Gods, my Boy has done his Duty*

From all which 'tis plain, that Love had not the least Influence upon the Death of *Marcus*, nor is it mention'd, or suppos'd, or so much as suspected to have had, by any of the other Poetical Characters If here it should be objected That the Parting of Lovers is deplorable, and that consequently every thing that has a Tendency to that Parting must excite Compassion, and that therefore the Scene between *Portius* and *Lucia* in the Third Act is truly Tragical To that I answer, That I own the Parting of Lovers to be deplorable, and that consequently every thing that has a Tendency to that Parting must excite Compassion, but then that Parting must have a real compulsive, or at least a reasonable Cause, and not proceed like *Lucia*'s Resolution to part with *Portius*, from Whimsey and Fantasticalness, for in that Case we cannot believe that the Lovers will really part, but that they will come to their Senses again. Now we shall shew immediately, that not only *Lucia*'s Resolution is fantastical, but that the Passion in the Scene between her and *Portius* in the Third Act, and that in the foregoing Scene between *Portius* and *Marcus*, has not the least Foundation in Nature

Marcus, who is represented so warm and so violent a Lover, yet does not speak one Word to his Mistress thro' the whole Play, and in the Beginning of the Third Act, he who is by Nature bold and undertaking, applies himself to *Portius*, who is cool and modest, to speak for him

> Portius, *thou oft enjoy'st the fair One's Presence,*
> *Then undertake my Cause, and plead it to her,*
> *With all the Strength and Heat of Eloquence,*
> *Fraternal Love and Friendship can inspire*

How dull is this young *Stoick* to believe, that any one can plead for a Lover like himself, and not to know that one Glance of a Lover is more capable of going to the Heart of his Mistress, than all the Art and all the Genius of the most accomplish'd Orator, and that the little blind Boy-God is more eloquent and more persuasive than all the rest of Gods and Men together, for as to the Reason that he alledges for this Desire,

Portius, *thou oft enjoy'st the fair One's Presence,*

'Tis none of *Lucia*'s Fault that he had not had the same Advantage, as appears by what she says immediately upon her Arrival

Luc *Did not I see your Brother* Marcus *here,*
Why did he fly the Place, and shun my Presence?

But this absurd Petition of *Marcus* is necessary to draw on the following fantastical Scene The Answer of *Portius* to this Question of *Lucia* is very extraordinary, and shews a Lover recommending his Rival to his Mistress.

Port *Oh,* Lucia, *Language is too faint to shew*
His Rage of Love, it preys upon his Life,
He pines, he sickens, he despairs, he dies,
His Virtues and his Passions lie confus'd,
And mixt together in so wild a Tumult,
That the whole Man is quite disfigur'd in him
Heav'ns! would one think 'twere possible for Love
To make such Ravage in a noble Soul!
Oh, Lucia, *I'm distress'd, my Heart bleeds for him*
Ev'n now while thus I stand bless'd in thy Presence,
A secret Damp of Grief comes o'er my Thoughts
And I'm unhappy tho' thou smil'st upon me

Now what can be the Meaning of all this? to make his Mistress compassionate to his Rival? That for ought I know may be very Heroick, but of this I am sure that there is not one jot of Nature in it, for Lovers are jealous, Women are inconstant, and Pity is often the Fore-runner of Love

La pietà messaggiera e de' l Amor,
Come il Lampo del tuon Tasso

For Pity still foreruns approaching Love,
As Lightning does the Thunder

As Mr *Dryden* translates it in his *Spanish Fryar* But what says the Lady to this? Why, she being pretty conceited of her Charms, immediately cries out to *Portius,*

How wilt thou guard thy Honour in the Shock
Of Love and Friendship? Think betimes, my Portius,
Think how the Nuptial Tie, that might ensure
Our mutual Bliss, would raise to such a Height
Thy Brother's Grief, as might perhaps destroy him

Sweetly intimating, that the irresistable Power of her Beauty will force poor *Marcus* to dispose of his Person in such a manner, as may give a substantial unquestionable Proof of his Passion.

For he who hangs or beats out's Brains,
The Devil's in him if he feigns

Upon which *Portius* comes to the Point, and makes an extraordinary Speech for him

Port *Alas poor Youth! What dost thou think, my* Lucia?
His generous, open, undesigning Heart
Has by'd his Rival to sollicit for him,
Then do not strike him dead with a Denial,
But hold him up in Life, and chear his Soul
With the faint Glimmering of a doubtful Hope

The plain Meaning of this is That *Portius* desires his Mistress to play the Jilt either with himself or his Brother Upon which the Lady takes up an extraordinary Resolution, and says to *Portius*,

Luc *I see thy Sister's Tears,*
Thy Father's Anguish, and thy Brother's Death,
In the Pursuit of our ill-fated Love
And, Portius, *here I swear, to Heav'n I swear,*
To Heav'n, and all the Pow'rs that judge Mankind,
Never to mix my plighted Hands with thine,
While such a Cloud of Mischiefs hangs about us,
But to forget our Loves, and drive thee out
From all my Thoughts, as far as I am able

Which is as much as to say That she resolves to leave her Lover to hang himself, for fear his Rival should drown himself *Portius* shews in his Answer that he is quick of Apprehension, and takes it so

Port *What hast thou said? I'm Thunderstruck Recal*
Those hasty Words, or I am lost for ever
Luc *Has not the Vow already pass'd my Lips?*
The Gods have heard it, and 'tis seal'd in Heaven,
May all the Vengeance that was ever pour'd
On perjur'd Heads, o'erwhelm me if I break it

Portius, after a Pause,

Fix'd in Astonishment I gaze upon thee,
Like one just blasted by a Stroke from Heaven,
Who pants for Breath, and stiffens yet alive,
In dreadful Looks a Monument of Wrath

But now here comes an unexpected Turn,

Luc *At length I've acted my severest Part,*
I feel the Woman breaking in upon me,
And melt about my Heart! My Tears will flow
But Oh! I'll think no more! The Hand of Fate
Has torn thee from me, and I must forget thee
Port *Hard-hearted, cruel Maid!*

Never Reproach was certainly more unreasonable, and she might very well answer him as *Warner* did Sir *Martin*.

> Sir Mart *Adieu hard-hearted* Warner
> Warn *Adieu soft-headed Sir* Martin

But *Lucia* makes *Portius* another sort of an Answer.

> Luc *Oh stop these Sounds,*
> *These killing Sounds, why dost thou frown upon me?*
> *My Blood runs cold, my Heart forgets to heave,*
> *And Life it self goes out at thy Displeasure*
> *The Gods forbid us to indulge our Loves,*
> *But oh! I cannot bear thy Hate, and live*

Well! let me die, if all this be not extremely whimsical, what she means by the Hand of Fate in her last Speech but one, I cannot imagine, and I can less conceive how she, who cannot bear the Frown of her Lover, can endure to think of parting with him But let us see what Advantage *Portius* takes of her Ladyship's Weakness in the following Speech

> Port *Talk not of Love, thou never knew'st its Force,*
> *I've been deluded, led into a Dream*
> *Of fancy'd Bliss O* Lucia! *cruel Maid!*
> *Thy dreadful Vow, loaden with Death still sounds*
> *In my stunn'd Ears, What shall I say or do?*
> *Quick let us part! Perdition's in thy Presence,*
> *And Horror dwells about thee! — Ha! she faints*

And now I desire to ask the Reader, whether *Lucia*'s Swooning upon *Portius*'s resolving to comply with her Desire, does not shew more of an Hysterical Fit, than of the magnanimous Spirit of a *Roman* Lady, and of a Mind that is constant and consistent with it self For my part, I always thought that the Passions in Tragedy were to be produc'd by the Force of the Incidents and not by the Weakness of the Dramatical Persons. But *Portius* does not come one jot behind her in Weakness.

> *Ha! she faints*
> *What has my Rashness done? Wretch that I am!*
> Lucia, *thou injur'd Innocence! Thou best*
> *And loveliest of thy Sex! Awake my* Lucia,
> *Or* Portius *rushes on his Sword to join thee*
> *Her Imprecations reach not to the Tomb,*
> *They shut not out Society in Death*

He fancies that she's gone for good, and resolves to overtake her, when her Ladyship luckily recovers.

> Luc *O* Portius, *was this well, to frown on her,*
> *That lives upon thy Smiles, to call in doubt*
> *The Faith of one expiring at thy Feet,*
> *That loves thee more than ever Woman lov'd*

But now she falls into a Relapse of her Hysterical Passion.

What do I say! my half recover'd Sense
Forgets the Vow in which my Soul is bound,
Destruction stands betwixt us, we must part
Port *Name not the Word, my frighted Thoughts run back,*
And startle into Madness at the Sound,

And yet but a Moment pass'd he himself propos'd it

Luc *What would'st thou have me do? consider well*
The Train of Ills our Love would draw behind it
Think, Portius, *think, thou seest thy dying Brother*
Stab'd at his Heart, and all besmear'd with Blood,
Storming at Heaven and thee

This visionary Conceit has taken strong Hold of her Fancy, and now it seizes upon the Imagination of *Portius*

Port *To my Confusion and eternal Grief,*
I must approve the Sentence that destroys me

Well! This is the first time that ever I knew that a Fit of the Mother was catching In the next Page her Ladyship is at it again

Port *Stay,* Lucia, *stay, what do'st thou say? for ever!*
Luc *Have I not sworn? If,* Portius, *thy Success*
Must throw thy Brother on his Fate, farewell,
Oh! How shall I repeat the Words for ever?
Port *Thou must not go, my Soul still hovers o'er thee,*
And can't get loose
Luc *If the firm* Portius *shake*
To hear of parting, think what Lucia *suffers!*
Port *'Tis true, unruffled and serene I've met*
The common Accidents of Life, but here
Such an unlook'd for Storm of Ills falls on me,
It beats down all my Strength, I cannot bear it,
We must not part

Now the common Accidents of Life, which we have seen him meet *unruffled and serene,* are, the Destruction of his Country, the Ruin of Liberty, and the probable Approach of his Father's Death And the *Storm of ills that beats down all his Strength* is this Hysterical Fancy of *Lucia,* that *Marcus* will be forc'd, by the resistless Power of her Beauty, to lay dead-doing Hands upon himself

Thus do these two ingenious Persons contrive to torment and plague one another, upon an Event which a thousand to one is imaginary, and which, should it really happen, is most certainly at a distance, and that is the Self-Murder of *Marcus,* while they shew no Concern for the Death of *Cato,* which they know is likely to happen that very Day, and which they ought to be studying to prevent, nor for the Approach of *Cæsar*'s Army, which is expected at *Utica* that very Night, whose Arrival may not improbably be attended with the Death of *Portius* and *Lucius*, and upon whose Arrival likewise her whimsi-

cal Ladyship her self may, for any thing she knows, have a delicate green Gown given her, by some rampant Tribune, or some brawny Centurion.

Of the very few excellent Tragedies which we have upon our *English* Stage, the *Orphan* is that which the Author of *Cato* seems to have had most an Eye to There is in the *Orphan* an old moralizing Gentleman, who has two Sons and a Daughter, there is likewise in the Family another Lady, who is not a Relation but in their Affections, to whom the Brothers, tho' Friends, are Rivals. So that there is a Resemblance we see between both the Subject and Characters of the *Orphan* and *Cato* But now let us see the Difference that is to be found in the Conduct of them. The Passions of *Castalio* and *Polidor* for *Monimia*, a charming Maid, in the Flower of Youth and Beauty, and of *Monimia* for *Castalio*, an agreeable Youth, these Passions in the above-nam'd Persons, who are all of them in the same Family, in the Quiet and Retirement of a Country Life, and in full Ease and Prosperity, are very natural, and in high probability, whereas the Passions of *Marcus* and *Portius*, and of *Marcia* and *Lucia* are unseasonable, and highly improbable. The Rivalship in *Cato* produces nothing whereas that in the *Orphan* is the Cause of a most deplorable Distress, and a most moving Catastrophe, for tho' *Castalio* and *Polidor* are represented to be as warm Friends as *Marcus* and *Portius* can be, yet each of them strives to succeed in his Love, to the Disadvantage of the other, which is acting according to Nature, for Love, like Ambition, can endure no equal, whereas in *Cato*, as we have seen above, a Lover pleads for his Rival. In *Cato*, *Marcus* knows nothing of his Brother's Passion, which is very improbable, since that *Portius* had been some time in Love with *Lucia* as well as *Marcus*, that they are all three, as far as we can see, in the same House, and that Love, tho' he is painted blind, yet has Eyes as sharp as an Eagle Nor is it only improbable, this Ignorance of *Marcus*, but it has likewise no manner of Consequence In the *Orphan*, *Castalio* boasts of his Passion, and is resolv'd to maintain the Birth-Right of it, that which he conceals is his Intention of Marriage, which is a great deal more easy to be conceal'd than Love, and which it is highly probable that one in *Castalio*'s Circumstances would conceal, least it should come to his Father's Ear by his Brother's Resentment, but that probable Concealment has a surprizing and dreadful Consequence, which plunges all three into an Abyss of Woe. The Characters in *Cato* are represented as Philosophers all, whereas in the *Orphan* they are in that Mediocrity which is requir'd by *Aristotle*, neither wicked and profligate, nor sovereignly Virtuous, but rather good than wicked And the Calamities of all three are occasion'd by Faults which *Aristotle* terms involuntary, that is, by Faults occasion'd by the Force of an outrageous Passion The Fault of *Castalio*, is dissembling with his Brother, and marrying *Monimia*, without the Knowledge or Consent of his Father, that of *Monimia* is the marrying *Castalio*, without the Knowledge and Consent of his Father, who was her Benefactor, that of *Polidor*, is dissembling with his Brother, and the debauching *Monimia* without her Consent, contrary to the Rights of Hospitality, and that Veneration that was due to his Father's Protection and Guardianship; which Faults in all of them proceed from the Violence of a

Passion, which is admirably painted by the most ingenious Author And the Moral, tho' not express'd at the End of the Play, yet most intelligibly implied, is a wholesome, but terrible Instruction to an Audience to beware of clandestine Marriages, which involv'd a Family so happy before in such fatal Disasters. I know very well that there are Faults in the Conduct of the *Orphan*, but its Faults are light in Comparison of its Justness and Beauties. And as there are few Tragedies upon any Stage, ancient or modern, in which Compassion is mov'd to a greater Degree, 'tis a sure Sign that it has its Foundation for the most part in Nature

Nor is the Grief of *Cato* in the fourth Act, one Jot more in Nature than that of his Son and *Lucia* in the Third *Cato* receives the News of his Sons Death not only with dry Eyes, but with a sort of Satisfaction, and in the same Page sheds Tears for the Calamity of his Country, and does the same thing in the next Page, upon the bare Apprehension of the Danger of his Friends. Now, since the Love of one's Country is the Love of one's Countrymen, as I have shewn upon another Occasion I desire leave to ask these Questions, Of all our Countrymen which do we love most, those whom we know, or those whom we know not? And of those whom we know, which do we cherish most, our Friends, or our Enemies? And of our Friends, which are the dearest to us, those who are related to us, or those who are not? And of all our Relations, for which have we most Tenderness, for those who are near to us, or for those who are remote? And of our near Relations which are the nearest and consequently the dearest to us our Offspring or others? Our Offspring most certainly, as Nature, or in other Words Providence has wisely contriv'd for the Preservation of Mankind Now, does it not follow from what has been said That for a Man to receive the News of his Son's Death with dry Eyes, and to weep at the same time for the Calamities of his Country, is a wretched Affectation and a miserable Inconsistency? Is not that in plain *English* to receive with dry Eyes the News of the Deaths of those, for whose Sake our Country is a Name so dear to us, and at the same time to shed Tears for those for whose Sakes our Country is not a Name so dear to us? Upon the Danger of a Man's Country or his Friends, Reason and Duty require that he should appear concern'd Upon the untimely Death of a brave Son, Nature and Instinct require that he should shed Tears or at least that he should feel a Grief great enough to produce that Effect Now, is not this a pleasant Conduct, and a merry Philosophy, when a Man appears melting into Tears where only a bear Concern is requir'd and appears with dry Eyes and a calm Heart, where Nature requires a Flood of Tears, and the most moving Tenderness? If this were Nature in *Cato*, it would be Nature in other Men. For tho' we should grant that *Cato* had more Virtue than other Men, yet great Virtue is in no Men express'd and shewn by Passion, and in Philosophers less than others, and least of all in *Stoicks* One Man indeed may have more Virtue than another, by the Rigour of his Discipline, or by the Excellence of his Nature, but the Springs of Passion are the same in all Philosophy indeed may help to restrain our

Passions, but it never pretended to make them rise 'Tis only Nature that can do that, and Nature is the same in all.

But granting that 'tis commendable for a Man to shed Tears for the Danger of his Country, and to behold with dry Eyes a gallant Son lying dead before him of an untimely Fate, yet, why Tears for his Friends, and none for his Son? Tears for the bare Prospect of their Calamity, and none for the certain Destruction of a gallant Son There may be Stoicism and Romantick Honour in this for ought I know, but is there Reason, is there Nature in it? Is not this a downright Rebellion against Reason, against Nature, against Providence? Is not this bringing an artificial Character upon the Stage, instead of a natural one? And is an artificial Character proper for Tragedy, which is an Imitation of Nature, and whose chief Excellence consists in describing a natural Sorrow?

We have hitherto shewn the Faults that this Author has committed for want of observing the Rules We shall now shew the Absurdities with which he abounds thro' a too nice observing some of them, without any manner of Judgment or Discretion The Unities of Time and Place are mechanick Rules which, if they are observ'd with Judgment, strengthen the reasonableness of the Incidents, heighten the probability of the Action, promote the agreeable Deceit of the Representation, and add Cleanliness, Grace, and Comeliness to it But if they are practis'd without Discretion, they render the Action more improbable, and the Representation more absurd, as an unworthy Performance turns an Act of the highest Devotion into an Act of the greatest Sin

I have already mention'd some Indecencies and Improbabilities which are in the Conduct of this Play, which, tho' I have mention'd them upon other Occasions, yet are chiefly deriv'd from the indiscreet Observance of the Unity of Time 'Tis the Unity of Time that makes the Manners of the Dramatick Persons very indecent, and the Passions very improper and unbecoming But this will appear more clearly, when we come to consider the Unity of Time and the Unity of Place together, and to give the Reader a View of the Scenery, as far as is consistent with the Compass which I have prescrib'd to my self

Aristotle tells us, that a Tragick Poet ought to take care, that there be no Incident in his Tragedy which is without Reason From whence it follows, that there ought to be a clear Reason for the Entrance or Exit of each Dramatick Person, at that particular Time when he enters upon, or leaves the Place of Action, which is so far from being observ'd in this Tragedy, that there are often the strongest Reasons why the Persons of it ought to be in another Place, than in that in which we behold them. In order to the making this appear, let us consider the Time and Place at which the Action of the Play begins. The Action of this Play is in the great Hall of the Governor of *Utica's* Palace, and it begins at the Point of Day.

The Dawn is over-cast, the Morning low'rs,
And heavily in Clouds brings on the Day

Portius tells us this, who appears in this great Hall with his Brother *Marcus* at that early Hour, the Question is, what they came for? As I did not see the Play acted, I want to know in what Posture the Brother's appear'd first, and whether there was upon the Stage a Table with Candles on it, for as it was but just Dawn, and that Dawn was over-cast, it must be very Dark in the Hall, so dark, methinks, that it should be impossible for People within Doors, to tell whether it were Dawn or no, unless they talk'd to one another with their Heads out at the Window For my part, if I had not seen the Governour of *Utica's* large Hall underneath the *Dramatis Personæ*, I should have imagin'd by the two first Lines of the Play that the Scene had lay'n without Doors, but this is a Trifle in Comparison of what follows The two Persons who open this Play are the Sons of *Cato*, two young Men, who profess a great Love for their Country, and a high Esteem for their Father, and who besides are by Birth *Romans*, and by Discipline *Stoicks*, and who tell us in the very fourth Line of the Play, that that Day is like to be the last of their Father's Life, and of their Country's Liberty

> *The Dawn is over-cast, the Morning lowr's,*
> *And heavily in Clouds brings on the Day,*
> *The great, th' important Day, big with the Fate*
> *Of* Cato *and of* Rome

The Question is, whether after they have begun the Play by declaring this, the Transition to Love is not very forc'd and unnatural No noble *Roman* who had been concern'd for his Country, would have thought of Love on that Day, on which he expected that his Country would lose its Liberty, much less ought two Persons to have done it, who at the same time that they were *Romans*, were the Sons and the Disciples of *Cato* The Place was, as it were, a publick Place, the Hall of their Father's Palace, where they did not know but their Indecencies might be over-heard, especially when it was yet but Dusk, and they could hardly see one another, and their Father us'd to be an earlier Man than his Children, according to the Character which *Juba* gives of him, Act 1. p 9

> *He's still sincerely bent against himself,*
> *Renouncing Sleep and Rest, and Food and Ease*

Now I appeal to the Reader, whether *Cato*, if he had over-heard them, would not have thought them fine *Romans*, fine *Stoicks*, and delicate dutiful Children? *Marcus*, at the latter End of this first Scene, says to *Portius*

> Marc *A Brother's Sufferings claim a Brother's Pity*
> Port *Heav'n knows I pity thee! Behold my Eyes*
> *Ev'n whilst I speak — Do they not swim in Tears?*
> *Were but my Heart as naked to thy View,*
> Marcus *would see it bleed in his Behalf*

Were ever Tears so wrongly plac'd before? When he told us above, that that Day was like to be the last of his Father's Life, and his Country's Liberty, we then neither saw nor heard of his swimming Eyes, or his bleeding Heart,

and yet that sure was a juster Occasion for them, than the untimely, unworthy effeminate Passion of *Marcus*. Are these *Romans*? Are these Philosophers? Are these the Sons and Disciples of *Cato*?

Nor is there a better Reason to be given, why *Marcus* leaves the Stage at present, than why he and his Brother enter'd upon it For the Reason which he gives for it himself is much stronger, why *Portius*, who stays, should do the same

> Marc Sempronius *comes*
> *He must not find this Softness hanging on me*

Now *Marcus* had nothing to do to hide his Softness, but to hold his Tongue, whereas *Portius* had swimming Eyes, and a bleeding Heart The true Reason why the Author makes *Marcus* leave the Stage here, is, that he wanted to be rid of him upon any frivolous Pretence

Well! But what brings *Sempronius*, who now enters the Hall of the Governor's Palace, so early? why, he comes to meet old *Syphax*, as is plain from his Soliloquy, Page 6.

> —— *I wonder old* Syphax *comes not! his* Numidean *Genius*
> *Is well dispos'd to Mischief, were he prompt*
> *And eager on it, but he must be spur'd*

Well! but for what does *Sempronius* come to meet old *Syphax*? Why to conspire, to plot! Against whom? Against the Governor and the Senate Where? In the Governour's Hall When? Just before the meeting of the Senate, because then there were sure to be People there I appeal to the Reader now if these are not close politick Persons, and if an Author, who makes his Characters, carry on a Conspiracy against a Governour in his own Hall, had not need to be as dexterous as Mr. *Bays* is at the penning a Whisper.

Methinks *Portius* gives a very odd Reason for his leaving the Scene, at the Bottom of the 5th Page.

> *I'll strait away*
> *And while the Fathers of the Senate meet*
> *In close Debate, to weigh th' Event of War,*
> *I'll animate the Soldiers drooping Courage*
> *With Love of Freedom, and Contempt of Life*

'Tis now but half an Hour after Day-break, and the Soldiers in all likelihood are not up yet, unless those who were upon their Duty The true Reason for his going is, that the Author wanted to be rid of him, in order to bring on old *Syphax*, and so to carry on the Plot, I do not mean the Plot of the Play, but the Plot of *Sempronius* and *Syphax*.

Upon the Departure of *Portius*, *Sempronius* makes but one Soliloquy, and immediately in comes *Syphax*, and then the two Politicians are at it immediately. They lay their Heads together, with their Snuff-boxes in their Hands,

as Mr *Bays* has it, and fegue it away But in the midst of that wise Scene *Syphax* seems to give a seasonable Caution to *Sempronius.*

> Syph *But is it true,* Sempronius, *that your Senate*
> *Is call'd together? Gods! Thou must be cautious,*
> Cato *has piercing Eyes*

There is a great deal of Caution shewn indeed, in meeting in a Governour's own Hall to carry on their Plot against him. Whatever Opinion they have of his Eyes, I suppose they had none of his Ears, or they would never have talk'd at this foolish rate so near him.

> *Gods! Thou must be cautious*

Oh! Yes, very cautious, for if *Cato* should over-hear you, and turn you off for Politicians, *Cæsar* would never take you no, *Cæsar* would never take you

Thus have we laid before the Reader some of the Conduct, and some of the Sentiments in the first Act, which are relatively absurd, that is with Relation to Time and Place. There are Sentiments in it which are absolutely so, to which perhaps we may return, when we come to treat of the Sentiments But let us now proceed to the second Act

When *Cato* in the 23d p Act 2 Turns the Senators out of the Hall, upon pretence of acquainting *Juba* with the Result of their Debates, he appears to me to do a thing which is neither reasonable nor civil *Juba* might certainly have better been made acquainted with the Result of that Debate in some private Apartment of the Palace But the Poet was driven upon this Absurdity to make way for another, and that is to give *Juba* an Opportunity to demand *Marcia* of her Father But the Quarrel and Rage of *Juba* and *Syphax,* in the same Act, the Invectives of *Syphax* against the *Romans* and *Cato,* the Advice that he gives *Juba,* in her Father's Hall, to bear away *Marcia* by Force, and his brutal and clamourous Rage upon his Refusal, and at a time when *Cato* was scarce out of Sight, and perhaps not out of hearing, at least some of his Guards or Domesticks must necessarily be suppos'd to be within hearing, is a Thing that is so far from being probable, that it is hardly possible

But because the Quarrel and Reconcilement between *Juba* and *Syphax,* the Prince and the General, in this Scene of *Cato,* seems to be an Imitation of the Quarrel and Reconcilement in the Scene between *Anthony* and *Ventidius,* the Prince and the General, in the First Act of *All for Love,* I shall endeavour to shew how infinitely short the Copy comes of the Original The Quarrel and Reconcilement between *Anthony* and *Ventidius* are pleasing for the following Reasons. *Ventidius* appears to be perfectly honest, and perfectly a Friend to *Anthony*; he begins the Scene with an unfeigned Declaration of his Affection and Tenderness for *Anthony,* which is prepar'd to make the greater Impression, by the noble Character which even *Alexas,* *Ventidius*'s greatest Enemy, gives of him *Ventidius* gives the greatest Proof of his Zeal for *Anthony*'s Service, and a Proof of the greatest Importance to him in his present Emergency, in the twelve Legions he brings to him The naming of that Proof

naturally brings him to the Mention of *Cleopatra*, and to the telling *Anthony* a little too roughly of his greatest Fault, which had brought him to the very Brink of Ruin, and would infallibly plunge him into the Abyss of it, if he persever'd in it And yet the very Rudeness of this Remonstrance proceeds from the Zeal and Affection of *Ventidius*, and aims at the true Interest and the Honour of *Anthony* But *Anthony*, too warm to make these Reflections, wholly mistakes him, and calls him Traytor upon it, which gives the justest Occasion in the World for a Turn towards a Reconcilement, for upon that *Ventidius* gives an undeniable Proof of his Fidelity, by putting him in Mind, that had he been a Traytor, he had certainly carry'd his twelve Legions to *Octavius*'s Camp. Upon this *Anthony* relents, and the Reconcilement is as warm as the Quarrel had been violent, and is upon this Account delightful, because 'tis entirely to both their Satisfactions, and for both their Interests And as the Conduct thro' the whole Scene is very just, the whole Scene is writ with a Warmth and a Spirit, and with a Strength and a Dignity of Expression that are worthy of the noble Occasion.

The Scene between *Juba* and *Syphax* has in it the very counterpart of every thing which recommends the other The Audience before it begins knows *Syphax* to be a Traytor to *Juba*, and a Villain *Syphax* begins it like a Clown and a Brute, with Rallery too low and too gross for Comedy The Advice that he gives to *Juba* tends to his Infamy, if it does not tend to his Ruin Because *Juba* will not take that Advice, *Syphax*, like a true Villain, enrag'd at the Virtue and Integrity of his Master, affronts him in the grossest manner *Juba* truly and justly calls him Traytor upon it, whereas *Anthony*, when he gave that Language to *Ventidius*, said in his Passion what he did not think. *Syphax*, upon hearing that terrible Reproach, is not concern'd as *Ventidius* was, for his own Honour, or for his Master's Unkindness, for *Syphax* knew himself to be ten times more a Villain than *Juba* believ'd him to be, but for the vile Safety of his superannuated Carcass, which obliges him to dissemble a Submission, which brings on the Appearance of a Reconcilement, that causes Indignation instead of Satisfaction to the sensible part of an Audience, which must know it to be perfidious on the part of *Syphax*, and like to prove fatal to the Imbecillity of *Juba* Now add to all this, that Air of Affectation with which the whole Scene is writ, and that Absurdity of Sentiments with relation to Time and Place, which we mention'd above, and then let the Reader consider what an Imitation this is of the noble Scene between *Anthony* and *Ventidius*

Sempronius, in the Second Act, comes back once more in the same Morning to the Governour's Hall, to carry on the Conspiracy with *Syphax* against the Governour, his Country and his Family, which is so stupid, that 'tis below the Wisdom of the *O———'s*, the *Mac's*, and the *Teague's*, even *Eustace Commins* himself would never have gone to Justice-Hall, to have conspir'd against the Government. If any Officers at *Portsmouth* should lay their Heads together, in order to the carrying off *J——— G———'s* Niece or Daughter, would

they meet in *J*——— *G*———'s Hall to carry on that Conspiracy? There would be no Necessity for their meeting there, at least till they came to the Execution of their Plot, because there would be other Places to meet in. There would be no Probability that they should meet there, because there would be Places more private and more commodious. Now there ought to be nothing in a Tragical Action but what is necessary or probable.

But Treason is not the only thing that is carried on in this Hall. That and Love and Philosophy take their Turns in it, without any manner of Necessity or Probability, occasion'd by the Action, as duly and as regularly without interrupting one another, as if there were a triple League between them, and a mutual Agreement, that each should give place to, and make way for the other in a due and orderly Succession.

We come now to the Third Act *Sempronius* in this Act comes into the Governour's Hall with the Leader of the Mutiny. I have already mention'd that the unparallel'd Villany of his Behaviour, while *Cato* is with them, is no way necessary for the carrying on the Action of the Play. But as soon as *Cato* is gone, *Sempronius*, who but just before had acted like an unparallel'd Knave, discovers himself like an egregious Fool to be an Accomplice in the Conspiracy

> Semp *Know, Villains, when such paltry Slaves presume*
> *To mix in Treason, if the Plot succeeds*
> *They're thrown neglected by, but if it fails,*
> *They're sure to die like Dogs, as you shall do*
> *Here, take these factious Monsters, drag them forth*
> *To sudden Death*

'Tis true, indeed, the second Leader says there are none there but Friends, but is that possible at such a Juncture? Can a Parcel of Rogues attempt to assassinate the Governour of a Town of War in his own House, in Mid-day, and after they are discover'd and defeated? Can there be none near them but Friends? Is it not plain from these Words of *Sempronius*,

> *Here, take these factious Monsters, drag them forth*
> *To sudden Death*

And from the Entrance of the Guards upon the Word of Command, that those Guards were within Ear-shot? Behold *Sempronius* then palpably discover'd How comes it to pass then, that instead of being hang'd up with the rest he remains secure in the Governour's Hall, and there carries on his Conspiracy against the Government the third time in the same Day, with his old Comrade *Syphax*? who enters at the same time that the Guards are carrying away the Leaders, big with the News of the Defeat of *Sempronius*, tho' where he had his Intelligence so soon, is difficult to imagine. And now the Reader may expect a very extraordinary Scene There is not abundance of Spirit indeed, nor a great deal of Passion, but there is Wisdom more than enough to supply all Defects.

> Syph *Our first Design, my Friend, has prov'd abortive,*
> *Still there remains an After-game to play,*

My Troops are mounted, their Numidian *Steeds*
Snuff up the Winds, and long to scour the Desart,
Let but Sempronius *lead us in our Flight,*
We'll force the Gate where Marcus *keeps his Guard,*
And hew down all that would oppose our Passage,
A Day will bring us into Cæsar's *Camp*
Semp *Confusion! I have fail'd of half my Purpose*
Marcia, *the charming* Marcia's *left behind*

Well! but tho' he tells us the half Purpose that he has fail'd of, he does not tell us the half that he has carried But what does he mean by

Marcia, *the charming* Marcia's *left behind?*

He is now in her own House, and we have neither seen her, nor heard of her any where else since the Play began But now let us hear *Syphax*

Syph *How! will* Sempronius *turn a Woman's Slave?*
Semp *Think not thy Friend can ever feel the soft*
Unmanly Warmth and Tenderness of Love
Syphax, *I long to clasp that haughty Maid,*
And bend her stubborn Virtue to my Passion,
When I had gone thus far, I'd cast her off
Syph *Well said! That's spoken like thy self,* Sempronius
What hinders then but that thou find her out,
And hurry her away by manly Force

But what does old *Syphax* mean by finding her out? They talk as if she were as hard to be found as a Hare in a frosty Morning

Semp *But how to gain Admission?*

Oh! She is found out then, it seems She is at Home at last The subtle Toad, it seems, has been in her Bed-chamber with her, and that makes him talk of his having left her behind And now we have both Halves of his Purpose, both that which he has carried, and that which he has fail'd of He has had *Marcia,* and he has left her behind But I am afraid that *Sempronius* had not behav'd himself so vigorously as he ought to have done, and that makes him doubt of a second Admission

But how to gain Admission? for Access
Is giv'n to none but Juba *and her Brothers*

But raillery a part, why Access to *Juba?* for he was own'd and receiv'd as a Lover neither by the Father, nor by the Daughter. Well! but let that pass *Syphax* puts *Sempronius* out of Pain immediately, and being a *Numidian,* abounding in Wiles, supplies him with a Stratagem for Admission, that I believe is a *non pareille*

Syph *Thou shalt have* Juba's *Dress, and* Juba's *Guards,*
The Doors will open, when Numidia's *Prince*
Seems to appear before them

Sempronius is, it seems, to pass for *Juba* in full Day, at *Cato's* House, where they were both so very well known, by having *Juba's* Dress and his Guards; as if one of the Marshals of *France* could pass for the Duke of *Bavaria* at Noon-Day at *Versailles*, by having his Dress and his Liveries. But how does *Syphax* pretend to help *Sempronius* to young *Juba's* Dress? Does he serve him in a double Capacity, as General and Master of his Wardrobe? But why *Juba's* Guards? For the Devil of any Guards has *Juba* appear'd with yet Well! Tho' this is a mighty politick Invention, yet methinks they might have done without it For, since the Advice that *Syphax* gave to *Sempronius*, was

To hurry her away by manly Force

In my Opinion the shortest and likeliest Way of coming at the Lady was by demolishing, instead of putting on an impertinent Disguise to circumvent two or three Slaves But *Sempronius*, it seems, is of another Opinion He extols to the Skies the Invention of old *Syphax*

Sempr *Heavens! What a Thought was there?*

Now I appeal to the Reader, if I have not been as good as my Word Did not I tell him that I would lay before him a very wise Scene?

Dixi in his e sse Elegantiam Atticam

But I have one Remark more to make, before I take my leave, for the present of this third Act and that is, that I have not often met with, a more civil, officious, obliging Person to his Friend than old *Syphax* He is for helping his Friends to Diversion, with as little Ceremony as may be First he offers his Service to *Juba*, and now he is for obliging his Friend *Sempronius* He appears to have an extraordinary regard for the Daughter of *Cato*, and is resolv'd that she shall have it one way or other, at any rate And because he wisely considers, that Women are to be struggl'd with to bring them to what they desire, he, that he may lay a double Obligation upon her is resolv'd, both to help her to pleasure, and to a just Apology for it

But now let us lay before the Reader that part of the Scenary of the fourth Act, which may shew the Absurdities which the Author has run into thro' the indiscreet Observance of the Unity of Place I do not remember that *Aristotle* has said any thing expresly concerning the Unity of Place 'Tis true implicitely he has said enough in the Rules which he has laid down for the Chorus. For by making the *Chorus* an essential Part of Tragedy, and by bringing it upon the Stage immediately after the opening of the Scene, and retaining it there till the very Catastrophe, he has so determin'd and fix'd the Place of Action, that it was impossible for an Author upon the *Grecian* Stage to break thro' that Unity I am of Opinion that if a modern Tragick Poet can preserve the Unity of Place without destroying the Probability of the Incidents, 'tis always best for him to do it because by the Preservation of that Unity, as we have taken notice above, he adds Grace and Cleanness, and Comeliness to the Repre-

sentation. But since there are no express Rules about it, and we are under no Compulsion to keep it, since we have no Chorus, as the *Græcian* Poet had; if it cannot be preserv'd without rendring the greater Part of the Incidents unreasonable and absurd, and perhaps sometimes monstrous, 'tis certainly better to break it

But to come close to our Business, *Lucia* and *Marcia* are the two Persons who open the fourth Act, *Lucia*, with the Relicks of her Hysterical Fit on her

> Luc *Now tell me, Marcia, tell me from thy Soul,*
> *If thou believ'st it possible for Women*
> *To suffer greater ills than* Lucia *suffers*

So that we see she is still possess'd with the Vision of what her Beauty will drive poor *Marcus* too But while she is tormented with one Vision her self, she is resolv'd to Plague her Friend *Marcia* with another

> Luc *I know thou'rt doom'd alike to be belov'd*
> *By* Juba, *and thy Father's Friend* Sempronius,
> *But shou'd this Father give you to* Sempronius,

Upon which *Marcia* uses a pertinent Expostulation with her

> Marc *Why wilt thou add to all the Griefs I suffer*
> *Imaginary Ills and fancy'd Tortures?*

And afterwards makes her a very reasonable Proposal,

> *Let us retire, and see if we can drown*
> *Each softer Thought in Sense of present Danger*

Had she but made this Proposal to her, before *Lucia*'s meeting with *Portius* in the Third Act, it might have sav'd her a dreadful Fit of the Vapours But they depart, and now comes Bully *Sempronius*, comically accoutred, and equip'd with his *Numidian* Dress and his *Numidian* Guards. Let the Reader attend to him with all his Ears, for the Words of the Wise are precious

> Semp *The Deer is lodg'd, I've track'd her to her Covert*

Now I would fain know, why this Deer is said to be lodg'd, since we have not heard one Word since the Play began of her being at all out of Harbour, and if we consider the Discourse with which she and *Lucia* begin the Act, we have Reason to believe that they had hardly been talking of such Matters in the Street However, to pleasure *Sempronius*, let us suppose for once that the Deer is lodg'd

> *The Deer is lodg'd, I've track'd her to her Covert*

If he had seen her in the open Field, what Occasion had he to track her, when he had so many *Numidian* Dogs at his Heels, which with one Halloo he might have set upon her Haunches? If he did not see her in the open Field, how could he possibly track her? This Metaphor *track* is of the Number of those, that render a Discourse both obscure and ambiguous But Rhetorick apart, if

he had seen her in the Street, why did he not set upon her in the Street, since thro' the Street she must be carry'd at last? Now here instead of having his Thoughts upon his Business, and upon the present Danger, instead of meditating and contriving how he shall pass with his Mistress thro' the Southern Gate, where her Brother *Marcus* is upon the Guard, and where she would certainly prove an *Impediment* to him, which is the *Roman* Word for the Baggage instead of doing this, *Sempronius* is entertaining himself with Whimsies.

Semp *How will the young* Numidian *rave to see*
His Mistress lost? If ought could glad my Soul
Beyond th' Enjoyment of so bright a Prize,
'T would be to torture that young gay Barbarian
But hearke! what Noise? Death to my Hopes, 'tis he,
'Tis Juba's *self! There is but one Way left,*
He must be murder'd, and a Passage cut
Thro' those his Guards

Pray what are these his Guards? I thought at present that *Juba's* Guards had been *Sempronius's* Tools, and had now been dangling after his Heels. But now let us see what *Juba* says upon seeing him,

Juba *What do I see? Who's this that dares usurp*
The Guards and Habits of Numidia's *Prince?*

We see here that *Juba* does but ask him a pertinent Question, when he very rudely makes him an impertinent Answer,

Semp *One that was born to scourge thy Arrogance,*
Presumptuous Youth

Now what is this Arrogance, and what this mighty Presumption? Where lies the Arrogance and the Presumption of a Man's laying claim to his own Cloaths, when he sees them upon another Man's Back? If the Meaning of the Word *Arrogance* is taking to a Man's self what does not belong to him, the Reader may easily judge on whose side the Arrogance lies Well! *Juba* is amaz'd at this Extravagance of *Sempronius*, and so I make no doubt is the Reader

Jub *What can this mean,* Sempronius?

Sempronius, who is but for a Word and a Blow, replies,

Semp *My Sword shall answer thee, have at thy Heart*
Jub *Nay then beware thy own, proud barbarous Man*

Upon which *Juba* kills him, and upon that *Juba's* own Guards surrender themselves Prisoners to *Juba*, when that Paper-Serpent *Sempronius* goes off with the following Bounce

Curse on my Stars! Am I then doom'd to fall
By a Boy's Hand? Disfigur'd in a vile
Numidian *Dress? And for a worthless Woman?*

'Tis not twenty Lines above, that this worthless Woman was a bright Prize. But Loss of Blood may pall the Imagination of the most vigorous Lover. But now let us sum up all these Absurdities together. *Sempronius* goes at Noonday, in *Juba*'s Cloaths, and with *Juba*'s Guards, to *Cato*'s Palace, in order to pass for *Juba*, in a Place where they were both so very well known, he meets *Juba* there, and resolves to murder him with his own Guards. Upon the Guards appearing a little bashful, he threatens them,

Ha! Dastards, do you tremble?
Or act like Men, or by yon azure Heav'n!

But the Guards still remaining restiff, *Sempronius* himself attacks *Juba*, while each of the Guards is representing Mr *Spectator*'s Sign of the Gaper aw'd, it seems, and terrified by *Sempronius*'s Threats *Juba* kills *Sempronius*, and takes his own Army Prisoners, and carries them in Triumph away to *Cato* Now I would fain know if any part of Mr *Bay*'s Tragedy is so full of Absurdity as this.

Upon hearing the Clash of Swords *Lucia* and *Marcia* come in. The Question is, why no Men came in upon hearing the Noise of Swords in the Governour's Hall? Where was the Governour himself? Where were his Guards? Where were his Servants? Such an Attempt as this so near the Person of a Governour of a Place of War was enough to alarm the whole Garrison, and yet for almost half an Hour after *Sempronius* was kill'd, we find none of those appear, who were the likeliest in the World to be alarm'd, and the Noise of Swords is made to draw only two poor Women thither, who were most certain to run away from it Upon *Lucia* and *Marcia*'s coming in *Lucia* appears in all the Symptoms of an Hysterical Gentlewoman

Luc *Sure 'twas the Clash of Swords, my troubled Heart*
Is so cast-down, and sunk amidst its Sorrows,
It throbs with Fear, and akes at ev'ry Sound!

And immediately her old Whimsey returns upon her

O Marcia, *should thy Brothers for my Sake —*
I die away with Horror at the Thought

She fancies that there can be no cutting of Throats, but it must be for her If this is Tragical, I would fain know what is Comical Well! upon this they spy the Body of *Sempronius*, and *Marcia* deluded by the Habit, it seems, takes him for *Juba*, for, says she,

The Face is muffled up within the Garment

Now how a Man could fight and fall with his Face muffled up in his Garment, is, I think, a little hard to conceive Besides, *Juba* before he kill'd him knew him to be *Sempronius* It was not by his Garment that he knew this, it was by his Face then, his Face therefore was not muffled Upon seeing this Man with the muffled Face, *Marcia* falls a raving, and owning her Passion for

the suppos'd Defunct, begins to make his Funeral-Oration. Upon which *Juba* enters listning, I suppose, on Tip-toe, for I cannot imagine how any one can enter listning in any other Posture I would fain know how it came to pass, that during all this time he had sent no body, no, not so much as a Candle-snuffer, to take away the dead Body of *Sempronius*. Well! but let us regard him listning Having left his Apprehension behind him, he at first applies what *Marcia* says to *Sempronius* But finding at last, with much ado, that he himself is the happy Man, he quits his Eves-dropping, and discovers himself just time enough to prevent his being cuckolded by a dead Man, of whom the Moment before he had appear'd so jealous, and greedily intercepts the Bliss which was fondly design'd for one who could not be the better for it. But here I must ask a Question, How comes *Juba* to listen here, who had not listned before throughout the Play? Or, How comes he to be the only Person of this Tragedy who listens, when Love and Treason were so often talk'd in so publick a Place as a Hall. I am afraid the Author was driven upon all these Absurdities, only to introduce this miserable Mistake of *Marcia*, which, after all, is much below the Dignity of Tragedy, as any thing is which is the Effect or Result of Trick This Lamentation over the dead Body of living *Juba* seems to me to be nearly allied to a merry Adventure of the same Nature between Sir *Frederick Frolick* and my Lord *Bevil*'s Sister

But let us come to the Scenary of the Fifth Act *Cato* appears first upon the Scene, sitting in a thoughtful Posture, in his Hand *Plato*'s Treatise on the *Immortality of the Soul*, a drawn Sword on the Table by him Now let us consider the Place in which this Sight is presented to us The Place, forsooth is a large Hall Let us suppose that any one should place himself in this Posture, in the midst of one of our Halls in *London*, that he should appear *solus* in a sullen Posture, a drawn Sword on the Table by him, in his Hand *Plato*'s Treatise of the *Immortality of the Soul*, translated lately by *Bernard Lintott*, I desire the Reader to consider, whether such a Person as this would pass with them who beheld him for a great Patriot, a great Philosopher, or a General, or for some whimsical Person who fancied himself all these, and whether the People who belong'd to the Family would think that such a Person had a Design upon their Midriffs or his own

In short, that *Cato* should sit long enough in the aforesaid Posture in the midst of this large Hall, to read over *Plato*'s Treatise on the Immortality of the Soul, which is a Lecture of two long Hours That he should propose to himself to be private there upon that Occasion, that he should be angry with his Son for intruding there, then that he should leave this Hall upon the Pretence of Sleep, give himself the mortal Wound in his Bed-chamber, and then be brought back into that Hall to expire, purely to shew his good Breeding and save his Friends the trouble of coming up to his Bed-chamber, all this appears to me to be improbable, incredible, impossible *Aristotle* tells us, that there ought to be no Incident in a Tragedy but what ought to be reasonable And *Boileau* tells us after him,

La Scene Demande une exacte raison

But this Tragedy of *Cato*, instead of having all its Incidents reasonable, has hardly one that is so. And I know no one Tragedy, either Ancient or Modern, *English* or Foreign, that has a Heroe so famous for Wisdom, or a Conduct so notoriously indiscreet. But so much for the Faults that are in this Tragedy with regard to the Rules of *Aristotle.*

FINIS.

LETTERS UPON THE SENTIMENTS OF THE TWO FIRST ACTS OF CATO

To Mr. *C*———

1713-1718, 1721

LETTER I

SIR,

AFter I had endeavour'd to shew the absurd Conduct of the Tragedy of *Cato*, by the *Remarks* which were printed by *Bernard Lintott*, the numerous Idolizers of that Tragedy, whose unparallell'd Zeal was the Child of their unparallell'd Ignorance, shelter'd themselves under the Beauty of the Sentiments of that Poem Upon which I, who knew the Sentiments to be at least as absurd as the Conduct, wrote two long Letters to a learned and judicious Friend, by which I endeavour'd to shew the Sentiments as incongruous as the Conduct When I acquainted you with this at Mr *W*———'s House, you were pleas'd to declare, that you desir'd to see a Copy of those Letters. And when, upon that, I acquainted you by what poor Artifice I had been depriv'd of the Copy of those Letters, as my Friend had been of the Original, you seem'd desirous to see as many of the lost Remarks as I could recollect, which, in compliance with your Desires, I shall send you, from time to time, as I can recollect them, hoping that they may appear solid to one who has shewn so much Justness in all the Judgments you have made of things of this nature, but desiring, at the same time, that you would not expect any thing ev'n of that little Force and that little Grace of Expression which they might have in the two forementioned Letters, for which I have not time, and for want of which I promise to make what Amends I can, by the Solidity of my Remarks, and by the Shortness of my Letters

First then, I desire to know, whether the exclaiming against *Pharsalia* so often in this Tragedy, two Years after that Battle had been fought in a different and distant part of the World, and but two Days after the Battel of *Thapsus*, which was fought at the very Gates of *Utica*, and by the loss of which the present Danger of the People in *Utica* was occasion'd, is not as absurd as it would have been in the Marshal *de Villeroy* to have cryed out after the Defeat at *Ramelies, Blenheim, Blenheim*, oh *Blenheim*! And we have the more reason to ask this Question, if we consider that it was *Pompey* who commanded at *Pharsalia*, but it was *Cato* who commanded at *Thapsus* If any one happens to answer here, that the Defeat at *Pharsalia* destroy'd the Flower of the Republican Army, and consequently was the occasion of the Defeat at *Thapsus*, to that I answer, that the Defeat at *Thapsus* was not occasion'd by the Overthrow at *Pharsalia* For at that rate much more might the Overthrow which happen'd afterwards in *Spain*, be attributed to the two Defeats at *Thapsus* and *Pharsalia*, whereas 'tis very plain, that in *Spain*, notwithstanding the two former Defeats,

Cæsar's Army had been defeated by young *Pompey's*, if young *Pompey* had not been vanquish'd by *Cæsar*. For it was the invincible Spirit of *Cæsar* which got the Day, which his Army had certainly lost if they had fought under any other General. Besides, suppose that we were oblig'd to own, that the Defeat at *Thapsus* was occasion'd by that at *Pharsalia*, yet the Author could draw nothing from that but a false Politick Reflection, for as great Passion is occasion'd by great Surprize, it always dwells upon the last Disaster. But I begin to run into length, which I would industriously avoid You shall have more by the first Opportunity

I am, SIR, Your, &c.

Nov 4 1718

LETTER II.

SIR,

IN sending these Remarks upon the Sentiments of *Cato* to you, I shall rather endeavour to entertain you with frequent Letters than to fatigue you with long ones, that you may still leave off, if not with an Appetite, yet without that Disgust which attends great Satiety.

To come then to the Matter, without any more ceremony, I desire to know whether that Sentiment of *Marcus* in the first Scene of the Play,

Love is not to be reason'd down, or lost
In high Ambition, or a thirst of Greatness,

is not false in it self, according to that Reflection of *Rochefoucault, On passe souvent de l'Amour a l'Ambition, mais on ne revient gueres, de l'Ambition a l'Amour*, and whether 'tis not most abominable in one, who just before had profess'd himself a Stoick? which Sect of Philosophers pretended by the Force of Reason to extirpate all the Passions

The first Speech of *Sempronius* to *Portius* begins thus

Good Morrow, Portius! *let us once embrace,*
Once more embrace, whilst yet we both are free

Now are not these formal Embraces, between two People who saw one another every Hour, something upon the Comique?

But what *Portius* says to this is still more whimsical

My Father has this Morning call'd together
To this poor Hall, his little Roman *Senate,*
(*The Leavings of* Pharsalia)

Still harping upon *Pharsalia*

Now, to whom does he tell this extraordinary piece of News? why, to the only Senator who makes any figure in that Assembly, ridiculous or not ridiculous so that if the Senate was called together that Morning, he had been cer-

tainly summon'd But this Senate methinks was very early summon'd. 'Tis now not above half an Hour after Day-break

But why the Leavings of *Pharsalia*? why still harping upon *Pharsalia*? when 'tis evident from History that this mock Senate, this Senate in Burlesque, was compos'd of a Parcel of Scoundrels who had never seen *Pharsalia* For can you or any one believe, that if they had been of real Senatorian Rank, *Cæsar* would have us'd them as he did, who hang'd up as many of them as fell into his Hands? But let us now see what *Sempronius* is pleas'd to reply to *Portius*

Not all the Pomp and Majesty of Rome
Can raise her Senate more than Cato's *Presence*
——————*O, my* Portius!
Could but I call that wond'rous Man my Father,
Would but thy Sister Marcia *be propitious*
To thy Friend's Vow I might be blest indeed
Port *Alas,* Sempronius! *would'st thou talk of Love*
To Marcia, *while her Father's Life's in danger?*
Thou might'st as well court the pale trembling Vestal,
When she beholds the Holy Flame expiring
Sempr *The more I see the Wonders of thy Race,*
The more I'm charm'd Thou must take heed, my Portius,
The World has all its Eyes on Cato's *Son*
Thy Father's Merit sets thee up to View,
And shews thee in the fairest Point of Light,
To make thy Virtues or thy Faults conspicuous
Port *Well dost thou seem to check my lingring here*
On this important Hour

Now was ever such a Consequence drawn from such an Antecedent? For let us consider the genuine Meaning of what was said before by *Portius,* and what was answer'd by *Sempronius*

Port *Alas,* Sempronius! *would'st thou talk of Love*
To Martia *while her Father's Life's in danger?*
Thou might'st as well court the pale trembling Vestal,
When she beholds the Holy Flame expiring
Semp *The more I see the Wonders of thy Race*
The more I'm charm'd—Thou must take heed, my Portius,
The World has all its Eyes on Cato's *Son*
Thy Father's Merit sets thee up to View,
And shews thee in the fairest Point of Light,
To make thy Virtues or thy Faults conspicuous

Now, what were these Wonders of *Cato's* Race? why, their Stoicism, their Apathy, then curbing their Passions by the Force of their Reason For what occasion'd this Speech of *Sempronius,* and this Caution which he gives to *Portius*? Why, what but *Portius* is declaring the Resolution of his Sister *Martia* not to admit of any effeminate unworthy Passion while her Father's Life is in danger. So that methinks *Portius* might reasonably have interpreted this Caution of *Sempronius,* as a Reprimand for his own extravagant and unreasonable Passion, and not have construed it as a Design to send him on an *April* Errand

to harangue a poor Parcel of drunken Sots before they were out of their first Sleep But, as we observ'd in the printed Remarks, the Author wanted to be rid of *Portius* to make Room for *Syphax*, and so thrust him out with as little Ceremony as *Manly* did my Lord *Plausible*.

I am,
Your, &c

LETTER III

SIR,

TO enter into Matter without Ceremony, I should be glad to know your Opinion of what *Syphax* tells *Sempronius* in the Beginning of the Scene between them in this first Act

> Syph Sempronius, *all is ready,*
> *I've sounded my* Numidians *Man by Man*
> *And find them ripe for a Revolt They all*
> *Complain aloud of* Cato's *Discipline,*
> *And wait but the Command to change their Master*

Now where's the Policy or the Prudence of sounding them Man by Man? The common Soldiers obey their Commanders, and 'tis dangerous to trust a Conspiracy with too many. But when did *Syphax* do this? 'Tis but half an Hour after Day-break, when he says this If he had done it the Day before, methinks *Sempronius* his Fellow-Conspirator should have known it over-night, since *Cæsar* was so soon expected, and *Sempronius* himself seems to be of that Opinion

> *Believe me,* Syphax, *there's no time to waste,*
> *Ev'n while we speak our Conqueror comes on*
> *And gathers Ground upon us ev'ry Moment*
> *Alas! thou knowest not* Cæsar's *active Soul,*
> *With what a dreadful Course he rushes on*
> *From War to War In vain has Nature form'd*
> *Mountains and Oceans to oppose his Passage,*
> *He bounds o'er all, victorious in his March,*
> *The* Alpes *and* Pyreneans *sink before him,*
> *Thro' Winds and Waves and Storms he works his Way,*
> *Impatient for the Battel One Day more*
> *Will set the Victor thundring at our Gates*

so that according to this 'tis plain, that *Syphax* ought to have acquainted *Sempronius* over-night, with the Inclination which his *Numidians* had to revolt, provided he had sounded them the Day before, and how he could sound them Man by Man, by Night, in a Town of War, as *Utica* was, is something hard to conceive But to dwell no longer on this If all the *Numidians* were thus at the Command of *Syphax*, how comes *Sempronius* so earnest about the gaining *Juba* as he is in the Remainder of this Speech?

> *But tell me, hast thou yet drawn o'er young* Juba?
> *That still wou'd recommend thee more to* Cæsar,
> *And challenge better Terms*

But, Sir, how comes *Sempronius* in the foregoing Speech to use this Language to *Syphax*,

Alas! thou know'st not Cæsar's *active Soul*?

when 'tis plain from the Scene in the first Act betwen *Syphax* and *Juba*, that the former is so very well acquainted with the Character and Manners of the present *Romans* in general, and when 'tis plain from the Scene between *Juba* and *Syphax* in the second Act, that *Syphax* was so very well acquainted with the Manners and Actions of their remotest Ancestors

Juba *Wouldst thou degrade thy Prince into a Ruffian?*
Syph *The boasted Ancestors of these great Men,*
Whose Virtues you admire, were all such Ruffians
This Dread of Nations, this almighty Rome,
That comprehends in its wide Empire's Bounds
All under Heav'n, was founded on a Rape
Your Scipio's, Cæsar's, Pompey's *and your* Cato's,
(These Gods on Earth) are all the spurious Brood
Of violated Maids, of ravish'd Sabines

Now is it possible that a Man who talks at this Rate, should be unacquainted with the Character of *Cæsar*, who was the greatest Captain that ever had been in the World, and whose Actions had made so much noise in the World for so many Years together? Is it possible that any one now alive should be acquainted with the Manners and Actions of the very first Princes of the *Savoy* Family, and should be a Stranger to the Character and the Actions of Prince *Eugene*?

But, Sir, I cannot imagine, for what Reason *Sempronius* should appear thus solicitous for the drawing over *Juba* into this Conspiracy,

But tell me, hast thou yet drawn o'er young Juba?
That still would recommend thee more to Cæsar
And challenge better Terms ——

when 'tis plain from the Soliloquy of *Sempronius* in the sixth Page of this first Act (*Edit* 1) that the principal Motive that engag'd *Sempronius* in this Conspiracy was the possessing *Marcia*?

Cato *has us'd me Ill He has refused*
His Daughter Marcia *to my ardent Vows*
Besides, his baffled Arms, and ruined Cause
Are Barrs to my Ambition Cæsar's *Favour,*
That show'rs down Greatness on his Friends, will raise me
To Rome's *first Honours If I give up* Cato,
I claim in my Reward his Captive Daughter

Now *Juba* was not only *Sempronius* his Rival, but *Sempronius* knew that he was so, as 'tis plain from *p* 31 of the first Edition, *Act* 2.

Semp Syphax, *I now may hope, thou hast forsook*
Thy Juba's *Cause, and wishest* Marcia *mine*

Now 'tis evident that since *Sempronius* expected to possess the Daughter, by betraying the Father to *Cæsar*, how comes he to appear so earnest to reconcile his Rival to *Cæsar*?

> Semp *Be sure to press upon him every Motive*
> *Juba's Surrender, since his Father's Death,*
> *Would give up* Africk *into* Cæsar's *Hands,*
> *And make him Lord of half the burning Zone*

Now, Sir, did you ever hear of a duller Lover, or a more stupid Plotter than this *Sempronius*, who being engag'd in a Conspiracy against *Cato* by the Motives of Love and Ambition, appears zealous to reconcile a pow'rful Rival to *Cæsar*, who, being reconcil'd, would infallibly traverse him in his Passion, and consequently in his Ambition? Can any thing be more plain, than that *Cæsar*, who sacrific'd ev'ry thing to his Interest and his Ambition, would sacrifice both the Passion and Ambition of *Sempronius* to him who was able

> *To make him Lord of half the burning Zone,*

And can any thing be more manifest than that *Juba*, if once reconcil'd to *Cæsar*, would, unless he were more stupid than *Sempronius*, use all his Interest with *Cæsar*, to hinder his Rival from mounting, as he propos'd to himself, to the first Honours of *Rome*, least those Honours should be as it were so many steps towards his succeeding in his Passion for *Marcia*? But I have exceeded the Bounds to which I propos'd to confine my self in ev'ry Letter, and am, till the next Opportunity,

SIR,

Yours, &c

LETTER IV

SIR,

I Come now to the Scene between *Juba* and *Syphax*, being the fourth Scene of the first Act, which you have heard so extravagantly commended When I come to shew you that the Author has manag'd Matters with so much Dexterity, that the whole Scene is one gross Fault, that *Syphax* is very much in the wrong in his Invectives against the *Romans*, that *Juba* is more in the wrong in his Defence of them, what shall we say of the Taste and Judgment of its Admirers? shall we forbear to cry out with Indignation, *Quantum est in rebus inane?*

First then I come to shew that *Syphax* is very much in the wrong in his general Invective against the *Romans* For do but consider what the Design of *Syphax* was in this Conversation with *Juba* his Design was to draw over *Juba* to the Party of *Cæsar*, according to the Request which *Sempronius* made him, no less than twice, in the foregoing Scene

> *But tell me, hast thou yet drawn o'er young* Juba
> *That still wou'd recommend thee more to* Cæsar,
> *And challenge better Terms*

and in the next Speech but one,

Be sure to press upon him ev'ry Motive
Juba's *Surrender, since his Father's Death,*
Would give up Africk *into* Cæsar's *Hands,*
And make him Lord of half the burning Zone

And as soon as *Syphax* remains alone, he says,

I'll try if yet I can reduce to Reason
This head-strong Youth, and make him spurn at Cato
The Time is short, Cæsar *comes rushing on us* ——
But hold! young Juba *sees me, and approaches*

Now the first Speech of *Syphax,* in this Scene between him and *Juba,* contains a general Invective against the *Romans.*

Syph *'Tis not my Talent to conceal my Thoughts,*
Or carry Smiles and Sun-shine in my Face,
When Discontent sits heavy at my Heart
I have not yet so much the Roman *in me*

Now, Sir, the Question is, whether an Invective against the *Romans* in general, is a probable Method to induce *Juba* to espouse that part of them, which either was, or at least pass'd for, the most profligate part of them with all the impartial World, and more particularly with *Juba?* The Question is, whether an Invective against the *Roman* Fraud and Hypocrisie was likely to make *Juba* desert *Cato,* whom all the World allowed to be sincere, and to bring him over to *Cæsar* who was renown'd for the Artifice of his Dissimulation?

But as *Syphax* is very much in the wrong in this general Invective against the *Romans* in general, *Juba's* infinitely more so in his Defence of them For *Syphax* is not in the wrong absolutely, but only with relation to the Design with which he speaks, for absolutely speaking, he is so far from saying too much against them, that he does not speak a hundredth Part of the Truth And what *Juba* says in Defence of them, does by no means belong to the *Romans* who liv'd in *Juba's* Time, but to those who liv'd in the Vigour of the Common-wealth. The *Romans,* who liv'd in *Juba's* Time, were the most profligate Race of People that ever liv'd in the World, which will easily appear by the Account that is given of their Manners by their own discerning and impartial Historian *Sallust,* in his History of the *Catilinarian* War As you have the Works of that Prince of Historians by Heart, there is no Occasion for repeating the Passage I appeal to you therefore, if 'tis not manifest, from the Account which *Sallust* gives of them, that the Reflection of *Syphax* in the foregoing Speech is not the hundredth Part of what his Contemporary *Romans* deserv'd, and whether it does not appear likewise from the same Account that the following Sentiments of *Juba* are not only false but base

Jub *Why dost thou cast out such ungen'rous Terms*
Against the Lords and Sovereigns of the World?
Dost thou not see Mankind fall down before them,
And own the Force of their superior Virtue?

Is there a Nation in the Wilds of Africk,
Amidst our barren Rocks, and burning Sands,
That does not tremble at the Roman *Name?*

But let us see what *Syphax* replies to this Speech of *Juba.*

Syph *Gods! where's the Worth that sets this People up*
Above your own Numidia's *tawny Sons!*
Do they with tougher Sinews bend the Bow?
Or flies the Javelin swifter to its Mark,
Launch'd from the Vigour of a Roman *Arm?*
Who like our active African *instructs*
The fiery Steed, and trains him to his Hand?
Or guides in Troops th' embattled Elephant,
Loaden with War? These, these are Arts, my Prince,
In which your Zama *does not stoop to* Rome

The Preheminence over other Nations to which the *Romans* ow'd the Extent of their Empire, did not proceed so much from the superior Strength or Address of their Individuals, consider'd as Individuals, as from their publick and military Discipline However, what *Syphax* says here would not be so very impertinent, if the Design of *Syphax* were to draw *Juba* off from the *Romans* in general, but as I said before, I cannot imagine how he can pretend by these means to draw *Juba* off from that Party of the *Romans* which he believ'd the juster, and to make him espouse that part of them, of the Justice of whose Cause he had no manner of Opinion.

But now Sir, let us come to what *Juba* replies to *Syphax* in the Defence of his *Romans*

Juba *These all are Virtues of a meaner Rank,*
Perfections that are plac'd in Bones and Nerves
A Roman *Soul is bent on higher Views*
To civilize the rude unpolish'd World,
And lay it under the Restraint of Laws,
To make Man mild, and sociable to Man,
To cultivate the wild licentious Savage,
With Wisdom, Discipline, and lib'ral Arts,
Th' Embellishments of Life Virtues like these,
Make Human Nature shine, reform the Soul,
And break our fierce Barbarians into Men

Now, Sir, are you able without a just Indignation to behold in *Juba* this base Admiration of a Nation, which in its Progress to universal Monarchy endeavour'd to enslave the very Kings of *Africa,* as it had done those of *Europe* and *Asia* before? The truth of it is, that wherever the *Romans* at this time of day carried their Arms, they taught the Nations their Luxury, their Rapines, their Frauds, their civil Dissentions, and in short, all the deplorable Corruption of their Manners, and *Syphax* might have answer'd him a thousand Times more fully than he does in the following Speech

Syph *Patience kind Heav'ns!—Excuse an old Man's warmth*
What are these wond'rous civilizing Arts,
This Roman *Polish, and this smooth Behaviour,*

That render Man thus tractable and tame?
Are they not only to disguise our Passions,
To set our Looks at variance with our Thoughts,
To check the Starts and Sallies of the Soul,
And break off all its Commerce with the Tongue,
In short, to change us into other Creatures,
Than what our Nature and the Gods design'd us

Here are not above two or three of the Sentiments which are found in the forementioned Account of *Sallust*, whereas that admirable Historian employs whole Pages in describing the prodigious Corruption of the *Roman* Manners.

In the following Speech, *Juba* pretends to convince *Syphax* of the Virtue of the *Romans* in general, I mean of the *Romans* who were his Contemporaries, by the Virtue of *Cato*, as if there were any Conclusion from the Virtue of one Man to the Virtue of a whole Nation, one might as reasonably conclude from the Understanding of one Man to the Understanding of a whole Nation one might as reasonably conclude that the *Thebans* were the brightest People of *Greece*, because *Pindar* was the greatest of the Lyrick Poets, as that they were naturally the bravest People of *Greece*, because *Pelopidas* and *Epaminondas* were perhaps the greatest Captains of their Time We have shewn already, that the *Romans* of those Times were so far from being more virtuous than other People, that they were more profligate in their Manners than any other Nation whatever

The Virtue of *Cato* therefore, such as it was, must have been owing to something else than the national Virtue of his Contemporary *Romans*. It was owing perhaps to an Affectation of the austere Virtue of his Ancestors, to *Grecian* Philosophy, to an over-grown monstrous Pride, which appears ev'ry where throughout his Character, to the Obstinacy of an inflexible Temper, and perhaps I might add to likewise invincible Ignorance, I mean an utter Ignorance of the Condition and Constitution of his Country, and of the Changes that had been made in it, by the Alteration of their Manners, by the loss of their *Agrarian*, and by prolongation of Magistracy, so that the *Roman* Liberty in *Cato's* Time was in a desperate Condition, and was irretrievable unless by absolute Power.

It was never to be recover'd by *Cato*, *Cæsar* alone could restore it *Cato* had only the impotent Will, but *Cæsar* alone had the Power The merry way of reasoning in this Scene, puts me in Mind of an Observation which *Rapin* makes upon the *French* Poets his Contemporaries, that Logick was so much neglected in their Poems, that they were for the most part either Fustian or Nonsense But I forget my Promise, and transgress my Bounds. The Remainder of this Scene must make the Subject of another Letter, which I promise to send you as soon as I have leisure to think of it

I am, SIR,
Your, &c.

LETTER V

SIR,

THE last time I had the Satisfaction to write to you, I was oblig'd to break off my Remarks in the middle of the Scene between *Syphax* and *Juba*, which is the fourth of the first Act. Being encourag'd by your Approbation of what I have already sent you, I shall now examine the Remainder of that Scene.

In the 11th Page *Syphax* urges *Juba* to abandon *Cato*, as you may see in the following Dialogue.

Juba *What would'st thou have me do?*
Syph *Abandon* Cato
Juba Syphax, *I should be more than twice an Orphan*
By such a Loss
Syph. *Ay, there's the Tie that binds you.*
You long to call him Father Marcia's *Charms*
Work in your Breast unseen, and plead for Cato
No Wonder you are deaf to all I say
Juba Syphax, *your Zeal becomes importunate*
I've hitherto permitted it to rove,
And talk at large, but learn to keep it in,
Least it should take more Freedom than I'll give it

Now, Sir, can you see here, without smiling, that *Syphax* makes a Proposal to his Prince, which the latter believes to be downright villainous, and yet does not provoke him, but as soon as the other touches upon his Love for *Marcia*, the Milksop takes Fire, and shews that he cannot bear it

But now, Sir, let us see what *Syphax* says upon this Resentment of *Juba*.

Syph *Sir, your great Father never us'd me thus*

That is as much as to say, that his Father never reprimanded him for his Insolence and his Presumption, but see how he proceeds

Alas! he's dead, but can you e'er forget
The tender Sorrow, and the Pangs of Nature,
The fond Embraces, and repeated Blessings
Which you drew from him, in your last Farewel?
Still must I cherish the dear sad Remembrance,
At once to torture and to please my Soul
The good old King at parting wrung my Hand,
(His Eyes brim full of Tears) then sighing cry'd,
Prithee be careful of my Son! His Grief
Swell'd up so high, he could not utter more

Now, Sir, 'tis plain from this Speech, that *Syphax* was present at the last parting between the Son and the Father Let us see now, whether *Syphax* can make mention of this last parting between the Son and the Father, for any other reason than to work upon the Weakness of his young Master, and to put him out of his princely Senses Not considering that the mention of that part-

ing, if he supposes his Younker had common Sense, would render the Insolence and the Presumption which *Syphax* shews, by urging *Juba* to abandon *Cato*, inexcusable and insupportable, because at that parting, at which we have just now shewn that *Syphax* was present, the Father strictly charges the Son never to abandon *Cato*

This is evident from what *Juba* says in the Scene between him and *Cato* in the second Act, where *Juba* gives the other a Relation of what happen'd at the last parting between his Father and himself in the following Words

My Father, when, some Days before his Death,
He order'd me to march to Utica.
(Alas, I thought not then his Death so near!)
Wept o'er me, press'd me in his aged Arms,
And as his Grief gave way, My Son, said he,
Whatever Fortune shall befall thy Father,
Be Cato's *Friend, he'll train thee up to great*
And virtuous Deeds Do but observe him well,
Thou'lt shun Misfortunes, or thou'lt learn to bear them

But now the Son in this Scene between him and *Syphax* in the first Act, upon the Mention which *Syphax* makes of this Parting, seems entirely to have forgot that Admonition of his Father, of which he makes so circumstantial a Relation to *Cato* in the 2d Act To be convinc'd of this, let us see what he answers to what *Syphax* said last to him

Juba *Alas, thy Story melts away my Soul!*
That best of Fathers! How shall I discharge
That Gratitude and Duty which I owe him?
Syph *By laying up his Counsels in your Heart*
Juba *His Counsels bad me yield to thy Directions*

What? when those Directions were point blank contrary to his own, as they apparently are here? But what follows?

Then Syphax *chide me in severest Terms,*
Vent all thy Passion, and I'll stand its Shock
Calm and unruffled as a Summer's Sea,
When not a Breath of Wind flies o'er its Surface

Thus *Juba*, as I said above, has either entirely forgot that Admonition of his Father, of which he makes so circumstantial a Relation to *Cato* in the 2d Act; or has not Capacity enough to know, that what *Syphax* brings as an Excuse for his Insolence ought to render it insupportable But now, Sir, let us see what *Syphax* says upon this melting Tenderness of *Juba*

Syph *Alas, my Prince, I'd guide you to your Safety*
Juba *I do believe thou would'st, but tell me how?*
Syph *Fly from the Fate that follows Cæsar's Foes*
Juba *My Father scorn'd to do it*
Syph *And therefore died*
Juba *Better to die ten thousand, thousand Deaths*

Than wound my Honour
Syph *Rather say your Love*
Juba Syphax, *I've promis'd to preserve my Temper,*
Why wilt thou urge me to confess a Flame
I long have stifled, and would fain conceal

Now, Sir, I desire to know how *Syphax* and *Sempronius* should come to know of this Flame, if *Juba* had long stifled it, and would fain conceal it. For as *Sempronius* tells us in the third Act, no one had Access to *Marcia* but *Juba* and her Brothers. And if *Juba* had never confess'd any Passion, the Brothers sure would not talk of any such thing, before they were certain of it, tho' perhaps they might have guess'd at it, and certain they could not be, before the Declaration of *Juba.*

For what remains, tho' this Character of *Juba* is not so faulty with relation to the Rules, as some which I mentioned in the *Remarks* which were formerly publish'd by *Lintott,* yet is it more faulty, absolutely and consider'd in it self For *Juba* is a Character that is not only shocking and contemptible to Men of Sense, at the same time that the Author endeavours to render him estimable and agreeable, but he is shocking and contemptible by the very same Qualities by which the Author endeavours to render him estimable and agreeable, and these are his Esteem and Admiration of *Cato* and of the *Romans* For in admiring the *Romans* who were his Contemporaries, he not only admir'd the most profligately wicked of all Nations, as we have shewn above by the Testimony of their noblest Historian, but a Nation who, in their Progress to universal Monarchy, were about to ruin and enslave *Numidia,* and the rest of *Africa,* as they had done *Europe* and part of *Asia* before And as to that Esteem and Veneration and almost Adoration which he shews for *Cato,* we have this one Remark to make, that he thinks and acts directly counter to him, even in those very Qualities for which he pretends to admire him For the most shining Qualities in *Cato's* Character were the Love of his Country, and the Command which he had of his Passions

Now, Sir, for the first of these Qualities give me leave to observe, that *Cato* was a Lover of his own Country, and not of *Numidia,* and he and his *Romans* design'd to subdue *Numidia* to *Rome,* and not *Rome* to *Numidia* If *Syphax* had been a loyal Subject and a true Friend to his Prince, and not a false Traitor and a Friend to *Rome,* he would have advis'd his Prince to have defied both *Cæsar* and *Cato,* and the *Romans* in general, and taking this Advantage of their civil Dissensions to have retreated into his own *Numidia,* and to have rows'd up all the Nations between the Tropicks against those accursed Plagues of Human Race, who design'd to sacrifice the Happiness and the Virtue of Mankind to their insatiable Avarice, and their detestable Ambition. And *Juba* had follow'd that Advice, if he had been wise or magnanimous enough to have had any Regard for his own Royalty and his Independency, or had been a true Patriot enough to have had half so much concern for the Liberty and Happiness of *Numidia* as *Cato* had for that of *Rome*

Now as for the other Quality of *Cato,* the Command of his Passions, *Juba* is so far from commanding his own, that thro' an unparallell'd Impotence of

Mind, he chuses that very Day to make a Declaration of his Passion for *Marcia*, and to gain her Father's Consent, which is apprehended to be the very last both of *Roman* Liberty, and of her Father's Life And this Weakness of his is exposed the more, and render'd the more contemptible ev'n by what *Portius* says to *Marcus* in his Praise in the first Scene of the Play

Behold young Juba *the* Numidian *Prince,*
With how much Care he forms himself to Glory,
And breaks the Fierceness of his native Temper,
To copy out our Father's bright Example
He loves our Sister Martia, *greatly loves her!*
His Eyes, his Looks, his Actions all betray it
But still the smother'd Fondness burns within him
When most it swells and labours for a Vent,
The sense of Honour and desire of Fame
Drive the big Passion back into his Heart

So that *Juba*, it seems, after having for some time stifled his Passion, chuses that very Day to declare and divulge it, on which Reason and Decency oblig'd him most of all to conceal it

By the way, Sir, I desire leave to observe, that for *Portius* to declare that *Juba* loves his Sister *Marcia*, and not only loves her, but greatly loves her, that his Eyes, that his Looks, that his Actions all betray that Love, that tho' he is silent the smother'd Fondness burns within him, even when it labours most for a Vent, and that he is restrain'd from divulging it, by the sense of Honour and the desire of Fame, I say, for *Portius* to declare all this, when it appears that *Juba* has not only made no mention of it before that Day, but declares it upon the only Day in which the sense of Honour and desire of Fame forbid such a Declaration, are Sentiments that appear to me to be visionary and fantastick It seeming to me to be equally self-evident, that nothing could make such a Declaration in *Juba* dishonourable before that Day, and that nothing could have hinder'd it from passing for Infamous then

Thus, Sir, have I given you an Account of the Absurdities and the Inconsistencies which are to be found in the Sentiments of the first Act of the Tragedy of *Cato* I shall proceed to the second Act with the first Opportunity,

I am, SIR,
Your, &c.

LETTER VI.

SIR,

YOU could not have us'd a more prevailing Argument to oblige me to continue my Remarks upon the Sentiments of *Cato*, than the assuring me that those which I have already sent you upon the Sentiments of the first Act have not been *displeasing to you.* I shall proceed then to the second Act, and entring upon the Subject without any more Ceremony, I shall desire to know from you, whether the first Scene of the second Act, that is the Scene which

shews the Senate assembled, deserves the Applause which it met with at first from the Reader and the Spectator. In order to the answering this Question, let us consider the Design, with which *Cato*, who presides o'er it, summon'd this Assembly Let us consider next the Manner of speaking in it, and lastly the Speeches themselves.

The Design of *Cato* is to consult this Assembly about Peace or War, which he does, without so much as once consulting them, about the Means of carrying it on, or so much as once asking their Advice about it And yet *Cæsar* was expected in a few Hours at the Gates of *Utica*, a Town not maintainable against *Cæsar*'s Army, as we may learn by the very first Lines of the Play.

> *The Dawn is overcast, the Morning low'rs,*
> *And heavily in Clouds brings on the Day,*
> *The great, th' important Day, big with the Fate*
> *Of* Cato *and of* Rome

For how could that Day be big with the Fate of *Cato* and of *Rome*, if *Utica* were in a Capacity to hold out a Siege against the Arms of *Cæsar*?

But, Sir, let us consider the Manner of speaking in this Assembly As soon as *Cato* proposes the Business of Peace or War, *Sempronius* rises, and declares for the latter, when *Cato* immediately contradicts him without staying to see if the rest of the Senators were of his Opinion, which is contrary to the Method of all Councils, either those of *Parnassus* or those of the World, because such a Proceeding is not consonant to Reason nor to the Design of convening such *Assemblies*

For the very Design of convening such Assemblies, and of asking their Advice, is, that every Man who is ask'd it, should give it sincerely and without Prepossession. Now is it not plain, Sir, that if he who has the supream Authority in a Council declares his Opinion before the rest, they who speak after him are in some measure byass'd?

But now let us come to the Speeches themselves, and let us begin with *Cato*'s.

> *Fathers, we once again are met in Council,*
> Cæsar's *Approach has summon'd us together,*
> *And* Rome *attends her Fate from our Resolves*
> *How shall we treat this bold aspiring Man?*
> *Success still follows him, and backs his Crimes*
> Pharsalia *gave him* Rome, Egypt *has since*
> *Receiv'd his Yoke, and the whole* Nile *is* Cæsar's
> *Why should I mention* Juba's *Overthrow,*
> *And* Scipio's *Death?* Numidia's *burning Sands*
> *Still smoak with Blood 'Tis time we should decree*
> *What Course to take Our Foe advances on us,*
> *And envies us ev'n* Libya's *sultry Desarts*
> *Fathers, pronounce your Thoughts, are they still fixt*
> *To hold it out, and fight it to the last?*
> *Or are your Hearts subdu'd at length, and wrought*
> *By Time and ill Success to a Submission?*

We will begin to examine this Speech by the Tayl, for 'tis not till the four last Lines that *Cato* puts the Question to this mock Senate, whether they were for Peace or War, which is putting a wrong Question. For as long as they had a Ressource, and the Affairs of the Commonwealth were not desperate, as appears by what *Cato* and *Juba* say in the sequel, all true Patriots ought to be for War, and the only Question which could be put properly to them, was, since *Cæsar* approached, and *Utica* was not maintainable by their Forces, against his numerous and victorious Army, to what Places they should immediately retreat, and where they might best and soonest recruit their Forces. All the first part of the Speech is Declamation, and telling his Hearers, tho' neither he nor they had a Minute to lose, *Cæsar* being expected every Hour, what either was not true, or what they must every one of them know every Jot as well as himself Besides, could any thing be so little to his Purpose, as that at this extraordinary Juncture which required that he should use all his Art and all his Force to animate them, he should remind them thus of the Felicity and the constant Success of *Cæsar*, and enumerate the Battels he had gain'd, and the Countries he had conquered, which was enough to make them lose all Courage and incline them to a base Submission? If it has not that Effect on *Sempronius*, 'tis because he is a Traitor, and does not speak his Mind, that by persuading *Cato* to hold out, he may have the Merit of delivering him up to *Cæsar* Being ordered then by *Cato* to declare his Opinion, he delivers it in the following Speech, which is intended by the Author as a *Gasconnade*.

> Semp *My Voice is still for War*
> *Gods! can a* Roman *Senate long debate*
> *Which of the two to chuse, Slav'ry or Death!*
> *No, let us rise at once, gird on our Swords,*
> *And, at the Head of our remaining Troops,*
> *Attack the Foe, break thro' the thick Array*
> *Of his throng'd Legions, and charge home upon him*
> *Perhaps some Arm, more lucky than the rest,*
> *May reach his Heart, and free the World from Bondage*

This, as I said before, is design'd by the Author as a *Gasconnade*. But 'tis only its being in the wrong Place that makes it so. For if this Speech had been spoke after *Cato* had declar'd against both making Peace and retreating, it had been great and reasonable, and *Roman*. For this Advice of *Sempronius* is wrong, because the Forces in *Utica* could before the Arrival of *Cæsar* make a Retreat and recruit But after Refusal to make Peace and to make a Retreat, there remain'd but two things, either to go out and fight, or to stay there till they were coop'd up by *Cæsar* To stay there was foolish and desperate, for *Cæsar* might be certain to reduce them by Famine, without suffering them so much as to strike a Stroke. If they went out and fought, they had a Chance for it, tho' the odds was very great against them.

> *Perhaps some Arm, more lucky than the rest,*
> *May reach his Heart, and free the World from Bondage*

So that *Cato* having resolved neither to make Peace nor to retreat, was oblig'd by Reason to follow this Advice of *Sempronius*. Let us now see what Reasons he gives for his not doing it.

Cato *Let not a Torrent of impetuous Zeal*
Transport thee thus beyond the Bounds of Reason
True Fortitude is seen in great Exploits
That Justice warrants, and that Wisdom guides,
All else is tow'ring Frenzy and Distraction
Are not the Lives of those, who draw the Sword
In Rome's *defence, entrusted to our Care?*
Should we thus lead them to a Field of Slaughter,
Might not th' impartial World with Reason say,
We lavish'd at our Deaths the Blood of thousands,
To grace our Fall, and make our Ruine glorious?

Why no The World could not with reason say, that he lavish'd at his Death the Blood of thousands, for doing a reasonable thing, that is by leading them out to fight against the Enemies of their Country, by which they had a Chance for the Victory, after he had resolv'd within himself neither to make Peace nor retreat The World might reasonably say, that

He lavish'd at his Death the Blood of thousands
To grace his Fall, and make his Ruine glorious,

by basely deserting them, that is, by dying alone, by dying by his own Hand, without making a fair Retreat with them, or making any Terms for them, or fighting bravely at the Head of them If he had fall'n in the Field at the Head of them, and the Deaths of thousands had attended on his, it would have been so far from making his Ruine glorious, that it would have obscur'd it, and would have render'd the Fall of *Cato* a vulgar Fall, and common to those numerous Chiefs, who in the several Ages of the World have been known to fall in Battel *Cato* knew very well, that to grace his Fall, and render his Ruine glorious with the unthinking part of the World, both with his Contemporaries and with Posterity, that the Singularity of his Fall was requisite, that in order to this there was a Necessity for his falling alone, for his falling by his own Hand, after having twice read over *Plato*'s Treatise of the Immortality of the Soul

But now, Sir, as *Sempronius* is in the wrong in declaring for War, before he knew that *Cato* had resolv'd neither to make Peace nor make a Retreat, as *Cato* is more in the wrong in answering him, let us now shew that *Lucius* is still more in the wrong in the Harangue which he makes for Peace, and *Cato* still more in the wrong than he, in the Answer which he makes to that Harangue

Lucius *My Thoughts, I must confess, are turn'd on Peace*
Already have our Quarrels fill'd the World
With Widows and with Orphans Scythia *mourns*
Our guilty Wars, and Earth's remotest Regions
Lie half unpeopled by the Feuds of Rome

'Tis time to sheath the Sword, and spare Mankind
It is not Cæsar, *but the Gods, my Fathers,*
The Gods declare against us, and repel
Our vain Attempts To urge the Foe to Battel,
(Prompted by blind Revenge and wild Despair,)
Were to refuse th' Awards of Providence,
And not to rest in Heav'ns Determination
Already have we shewn our Love to Rome,
Now let us shew Submission to the Gods

The first six Lines of this Speech contain nothing but a meer poetical Flourish And for these two that follow,

It is not Cæsar, *but the Gods, my Fathers,*
The Gods declare against us, and repel
Our vain Attempts

May we not reasonably say, that they are the Language of Baseness, that it would be more Philosophical as well as more *Roman* to say, that the Gods have only tryed them all this while, to try with what Constancy they would bear their Sufferings and endure their Losses, and whether they were worthy to be made the Deliverers of their Country But let us proceed,

To urge the Foe to Battel,
(Prompted by blind Revenge and wild Despair)
Were to refuse th' Awards of Providence,
And not to rest in Heav'ns Determination

Thus is this Fool in the other Extream, as if there were no medium, between urging the Foe to immediate Battel, and a base Submission *Cato* will tell him in his Answer that there is that medium, but will tell it him after such a manner, that he had better have said nothing

Cato *Fathers, I cannot see that our Affairs*
Are grown thus desp'rate We have Bulwarks round us,
Within our Walls are Troops enured to Toil
In Africk's *Heats, and season'd to the Sun,*
Numidia's *spacious Kingdom lies behind us,*
Ready to rise at its young Prince's Call

Thus *Cato* is sensible, that there is a medium between urging the Foe to immediate Battel, and a base Submission. There is a retreat into *Numidia,* where they may repair and recruit their Forces, and then it will be time to offer Battel, and therefore this Stoick justly cries out,

While there is Hope, do not distrust the Gods

But what Inference does he draw from hence? why, the strangest one in the World.

While there is Hope, do not distrust the Gods,
But wait at least till Cæsar's *near Approach*
Force us to yield

That is as much as to say, Since we have so fair a Retreat into *Numidia*, whose spacious Kingdom does as it were extend its Arms to receive us, why, in the Name of all the Gods e'en let us stay here. But let us suffer him to go on,

> *'Twill never be too late*
> *To sue for Chains, and own a Conqueror*
> *Why should* Rome *fall a Moment ere her time?*
> *No, let us draw her Term of Freedom out*
> *In its full Length, and spin it to the last*

But now, Sir, is that the way to spin the Freedom of *Rome* to the last, to stay till they are coop'd up in *Utica*, instead of retreating into *Numidia*, where they may raise another Army, with which they may once more contend for the Liberties of their Country But let him make an end of this blessed Harangue

> *So shall we gain still one Day's Liberty,*
> *And let me perish, but, in* Cato's *Judgment,*
> *A Day, an Hour of virtuous Liberty,*
> *Is worth a whole Eternity in Bondage*

Why let it be so, but then if a Day, if an Hour of virtuous Liberty be of such immense Value, sure an Age, or many Ages of it are infinitely more to be esteem'd And why they should talk of adding a Day to the Liberties of *Rome*, when they may reasonably hope to add whole Ages, by retreating into a vast Kingdom, which lyes open to receive them, is I must confess above my Apprehension

But, Sir, tho' I have not quite done with this Scene of the Senate, yet give me leave here to insert a Passage of the following Scene between *Cato* and *Juba*, in order to shew that whereas those old Stagers, *Sempronius* and *Lucius*, made, the one of them an extravagant Proposal, and the other a base one, young *Juba*, who in all likelihood was never in the right before, yet gives very reasonable Advice to *Cato* in the following Lines.

> *Had we not better leave this* Utica,
> *To arm* Numidia *in our Cause, and court*
> *Th' Assistance of my Father's pow'rful Friends?*
> *Did they know* Cato, *our remotest Kings*
> *Wou'd pour embattled Multitudes about him,*
> *Their swarthy Hosts wou'd darken all our Plains,*
> *Doubling the native Horrour of the War,*
> *And making Death more grim*

To which reasonable Advice we shall see immediately, that *Cato* gives a most unreasonable Answer

> Cato *And canst thou think*
> Cato *will fly before the Sword of* Cæsar?
> *Reduced like* Hannibal, *to seek Relief*
> *From Court to Court, and wander up and down,*
> *A Vagabond in* Africk!

Which is as much as to say, I confess that 'tis true, by retreating immediately from *Utica*, I may have an opportunity of recruiting my little Army in *Numidia*, and rendring it still more pow'rful than it was at *Thapsus*, and that consequently I may have yet another opportunity of consulting the Safety of my Friends, and retrieving their Interest, and their Pow'r, and may yet once more be in a Condition of contending for the Liberties of *Rome*, and of Mankind, yet rather than make this Retreat, which may look little in the Eyes of the unthinking Part of the World, I, who pretend so much concern for my Friends, and so much Love for my Country, will rather suffer my Country to sink, and my Friends to perish But for God sake, Sir, why this Aversion now from flying before the Sword of *Cæsar*? Who was it that flew from *Pharsalia* to *Africa* before the Sword of *Cæsar*? Was it not this very *Cato*? But pray, Sir, what does he, what can he mean by

> *Reduced like* Hannibal, *to seek Relief*
> *From Court to Court!*

Could he not have brought a nearer, and a *Roman* Example, to justifie and to sustain his Retreat? Did not the Great *Pompey* after his Flight from *Pharsalia* seek Relief in *Africa*, and seek Relief which he was not sure to find? Shall *Cato* after this refuse to seek certain Relief in *Numidia*, a Relief so necessary for the Preservation of his Friends and for the Support of sinking Liberty? But what can be the meaning of

> *wander up and down,*
> *A Vagabond in* Africk!

Did not the Great *Pompey* wander more like a Vagabond from *Pharsalia* to *Ægypt*, being accompanied but by few, as Vagabonds are often accompanied? whereas *Cato* might be attended by Thousands, by all the remains of the Forces in *Utica*, whose Lives he might secure by his Retreat, and whose Deaths he would certainly lavish by his Stay. Which is prov'd by Fact, and by the Event, for *Cæsar* hang'd as many of these worthy Senators as afterwards fell into his hands

But now 'tis time to go back to the Senate, and to shew that, upon the arrival of *Decius*, *Cato* makes a more unreasonable and extravagant Proposal, than either *Lucius* or *Sempronius* made before him

> Decius Cæsar *is well acquainted with your Virtues,*
> *And therefore sets this Value on your Life*
> *Let him but know the Price of* Cato's *Friendship,*
> *And name your Terms*
> Cato *Bid him disband his Legions,*
> *Restore the Common-wealth to Liberty,*
> *Submit his Actions to the publick Censure,*
> *And stand the Judgment of a* Roman *Senate*
> *Bid him do this, and* Cato *is his Friend*

Now here, Sir, give me leave to ask one Question. Did *Cato* believe that *Cæsar* would comply with this Proposal, or did he certainly know that he would reject

it? If he believ'd that he would comply with it, must not this Stoick be Weakness it self? If he certainly knew that he would reject it, why then is this a Brave and a *Roman* Proposal, or a Frantick and Extravagant one? May not we here retort upon *Cato*, what he himself said before to *Sempronius*?

Let not a Torrent of impetuous Zeal
Transport thee thus beyond the Bounds of Reason
True Fortitude is seen in great Exploits
That Justice warrants, and that Wisdom guides

Is this a Proposal that Wisdom guides? And does not *Decius* in the following Line very justly reproach him, with acting so contrary to his known Character?

Decius Cato, *the World talks loudly of your Wisdom* ——

Is not this so far from being Wise, that it is downright Ridiculous in one, who will do nothing to obtain his Demands, neither Fight bravely, nor Retreat prudently, nor propose any probable Conditions of Peace?

Thus, Sir, in compliance with your Desire, I have recollected, and sent you, the chief Things which I had formerly remark'd upon the Sentiments of the two first Acts of *Cato* What was chiefly to be observ'd upon the Sentiments of the other three Acts, fell in with the Method of the Remarks, which I formerly publish'd on that Tragedy

I should now go back to the Scene in the first Act, between *Juba* and *Syphax*, and say something concerning that Pride which *Syphax* objects against *Cato*. But this Letter being already swell'd to too great a Bulk, I shall omit it 'till the next Opportunity

I am,
SIR,
Your, &c

LETTER VII.

SIR,

I Shall now, according to my Promise, make an end of these Remarks, by going back to the Scene in the first Act between *Juba* and *Syphax* In that Scene, *Juba* boasts to *Syphax* of the Pow'r that *Cato* has to resist Pleasure, *Syphax* answers that the Abstinence of his *Numidian* Hunters is as extraordinary as that of *Cato*, to which *Juba* replies

Juba *Thy Prejudices*, Syphax, *won't discern*
What Virtues grow from Ignorance, and Choice,
Nor how the Hero differs from the Brute
But grant that others could with equal Glory
Look down on Pleasures, and the Baits of Sense,
Where shall we find the Man that bears Affliction,
Great and Majestick in his Griefs like Cato?
Heav'ns with what Strength, what Steadness of Mind,
He triumphs in the midst of all his Suff'rings!

How does he rise against a Load of Woes,
And thank the Gods that throw the Weight upon him!

Now here I desire leave, Sir, to make one Observation by the bye. The Author makes this young *African* affirm implicitely here, that 'tis harder to bear Affliction than to resist Pleasure, whereas there are two Principles innate in us, the one of which enables us to bear Affliction, and the other inclines us to submit to Pleasure, the one of which is Pride, and the other the ardent Desire of Happiness, and therefore *Rochefoucault* is in the right in his 29th Reflection, *Il faut des plus grand Virtus pour soutenir la bonne Fortune que la mauvaise* But now, Sir, I come to the chief thing of which I design'd to treat in this Letter, and that is the Pride of *Cato* Let us see then what *Syphax* says to *Cato*'s Firmness under Affliction.

Syph *'Tis Pride, rank Pride, and Haughtiness of Soul*

Now here I would ask the Author one Question. Did he design this Assertion of *Syphax* for Truth or Slander? If he design'd it for Truth, there is an end at once of all his Heroe's Virtue, if he design'd it for Slander, why then I desire leave to tell him, that he has drawn his Hero so unhappily, that what he design'd for Slander is apparently true, for in the latter end of that Scene of the second Act where *Decius* appears, *Cato* does not only think himself the greatest and most deserving of Mankind, but is so foolishly vain and so intolerably insolent as to declare it to all about him

Dec *Does* Cato *send this Answer back to* Cæsar,
For all his generous Cares and proffer'd Friendship?
Cato *His Cares for me are insolent and vain*
Presumptuous Man! The Gods take Care of Cato
Wou'd Cæsar *shew the Greatness of his Soul?*
Bid him employ his Care for these my Friends,
And make good use of his ill-gotten Pow'r,
By sheltring Men much better than himself

Which is as much as to say, *Cæsar* shews Insolence and Vanity in taking Care of me, but he would shew the Greatness of his Soul in taking care of these Scoundrels here about me, who are as much better than him, as I am better than they are Now is not this to say in plain *English*, As long as the Gods take care of me, let the Devil take care of my Friends here For has not he painted *Cæsar*, but six lines before this, as black as any modern can paint the Devil?

Didst thou but view him right, thou'dst see him black
With Murder, Treason, Sacrilege, and Crimes,
That strike my Soul with Horror but to name 'em.

And so much for the Pride of *Cato*, at least at present. And now, Sir, let us return to what *Juba* said a little above, and take Occasion from it to make one more Remark

Where shall we find the Man that bears Affliction,
Great and Majestick in his Griefs, like Cato?

Heav'ns with what Strength, what Steadiness of Mind,
He triumphs in the midst of all his Suff'rings!
How does he rise against a Load of Woes,
And thank the Gods that throw the Weight upon him!

Now the Truth of the Matter is, that *Cato* shew'd less Strength and Steadiness in his Affliction, than any of the conquer'd *Romans* who fled to *Spain*, that they might reserve themselves for better Times and have one glorious Tryal for Liberty more He was so far from rising under the Load, that he impiously threw down the Burden, and by poorly dying before the Word of Command, acted the Part of a cowardly Soldier, who flies from the Post where his General has plac'd him, and leaves his Buckler behind him

Thus, Sir, have I sent you what remain'd to be said concerning the Sentiments of *Cato*. Some of my Friends have importun'd me to say something of the Expression and the Harmony, which I shall do my utmost Endeavour to decline,

I am, SIR,
Your, &c

Jan. 15. 1717.

A TRUE CHARACTER OF MR. POPE, AND HIS WRITINGS.

1716

To Mr ———

SIR,

I Have read over the *Libel*, which I received from you the Day before Yesterday. Yesterday I received the same from another Hand, with this Character of the Secret Author of so much stupid Calumny

That he is one, whom God and Nature have mark'd for want of Common Honesty, and his own Contemptible Rhimes for want of Common Sense, that those Rhimes have found great Success with the Rabble, which is a Word almost as comprehensive as Mankind, but that the Town, which supports him will do by him, as the Dolphin did by the Ship-wrack'd *Monkey*, drop him as soon as it finds him out to be a Beast, whom it fondly now mistakes for a Human Creature. 'Tis, *says he*, a very little but very comprehensive Creature, in whom all Contradictions meet, and all Contrarieties are reconcil'd, when at one and the same time, like the Ancient *Centours*, he is a Beast and a Man, a Whig and a Tory, a virulent *Papist* and yet forsooth, a Pillar of the Church of *England*, a Writer at one and the same time, of *GUARDIANS* and of *EXAMINERS*, an assertor of Liberty and of the Dispensing Power of Kings, a Rhimester without Judgment or Reason, and a Critick without Common Sense, a Jesuitical Professor of Truth, a base and a foul Pretender to Candour, a Barbarous Wretch, who is perpetually boasting of Humanity and Good Nature, a lurking way-laying Coward, and a Stabber in the Dark, who is always pretending to Magnanimity, and to sum up all Villains in one, a Traytor-Friend, one who has betrayed all Mankind, and seems to have taken his great Rule of Life from the following lines of *Hudibras*.

> *For 'tis easier to* Betray
> *Than Ruin any other way,*
> *As th Earth is soonest undermin'd,*
> *By vermin Impotent and Blind*

He is a Professor of the worst Religion, which he laughs at and yet has most inviolably observ'd the most execrable Maxim in it, *That no Faith is to be kept with Heretick*s A wretch, whose true Religion is his Interest, and yet so stupidly blind to that Interest, that he often meets her, without knowing her, and very grosly Affronts her. His Villainy is but the natural Effect of his want of Understanding, as the sowerness of Vinegar proceeds from its want of Spirit, and yet, *says My Friend*, notwithstanding that Shape and that Mind of his, some Men of good Understanding, value him for his Rhimes, as they would be fond of an *Asseinego*, that could sing his part in a Catch, or of a *Baboon* that could whistle *Walsingham* The grosser part of his gentle Readers

believe the Beast to be more than Man, as Ancient Rusticks took his Ancestors for those Demy-Gods they call *Fauns* and *Satyrs.*

This was the Character, which my Friend gave of the Author of this miserable Libel, which immediately made me apprehend that it was the very same Person, who endeavour'd to expose you in a *Billinsgate* Libel, at the very time that you were doing him a Favour at his own earnest Desire, who attempted to undermine Mr *PHILIPS* in one of his *Guardians,* at the same time that the *Crocodile* smil'd on him, embrac'd him, and called him Friend, who wrote a Prologue in praise of *CATO,* and teaz'd *Lintott* to publish Remarks upon it, who at the same time, that he openly extoll'd Sir *Richard Steele* in the highest manner, secretly publish'd the Infamous Libel of Dr *Andrew Tripe* upon him, who, as he is in Shape a *Monkey,* is so in his every Action, in his senseless Chattering, and his merry Grimaces, in his doing hourly Mischief and hiding himself, in the variety of his Ridiculous Postures, and his continual Shiftings, from Place to Place, from Persons to Persons, from Thing to Thing But whenever he Scribbles, he is emphatically a *Monkey,* in his awkard servile Imitations For in all his Productions, he has been an *Imitator,* from his Imitation of *VIRGILS Bucolicks,* to this present Imitation of *HORACE* ———His *Pastorals* were writ in Imitation of *VIRGIL,* ———His *Rape of the Lock* of *BOILEAU,* ———His *Essay on Criticism,* of the present Duke of *Buckingham,* and of my Lord *Roscommon,* ———His *Windsor-Forest* of Sir *John Denham,* ———His *Ode upon St Cæcilia* of Mr *Dryden,* and ——— His *Temple of Fame,* of *CHAUCER*

Thus for fifteen Years together this Ludicrous Animal has been a constant *Imitator* Yet he has rather mimick'd these great Genius's, than he has Imitated them. He has given a False and a Ridiculous Turn to all their good and their great Qualities, and has, as far as in him lies, Burlesqu'd them without knowing it But after having been for fifteen Years as it were an *Imitator* he has made no Proficiency. His first Imitations, tho' bad, are rather better than the Succeeding, and this last Imitation of *HORACE,* the most execrable of them all

For as a Dog that turns the Spit,
Bestirs himself and plies his Feet
To climb the Wheel, but all in vain,
His own Weight brings him down again,
And still he's in the self same place
Where at his setting out he was,
So in the Circle of the Arts,
Does he Advance his natural Parts
Hud

If you should chance, Sir, to shew this LETTER to any of your Acquaintance who have perus'd his Senseless Calumnies, they may think perhaps that we follow his Example, and retort Slander upon him. I Desire that you would have the Goodness to assure such, that in the Moral part of his Character, and

all that relates to matter of Fact, there is no manner of Rhetorick us'd, all is exactly and litterally true, for which we appeal to those Poetical Persons, with whom we have been most Conversant in *Covent-Garden*. We have always been of Opinion that he who invents, or pretends, or falsifies Matter of Fact, in order to slander any one, deserves an Infamous Punishment, and we have always had before our Eyes the following Verses out of *Horace*,

> ——— *Absentem qui rodit amicum,*
> *Qui non defendit alio culpante, solutos*
> *Qui captat risus Hominum, famamq, dicacis,*
> *Fingere qui non visa potest commissa tacere,*
> *Qui nequit, hic niger est, hunc tu Romane, caveto, &c*

As to what relates to the *Person* of this wretched Libeller, if in that there may be some trifling Exaggerations, yet even that is not design'd to Deceive or Impose upon any to whom you may happen to shew it, but is intended to lead them to an exact Knowledge of the Truth by a very little enlarging upon it

But if any one appears to be concern'd at our Upbraiding him with his Natural Deformity, which did not come by his own Fault, but seems to be the Curse of God upon him, we desire that Person to consider, that this little Monster has upbraided People with their Calamities and their Diseases, and Calamities and Diseases, which are either false or past, or which he himself gave them by administring Poison to them, we desire that Person to consider, that Calamities and Diseases, if they are neither false nor past, are common to all Men, that a Man can no more help his Calamities and his Diseases, than a Monster can his Deformity, that there is no Misfortune, but what the Generality of Mankind are liable too, and that there is no one Disease, but what all the rest of Men are subject too, whereas the Deformity of this Libeller, is Visible, Present, Lasting, Unalterable, and Peculiar to himself. 'Tis the mark of God and Nature upon him, to give us warning that we should hold no Society with him, as a Creature not of our Original, nor of our Species And they who have refus'd to take this Warning which God and Nature have given them, and have in spight of it, by a Senseless Presumption, ventur'd to be familiar with him, have severely suffer'd for it, by his Perfidiousness They tell me, he has been lately pleas'd to say, *That 'tis Doubtful if the Race of Men are the Offspring of* Adam *or of the* Devil * But if 'tis doubtful as to the Race of Men, 'tis certain at least, that his Original is not from *Adam*, but from the *Divel*. By his constant and malicious Lying, and by that Angel Face and Form of his, 'tis plain that he wants nothing but Horns and Tayl, to be the exact Resemblance, both in Shape and Mind, of his Infernal Father. Thus, Sir, I return you Truth for Slander, and a just Satire for an Extravagant Libel, which is therefore ridiculously call'd an Imitation of *Horace*. You know very well, Sir, that the Difference between *Horace*, and such an Imitation of him, is almost Infinite, and I leave you to consider what Influence such an Imitation must have upon its Readers of both Kinds, both upon those

* *The* WORMS, *a Satire, Stanza* 4

who are acquainted with that Great Poet, and with those that know him not, how contemptible it must render *Horace* to the latter, and his Imitator to the former, who when they shall behold the Ghost of their old and their valued Friend, raised up before them, by this awkard Conjurer, in a Manner so ridiculously frightful, when they behold him thus miserably mangled, and reflect at once with Contempt and Horrour, upon this Barbarous Usage of him, will not be able to refrain from exclaiming in the most vehement Manner.

Qualis adest, Quantum mutatus ab illo, &c

They must think that their old and valued Friend had a Prophetick Spirit, and seem'd to foretel the Usage, which he has lately received from this Barbarian and his Brethren, when in the fourth Ode of his Third Book he cryed

Visam Britannos Hospitibus feros

But as for the other sorts of Readers, the Readers who have no Knowledge of *Horace*, but from this contemptible Imitation, what must they think, Sir of those great Men, who extol him, for the second Genius of the *Roman-Empire* Illustrious for so many great Qualities which are to be found in him alone? Must they not look upon all his Admirers, as so many Learned Idiots, and upon the *Roman-Empire* it self, as a vast Nation of Fools?

You know very well, Sir, that as *Horace* had a firmness of Judgment, and a sureness and truth of Taste, he never once form'd a wrong Judgment to himself, either of the Actions of Men in general, or of the particular Worth and Merit of Authors, he had an Honour and a Rectitude of Soul, that would have oblig'd him to die a thousand times rather than to Write any thing against his Conscience.

Pejusque letho flagitium timet

He was capable indeed of being provok'd to expose either a Fool or a Knave whom otherwise he might have suffer'd to have remain'd in Obscurity, but the most Barbarous Usage of his most Malicious Enemy, could never urge him to Slander that Enemy. From this Force and Clearness of his Understanding, and this Noble Rectitude of his Will, it has proceeded that all his Censures are like so many *Decrees*, that have been all affirm'd by Posterity, the only Supream Court of Judicature, for the Distribution of Fame and Infamy from which Mankind can have no Appeal That Supream, Impartial, Incorruptible Judicature, has the same Opinions of Persons and Things, and especially of Authors that he had The same high Value for *Tibullus*, for *Pollio*, for *Varus*, for *Virgil*, and the same Contempt for *Bavius*, for *Mævius*, for *Crispinus*, for *Alpinus*, for *Fannius*, and for a thousand more

The same Justness and Fineness of Discernment, and the same noble Rectitude of Will, appear in the *French Satirist*, which make the most considerable Share of his Merit, and the most Distinguishing part of his Character, if we will believe what he says of himself, in his Admirable Epistle to *Monsieur* SEIGNELEY. You know, Sir, that what *Boileau* says there of himself is

exactly true in Fact. The Persons whom he has attack'd in his Writings have been for the most part Authors, and most of those Authors Poets. The Censures which he has pass'd on them have been confirm'd by all *Europe*. But at the same time that judicious Poet, has been as liberal of his Praise to his Contemporaries, who were excellent in their Kinds, as *Corneille, Racine, Moliere,* and *La Fontaine*. Nay, he was generous enough to defend *Racine,* and to support and strengthen him, when a clamorous crou'd of miserable Authors endeavoured to oppress him, as appears by his Admirable Epistle addrest to that Tragick Poet.

You, and I, both know very well, Sir, that there has been never wanting a Floud of such Authors, neither in *England* nor *France,* who being like this Imitator, in ev'ry Respect, the reverse of *Horace,* in Honour, in Discernment in Genius, have always combin'd to attack any thing that has appear'd above their own dull Level, while they have hug'd and admir'd each other, Authors who have thought to be too hard for their Adversaries by opposing *Billinsgate* to Reason, and Dogmatical Assertion to Moral Demonstration, and who have been Idiots enough to believe that their Noise and Impudence could alter the Nature of Things, and the Notions of Men of Sense.

Of all these Libellers, the present Imitator is the most Impudent, and the most Incorrigible, who has lately pester'd and plagu'd the World with Five or Six Scandalous Libels, in Prose, that are all of them at once so Stupid, and so Malicious, that Men of Sense are Doubtful, if they should attribute them to the Libellers Native Idiotism, or to Accidental Madness.

In all these Libels, the chief Objects of his Scandal and Malice, have been Persons of distinguish'd Merit, and among these he has fallen upon none so foully as his Friends and Benefactors. Among these latter, he has attack'd no one so often, or with so much ridiculous, impotent Malice, as Sir *Richard Blackmore*, who is Estimable for a thousand good and great Qualities. And what time has he chosen to do this? Why, just after that Gentleman had laid very great Obligations on him, and just after he had oblig'd the World with so many Editions of his Excellent *Poem* upon *CREATION,* which *Poem* alone is worth all the *Folios,* that this Libeller will ever write, and which will render its Author the Delight and Admiration of Posterity. So that 'tis hard to determine whether this Libeller is more remarkable for his Judgment or his Gratitude

I dare venture to affirm, that there is not an Author living so little Qualified for a Censurer as himself. I know nothing for which he is so ill Qualified as he is for Judging, unless it be for Translating *HOMER* He has neither Taste nor Judgment, but is, if you will pardon a Quibble, the very necessity of *Parnassus*, for he has none of the Poetical Laws, or if he has the Letter of any, He has it without the Spirit. Whenever he pretends to Criticise, I fancy I see *Shamwell* or *Cheatly* in the Squire of *Alsatia,* cutting a Sham or Banter to abuse some Bubble. The *Preface* is full of gross Errours, and he has shewn himself in it, a Dogmatical, Ignorant, Impudent Second-Hand Critick As for the *Poem,* however he may cry up *HOMER* for being every where a

Græcian-Trumpeter in the Original, I can see no *Trumpeter* in the *Translator*, but the King of *Spain's*. But since his Friends will alledge 'tis easie to say this, I desire that it may go for nothing, till I have so plainly prov'd it, that the most Foolish, and the most Partial of them shall not be able to deny it.

As for what they call his *Verses*, he has, like Mr *Bayes*, got a notable knack of Rhimeing and Writing smooth Verse, but without either Genius or Good Sense, or any tolerable Knowledge of *English*, as I believe I shall shew plainly, when I come to the rest of his Imitations. As for his Translation of *HOMER*, I could never borrow it, till this very Day, and design to read it over to Morrow, so that shortly you may expect to hear more of it I will only tell you beforehand, that *HOMER* seems to me to be untranslatable in any Modern Language That great Poet is just in his Designs, admirable in his Characters, and for the most part exact in his Reasoning, and correct in his Noble Sentiments, but these are Excellencies, which may be already seen in the Prose Translations of Him

The Qualities which so admirably distinguish *HOMER* from most other Writers, and which therefore a Translator in Verse is particularly oblig'd to show, because they cannot be shown in Prose, are the Beauty of his Diction, and the various Harmony of his Versification But 'tis as Ridiculous to pretend to make these Shine out in *English* Rhimes, as it would be to emulate upon a *Bag-pipe*, the Solemn and Majestick Thorough Basse of an *Organ*

But you may suddenly expect more of this if what I have already said, happens to entertain you.

I am
Sir,
Your, &c

London
May 7 1716

TO SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE
ON THE MORAL AND CONCLUSION OF AN EPICK POEM
1716, 1721

Decemb. 5. 1716.

SIR,

WHEN I sent you my Observations, upon the Two first Acts of the Play, I sent you so many Reasons which oblig'd me to differ from you, with respect to the Encomium, which you give to that Tragedy, in your *Essay* upon *Epick Poetry*. And whenever you think fit to lay your Commands upon me, I shall lay before you the Reasons, for which I dissent from you, with regard to the Commendation which you give to a *late Translation* At present I shall pass to Things more general, and consequently of far greater Importance.

IN the Chapter which treats of the Moral, you are pleased to affirm two Things, The first is, That one who writes an Epick Poem, need not in his first Intention, pitch upon some considerable Moral, and then contrive his Fable suitable to that Design, The Second Thing is, That there is no occasion that an Epick Poem should end Fortunately with regard to the Principal Character

BUT, Sir, before I give my Reasons for dissenting from you, with regard to these Two Points, the first of which is of Consequence, and the Second of the utmost Importance I desire that you would give me leave to enumerate some Things, in which we perfectly Agree, that by this Method, we may facilitate an Agreement in Things in which we Differ

We agree then, Sir, in the following Points.

1 That there must be a Fable *Essay* p 37
2 That there must be an Action. *Ess* p. 47
3 That the Action must be one. p *ibid*
4 That there must be a Moral p. 76.
5 That the Fable and the Action must be only for the Moral *Ibid* & p. 34
6 That the Moral must be the genuine Result of the Fable and the Action p 77
7. That Admiration ought to be the predominant Passion in the narration of the Action. p. 33
8 Nothing that is common or ordinary, can excite Admiration. p 34 & 35.
9 That there ought to be an Allegory. p. 41.

THESE, Sir, are Things in which we agree expresly. There are other Things in which we agree implicitly, because if these last are false, they destroy the Truth even of those in which we agree expresly, as that

1 The Moral must contain an undeniable Truth, or else it cannot be a Moral For Falshood may delude, but only Truth can instruct

2. That the Instruction which the Poem gives, must be general; Moral Philosophy being the Law of Nature, and consequently, instructive to Mankind.

3. That the Poetick Action must remain general, even after the Imposition of Names, for if the Action is particular, there can be no general Instruction deduced from it, the Conclusion being false to generals from particulars.

4. That for the same Reason, the Characters at the bottom must be general likewise, even after the Imposition of Names

5. That the Action and Characters being both general, even after the Imposition of Names, they must be, consequently, both Allegorical.

Let us come now, Sir, to the two forementioned Particulars.

You say, That an Epick Poet is not oblig'd to have the Moral first in his Mind For, say you, no Author can form the Narration of any great and memorable Action, but some Moral will arise from it, whether the Writer intends it or not Suppose this were true, a Poet is to Instruct by his Art and not by Chance But the very contrary of this is true, a Poet may form the Narration, of a Hundred great and memorable Actions, if these Actions are Particular and Historical, and not one Moral shall arise from them all; as the Battle of *Pharsalia*, the Death of *Brutus* and *Cassius*, the Death of *Cato*, the Death of King *Lear*, the Death of *Hamlet*, the Death of *Harry* the Fourth And I defie any Poet to form a general Action, and general Characters, but he must form them upon a Moral, and consequently that Moral must be first in his Head Can any one believe, that *Æsop* first told a Story of a Cock and a Bull, and afterwards made a Moral to it? Or is it reasonable to believe, that he made his Moral first, and afterwards to prove it, contriv'd his Fable? Now I know no difference that there is, between one of *Æsop*'s Fables, and the Fable of an Epick Poem as to their Natures, tho' there be many and great ones, as to their Circumstances 'Tis impossible for a Poet to form any Fable, unless the Moral be first in his Head

You say that since *Homer* and *Virgil* does not expresly draw any Doctrine from their Fables, it is not certain whether they design'd any; and it is still more uncertain, you say, whether they intended those particular Morals, which are generally ascrib'd to them, which is as much as to say, that, tho' we can see a Design, a good, a just, and a great Design in those admirable Poems, yet the Authors of them saw none, and that, perhaps that is not their Design, which appears to us and others, but something, which after so many Ages, has appeared to no Man Could *Homer* or *Virgil*, if they had studied a Thousand Years, have contrived Morals, which would have been more the genuine result of all the Parts of their Fables and of their Actions, than those which are generally ascribed to them? Or can those Morals be made to appear the genuine result of any other Poetick Actions, unless they are Copies of those?

You continue to say, That as from Pulpit Discourses on Divine Subjects, many useful Inferences may be deduc'd by the Preacher; so in these superior

Poems, &c But here, Sir, you appear not to consider, that the grand Moral of every Sermon is the Text, which certainly is, or ought to be, first in the Mind of every Preacher

To conclude my Remarks on this first Point, it appears to me evident, that every Man who undertakes any great Action, has the chief Design which he proposes by it, first of all in his Head, but you yourself are pleased to own, p. 34 *That the principal End of an Epick Poet, is to give Pleasure and Instruction*, and p 76 *That the Pleasure is only in order to the Instruction*, and p 77. *That the most important part of the Instruction ought to arise from the whole Fable, because the Instruction that arises from the whole, must be more important than that which arises from the Parts* By owning all which, it is clear to me that you implicitly own, That the Moral of an Epick Poem must be first in the Head of the Poet

I now, Sir, come to the Second Point, concerning which we differ. You are pleas'd to affirm, That it is not necessary, that an Epick Poem should end happily, with relation to the Principal Character, but that the Poets and mere Criticks have laid down this Rule, without consulting Reason in the Case, being led into it by the *Iliad* and *Odysses* of *Homer*, and the *Æneis* of *Virgil*. And here you deplore that servile Submission which the Poets and Commentators have made to naked Authority, by which they have advanc'd Maxims out of Reverence to great Names, without any Discussion of the Subject, or entering upon any Enquiry which supports their Assertion, because, say you, the End of the Epick Poet may be equally attain'd, tho' the Event should be Unfortunate, into which we are now to Enquire

THE principal Character of an Epick Poem, must be either morally good or morally vicious, if he is morally good, the making him end unfortunately, will destroy all Poetical Justice, and consequently, all Instruction Such a Poem can have no Moral, and consequently no Fable, no just and regular Poetical Action, but must be a vain Fiction and an empty Amusement. Oh, but there is a Retribution in Futurity! But I thought that the Reader of an Epick Poem was to owe his Instruction to the Poet, and not to himself: Well then, the Poet may tell him so at the latter end of his Poem. Ay, would to God I could see such a latter End of an Epick Poem, where the Poet should tell the Reader, that he has cut an honest Man's Throat, only that he may have an Opportunity to send him to Heaven, and that tho' this would be but an indifferent Plea upon an Indictment for Murder at the Old-Baily, yet that he hopes the good-natur'd Reader will have Compassion on him, as the Gods have on his Hero But Raillery apart, Sir, What occasion is there for having recourse to an Epick Poet to tell our selves by the bye, and by occasional Reflection, that there will be a Retribution in Futurity, when the Christian has this in his Heart constantly and directly, and the Atheist and Free-thinker will make no such Reflection? Tell me truly, Sir, would not such a Poet appear to you or me, not to have sufficiently consider'd what a Poetical Moral is?

And should not you, or I Sir, be oblig'd, in order to make him comprehend the Nature of it, to lay before him that universal Moral, which is the Foundation of all Morals, both Epick and Dramatick, and is inclusive of them all, and that is, That He who does good, and perseveres in it, shall always be Rewarded, and he who does ill and perseveres in it, shall always be punish'd? Should we not desire him to observe, That the foresaid Reward must always attend and crown good Actions, not sometimes only, for then it would follow, that sometimes a perseverance in good Actions has no Reward, which would take away all Poetical Instruction, and indeed every sort of Moral Instruction, resolving Providence into Chance or Fate Should we not, Sir, farther put him in Mind, that since whoever perseveres in good Actions, is sure to be Rewarded at the last, it follows, that a Poet does not assert by his Moral, that he is always sure to be Rewarded in this World, because that would be false, as you have very justly observ'd, *p* 60. and therefore never can be the Moral of an Epick Poem, because what is false may Delude, but only Truth can Instruct. Should we not let him know, Sir, that this universal Moral only teaches us, That whoever perseveres in good Actions, shall be always sure to be Rewarded either here or hereafter, and that the Truth of this Moral is prov'd by the Poet, by making the principal Character of his Poem, like all the rest of his Characters, and like the Poetical Action, at the bottom, Universal and Allegorical, even after distinguishing it by a particular Name, by making this principal Character at the bottom, a meer Poetical Phantom, of a very short duration, thro' the whole extent of which duration we can see at once, which continues no longer than the reading of the Poem, and that being over, the Phantom is to us nothing, so that unless our Sense is satisfy'd of the Reward that is given to this Poetical Phantome, whose whole duration we see thro' from the very beginning to the end, instead of a wholsome Moral, there would be a pernicious Instruction, *viz* That a Man may persevere in good Actions and not be Rewarded for it thro' the whole extent of his duration, that is, neither in this World nor in the World to come

But tho' the principal Character of an Epick Poem is morally vicious, yet the Poem ought not to end unfortunately with relation to that principal Character. But here, Sir, I think my self oblig'd to explain my self By a Character morally vicious, I by no means mean a Villainous Character: Because a Villain can never have greatness of Mind nor greatness of Capacity sufficient to perform Things deserving to be admir'd. But Admiration is, as it were, the Instrument by which the Poet works his End, which is Instruction, as has been acknowledg'd

By a Character morally vicious then, I mean such a Character as is compounded of good and bad Qualities, the good at the same time overcoming the bad, and Hiding them as the Sun does Mercury, by the greatness of their Neighbouring Lustre Now a Poet is not to make an Heroick Poem end Unfortunately, with relation to such a Character, because such an end would weaken and destroy that Admiration which is requisite for the Poet's attain-

ing his End, and destroy or weaken it in the very place where its Influence is most requisite. For as the greatest Impression that a Poem is to make, ought to be made at the end of it, the reigning Passion of that Poem ought to predominate most there As therefore Terrour and Compassion ought to be most violently mov'd, at the Catastrophe of a Tragedy, and Laughter at that of a Comedy, Admiration ought to be rais'd to its utmost height, at the end of an Epick Poem But if that Poem should end unfortunately, with relation to such a compounded Character, as we have just mention'd above, it would cause great Indignation in some, and great Compassion in others: Now as great Indignation and great Compassion are always attended with Grief, Admiration is constantly accompanied with Joy An Epick Poet therefore, by exciting Compassion or Indignation at the latter end of his Poem, instead of Admiration, would make that Poem throw off its Nature and assume that of Tragedy, which is as directly contrary to its own, as Grief is to Joy, or as Light is to Darkness

Nor would such a prosperous End, in relation to such a Character, be in the least a violation of Poetick Justice, tho' for the most part in Tragedy, it would be a very great one, because the Hero of an Epick Poem always carries on some good and great Design for the Advantage of that Society, of which he is the chief, or an illustrious Member, at least, it has been so, in all the Epick Poems I have yet seen, tho' this is far from being always the Case in Tragedy, now that publick Virtue makes Compensation for all Faults but Crimes, and he who has this publick Virtue is not capable of Crimes The ancient *Romans* and *Athenians*, while Liberty flourish'd among them, would have look'd very coldly upon a Poet, who should have shewn a great Patriot unfortunate, only for being a great Patriot In order to encourage publick Virtue and publick Spirit, and the Love of their Country, they oblig'd their Epick Poets, to shew those Virtues crown'd with Glory and Felicity Nay, the Ancients made the very future Happiness of their Heroes depend upon the Success of their good and great Designs for the Welfare of their Country Witness that famous passage in the Fragment of *Cicero, De somnio Scipionis Sed, quo sis, Africane, alacrior ad Tutandam Rempublicam, sic Habeto Omnibus, qui patriam conservaverint, adjuverint, auxerint, certum esse in cælo, ac Definitum locum, ubi Beati ævo sempiterno fruantur*

For my part, I have no Notion, that a suffering Hero can be proper for Epick Poetry *Milton* could make but very little, even of a Suffering God, who makes quite another Impression with his Lightning and his Thunder in *Paradise Lost*, than with his Meekness and his Stoicism in *Paradise Regain'd*· That great Spirit which Heroick Poetry requires, flows from great Passions and from great Actions If the suffering Hero remains insensible the generality of Readers will not be much concern'd for one, who is so little concern'd for himself. The Greatness of his Mind may, perhaps, be admir'd by a few, who are themselves magnanimous, but the Author of an Epick Poem ought to write to Mankind, and not only to the Age wherein he lives, but to remotest Posterity

If the Hero of an Epick Poem should not appear insensible in his Sufferings, his Sensibility will be attended with Passions, which are not only incompatible with that Admiration, which ought to be mov'd thro the Poem, but which will sink its Spirit, and debase its Majesty.

Let us then, Sir, leave the Virtues of Patience and long Suffering to be taught by Priests They will not fail to inculcate such Doctrines frequently, as being at once consistent with their Duty and their Craft But never fear that they will intrench upon your Province, and recommend publick Virtue and publick Spirit, and the Love of their Country, to a People, whom they have shewn too clearly, that 'tis their Design to enslave But for your part, Sir, that you may deserve more and more of your Country and of Mankind, make Choice of a Hero, whose every Action may flow from those noble Principles, and Reform a degenerate Age, which seems so fond of Slavery Let his great Actions be crown'd with Glory and Victory, with the Joyful Acclamations of the People, whom he has made happy by his Heroick Conduct and Virtue, and with such transcendent Felicity, as may raise the highest Admiration in the Breast of every Reader, inflame every one of them with the love of his Country, and with a burning Zeal to imitate what he admires

REMARKS UPON MR. POPE'S TRANSLATION OF HOMER. WITH TWO LETTERS CONCERNING WINDSOR FOREST, AND THE TEMPLE OF FAME

1717

PREFACE.

I Esteem it to be one of the greatest Misfortunes of my Life, that I have been so often forc'd to be engag'd in Disputes of this Nature with my Contemporaries. I can safely affirm, that I never attack'd any of their Writings, unless I was provok'd to it, and unless they had Success abundantly beyond their Merit, in short, unless the shewing and exposing their Faults, became a Piece of Justice due both to the Commonwealth of Learning, and to my self. But after I had done examining their particular Pieces, I was so far from bearing any Malice to the Persons of the Authors, that I was very willing to allow of that Merit, which they might otherwise have, to own their good Qualities, and to do them any manner of Service that lay in my little Power.

I must confess, the Case at present is vastly different I have always look'd upon the little Gentleman with whom I have to do at present, in spight of Popular Error be it spoken, as one absolutely without Merit for there can be no Poetical Merit, without Good Sense, which he certainly has not, as from the following Sheets, will, I hope, plainly appear Besides, I regard him as an Enemy, not so much to me, as to my KING, to my COUNTRY, to my RELIGION, and to that LIBERTY which has been the sole Felicity of my Life 'Tis true, he is by Nature as uncapable of subverting any of these, as a *Fly* upon a Chariot is of overturning the Machine which supports it But a Vagary of Fortune, who is sometimes pleas'd to be frolicksome, and the epidemick Madness of the Times, have given him Reputation, and Reputation, as HOBBES says, is *Power, and that has made him dangerous*, therefore, I look upon it to be my Duty to King *GEORGE*, whose Faithful Subject I am, to my COUNTRY, of which I have all my Life-time, appear'd a constant Lover, to the LAWS, under whose Protection I have so long securely lived, and which this vile Scribbler, by his Dispensing Power, and by his wretched Passive Cant, has been so industrious to destroy, and to the LIBERTY of my Country, more dear than Life to me, of which I now for Forty Years have been a constant Assertor, and lastly, to so many Illustrious Persons of both Sexes, whom this odious Slanderer has us'd his utmost Endeavour clandestinely to defame I look upon it to be my Duty to all These, to pull the *Lyon*'s Skin from this Little *Ass*, which Popular Error has thrown round him, and show him in his natural Shape and Size, in spight of all his Malice, a quiet, harmless Animal, and Diverting, even to those weak People to whom he before was Terrible

That this has been a very Popular Scribbler, is not at all wonderful For the vilest Scribblers have in all Ages been Popular, nay, often more Popular than

good Writers, and Criticks and Satirists have in every Age, from HORACE, down to BEN complain'd of it. HORACE in the *Fourth Satire* of his *First Book*, makes merry with FANNIUS, a very Popular Scribbler

> ——————— *Beatus* FANNIUS, *ultro*
> *Delatis capsis & imagine, quum mea nemo*
> *Scripta legat*

'Tis worth our while to see what DACIER says upon this Passage FANNIUS *en Faisant tous les jours des Assemblées*, &c. That is, FANNIUS *by causing People to be assembled every Day, that he might read his Works to them, had form'd a very numerous Party, who every where extoll'd his Verses, and every where spread about Copies of them whereas the Verses of* HORACE, *who was resolv'd to owe his Reputation to Himself alone, and who read them very rarely, and to very few, were almost altogether unknown, and made not a fourth Part of the Noise, that the senseless Works of* FANNIUS *did. For it was then as it is now, a Cabal was often more powerful than Merit.*

JUVENAL is out of Humour in the very Beginning of his *Satires*, with the popular Poetasters of his Time, and 'tis perhaps to their successful Folly, that we owe his noble and never-dying *Satires*

In the Beginning, he imitates his Brother Satirist and Predecessor PERSIUS, whose very first Satire, and the Prologue to that Satire, show him in very bad Humour with the ill Taste of that Age, and the successful Writings of some of his worthless Contemporaries There is something so remarkable in the Beginning of that Satire, that the Reader, I believe, will not be displeased, if I lay before him both the Original, and Mr DRYDEN's Translation of it PERSIUS begins thus. The Dialogue is between PERSIUS and a Friend.

> *O curas hominum! O quantum est in rebus inane!*
> *Quis legat hæc? Min' tu istud ais? Nemo hercule Nemo?*
> *Vel duo, vel nemo turpe & miserabile! Quare?*
> *Ne mihi Polydamas, & Trojades Labeonem*
> *Prætulerint? Nugæ Non, si quid turbida Roma*
> *Elevet, accedas, examénve improbum in illâ*
> *Castiges trutinâ*

And thus Mr DRYDEN has Translated it·

PERSIUS

> *How anxious are our Cares! and yet how vain*
> *The Bent of our Desires!*
> FRIEND *Thy Spleen contain,*
> *For none will read thy Satires*
> PERSIUS *This to me?*
> FRIEND *None, or what's next to none, but Two or Three*
> *'Tis hard, I grant*
> PERSIUS *'Tis nothing, I can bear,*
> *That paltry Scribblers have the Publick Ear*
> *That this vast universal Fool, The Town,*
> *Should cry up* LABEO's *Stuff, and cry me down*

They damn Themselves, nor will my Muse descend
To clap with such who Fools and Knaves commend
Their Smiles and Censures are to me the same
I care not what they praise, or what they blame.

Here the Reader is desir'd to take Notice, That this LABEO, whom PERSIUS mentions with so much Scorn, was a ridiculous Poetaster of those Times, who had plagued the World with a senseless Translation of HOMER's *Iliad*, as the Reader may be satisfy'd from the learned CASAUBON, and Mr DRYDEN after him.

If we descend to the Moderns, we shall find, that the same Thing that put these *Romans* out of Humour, mov'd the Spleen of our BEN. JOHNSON. Witness this Passage in his *DISCOVERIES*

Nothing in our Age, I have observ'd, is more preposterous than the running Judgments upon Poetry and Poets, when we shall hear those Things commended and cryed up for the best Writings, which a Man would scarce vouchsafe to wrap any wholesome Drug in He would never light his Tobacco with them and those Men almost nam'd for Miracles, who are yet so vile, that if a Man should go about to examine and correct them, he must make all they have done but one Blot The Good is so entangled with their Bad, that forcibly the one must draw on the other's Death with it A Spunge dipt in Ink will do all

———————— Comitatur punicæ Librum
Spungia

And a little after

Non possunt multæ, una litura potest

Yet their Vices have not hurt them. Nay, a great many they have profited, for they have been lov'd for nothing else. And this false Opinion grows strong against the best Men, if once it takes Root with the Ignorant CESTIUS *in his Time was preferr'd to* CICERO, *so far as the Ignorant durst They learn'd him without Book, and had him often in their Mouths But a Man cannot imagine that Thing so foolish or rude, but it will find and enjoy an Admirer, at least a Reader or Spectator The Puppets are seen now in despight of the Players.* Heath's *Epigrams, and the* Skuller's *Poems, have their Applause There are never wanting, that dare prefer the worst Preachers, the worst Pleaders, the worst Poets, not that the better have left to write or speak better; but that they that hear them judge worse* Non illi pejus dicant, sed hi corruptius judicant. *Nay, if it were put to the Question, of the* Water Rhymer's *Works, or* SPENSER's, *I doubt not but the former would find more Suffrages, because the most favour common Vices, out of a Prerogative the Vulgar have to loose their Judgments, and like that which is naught.*

Nor think this to be true only of the sordid Multitude, but the neater sort of our Gallants for all are the Multitude, only they differ in Cloaths, not in Judgment or Understanding. Thus far BEN JOHNSON.

I am very unwilling to acquaint the Reader with what has happen'd in my own Memory, as being by Nature, I hope, above insulting and mortifying any inoffensive Person under Misfortune. But since the present Occasion makes it necessary, I declare before-hand, that I pretend to pass no Censure upon the Person, who will be named underneath, but only to give the Reader a View of the Matter of Fact, and of the Fortune of the Man Nothing then is more certain, than that Mr. SETTLE, who is now the *City* Poet, was formerly a Poet of the *Court* And at what Time was he so? Why, in the Reign of King CHARLES II when that *Court* was more Gallant, and more Polite, than ever the *English Court* perhaps had been before When there were at Court the present and the late Duke of BUCKINGHAM, the late Earl of DORSET, WILMOT Lord *Rochester*, famous for his Wit and Poetry, Sir CHARLES SEDLEY, Mr. SAVIL, Mr BUCKLEY, and several others

Mr SETTLE's First Tragedy, *Cambyses King of Persia*, was Acted for Three Weeks together The Second, which was *The Empress of Morocco*, was Acted for a Month together, and was in such high Esteem, both with the Court and Town, that it was Acted at *Whitehall* before the *KING*, by the Gentlemen and Ladies of the Court, and the *Prologue*, which was spoke by the Lady BETTY HOWARD, was writ by the Famous Lord ROCHESTER The Booksellers, who printed it, depending upon the Prepossession of the Town, ventur'd to distinguish it from all the Plays that had been ever published before For it was the First Play that ever was sold in *England* for Two Shillings, and the First that ever was printed with Cuts The Booksellers at that Time of Day, had not discern'd so much of the Weakness of their gentle Readers, as they have done since, nor so plainly discover'd that Fools, like Children, are to be drawn in by *Gugaws* Well! but what was the Event of this great Success? Mr SETTLE began to grow Insolent, as any one may see who reads the *Epistle Dedicatory* to the *Empress of Morocco* Mr DRYDEN, Mr SHADWELL, and Mr CROWN began to grow Jealous, and They Three in Confederacy, wrote Remarks on the *Empress of Morocco* Mr SETTLE answer'd them, and, according to the Opinion which the Town had then of the Matter, for I have utterly forgot the Controversy, had by much the better of them all In short, Mr SETTLE was then a formidable Rival to Mr DRYDEN And I remember very well, that not only the *Town*, but the *University* of *Cambridge*, was very much divided in their Opinions about the Preference that ought to be given to them, and in both Places, the Younger Fry, inclin'd to ELKANAH.

The Fortune that has happen'd to Mr. SETTLE since, ought to be a Lesson to All, and especially to this little Gentleman, not to grow insolent upon Success. I defy any Man to show me Half the Number of Errors, in the same Number of Lines, in any of Mr SETTLE's Writings, or any other Person's whatever, that there are in the First Six Pages of *Windsor Forest*. But more of this hereafter.

But to return to the Business from which I may seem to have digress'd The Success of Undeserving Writings, has made some of the best *French* Writers Merry, some of them Chagrin, and some both Chagrin and Merry.

'Tis the very Foundation of BOILEAU's Satires, and has occasion'd the following fine Reflection of Monsieur *De La* BRUYERE: *What a dreadful Fatigue,* says he, *must the Man undergo, who is without Trumpeters, and without Cabal, who is engag'd in no Club, and has the Support of no Party, and who has nothing in the World to recommend him, but a great deal of Merit! What a dreadful Fatigue must such a one undergo, to break thro' the Obscurity in which Fortune has plac'd him, and set himself upon a Level with a Coxcomb who is in Vogue!*

From all that has been said, it sufficiently appears, that there is no Occasion to wonder, that this, tho' an Empty, has been a Popular Scribbler, but that Protestants, that Lovers of Liberty, and of their Country, should encourage him at this extraordinary rate, to suborn Old HOMER to propagate his ridiculous Arbitrary and Popish Doctrines Old HOMER, who was a Lover of Liberty, and an Honest *Pagan,* who for the Diversion of his gentle Readers, set better Gods to kick and to cuff, than ever were made by any *Romish* Priest in *Europe* This, I must confess, is to me a Prodigy, a Thing out of the common Course of Nature, and which surpasses my Understanding.

OBSERVATIONS

IN the Reign of King CHARLES the Second, a very ingenious *Frenchman* * observ'd of *England,* That there is no Nation where the Men have more Courage, where the Women have more Beauty, and where both Sexes have more Wit. But, says he, 'tis impossible that one Nation can have every thing. There is no Country in *Europe,* where a good Taste is so rare. And this was writ at a Time, when perhaps the *English* Taste was better than ever it was before, or than ever it has been since. If that Gentleman had been living these last Seven Years, he would have commended our Understandings, no more than he did our Taste. For, for the greatest Part of that Time, a fatal *Delirium* seems to have seiz'd upon *Great Britain,* an Epidemical Stupidity, which has done more Mischief, than the most raging Plague. For, during the greater Part of that Time, have not two Thirds of the Nation believ'd and declar'd, that White is Black, that Black is White, that Virtue is detestable, that Vice is amiable, that Wisdom is contemptible, that Folly is estimable, that we are to hate, to slander, to curse our Deliverers, to love, to extol, to bless our Destroyers That 'tis better to fall down and adore the Devil, than to worship God in Spirit and in Truth That true Religion can have no Support but from Atheism and Idolatry. That Liberty can only be upheld by Tyranny, Property by Beggary, Trade by Bankrupcy That all the Fools, the Villains, the Rakes, the Scoundrels, the Drabs, the Bawds, the Cheats, the Thieves, the House-breakers, the Murderers, have an indispensible Obligation upon them to decry, and vilify, and ridicule all that is Good, and Great, and Wise, and Just, and Venerable That

* *Monsieur* DE ST EVREMOND

to carry on this important Work, they are to borrow the Follies and the Vices of every Nation of *Europe*. That they are to appear more Stupid and more Impudent than the most Foolish of the *Irish*, more Noisie and more Impertinent than the Vainest of the *French*, more Jealous and more Base than the very Worst of the *Spaniards*, and more Cruel and more Perfidious than the most Profligate of the *Italians* But this epidemical, fatal Delusion, has shewn it self in nothing more, than in a general and outragious Admiration of Fools For a Man has wanted no Quality to recommend him to the Great and the Small Rabble, but the being a forward, noisy, impudent, empty Fool. One would have said, for the greater Part of these last Seven Years, of him who had such Folly, what BEN JOHNSON makes *Volpone* say of him who has Money

> ——————— *Whoe'er has Thee,*
> *He shall be Learned, Honest, Valiant, Wise*

What Pulpiteer, for these last Seven Years, has been the Idol of the Rabble? What *Drum-Ecclesiastick* has drawn in most Volunteers? Why, that which has been beat by the most noisy, impudent Fool. Whose printed Sermons have been most bought up? Those of the most noisy and impudent Fool What Captain has been the Idol of the Common People of *England*? Who have been the Prose-Authors that have been most in Vogue? Why, *Abel* and the *Examiner, par nobile fratrum* whose Rhetorick has been *Billingsgate*, and whose Reasons have been Impudence, and who have as naturally rail'd at all the Great People of *England*, as Dogs howl at the Moon. Who is the Author that has printed Rhymes which have had the most general Vogue? Who has writ thoughtless, unmeaning Farces, which have been most applauded on the Stage? for which Parties have been made, and Cabals been formed, to vindicate Folly and to justify Nonsense. This is not a Place to answer that Question, we shall do it amply below.

England has certainly produced great Men in every Part of Learning But that Branch of it, which did most Honour to *Greece* and to *Ancient Rome*, has likewise done most to *England*. We have had a Poet, who in Sublimity has excell'd both Ancients and Moderns Our Comick Poets have surpass'd Mankind. We have had Eight Gentlemen * alive at a Time, who have writ good and diverting Comedies We have a Gentleman now alive, who has excelled his Contemporaries, both *French* and *English*, in Pastoral The Reader will easily perceive that I mean Mr AMBROSE PHILIPS. We have lately been entertained and instructed by an admirable Philosophical Poem, which has equall'd that of LUCRETIUS, in the Beauty of its Versification, and infinitely surpass'd it, in the Solidity and Strength of its Reasoning But, as the *Jews*, who had the Knowledge and Worship of the True God among them, often deserted Him to bow down before Idols, and to worship Beasts, and Fish, and Stocks, and senseless Stones, so, if smaller Things may be compar'd with the Greatest, and Things that are Human, with Things that are Divine, the *English* have often

* *Mr* WYCHERLEY, *Mr* DRYDEN, *Sir* GEORGE ETHEREGE, *The late Duke of* BUCKINGHAM, *Mr* SHADWELL, *Mr* CROWN, *Mr* OTWAY, *Sir* ROBERT HOWARD

neglected their True Geniuses, and fallen to admire Fools. The great Lord BACON was suffer'd to dye poor and miserable, and the great SPENSER to starve BEN. JOHNSON was more than once sacrific'd to his worthless Rivals In the Reign of King CHARLES II MILTON, who was an Honour to *Great Britain*, and an Ornament to Human-kind, continued long neglected and obscure. How few of those to whom he wrote, had Eyes for his matchless Beauties! How many of them were more blind than he! Upon the other Side of *Parnassus*, the admirable Pleasantry of BUTLER found still worse Quarter than the Force, and Elevation, and Sublimity of MILTON The Church, in whose Defence he wrote, suffer'd him to starve, and after he was dead, refus'd him a Burial-Place That Church which has since subscrib'd such Sums to a worthless, bigotted Fool, who would destroy it Root and Branch. So little Zeal have some Divines for *Religion*, and so little Discernment for Merit. In short, BUTLER was suffer'd to dye in a Garret, OTWAY in an Ale-House, NAT LEE in the Streets. And yet BUTLER was a whole Species of Poets in one, admirable in a Manner in which no one else has been tolerable A Manner which began and ended in him, in which he knew no Guide, and has found no Followers. Yet BUTLER, so extraordinary a Man in his Kind, was not a greater Master in raising our Mirth, than OTWAY in drawing Tears from us, who had a Faculty in touching the softer Passions beyond both Ancients and Moderns, if you except only EURIPIDES Yet he, who mov'd our Pity so strongly in the Distresses of MONIMIA, and of BELVIDERA, could excite none at all for his own Calamity, but languish'd in Adversity unpitied, and dy'd unlamented. Mr WYCHERLEY was suffer'd to languish Seven Years in a close Imprisonment while the worthless Writers of Farce flourish'd, and that for an inconsiderable Debt, his Merit and Fortune consider'd, and experienc'd all that Baseness in his Relations, Friends, and Acquaintance, against which the *Plain-Dealer* had with so much Warmth inveigh'd

Mr. DRYDEN, who had so many great Qualities, who refin'd the Language of our Rhyming Poetry, and improv'd its Harmony, who thought often, so finely, so justly, so greatly, so nobly who had the Art of Reasoning very strongly in very elegant Verse, and who of all our Rhyming Poets wrote beyond comparison with most Force, and with most Elevation, was often sacrific'd to his worthless Contemporaries, could never receive Encouragement enough to set him entirely at Ease, died without leaving behind him enough to inter him, and left behind him a destitute and deplorable Family.

There is a Gentleman, the living Ornament of the Comick Scene, who after he had for several Years entertain'd the Town, with that Wit and Humour, and Art and Vivacity, which are so becoming of the Comick Stage, produc'd at last a Play, which besides that it was equal to most of the former in those pleasant Humours which the Laughers so much require, had some certain Scenes in it, which were writ with so much Grace and Delicacy, that they alone were worth an entire Comedy What was the Event? The Play was hiss'd by Barbarous Fools in the Acting, and an impertinent Trifle was brought on after it, which was acted with vast Applause Which rais'd so much Indigna-

tion in the foresaid Writer, that he quitted the Stage in Disdain, and Comedy left it with him And those nice great Persons, whose squeamish Palates *rejected Quails and Partridges, have pin'd ever since in such a Dearth, that* they greedily feed upon Bull-Beef.

Thus have I set before the Readers Eyes, in as short a Method as I could, the cruel Treatment that so many extraordinary Men have received from their Countrymen for these last hundred Years. If I should now shift the Scene, and show all that Penury, and that Avarice chang'd all at once to Riot and Profuseness, and more squander'd away upon one Object, than would have satisfied the greater part of those extraordinary Men, the Reader to whom this one Creature should be altogether unknown, would fancy him a Prodigy of Art and Nature, would believe that all the great Qualities of those extraordinary Persons were centred in him alone; that he had the Capacity and Profoundness of BACON, the fine Painting of SPENSER, the Force and Sublimity, and Elevation of MILTON, the fine Thinking and Elegance, and Versification of DRYDEN, the Fire and Enthusiasm of LEE, the moving melting Tenderness of OTWAY, the Pleasantry of BUTLER, the Wit and Satire of WYCHERLEY, and the Humour and Spirit, and Art and Grace of C——— But if upon this Belief I should venture to assure him, that the People of *England* had made no human Choice, that they had chosen like Heaven, not one great, nor wise *nor learned, but a little wretched, foolish, abject thing, to confound the* Wisdom of the Wise, so poor, so little, so abject, that he has not one of the great Qualities which are mention'd above, so very far from it, that he has writ Two Farces, and a Comick Poem, without one Jest in the Three, that in all his Trifles which he calls serious, there is nothing finely, nor greatly, nor justly thought, that there is neither Design nor Meaning, either in his serious Pieces, or in his Buffoonry, that there is nothing like any Passion finely touch'd, nor any one Character finely or truly drawn, that the Sentiments are often extravagant and absurd, the Language often impure and barbarous The Reader to whom I should declare this, would either believe me a *malicious* Enemy, and that I invented Slander, or that the Reign of the last Ministry was designed by Fate to encourage Fools.

I defie the most industrious of his greatest Partizans, to produce one Passage from all his Writings, that can contradict what I have said In the mean while, to satisfie the Reader of his Incapacity to Translate HOMER, or of writing any thing of his own that is barely tolerable, I shall lay before the Reader some Observations upon the late Translation of HOMER, upon *Windsor Forest, The Temple of Fame,* and *The Rape of the Lock* We shall begin with the Translation of HOMER

There is a notorious Ideot, one Hight *Whachum,* who from an under-spur Leather to the Law, is become an under-strapper to the Play-House, who has lately burlesqu'd the *Metamorphoses* of OVID, by a vile Translation of him, and alter'd *him so much from what he was, that the Roman treats of no* Transformation half so strange as his own · This Fellow is concern'd in an impertinent

Paper which is call'd the *Censor*. In the Third of which he is pleased to extol the late Translation of HOMER, *I know not which I should most admire*, says he, *the Justness of the Original* (where I suppose he means, the Justness of the Original expressed in the Translation) *or the Force and Beauty of the Language, or the Sounding Variety of the Numbers*. He may admire which of these he pleases But the Truth of the Matter is, that there is in this Translation neither the Justness of the Original, even where the Original is just, nor any Beauty of Language, nor any Variety of Numbers Instead of the Justness of the Original, there is in this Translation Absurdity and Extravagance Instead of the beautiful Language of the Original, there is in the Translation Solecism and barbarous English.

Indeed it is impossible for any Translator, and much less for this, to express in a Translation the Poetical Language of HOMER By the Advantage of the Language in which he wrote he had several ways of rendering his Language Poetical, which a Translator can never have, as the frequent Use of compounded and decompounded Words, the Use of Words which were as it were at one and the same time both Grecian and Foreign, as being confin'd in their vulgar Use to some particular Part of *Greece*, as likewise the Use of Words which were purely Poetick and which were seldom or never us'd in Prose, the contracting or lengthening the Words which he used, and the frequent transposing of Syllables, and, lastly, the altering the Terminations of Words, by means of the different Dialects But a Translator of HOMER has but one way of rendering his Diction Poetical, and that is, the frequent Use of Figures, and above all Figures of Metaphors And therefore, where-ever in the late Translation of HOMER, there is no Use of Figures, there we may justly conclude, that the Diction is Prosaick, though at the same time, the Diction of the Original, in that very Place, even without Figures, may be truly Poetical, for Reasons mention'd above Now, in the late Translation of HOMER, there are, modestly speaking, Twenty Lines where there is no Figure, for One that is Figurative, and, consequently, there are Twenty Prosaick Lines, for One that is Poetical Indeed, the late Translator of HOMER, by his want of Genius, and by his writing figuratively, where the *Grecian* has writ plainly, has often made his Diction the very Reverse of that of the Original. Where the Original is pure, the Translation is often barbarous, often obscure, where the Original is clear and bright, often flat and vile, where the other is great and lofty, and often, too often, affected and unnatural, where the Original is simple and unaffected, as it is frequently stiff and awkward, where the Original is easie, graceful, and numerous *In short, the* HOMER *which* LINTOTT *prints, does not* talk like HOMER, but like POPE, and is so far from expressing the Beauty of HOMER's Language, that he makes him speak *English* as awkwardly as other Foreigners do, and sometimes makes him talk as merrily as a Monsieur, who comes to live among us in his Old Age, and, with a great deal of Pains, acquires *English* enough to be laugh'd at. So that the little Gentleman who translated him, with a most comical and unparallel'd Assurance, has undertaken to trans-

late HOMER from *Greek*, of which he does not know one Word, into *English*, which he understands almost as little. And from hence it proceeds, that instead of making him *English*, he sometimes makes him *Irish*, and one would swear, that he had a Hill in *Tipperary*, for his *Parnassus*, and a Puddle in some Bog, for his *Hippocrene*.

But because it may be said, that this is only Talking, I will prove all this from the very Lines, which *Censor Whachum* has brought to show the Excellence of this Translation, which he will show, he says, from the Two Similitudes of the Motion of the *Grecian* Army, in the Second Book of the *Iliad*

The Scepter'd Rulers lead, the following Host,
Pour'd forth in Millions, darkens all the Coast

Now, where is the Justness of the Original in these two Lines? Though HOMER is said to nod sometimes, yet 'tis hard if he snores so like a Sot, as to give the Lye to his own Calculation which he makes in this very Book, by which Calculation it appears, that the Army of the *Grecians* did not amount to above a Hundred Thousand in all And if any one happens to answer this, That their Numbers are augmented by Poetical License, to that I reply, That no Poetical License ever extended to such an Augmentation of Numbers, as to make a Poet give the Lye to his own Calculations, or to make us believe, that Two and Three make Six Never human Army yet consisted of Millions No Place upon Earth can contain such Numbers congregated, but what at the same time will starve them But let us proceed

As from some rocky Cleft the Shepherd sees,
Clust'ring in Heaps on Heaps, the driving Bees

Now where is the Justness of the Original here again? For while the Bees *drive*, they cannot possibly *cluster*.

Rolling and black'ning, Swarms succeeding Swarms,
With deeper Murmurs, and more hoarse Alarms

Here again, there is nothing of the Justness of the Original, since but One Swarm of Bees can come from One Cleft of a Rock.

Dusky they spread, a close embodied Crowd,
And o'er the Vale descends the living Cloud

The first Line here presents us with a Contradiction in Terms, for while the Bees are a *close embodied Crowd*, how can they possibly *spread*? Besides, what does the Translator mean, by a *close embodied Crowd*? What Tautology, what Fustian is this? As if every *Crowd* was not *close* And what does he mean by *embodied*? What Idea to the Mind does that Word clearly and distinctly present? In short, *Crowd* is nothing but a Botch, and a meer Crambo to *Cloud*. For who ever heard of a Crowd of Bees? A Crowd of any thing implies Confusion, but it appears by the following Lines of VIRGIL, that Bees when they swarm, are under Command, and, by consequence, not without Order,

no more than the *Grecian* Army, when it *pour'd it self forth,* as Mr. *Censor Whachum* says, *in Millions*

At cum incerta volant cœloque examina ludunt,
Contemnunq, favos, & frigida tecta relinquunt,
Instabiles animos ludo prohibebis inani
Nec magnus prohibere labor tu regibus alas
Eripe non illis quisquam cunctantibus altum
Ire iter, aut castris audebit vellere signa

For the last Line of the foresaid Simile

And o'er the Vale descends the living Cloud

There is neither Sense, nor *English* in it. To descend *to,* or *into,* to descend *on,* or *upon,* is *English,* but to descend *o'er,* is barbarous, as will appear plainly, by taking away the Contraction of the Preposition, and changing the Metaphor for the common Name And then the Line will run thus

A Swarm of Bees descends over the Vale

What Sense is here? What clear Idea of any Thing? or of any particular local Motion? Where is this boasted Beauty of the Language? Where is the Justness of the Original? HOMER, indeed, does compare the Motion of the *Grecian* Army, to the Motion of a Swarm of Bees, but he does it with a beautiful Simplicity, nor does he use any such impertinent Metaphor, as *living Cloud,* which can serve for nothing but to distract the Mind of the Reader, and to divert it from the Idea which the Poet design'd to lay before it of the Motion of the *Grecian* Army

As we have shown in this first Simile, that HOMER speaks very bad Sense, and very bad *English,* we shall show in the second Simile, which *Censor Whachum* mentions, that he is turn'd errant *Teague,* and speaks downright *Irish* He speaks of the *Grecian* Army assembled

Murmuring *they move, as when old Ocean* Roars

Now did ever any Mortal before compare a *Murmur* to a *Roar*? HOMER has nothing of this *Murmur* in him. He only says,

Κινήθη δ' ἀγορὴ, ὡς κύματα μακρὰ θαλάσσης
Πόντου Ικαρίοιο.

The Assembly was moved like the vast Waves of the Icarian Sea. Now was there ever such a Translator as POPE or such an Admirer as the *Censor*? But what shall we say?

——————— *Ainsi qu'en sots Auteurs,*
Notre siecle est fertile en sots Admirateurs,
Et sans ceux que fournit la Ville & la Province,
Il en est chez le Duc, il en est chez le Prince
L'ouvrage le plus plat, a chez les Courtisans,
Trouvé de tout temps des zelez Partisans,
Et pour finir enfin par un trait de Satire,
Un Sot trouve toujours, un plus Sot qui l'admire

That is,

As the Age is fruitful in scribbling Fools, 'tis
Still more fertile in admiring Blockheads

But because some of the Favourers of the late Translation, may say in its Behalf, that this foolish Fellow who writes the *Censor*, by an Ideot-Zeal, and a Sympathy with every thing that is stupid, may have mistaken a Bull for a Beauty, and a Bull which is not to be parallel'd in the whole Translation, I will, out of this very Second Book, present the *Censor* with a Rowland for his Oliver, and with a Touch of *Tipperary*, for his Stroke of *Kilkenny*. Let him turn then to the 431 Verse of this Second Book, and he will find these Lines

The Monarch spoke, and strait a Murmur rose,
Loud as the Surges when the Tempest blows,
That dash'd on broken Rocks, tumultuous roar,
And foam and thunder on the stony Shore

Now, who ever heard such a noisy, roaring, thundering Murmur in *England*? 'Tis an *Irish* Murmur most certainly, or, if the *Censor* will obstinately maintain this Murmur to be a Roar, we will grant him this, that it is the Roaring of an *Irish Bull*. But HOMER was too dull to think of this murmuring Roar He only said,

——————— Ἀργεῖοι δ' μεγ' ἴαχον

The Grecians sent forth a great Cry

There is a Passage in the First Book of HOMER, where AGAMEMNON says thus to ACHILLES

Since APOLLO *deprives me of my* CHRISEIS, *I*
Shall send her away in one of my Ships, attended
By some of my Subjects, but I shall come my
Self to your Tent, and take BRISEIS *by force from*
You, that you may know how much my Pow'r is
Greater than yours, and that no one may presume
For the future to pronounce himself equal to me

This is the naked Meaning of HOMER. For I have not Time enough upon my Hands, to endeavour to show him with his Harmony, and the rest of his Ornaments Now how does the Translator render the latter Part of this Passage? Why, even thus

And hence to all our Host it shall be known,
That Kings are subject to the Gods alone

Was there ever such an unfortunate Interpretation? Had he studied to blunder Ten Years, he could never have done it worse. For he makes AGAMEMNON, to whose Command so many Kings were subject, say this to ACHILLES, a King himself, who had been so many Years subject to his Command, and at the very Time that he threatens him with the Power which the Subjection of so many Kings gave him, the Translator makes him declare, that those Kings are wholly independant of him, and that he has nothing to do with ACHILLES.

But though this Interpretation is not only foreign to the Sense of HOMER, but downright contradictory of him, yet the Translator is so full of his *Jacobite* Notions, of which this is one, that Kings are accountable to none but God, that he omits no Occasion of showing his Malice, tho' he shows at the same time his Ignorance and his Stupidity As in Two Editions of his *Essay upon Criticism,* he has been pleas'd to vindicate the Dispensing Power of Kings.

There are other Passages of this Nature, some of which are downright Boggisms, and others compos'd of such uncouth, unlick'd Stuff, that LINTOTT may be justly affirm'd, to buy more Bears, and sell more Bulls, between the Two *Temple Gates,* than all the Stock-Jobbers put together do in *Exchange-Alley*

But because the Favourers of this Translation may say with some Colour, that 'tis not fair to cull out a Passage here and there to the Disadvantage of the whole, let us consider the first Hundred Lines of this Translation, and see how many Errors he has been guilty of, against the Justness of the Original, and the Propriety of his Native Language.

The Errors of the Translator begin with his Work *Ver.* 1.

The Wrath of PELEUS *Son, the direful Spring*
Of all the Grecian Woes, O Goddess, sing

HOMER says thus

O Goddess, sing the pernicious Wrath of
ACHILLES, *which brought numerous Woes*
To the Grecians

Now the Translator by saying *all,* instead of *numerous,* has clearly shown that he understood neither his Author's Language, nor his Subject For by *The Spring of all the Grecian Woes,* he must either mean, the Spring of all the Woes which the *Grecians* ever felt while they were a Nation, many Years before ACHILLES was born, and many Years after he dyed, which is monstrous, or he must mean, the Spring of all the Woes which they felt at the Siege of *Troy,* which is extravagant, since the Quarrel between ACHILLES and AGAMEMNON is not supposed to have happen'd 'till the Tenth Year, or he must mean, that the Wrath of ACHILLES was the Spring of all the *Grecian* Woes, of which it was the Spring, which is ridiculous, or, lastly, that it was the Spring of all the Woes which the *Grecians* felt during the Time of the Poetical Action, which is false, for the very first *Grecian* Woe, which both the Original and the Translation mention, and which was infinitely the greatest of them all, *viz* the Plague, is so far from springing from the Wrath of ACHILLES, that the Wrath of ACHILLES manifestly sprung from that.

As the Two first Lines show that he understands no *Greek,* the next Two prove that he knows no *English* *Ver.* 3

That Wrath which hurl'd to PLUTO's *gloomy Reign,*
The Souls of mighty Chiefs untimely slain

Let us resolve this Couplet to Prose, and see if we can find, *disjecti membra poetæ. O Goddess, sing the pernicious Wrath of* ACHILLES, *that Wrath which hurl'd the Souls of mighty Chiefs to the gloomy Reign of* PLUTO. Now I appeal to any impartial Person, if *hurling Souls to the gloomy Reign of* PLUTO, be not most abominable Fustian. *Hurling of Souls* is downright Burlesque and Ridiculous, and I never either saw, or heard of the Expression before, unless once, in a Copy of Verses the most Farcical, as well as the most Obscene, that ever was writ *Reign* signifies the Duration of Imperial Power with one or more particular Person But here it is made to signify *Place,* which it cannot do by any just Figure whatever there being no Resemblance nor Proportion between Place and Duration

There is so much to be observ'd upon the Lines between the Sixth and the Eleventh, and the Observations will be so dry, that we shall let them alone 'till another Opportunity, and at present pass to the Eleventh and Twelfth Lines *Line* 11.

> LATONA's *Son a dire Contagion Spread,*
> *And heap'd the Camp with Mountains of the Dead*

Here the Translator, by rendering figuratively what HOMER writes with so much Simplicity, becomes both extravagant, absurd, and affected, and corrupts the Original HOMER says only,

> ——————— ——— -- ὀλέκοντο δε λαοί.
>
> *The People perish'd*

I remember BOILEAU in his *Art of Poetry,* laughs at *Brebœuf* for something like this Hyperbole

> ——————— *Mais n'allez pas sur les pas de Brebœuf,*
> *Même dans une Pharsale entasser sur les Rives,*
> *Des Morts, & des Mourans, des Montagnes plaintives*

'Tis true indeed, the Epithet *Plaintive,* added something to the Ridicule in *Brebœuf*, but without that Epithet, *Mountains of the Dead* had been an extravagant Hyperbole, but is much more extravagant in the Translation of HOMER, and is likewise very absurd. For could it enter into any one's Head, but this Translator's, that the *Grecians* would suffer the Bodies of Men who had died of the Plague, to lie rotting in their Camp, in heaps? which was the way to be not only infected, but downright poison'd Does not HOMER say in effect that the Bodies of the Dead were burnt as fast as they died?

> Ἀιεὶ δὲ πυραὶ νεκύων καίοντο θαμειαί
>
> *There were always a great many Fires with*
> *Dead Bodies burning*

And the Translator says,

> *For nine long Nights thro' all the dusky Air,*
> *The Fires thick flaming shot a dismal Glare*

Besides, to *heap the Camp,* does not seem to me to be English, and *to heap the Camp with Mountains,* is vilely low, and monstrously absurd. A Heap is infinitely less than a Mountain, there must be a great many Heaps to make one Mountain, whereas this Translator is pleased to make several Mountains go to one Heap.

Ver. 13.

The King of Men his reverend Priest defy'd,
And for the King's Offence the People dy'd

Instead of *defy'd,* we have in HOMER, dishonour'd, ἠτίμησε· By the English Translation one would think, that AGAMEMNON had sent the old Priest a Challenge O wicked, wicked Rhyme! what Errors, what Blunders art not thou the Occasion of, in lazy and ignorant Poetasters!

Ver 15.

For CHRYSES *sought with costly Gifts to gain*
His Captive Daughter from the Victor's Chain

To *gain his Captive Daughter from the Victor's Chain,* is neither *English,* nor *Grammar* Nor was the Word *Chain* fit to be us'd by the Translator, when he spoke of a Lady, for whom he would insinuate at the same Time, that AGAMEMNON had a violent Passion I know very well, that his Patrons will say here, that the word *Chain* is a Metaphor, but no Metaphor is to be us'd, that presents an indecent Idea What HOMER says here is, that CHRYSES went to the *Grecian* Fleet, and carried an immense Ransom with him for the Redemption of his Daughter

Ver 27

But O! relieve a wretched Parent's Pain,
And give CHRYSEIS *to these Arms again*

This is the Language of a Lover and by its Levity and Affectation, corrupts the Simplicity and Gravity of the Original, and destroys the Character of CHRYSES, of whom it is very unbecoming, either as a Man in Years, a Father, or a Priest HOMER says only,

Set free my dear Daughter

Ver. 36.

Nor ask presumptuous what the King detains

This Line is obscure, and the Meaning of it, according to true Construction, is very different from what the Translator intends. For the Meaning of it, according to true Construction, is, That the Priest should not presume to ask, what it is that the King detains, whereas the Translator means, That CHRYSES should not presume to recover what the King is resolv'd to keep.

Ver. 42.

And Age dismiss her from my cold Embrace,
In daily Labours of the Loom employ'd,
Or doom'd to deck the Bed she once enjoy'd

This is an Infidelity, and an Affectation, contrary to the Modesty of HOMER, and of the Muse, that Virgin Goddess, who is supposed to make the Relation The Translator pretends to justify these Lines in his Tenth Observation upon the First Book, where speaking of the different Signification of the Participle ἀντιόωσαν, which signifies either *making the Bed*, or *partaking* it, he declares for the latter Sense, contrary to the Opinion of EUSTATHIUS, and Madam DACIER, because the one, says he, is a Bishop, and the other a Lady. *For that* AGAMEMNON *was not studying here for Civility of Expression*, says he, *appears from the whole Tenour of his Speech, and that he design'd* CHRYSEIS *for more than a Servant-Maid, may be seen from some other things that he said of her, as that he preferr'd her to his Queen* CLYTEMNESTRA To which I answer That *speaking* is one thing, and *designing* another, and let AGAMEMNON design CHRYSEIS for what the Translator pleases, he speaks of her with Modesty, as may appear, not only from the whole Tenour of his Speech, but from the whole Tenour of the ILIAS and ODYSSEIS, which puts me in mind of an Observation of RAPIN *They are, for the most part*, says he, *only your little Genuses, that appear Wanton or Impious in their Writings.* HOMER *and* VIRGIL, says he, *are always Modest They have always shown themselves as severely Virtuous, as the most rigid Philosophers And the Muses of True Poets, are as Chast and Modest, as Vestals* But 'tis no Wonder that this Translator, who in his *Rape of the Lock*, could not forbear putting Bawdy into the Mouth of his own Patroness, should put something like it into the Mouth of HOMER If Mr. POPE had been a True Genius, he had been neither Wanton nor Impious He had neither dishonour'd BELINDA, nor burlesqu'd the Sacred Writings For, notwithstanding his Jesuitical Advertisement, it was He who burlesqu'd the *First Psalm* of DAVID In that Jesuitical Advertisement, he does not deny it, but would appear to deny it But suppose he had flatly deny'd it, can any one wonder, that one who has frankly and gayly, without any Provocation, and intirely against his Interest, done an Action by which he has disclaim'd all Pretence to Religion, would any one wonder, I say, that that Wretch should deny that Action, when all his Interest requir'd it? 'Tis apparent to me, that that *Psalm* was burlesqu'd by a Popish Rhymester. Let Rhyming Persons, who have been brought up Protestants, be otherwise what they will, let them be Rakes, let them be Scoundrels, let them be Atheists, yet Education has made an invincible Impression on them in behalf of the Sacred Writings But a Popish Rhymester has been brought up with a Contempt for those Sacred Writings in the Language which he understands. So that Ignorance with such a one, is the true Mother of Devotion Now show me another Popish Rhymester but he If this presumptive Proof is not strong enough to convince the Reader, that Mr POPE is the Burlesquer of the *First Psalm*, perhaps I can bring positive ones Mr. POPE, I suppose, endeavour'd to make a

Jest of God Almighty, out of a Spirit of Revenge and Retaliation, because God Almighty has made a Jest of him. He has, indeed, a notable Talent at Burlesque: his Genius slides so naturally into it, that he has burlesqu'd HOMER without ever once designing it But desiring the Reader to pardon this Digression, I proceed to my Business.

Ver. 66.

And gloomy Darkness roll'd around his Head

What can the Translator mean by *gloomy Darkness rolling around the Head* of any one? HOMER has nothing like this He only says, That APOLLO *descended, resembling the Night.* Nor does *gloomy Darkness rolling around the Head,* give a clear Idea of any thing, and for that Reason is as gross Fustian, as NAT LEE'S *Darkness* in ALEXANDER

——— ——— *Darkness o'erwhelm me,*
If Royal SISIGAMBIS *does not weep!*

Ver. 75.

Conven'd to Council all the Grecian Train

The Grecian *Train,* for Grecian *Army,* is something odd, and pretty near to Burlesque. And 'tis the rather to be taken Notice of, because I believe he has made use of the same Word in the same Sense, an Hundred times. One would swear by his Translation, that AGAMEMNON was nothing but some *Exchange-Alley* Stock-Jobber, who had the Honour to command a Company of *Train Bands.*

Ver 80.

If broken Vows this heavy Curse have laid,
Let Altars smoak, and Hecatombs be paid

Was ever any thing so flat, and so Prosaick as these two Lines? instead of the noble sounding Verse of HOMER Let us but take away the Rhyme, and they will appear in their true Light *If broken Vows have laid this heavy Curse, let Altars smoak, and let Hecatombs be paid* What does he mean by *broken Vows laying a heavy Curse,* without mentioning either Person, or Place, where, or on whom they have laid it? And as for *paying of Hecatombs,* it looks as if ACHILLES suspected, that APOLLO had drawn a Bill upon them for so many Oxen, which had been protested, which puts me in mind of a *Bill of Exchange* of Don QUIXOT *Pay, at Sight to the Bearer, Three Asses.* HOMER says here, *Let us consult somebody, who may inform us, whether the Wrath of* APOLLO *proceeds from the Non-performance of our Vows, or from our Neglect of Sacrifice.*

Ver. 99.

First give thy Faith, and plight a Prince's Word,
Of sure Protection by thy Power and Sword

CALCHAS says this to ACHILLES. But I cannot think that *give thy Faith* is English, no more is *plight a Prince's Word.* But what abominable Stuff is *plight a Prince's Word of sure Protection.* HOMER makes CALCHAS speak plainly. Do you, says he to ACHILLES, enter into an Engagement to me, and solemnly swear

Ver. 101

For I must speak what Wisdom would conceal,
And Truths invidious to the Great, reveal
Bold is the Task, when Subjects grown too wise,
Instruct a Monarch where his Error lies

HOMER is so far from having any thing of this, that it is quite contrary to his Meaning

For I must speak what Wisdom would conceal

What! would it be Wisdom to conceal those Truths which by the Will and Inspiration of his God he discovers? That in a Priest is a fine Wisdom truly And that this is the Case, the Translator owns in the 498*th* Verse of his first Book

A Prophet then inspir'd by Heav'n arose,
And points the Crime, and thence derives the Woes

But let us proceed,

Bold is the Task, when Subjects grown too wise,
Instruct a Monarch where his Error lies

Here this Translator makes a Priest, before all the Princes of the Army, assembled in Council, boast of a Wisdom superior to them all. Could SACHEVERELL himself be more impudent or more arrogant? The CALCHAS of HOMER makes no such glorious Boast of himself, all that he says is, that when a King, or a Man in Power, is throughly incens'd against an inferior Person, tho' perhaps he may stifle his Passion, and conceal his Resentment for the present, yet he never fails of being reveng'd at last.

Ver. 105

For tho' we deem the short-liv'd Fury past,
'Tis sure the Mighty will revenge at last

What short-liv'd Fury? This must be very obscure to those who have no Knowledge of the Original, which indeed is very clear HOMER makes CALCHAS speak plainly I believe, says he, the Man will be grievously offended at what I shall say, who has a great Command over all the *Grecians,* and whom the Army obeys And when a King is very much incens'd, *&c.*

Ver. 116

Nor Vows unpaid, nor slighted Sacrifice

Would not any one believe, who considers the true Signification of these Words, that CALCHAS meant Sacrifice which the *Grecians* had offer'd, and which the Gods had slighted, instead of Sacrifice which the *Greeks* had omitted, and for which Omission ACHILLES suspected that APOLLO had sent the Pestilence among them?

Ver. 119.

But he our Chief provok'd, the raging Pest

HOMER makes CALCHAS say,

APOLLO *does not complain either of the Non-performance of Vows, or of the Omission of Sacrifice, but of the Affront offer'd to his Priest by* AGAMEMNON

Whereas the Translator makes CALCHAS point at AGAMEMNON. *But he our Chief* The Priest had Reason to desire the Protection of ACHILLES, since he was resolved to put so flagrant an Affront upon the King of Men And then can any thing be more low and creeping than the word *Pest*? Who ever read the word *Pest* for *Plague*, in any good English Poet? I have heard of Pest-House indeed, but never of *Pest* alone Nor should we have heard of it here, if it had not been an half, and an awkward Rhyme to Priest. Indeed *Priest* and *Pest* have of late Years answer'd pretty well to each other What makes the word more base and more infamous, is, that it is perpetually in the Mouths of *French* Footmen and Taylors

Ver. 123

Till the great King, without a Ransom paid,
To her own CHRYSES *send the black-ey'd Maid*

Would not any one think by the first Line, that it is AGAMEMNON who is to pay the Ransom to CHRYSES? If it had not been for the sake of this wicked Rhyme, the Translator would have said, *without receiving a Ransom.* As for the Expression of *the Great King*, HOMER says nothing of it. Nor was AGAMEMNON so far Paramount to the other Princes, as to deserve that Appellation I never heard of that Expression in any *Greek* Author, either in Verse or Prose, till it was us'd for the King of *Persia*, after the *Persian* Monarchy began to grow formidable to *Greece Black-ey'd Maid*, in the 124*th* Line, is very low, if it is not Burlesque Perhaps the Translator will say, that *Black-ey'd* is a literal Translation of ἐλικώπιδα, and that so Mr DRYDEN and the Vulgar Latin have render'd it I grant it, but the *Greek* word has a much nobler and more charming Signification than that But suppose it had no other Signification than that, is the Translator to know at this time of day, that Words which have the same Signification, may be very noble in one Language, and very base in another?

Ver. 125

Perhaps, with added Sacrifice and Pray'r,
The Priest may pardon, and the God may spare

HOMER makes CALCHAS say nothing of the *Priest's Pardoning*. HOMER was an honest old Pagan, of a Religion much less absurd, and much less an Imposition upon the Understandings of Mankind, than Popery. For the Heathens who taught, That one God could beget another, and afterwards devour him, would never have swallowed that monstrous Absurdity, of a Mortal's making a God, and swallowing him down at a Mouthful. But perhaps this little Translator thought, with some Reason, That since by the first Fifty Lines of his Translation, he had made HOMER talk like an Ass, he might afterwards be allow'd to make him talk like a Papist.

Ver 138.

Is Heav'n offended, and a Priest profan'd,
Because my Prize, my beauteous Maid I hold,
And heav'nly Charms prefer to proffer'd Gold?
A Maid unmatch'd in Manners, as in Face,
Skill'd in each Art, and crown'd with ev'ry Grace
Not half so dear were CLYTEMNESTRA's *Charms,*
When first her blooming Beauties fill'd my Arms
Yet if the Gods demand her, let her sail,
Our Cares are only for the Publick Weal
Let me be deem'd the hateful Cause of all,
And suffer, rather than my People fall
The Prize, the beauteous Prize, I will resign,
So dearly valu'd, and so justly mine
But since for common Good I yield the Fair,
My private Loss let grateful Greece repair,
Nor, unrewarded, let your Prince complain,
That he alone has fought and bled in vain

By the foregoing Lines, the Translator has alter'd the Character of HOMER, destroy'd that of AGAMEMNON, corrupted the Simplicity and Majesty of the Original, offended against Probability, Decorum, and good Sense There is not one of these amorous Expressions in HOMER, which the Translator is pleas'd to put into the Mouth of AGAMEMNON His Reluctance to part with CHRYSEIS, proceeds from his Pride and his Avarice, and not from his Passion; which is plain from his demanding an Equivalent for CHRYSEIS, which 'tis impossible in Nature that a passionate Lover can do for his Mistress ACHILLES in his Reply, imputes his Reluctance and his Demand of an Equivalent, to his Pride and his Avarice, instead of attributing it to so scandalous a Motive as Passion AGAMEMNON ought to have been us'd like a Mad-Dog, if he had given the least Hint, that it was his Passion that was the Cause of his reluctant parting from a Whore (as the Translator supposes her to be either a profest one, or a Probationer) whose Detention would be the utter Ruin of the Army which he commanded, and before which he spoke Indeed, the insisting upon his Honour, and upon his Right, might appear necessary to them for the Preservation of his Authority, as the Preservation of that was necessary for the due Discharge of his Offices But the least mention of Passion had been most abominable, and had render'd HOMER the most impertinent of all Writers.

I am, for the present, weary of raking in the Dirt of this Translation, where, in so little Space, there are so many Faults to be found. But before I conclude, I shall say something to the Commendation which the above-named impertinent *Censor* gives to the Sounding Variety of the Numbers The Reader may easily see, that, through all the Verses I have cited, and 'tis true of all that I have not cited, instead of a pleasing Variety of Numbers, there is nothing but a perpetual Identity of Sound, an eternal Monotony. The Trumpet of HOMER, with its loud and its various Notes, is dwindled in POPE's Lips to a Jew's-Trump. The *Pegasus* of this little Gentleman, is not the Steed that HOMER rode, but a blind, stumbling *Kentish* Post-Horse, which neither walks, nor trots, nor paces, nor runs, but is upon an eternal *Canterbury,* and often stumbles, and often falls The *Pegasus* which HOMER rode, would carry Fifty POPES upon his Back at a time, and throw every one of his Riders.

If the Translation of the Ancient Poets is carry'd on but a little farther at the Rate that it has been in that of HOMER and OVID, why then we may expect, that in a very short Time, the Names of the Ancient Poets will sink as vilely low, as those of their Heroes, or those of their Goddesses. And as Dogs are called by the Names of their Heroes, HECTOR, and CÆSAR, and POMPEY, as Bitches are called by the Names of their Goddesses, VENUS, and JUNO, and DIANA: so great Fools will be christen'd anew by the Names of their great Poets, HOMER, and HORACE, and OVID, and then POPE and the *Censor* will not be the Translators of HOMER and OVID, but HOMER and OVID Themselves.

To conclude, All Persons whatever would be asham'd for the future to Translate Ancient Poets, if Providence had not contriv'd to keep the Ingenious in Countenance, that the Translation of LUCAN should at present be undertaken, by a Gentleman, who has shown the World, by a large Pattern, that he is very able to acquit himself well of it In that Translation, the Reader may expect to find English, Sense, Force, Elevation, Harmony, and the World may expect a Translation of LUCAN, as much superior to that of HOMER, as the Original of HOMER surpasses that of LUCAN.

Let us now give the Reader a short View of the Two Poems of *Windsor Forest,* and *The Temple of Fame*, and then he will see what Reason there was for the giving such vast Encouragement to the Translation of HOMER The Reader will find the Observations which I have made upon these Poems, in the following Letters, which were formerly writ to some Gentlemen of my Acquaintance.

OBSERVATIONS UPON *WINDSOR FOREST*

To Mr. B B.

SIR, *Decemb* 18 1714

YOU are in the right of it *Windsor Forest* is a wretched Rhapsody, not worthy the Observation of a Man of Sense. I shall only take Occasion from it to display the Beauties of *Cooper's-Hill,* in Emulation of which it was

impudently writ The *Cooper's-Hill* of Sir JOHN DENHAM is a Poem upon the Prospect which that Hill affords us. *Cooper's-Hill,* is a Hill in *Windsor-Forest,* about a Mile from *Egham* in *Surrey,* about Half a Mile from the *Thames,* and Three Miles from *Windsor.*

The Conduct of Sir JOHN DENHAM in his *Cooper's-Hill,* is as admirable, as that of the Author of *Windsor Forest,* is despicable Sir JOHN DENHAM presents no Object to his Reader, but what is truly in the Compass of his Subject. Whereas Half the Poem of *Windsor Forest* has nothing in it, that is peculiar to *Windsor Forest.* The Objects that are presented to the Reader in this latter Poem, are for the most part trivial and trifling, as Hunting, Fishing, Setting, Shooting, and a thousand common Landskips Whereas of a thousand Objects that *Cooper's-Hill* presents to the View, Sir JOHN DENHAM chuses only the most Instructive, the most Noble, and the most Magnificent, and which, at the same time, are the most Noble, and most Magnificent, which *Great Britain* can show As St. *Paul's, London, Windsor. Thames,* the Side of *Cooper's-Hill* that is next to the *Thames,* and *Runny-Mead* between them, ennobled by the Grant of the Great Charter there to the People of *England*

In *Windsor Forest,* though a Poem of above Four hundred Lines, there is no manner of Design, nor any Artful and Beautiful Disposition of Parts Whereas Sir JOHN has both an Admirable Design, and a Beautiful Disposition of Parts.

The first Object that He presents to our View, is St *Paul's* Cathedral, at Seventeen Miles Distance from the Place where he is, and *London* beneath it, and having laid before us, in that most pompous of all our Cathedrals, and in that vast and populous City, the Splendor and Prosperity of the Church, and the Riches, Numbers and Strength of the People, He turns to the Left, and in the magnificent Palace of *Windsor,* sets before us the Greatness, and the Power of our Monarchs, and from the Kings that are there interr'd, chusing Judiciously our Third EDWARD, one of the Greatest and the most Heroick of them, with his Queen PHILIPPA, and the BLACK PRINCE, his Son, all Three Victorious, all Three the Advancers of *England's* Glory, entertains us agreeably with the Remembrance of our past Triumphs, and the Institution of the Noblest Order in the World. Then viewing the Abbey of St *Anne's* Hill near *Chertsea,* he not only recalls to mind very naturally on that Occasion, the most memorable Event of the Destruction of Abbeys, but presents us with a general and most useful Instruction, *viz* that we should beware of a furious, ill-grounded Zeal, or of a dangerous Hypocrisy, that Apes it Then returning to the *Thames,* that runs winding through the Valleys beneath him, the *Thames,* the undoubted Source, both of the Prince's Power, and the People's Wealth, he describes it in Thirty Lines, that are Incomparable and Inimitable, and which exhaust even that exuberant Subject Then he describes a Royal Hunting, which Description may be said to be accomplish'd in all its Parts, and from that, by an easie and a beautiful Transition, he presents both Prince and People to our Eyes, even just at the Bottom of his Hill, by the Commemoration of that fam'd Event, *viz* the Grant of *Magna Charta* by King JOHN, to

the People of *England* assembled there. And as the Admirable Poet took Occasion before, from the View of St. *Anne*'s Hill, to give the most important Instruction that can be given to this Island, upon a Religious Account, *viz* That we should banish Persecution, and an ill-grounded Zeal, from among us, he takes an Opportunity now, from showing the Prince and the People assembled upon that memorable Occasion, to conclude this Poem, with the most important Instruction, that, upon a Civil Account, can be given, either to Prince or People, *viz* That the Prince should avoid intrenching upon Liberty, and the People upon Prerogative, and thus he has in this short, but admirable Poem, given those Instructions, both to the Prince, the Church and the People, which, being observ'd, must make the Prince Powerful and Glorious, the Church Great and Venerable, and the People a Flourishing and a Happy People; and which being neglected, must bring universal Misery upon the Nation Which are such certain Truths, that I defy any Man to show me a Time, when *England* was Happy at Home, and Glorious Abroad, but when these Instructions were observ'd, or, when it was Contemptible Abroad and Wretched at Home, but when they were neglected.

Thus have I endeavour'd to set before you, in a full Light, the admirable Art and Contrivance that are to be found in the *Cooper's-Hill*, in order to make the Rhapsody call'd *Windsor Forest*, appear the more contemptible I have already exceeded the Bounds which I prescrib'd to my self. Otherwise, I should set several of the Parts of these Two Poems in Parallel against one another, by which it would appear, that the Knight has more the Advantage of this little 'Squire of *Parnassus*, in the Beauty of the Parts, than he has in the Admirable Contrivance of the Whole I would say something likewise of the Expression and the Harmony, and would pretend to show, that as Sir JOHN DENHAM perpetually thinks clearly, he always expresses himself perspicuously, that the Language in his boldest Flights, is almost always sacred to him, that he is Bold, without Rashness, Plain, without Meanness, High without Pride, and Charming, without Meretricious Arts But that the Author of *Windsor Forest* has almost every where,

> *Absurd Expressions, crude, abortive Thoughts,*
> *All the lewd Legion of exploded Faults* *

That he is Obscure, Ambiguous, Affected, Temerarious, Barbarous And, lastly, That there is as much Difference between the Harmony of one Poem, and that of the other Piece, as there is between a Piece of Musick, which is Dead and Flat, and barely Mathematical, and one in which to the Truth of Composition, is added a Fine and a Charming Air. I know not but that I may prevail upon my self to do this another time, provided that you are entertained by what I at present send you.

I am, Sir,
Your, &c

* ROSCOMMON *on Translated Verse*

OBSERVATIONS UPON *The Temple of Fame.*

SIR,

I Come now to the last Production of this Author, which he calls, *The Temple of Fame,* a Vision, pretending at the same time, that the calling it a Vision, will apologize for every Extravagance with which he is pleas'd to blot his Paper. *For Verisimilitude,* says he, p 4. *is not required in the Descriptions of this Visionary and Allegorical kind of Poetry, which admits of every wild Object that Fancy may present in a Dream,* where he appears to be so far from knowing the Distinction between a Dream and a Vision, that he knows not the Difference between one Dream and another For as there are reasonable and consistent Dreams, there are extravagant and incoherent ones. The first of these were thought by the Antient Poets sometimes to be inspir'd by God And HOMER calls even that Delusive one which JUPITER sent to AGAMEMNON, *the Divine Dream,* and accordingly he makes it sensible and coherent. But a true Vision is acknowledg'd by all to be a Divine Inspiration, and therefore can have nothing in it inconsistent and incongruous For God can no more be the Author of Absurdity, than he can be of Evil And as a true Vision can have nothing possible in it, that is wild and incoherent, so the fictitious ones which are invented in Imitation of them, must resemble them in their Reasonableness, and their Consistency. Such is the celebrated Vision of SCIPIO, as 'tis related by CICERO, and such that of GODFREY, in the fourteenth Canto of the *Gierusalemme,* the most beautiful Parts of which are copied from the other In both which, tho' the manner of seeing is supernatural and miraculous, yet every thing that is seen there is probable at the same time that 'tis admirable, every thing that is said there is reasonable, at the same time that 'tis exalted, and there is in both as it were a Conjunction of Reason and Divinity But I make no doubt but I shall make it appear, that the pretended Vision of *The Temple of Fame,* is what the *French* call *Vision creuse,* and that the Author instead of a Seer of Visions, is a Dreamer of Dreams, and not of sober and consistent, but of feverish and delirious Dreams

I know very well, *Sir,* that it would be ridiculous to look for a Fable in a Work of this nature, if the Author in the Beginning of his Notes had not pretended to it, by a very plain Implication But at the same time, he furnishes us with an Argument, worth a thousand Arguments, to prove that there can be no such thing there, for the Author discovers in that very place that he is entirely ignorant of what a Fable is, and consequently of the very first Rudiments of an Art, which he pretends to have studied all his Life-time. For, says he, 'tis hard to comprehend, how a Fable should be the less valuable for having a Moral. As if there could possibly be any Fable without a Moral When the very first thing that he who makes a Fable does, is to fix upon his Moral. A Poetical Fable is compos'd of one Action and a Moral The Action the Body of it, and the Moral the Soul Now where is the one Action in this Poem which is composed of a Number of Phantoms incongruous and incoherent? And where is the Moral? In the 34*th* Page, *The Temple of Fame* changes to the Temple of Rumour, and there the Author modestly introduces himself as

an Actor, who in *The Temple of Fame* had been but a bare Spectator So that if there is any Moral, it can be only this, That when any one has not Merit enough to attain to a true, a solid, and a lasting Fame, he should content himself with a foolish, a false, and a transitory Rumour, and such, with Submission to his Honourable Patrons, is Mr POPE's Poetical Reputation

I am willing to own very frankly, that a Work of this Nature is not capable of a Fable, but then it is very capable of an Unity of Design, but this Author has corrupted the Unity of his Design by unexpectedly shifting his Scene, and deserting *The Temple of Fame* for the Temple of Rumour

I shall now give you the Author's View both of the one and the other Temple. I shall begin with *The Temple of Fame* And first, I shall shew you the Absurdities and the Inconsistencies which are apparent on the Outside of the Temple. And, *Secondly*, Those which are to be found in the Description of the Inside But first give me leave to take a short View of the Place, where this Author is posted to survey *The Temple of Fame* Pag 6

I stood, methought, betwixt Earth, Seas, and Skies,
The whole Creation open to my Eyes

If the whole Creation was open to his Eyes he must be vastly high Let it appear then by what follows, what a Master he is of Perspective.

In Air self-balanc'd hung the Globe below,
Where Mountains rise, and circling Oceans flow
Here naked Rocks, and empty Wastes were seen,
There Touring Cities, and the Forests green
Here sailing Ships delight the wandring Eyes,
There Trees, and intermingled Temples rise

Well! we will allow that from the prodigious Height where he stands, he might behold the Ocean But could he possibly from that Height discern the Mountains, the Rocks, the Wastes, the Forests, nay, such minute Objects, as the very Ships, and single Trees? But this is a Poetical Vision, perhaps his Favourers will say But a Poetical Vision, as has been shewn above, is to have nothing incongruous or absurd in it The above-mention'd Vision of GODFREY in the beginning of the 14*th* Canto of the *Gierusalemme*, is a Poetical Vision And yet how much juster and nobler are the Sentiments of TASSO, than are those of this Author? There is nothing in them contrary to the Laws of Nature, or to the *Ptolemaick* System, which was then universally received GODFREY is wrapt up to Heaven in a Vision, from whence UGO shews him the World below, and says to him, *St* 9

China, poi disse, & gli additò la Terra,
Gli occhi a ciò che quel globo ultimo serra

St 10

Quanto è vil la cagion ch' ala virtude
Humana, e quá giú premio e contrasto!
In che picciolo cerchio, & fra che nude
Solitudini é stretto il vostro fasto

Lei come Isola, il mare intorno chiude,
Et lui, c' hor Ocean chiamate, hor vasto,
Nulla eguale á tai nome ha in se di magno
Ma e bassa palude e breve stagno

St 11

Cosi l' un disse, & l' altro in giuso i lumi
Volse quasi sdegnoso & ne sorrise,
Che vide un punto sol, mar, terra, & i fiumi,
Che qui parun distincte in tante guise,
Et Ammiró, che pur al' ombre, a i fumi,
La nostra folle Humanitá, s' affise,
Servo imperio cercando, & muta fama,
Ne mira il ciel, ch' a se n invita & chiama

Let us now, *Sir,* contemplate this little Author, in that vast Exaltation to which he has rais'd his Carcass instead of his Verse, an Exaltation from which the whole Creation lies open to his View Let us behold him still looking up from thence, and viewing *The Temple of Fame.* P.9

O'er the wide Prospect as I gaz'd around,
Sudden I heard a wild promiscuous Sound
Like broken Thunders that at distance roar,
Or Billows murm'ring on the hollow Shore,
Then gazing up, a glorious Pile beheld,
Whose Towring Summit ambient Clouds conceal'd,
High on a Rock of Ice the Structure lay,
Steep its Ascent, and slippery was the Way

Now, Sir I would fain know from you, if this Image of a Temple built on a Rock of Ice, self-suspended in the Air, be not so wild, and so extravagant that 'tis not only unworthy of a Vision, but even of the Dream of a Man in Health It must be confess'd, that the Image of *Fame* in VIRGIL, and that of *Discord* in HOMER, are above Nature, as all the Machines of those great Poets are but this Image of the *Temple of Fame,* is contrary to Nature, and to the Eternal Laws of Gravitation, and is one of those Faults which HORACE so justly ridicules, in the beginning of his Letter to the PISOES

Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere si velit, & varias inducere plumas,
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici?
Credite, Pisones, isti tabulæ fore librum
Persimilem, cujus, velut ægri somnia, vanæ
Fingentur species

Now, Sir, what Interpretation does M DACIER give to this *vanæ species? Des Especes, des Idees vaines, c'est a dire, des Idees des choses, qui ne subsistent point ensemble dans la Nature, & qui ne se trouvent que dans le cerveau creux des Malades, des Fous, & de mechans Poetes* That is as much as to say *Species of Things, vain Ideas, or Ideas of Things, which never subsist together*

in Nature, and which are not to be found but in the disorder'd Brains of Men in Fevers, of Madmen, and of Poetasters. Now, Sir, I appeal to you, if this Idea of a Temple built upon a Rock of Ice, self-suspended in the Air, be not one of those Ideas?

But Mr POPE will make the same Objection here, which other Poetasters have done before him

——————— Pictoribus atque poetis,
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas

Well, we are ready to grant this, but then we reply with HORACE:

Sed non ut placidis coeant immitia, &c

And here, Sir, 'tis worth while to hear what DACIER says *Les Peintres & les Poetes, ne sont que des Imitateurs, & par cette Raison, ils ne doivent peindre, que ce qui est, ou ce qui peut etre car il n'y a que cela qu'on puisse imiter Mais les uns, & les autres ont souvent abusé de leur Art, & quitté les Veritez regulieres, ou les Idées ressemblables, pour ne suivre que les Imaginations monstreuses* That is to say *Painters and Poets are but Imitators, and for that Reason, they ought to Paint either that which is, or that which may be, since nothing but the one, or the other, can be Imitated. But both Painters and Poets have often abused their Art, and forsaken regular Truths, or probable Ideas, to run after monstrous Imaginations.*

And the same Interpreter tells us immediately afterwards HORACE *donne icy, un des plus importans Preceptes de l'Art Poetique, qui est, de n'assembler jamais des Sujets contraires & incompatibles, & de ne blesser jamais la Nature, la Vraisemblance, ou la Verité* That is to say HORACE *gives us here one of the most important Precepts in the Art of Poetry, which is, never to assemble contrary and inconsistent Subjects, and never to offend against Truth, or Nature, or Probability*

Now, if to show a Temple founded upon a Rock of Ice, self-suspended in the Air, is not to assemble contrary and inconsistent Subjects, and to offend against both Truth, and Nature, and Probability, why then I leave it to be determin'd by you, whether the most extravagant of all Writers can ever offend against them?

But I would fain know, Sir, why this wonderful Difficulty of Access to this *Temple of Fame?*

High on a Rock of Ice the Structure lay,
Steep its Ascent, and slippery was the Way

When not only such vast Multitudes are afterwards admitted into it, but among them, great Numbers of the most Idle, the most Wretched, the most Lazy, the most Abject of Mortals Witness what he says, p. 34. and 35

Pleas'd with the strange Success, vast Numbers press
Around the Shrine, and made the same Request
What you, she cry'd, unlearn'd in Arts to please,
Slaves to your selves, and ev'n fatigu'd with Ease,

Who loose a Length of undeserving Days,
Would you usurp the Lovers dear-bought Praise?
To just Contempt, ye vain Pretenders, fall,
The Peoples Fable, and the Scorn of all

Now what can signify, either the Height of the Situation, the Steepness of the Ascent, or the Slipperyness of the Way, when such as these are able to get up to the Temple?

There are Two Lines at the Bottom of the Tenth Page, relating to this Rock, which contain a double Blunder:

Their Names inscrib'd unnumber'd Ages past,
From Time's first Birth, with Time it self shall last

Which notable Couplet not only makes this Rock and this Temple coæval with the World, but supposes, that there was Fame before there were Men, and that the Names of Mortals had a Being before their Persons. The Simile in the 11th Page,

So Zembla's *Rocks* ——————

Is design'd, it seems, as we are told in the Notes, *to reconcile the Description of the Temple to Probability and Nature, and to render it,* says the Author, *not wholly unlikely, that a Rock of Ice should remain for ever.* But this is providing only for the least Part of the Absurdity, for the Duration of this Rock is only Absurd but the Self-Suspension is Monstrous.

You know, Sir, that this Author gives Four Faces to his Temple, and that he first describes the Western one. But would not any one swear, Sir, by the Beginning of this Description, that he describes the Eastern one? Page 12.

Westward a sumptuous Frontispiece appear'd

Here, 'tis plain, that by *Westward,* he means, upon the Western Front, for he describes the Eastern in the 14th Page. But if it appear'd upon the Western Front, it appear'd to the Spectator Eastward. For can any thing be more plain than that nothing upon the Western Front of St *Paul's* can appear to any one who does not look Eastward? Now, Sir, I proceed to show that upon this Western Front of the Temple, the Author pretends to show Things in Sculpture, which Sculpture cannot possibly show, as will appear by the following Lines.

Here Orpheus *sings, Trees moving to the Sound,*
Start from their Roots, and form a Shade around,
Amphion *there the loud creating Lyre*
Strikes, and Behold, a sudden Thebes *aspire,*
Cythæron's *Ecchoes answer'd to his Call,*
And half the Mountain roll'd into a Wall
There you might see the lengthning Spires ascend,
The Domes swell up, the widening Arches bend,
The growing Tow'rs like Exhalations rise,
And the huge Columns heave into the Skies

Now these are Ideas which instead of being judiciously bold, are foolishly rash and impudent. For *Trees starting from their Roots*, a *Mountain rolling into a Wall*, and a *Town rising like an Exhalation*, are Things that are not to be shown in Sculpture Neither Painting, nor Sculpture, can show Local Motion They can indeed show Posture and Position, and from Posture and Position, we may indeed conclude, that the Objects are in Local Motion; but then they must be such Objects as really are mov'd from one Place to another, either by Nature, or Art For Painting and Sculpture imitate, and therefore, as has been said above, they must imitate something, which either is, or may be And nothing can be more absurd, than to pretend, that these Arts can imitate such Motions of inanimate Bodies, as are contrary to the Laws of Nature But though the Things which I have already mention'd, are foolishly rash and presumptuous, yet what is said of CYTHÆRON's Eccho, is beyond all Comparison foolish.

CYTHÆRON's *Ecchoes answer'd to his Call*

Methinks I could give a good deal, to see that Sculptor, who should pretend to carve an Eccho The Subjects of Sculpture and Painting, are the Objects of Sight. And if any Sculptor or Painter, should pretend to Carve or to Paint Sound, that Sculptor or Painter, would be universally hooted at But that Author or Painter may well make Sound the Object of Sight in this 13th Page, who in Page 33 makes Musick the Object of Smell

> —— *In Air the trembling Musick floats,*
> *And up the Wind triumphant swell the Notes,*
> *So soft, so high, so loud, and yet so clear,*
> *Ev'n list'ning Angels lean'd from Heav'n to hear,*
> *To farthest Shores th' Ambrosial Spirit flies,*
> *Sweet to the World, and grateful to the Skies*

I come now to take a View of the Absurdities and Inconsistencies, which are to be found in the Description of the Inside of the Temple I mean, to take a View of the grossest and most obvious of them For if we should mention all, we should never have done We will begin with the Goddess herself, and afterwards descend to the Objects about her And here certainly we may justly say, That never any thing was so Confus'd and so Inconsistent, as this Author's Notion of Fame We can at the best, but guess at his Meaning. That VIRGIL and OVID by *Fame*, meant nothing but *Rumour*, is plain from the Description which the one gives of her Person, and the other of her Palace VIRGIL describes her as an *Evil Being*, *Fama malis* 2. As an *Odious One*, *Hæc passim Dea fœda virum diffundit in ora* 3 As a *Frightful One*, *Magnas territat urbes* 4 As a *Mischievous One*, *Tam ficti pravique tenax quam conscia veri* For our Author, as far as we are able to guess at his Meaning, he seems to intend her, in the main, for what we call *Renown*, or a *fair* and a *great Reputation*, as appears by the 28th and 29th Pages But having a very treacher-

ous Memory, to which all great Wits are subject, in the very next Page, which is the 30th, he confounds her with *Slander* and with *Rumour*.

This Band dismiss'd, behold another Crowd
Preferr'd the same Request, and lowly bow'd,
The constant Tenour of whose well-spent Days,
No less deserv'd a just Return of Praise
But strait the direful Trump of Slander sounds,
Thro' the big Dome the doubling Thunder bounds,
Loud as the Burst of Cannon, rends the Skies,
The dire Report thro' ev'ry Region flies,
In ev'ry Ear incessant Rumours rung,
And gath'ring Scandals grew on ev'ry Tongue
From the black Trumpet's rusty Concave broke
Sulphureous Flames, and Clouds of rolling Smoke
The pois'nous Vapour blots the purple Skies,
And withers all before it, as it flies

Now we had heard nothing of *Slander* before, nor so much as seen any Image of her, either on the Outside, or the Inside of her Temple By *Slander* here is meant *Fame* then, making use of another sort of Trumpet, and another sort of Wind to blow; which Two Trumpets this errant Wag seems to me to have borrow'd from the following facetious Lines of HUDIBRAS

Two Trumpets she does sound at once,
But both of clean contrary Tones,
But whether both with the same Wind,
Or one before, and one behind,
We know not, only this can tell,
The one sounds vilely, th' other well
And therefore vulgar Authors name
The one Good, th' other Evil Fame

And these Two Lines of our Author, savour strongly of HUDIBRAS's Trumpet behind

From the black Trumpet's rusty Concave broke
Sulphureous Flames, and Clouds of rolling Smoke

In the 34th and 35th Pages too, the Author seems to confound his Goddess with *Slander* and with *Infamy*

In describing her Person, he tells you, that he follows the Ancient Poets

Such was her Form, as Ancient Bards have told,
Wings raise her Arms, and Wings her Feet infold,
A Thousand busy Tongues the Goddess bears,
And Thousand open Eyes, and Thousand list'ning Ears

But by his Leave though, VIRGIL has shown her a great deal better than he has done. VIRGIL indeed has given her Wings, because he makes her a great Traveller, and so has given her Occasion to use them But OVID, who confines her to her House, has given her none And pray, Sir, what Reason had our Author, who has confin'd her to her Temple, to give her Wings, only that he might coop her up like a cramm'd Fowl afterwards? VIRGIL has given her too

a great many Ears, and a great many Tongues, because he makes her in her Travels, a great Babbler and a great Heark'ner; so that in all Likelihood, one Tongue, and one Pair of Ears, would have been often tyred. But OVID, who makes all her News be brought home to her, thought, that like the rest of her Sex, she might be contented with One Tongue, and One Pair of Ears, and might Listen and Bable enough with those, to set the World together by the Ears. And truly, one would think our Author might have been of the same Opinion, since all her News is brought home to her, and her Votaries come in Tribes; and seem to me to speak like a *Grecian Chorus*, or an *English Jury*, each of them by their Foreman.

VIRGIL makes Fame the Equivocal Daughter of the Earth, the youngest Sister of the Gyants, and a vast and horrible Monster:

> *Illam Terra parens, ira irritata Deorum,*
> *Extremam, ut perhibent, Cœo Enceladoque sororem*
> *Progenuit, pedibus celerem & pernicibus alis,*
> *Monstrum horrendum, ingens*

This Author having given no other Pedigree to *Fame*, seems to acquiesce in VIRGIL's. And yet it seems, he has given for Handmaids to this Gyantess, this horrible Monster, that sprung at first from the Dunghill, the Nine Immortal Muses, the Divine Daughters of JUPITER and MNEMOSYNE, and has transported them from the Gentle and Poetick Climate of *Greece*, and placed them in Bondage upon this Rock of Ice the Reason, I suppose, why they have lately produced such vile, servile Imitations, and such freezing Poetry.

Page 26

> *Beneath, in Order rang'd, the Tuneful Nine,*
> *(Her Virgin Handmaids) still attend the Shrine*
> *With Eyes on Fame for ever fix'd, they sing,*
> *For Fame they raise the Voice, and tune the String*

One would have thought that the Character that he himself gives of his Goddess, had been sufficient to instruct him to avoid this Absurdity. For at the bottom of the 27th Page, he represents her without Justice, and without Discernment

> *Some she disgrac'd, and some with Honours crown'd,*
> *Unlike Successes equal Merits found*
> *Thus her blind Sister, fickle Fortune, reigns,*
> *And, undiscerning, scatters Crowns and Chains*

And is this Monster, without Justice, and without Discernment, made the absolute Mistress of the Muses, who have been hitherto always esteem'd the Righteous and Discerning Dispensers of Fame, and Bestowers of Immortality? Must They be preposterously made the Handmaids of a False and a Foolish Fame, and the Tools of her whimsical and inconsistent Censures? And what then, in the Name of Absurdity, must their Poets be? A Parcel of Fools and Knaves, endeavouring to give Reputation to some who are like themselves and have neither the Will, nor the Discernment, to reward and to distinguish

Virtue and true Merit! As for this Author, his Muse, if he pleases, shall be the Chamber-Maid, or the Kitchen-Wench of this False and Foolish Fame. But as for the True Muses, they are the Divine Mistresses of True, Solid, and Lasting Fame, Mistresses in whom she lives, and moves, and has her very Being.

But let us see by the Conduct of this whimsical Goddess, what fine Work this Author has cut out for the Muses.

First then, After he has taken Care to place her Temple in the most difficult Situation imaginable, all manner of People, even the most Lazy and most Abject of Men, are admitted to it. *Page* 27.

> *Millions of suppliant Crowds the Shrine attend,*
> *And all Degrees before the Goddess bend,*
> *The Poor, the Rich, the Valiant, and the Sage,*
> *And boasting Youth, and narrative Old Age*

Secondly, She takes Care to have the Images of Warriors carv'd on the outward Walls of her Temple. *Page* 12

> *Here fabled Chiefs in darker Ages born,*
> *Or Worthies old, whom Arms or Arts adorn,*
> *Who Cities rais'd, or tam'd a monstrous Race,*
> *The fourfold Walls in breathing Statues grace*

She takes Care to have the Statues of Warriors within her Temple *Page* 17

> *Within, stood Heroes, who thro' loud Alarms,*
> *In Bloody Fields pursu'd Renown in Arms*
> *High on a Throne, with Trophies charg'd, I view'd*
> *The Youth that all things but Himself subdu'd*

By which Youth, he means ALEXANDER the Great, and JULIUS CÆSAR follows him. But now, after taking all this Care to have their Statues without and within her Temple, in the 31st Page, she very whimsically turns all their Persons out of it

> *A Troop came next, who Crowns and Armour wore,*
> *And proud Defiance in their Looks they bore*
> *For Thee, they cry'd, amidst Alarms and Strife,*
> *We sail'd in Tempests down the Stream of Life*
> *For Thee whole Nations fill'd with Flames and Blood,*
> *And swam to Empire thro' the purple Flood*
> *These Ills we dar'd, thy Inspiration own,*
> *And all that Virtue seem'd, was done for Thee alone*
> *Ambitious Fools! (the Queen reply'd, and frown'd)*
> *Be all your Acts in dark Oblivion drown'd,*
> *There sleep forgot, with mighty Tyrants gone,*
> *Your Statues moulder'd, and your Names unknown*

For God's Sake, Sir, tell me, if you are able, why this mighty Respect for the Statues, and this strange Disdain for the Persons? And why that very Reason given for rejecting the Persons, for which before she so highly esteem'd

the Statues? For were not ALEXANDER and JULIUS, the Two most Ambitious of all Mortals? Oh! but ALEXANDER and CÆSAR were Ancient Captains, and the Goddess rejects the Moderns. So that Ambition, it seems, was a Virtue in Ancient Captains, but is an unpardonable Crime in the Modern.

What makes this more Whimsical and more Ridiculous, is, that in the 35th and 36th Pages, Persons ten times worse than these, are not only taken into the Temple, for the very same Reason, for which these in the 31st were turn'd out of it, but, after they are admitted, have their Request granted them.

Last, those who boast of mighty Mischiefs done,
Enslave their Country, or usurp a Throne,
Or who their Glory's dire Foundation laid,
On Sov'reigns ruin'd, or on Friends betray'd,
Calm thinking Villains, whom no Faith can fix,
Of crooked Counsels, and dark Politicks·
Of these a gloomy Tribe surround the Throne,
And beg to make th' immortal Treasons known
The Trumpet roars, long flaky Flames expire,
With Sparks that seem'd to set the World on Fire,
At the dread Sound pale Mortals stood aghast,
And startled Nature trembled with the Blast

Do me the Favour, Sir, to tell me, if you know, who it is that blows this Trumpet? And whether the Muses who blew it for the Learned, and the Virtuous, are employed to blow it for these too? And whether the Author pretends that these, by the Trumpet, are made Famous or Infamous.

In the 33d and 34th Pages, a Parcel of Fops are admitted into the Temple, who are Ten times more Contemptible, than the fore-mention'd Persons are Odious Nay, they are not only admitted, but are prais'd and applauded for their Vanity and their Lying.

Next these, a youthful Train their Vows exprest,
With Feathers crown'd, with gay Embroidery dress't
Hither, they cry'd, direct your Eyes, and see
The Men of Pleasure, Dress, and Gallantry
Ours is the Place at Banquets, Balls, and Plays,
Sprightly our Nights, polite are all our Days
Courts we frequent, where 'tis our pleasing Care
To pay due Visits, and address the Fair
In fact 'tis true, no Nymph we could persuade,
But still in Fancy vanquish'd ev'ry Maid
Of unknown Dutchesses lewd Tales we tell,
Yet, would the World believe us, all were well
The Joy let others have, and we the Name,
And what we want in Pleasure, grant in Fame

A pretty Fame, truly! when the very smartest of these Coxcombs, is sure to have his Name rotten before his Carcass When the Author introduced these Fellows into the Temple of Fame, he ought to have made the Chocolate-House, and the Side-Box, Part of it But what says Fame to this Petition?

The Queen assents, the Trumpet rends the Skies,
And at each Blast a Lady's Honour dies

Thus these Coxcombs are not only prais'd and applauded for their Vanity and Lying, but the Muses are made the Instruments of that Praise, and that Applause.

In the 35th Page, another Parcel of the same Fops, are made Infamous and Contemptible, for the very same Reasons for which the others became, forsooth Renown'd

Pleas'd with the strange Success, vast Numbers prest
Around the Shrine, and made the same Request
What you, she cry'd, unlearn'd in Arts to please,
Slaves to your selves, and ev'n fatigu'd with Ease

To just Contempt, ye vain Pretenders, fall,
The Peoples Fable, and the Scorn of all

And yet her Favourites, in the foregoing Page, had own'd the same Defect to her:

In Fact, 'tis true, no Nymph we could persuade,
But still in Fancy vanquish'd ev'ry Maid

But now, Sir, if the Author answers, that he prepar'd us for this, in the Character that he gave us of Fame. *Page 27.*

Some she disgrac'd, and some with Honour crown'd,
Unlike Successes equal Merits found

And that this is the Way of the World, which blames some, and applauds others, for the very same Qualities To this I reply, that this is absolutely false, that Persons indeed with the same Qualities, are some applauded, and other blam'd by the World, but then they appear in very different Lights, and the World is far from taking them to have the same Qualities But for this impertinent Goddess, like the Satyr's Guest, in the Fable, to blow Hot and Cold with the same Breath, is ridiculously provoking.

I could take Notice here of an Inconsistency of an inferior Nature

In Fact, 'tis true, no Nymph we could persuade,
But still in Fancy vanquish'd ev'ry Maid,
Of unknown Dutchesses lewd Tales we tell,
Yet, would the World believe us, all were well

Now, how could these Coxcombs, all Coxcombs tho' they are, fancy themselves so successful, when they own with the very same Breath, that they are a Parcel of Lying Rascals?

But these, Sir, are Peccadillos in this Author, and are so very numerous that if we should take Notice of all of them, we should never have done.

In the 32d Page, 'tis hard to decide, whether the Author shows his Goddess or her Votaries, more whimsical:

Then came the smallest Tribe I yet had seen,
Plain was their Dress, and modest was their Mien
Great Idol of Mankind! we neither claim
The Praise of Merit, nor aspire to Fame,

But safe in Deserts from th' Applause of Men,
Would dye unheard of, as we liv'd unseen
'Tis all we beg thee, to conceal from Sight
Those Acts of Goodness which themselves requite

These worthy Persons had better have kept out of the Temple of Fame, than to have come upon so impertinent an Errand For what is the plain English of their Address to the Goddess? Why, they tell her, that they hate her, and despise her, and therefore beg of her, that she would grant their Request which is to keep them in Obscurity

'Tis all we beg thee, to conceal from Sight
Those Acts of Goodness which themselves requite

Which is just as pertinent a Petition, as it would be for them to pray to Oblivion, to render their Names Illustrious What follows is full as reasonable

O let us still this secret Joy partake,
To follow Virtue, ev'n for Virtue's sake!

Why, and so they might, in spight of her Divinity, that was absolutely in their own Power, whether she made mention of them, or not.

To this sottish Request, the Goddess returns as senseless an Answer, which is in Effect, That since they slight her, and contemn her, and give a pernicious Example to others to do the same, that therefore she will more ardently resound their Praise, than that of her most ardent Votaries

And live there Men who slight Immortal Fame?
Who then with Incense shall adore our Name?
But, Mortals, know, 'tis still our greatest Pride,
To blaze those Virtues which the Good would hide

Which Two last Lines contain an Assertion, that is utterly false. For, generally speaking, the Darlings of Fame, are the Ambitious and the Aspiring And 'tis with me an unquestion'd Truth, that a great deal of Wisdom, and Virtue, and extraordinary Merit, that would have been admir'd by all the World, if they had been known, have gone silent and obscure to the Grave, only because they were not attended with Ambition.

But now, Sir, the Author is about to leave the Temple of *Fame*, for the Temple of *Rumour* But before he does that, I shall make bold to ask him one Question, and that is, Why no Women have appear'd in the Temple of *Fame*? How will he answer this to his Mistress? He who begins this Poem so like a Termagant Lover? *Page* 8.

As balmy Sleep had charm'd my Cares to Rest,
And Love it self was banish'd from my Breast

Or, How will he answer this, as a Gallant Person to the rest of the Sex? Are there really no Women who are worthy to appear in the Temple of Fame? Oh yes, *divers*, he says, *but he thought he should affront the Modesty of the Sex*

in showing them there But, methinks, he might have had the Address to make Fame or the Muses applaud them, for being Worthy, and not Appearing, and so they had doubly applauded them For modest Merit, which is so engaging in our own Sex, is enchanting in the other Well! but let us admit of this Excuse, as a just one, for his not introducing the Persons of the Female Sex into his Temple. But why were there none of their Statues there? Why none of their Images on the outward Walls? Why should Fame and the Muses show so little Regard to the Merit of their own Sex? Have there been no Women whom History has recorded worthy of that Honour? To go no farther than our own Country, What does he think of the Ancient BOADICEA, or the Modern Glorious ELIZABETH? Or, if none but Foreign, as well as Ancient Heroins, can be esteem'd by him, What does he think of the Bravery of CLÆLIA, the Chastity of LUCRETIA, the Constancy of PORCIA, and the Resolution and extreme Tenderness of ARRIA? Heroick Virtue is certainly more Admirable in Women, than it is in Men, on account of the Defects in their Educations, the Tenderness of their Constitutions, and the extreme Violence of their Passions And therefore both HOMER and VIRGIL introduced Female Warriors into their Poems, to render their Works the more Admirable

But now, Sir, as we hinted above, the Author is about to be snatch'd from the Temple of *Fame,* that is, turn'd out of it, and thrust into the Temple of *Rumour,* by a Power, he says, unknown to him.

> *This having heard and seen, some Pow'r unknown,*
> *Strait chang'd the Scene, and snatch'd me from the Throne*

Now, Sir, this *Power unknown* will I bring him acquainted with. For I will engage, that upon his asking, *Who art Thou?* it shall make the same Answer, that the Spirit at *Philippi* did to BRUTUS, upon his asking the same Question, *viz* I am thy Evil Genius, who am order'd by JUPITER, to turn Thee out of the Temple of *Fame,* from the Company of Wits and Warriors, and to thrust thee into the Temple of *Rumour,* there to converse with Projectors, Pettifoggers, Quacks, and Almanack-Makers, and the other Fantoms of a Day In the Temple of *Fame,* Thou wert, *will it say,* but a Mute and Impotent Spectator, but in the Temple of *Rumour,* thou shalt be an Actor.

You shall have the rest by the first Opportunity

I am, Sir,
Your, &c

POSTSCRIPT

UPON Reading the REMARKS of Madam DACIER, which I never saw before the Twelfth of this Month of *February,* the Deference which I pay to her good Sense, and good Taste, made me something diffident of Part of the Remark which I had made upon the 138th Verse of Mr. POPE's Translation But as we have only the Assertion of Madam DACIER, and as I bring Reasons for my Opinion, I shall lay both the one and the other before the Reader, and submit the whole entirely to his Judgment.

Madam DACIER is of Opinion, That AGAMEMNON had a Passion for CHRYSEIS, but that he was restrain'd by Decency, from making any Declaration of it to the Army. My Opinion is, That HOMER makes him have no manner of Passion for her, but only a very high Esteem, preferring the Accomplishments of her Mind and Person before those of CLYTEMNESTRA: and that the Reluctance with which he parts from her, proceeds from his Pride and his Avarice, and not from his Love. If he had been passionately in Love with the Daughter, I should think, he would have had more Respect for her, than so grosly to affront her Father, for no other Cause than his Paternal Tenderness, and his Endeavour to redeem her. Every Man in Love necessarily and naturally aims at Love reciprocal. But the rudely affronting the Father, and threatning his very Life, is but an ill way of touching the Heart of a Daughter, so accomplish'd, and so carefully educated, as he describes CHRYSEIS. If AGAMEMNON had been passionately in Love with CHRYSEIS, that Love had been his predominant Passion, and would have been a Check to his Wrath, and his Pride, the Source of that Wrath, which we are told in the Beginning of the Poem, caus'd him to affront old CHRYSES. If Love had been a Passion so predominant in him, he could never possibly have demanded an Equivalent for an Object so beloved. In the Case of Love there can be no Equivalent. No passionate Lover can believe there can be an Equivalent, even for one Hair of his Mistress.

> *Num tu, quæ tenuit dives Achæmenes,*
> *Aut pinguis Phrygiæ Mygdonias opes,*
> *Permutare velis crine Lycimniæ?*
> *Plenas aut Arabum domos?* *

If HOMER had made Love the Cause of AGAMEMNON's reluctant parting with CHRYSEIS, and of his demanding an Equivalent, he would have made ACHILLES reproach him with it, instead of upbraiding him with his Pride and his Avarice.

Thus have I laid before the Reader the Opinion of Madam DACIER, and the Reasons by which I defend my own. 'Tis for Him to choose which he will espouse. But let his Choice incline to which Side it will, it must absolutely condemn the English Translator, who not only makes AGAMEMNON make an open Declaration of his Passion before the Army, but shews him talking as like an Amorous Milksop, as the whining Hero of a Modern Fustian Tragedy.

But as the Remarks of Madam DACIER made me diffident of one Observation, which I had made upon the late Translation of HOMER, they gave me Courage to resume another, which I had rejected, notwithstanding that I wanted not Reasons to support it, because I found my self almost singular in it, and that almost all the Interpreters were against me. 'Tis an Observation upon the Fourth Line of the Translation.

> *The Souls of mighty Chiefs untimely slain*

I could by no means think that this is the Meaning of HOMER, because of the Poet's Epithet Πολλὰς. For if by *mighty Chiefs*, the Translator does not

* HORAT. Lib. II. Ode 12.

mean those who commanded in Chief the Forces of Kingdoms and of Commonwealths, I would fain know what he does mean? But if he does mean those, it seem'd to me to be highly improbable, that many of those could be slain in Four or Five Days and the Days on which the *Grecians* and *Trojans* fought, from the Quarrel, to the Reconcilement of ACHILLES and AGAMEMNON, were in Number no more And it appears to me to be almost impossible, that the Bodies of many of those Chiefs, could in Four or Five Days, be left upon the Shore unburied, and a Prey to Dogs and Vultures. What the Original tells us, is, That *the Wrath of* ACHILLES *sent many of the Heroes before their Time to Hell.* Where by *Heroes,* HOMER appear'd to me, to mean the *Grecians* in general, who were at the Siege of *Troy*, which as it was a greater Compliment to his Country, as it was of most useful Instruction to his Country-men, by letting them know, that the very meanest of them, who ventur'd their Lives for the Common Good and Glory of *Greece,* were by that Action, exalted above the rest of Men, and placed at the very Top of their Species, so was it more agreeable to the Simplicity of the Heroick Times, when to constitute a Hero, there were requisite neither numerous Troops, nor Royal Dignity, nor Imperial Power, but Strength of Body, and Intrepidity of Mind, undaunted Bravery and a Contempt of Death, and a zealous affronting the most dreadful Dangers, for the Good of the Publick and of Mankind. For most of the Exploits of the Two greatest of the *Grecian* Heroes, HERCULES and THESEUS, appear to have been done by themselves alone

But though I had these Reasons to support my Opinion, the Crowd of Interpreters, by being against me, made me grow diffident of it, and reject it, as I said above, 'till the Reading Madam DACIER's Remark upon the Word Ηρώων, gave me Courage to resume it

The Reading of the Remarks of Madam DACIER, and her elegant and just Translation, naturally oblig'd me to read over the Beginning of Mr POPE's Translation again, upon which I found, that there are no less than Three gross Faults in the Seventh and Eighth Lines

> *Since great* ACHILLES *and* ATRIDES *strove,*
> *Such was the Sov'reign Doom, and such the Will of* JOVE

For, in the First Place, the Word *since* does by no means signify what the Translator intends it for, *viz. Ever since the Time that*, or *From the Time that Since,* by it self, can only signify, *Seeing that,* or *Because that.* In the Second Place, ACHILLES *and* ATRIDES *strove,* is not English, without adding how, or for what they strove, nor, if it were, would that be a Word fit to express a Quarrel between Two such Illustrious Enemies as ACHILLES and AGAMEMNON, nor is it by any means an Expression equivalent to that which HOMER uses, Διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε The dearest Friends may *strive.* People *strive* at Football, or at a Match at Cricket But let us consider the Second Verse

> *Such was the Sov'reign Doom, and such the Will of* JOVE

If by *The Sovereign Doom*, the Translator does not mean the *Will of* JOVE, I would fain know what he does mean? But if he does mean the *Will of* JOVE by it, is not this Line made up of vile Tautology?

Thus has he been guilty of Five or Six gross Faults in the Compass of so many Lines, every one of which Mr TICKELL has judiciously avoided in his Ingenious Translation, the first Ten Lines of which we shall lay before the Reader

> ACHILLES *fatal Wrath, whence Discord rose,*
> *That brought the Sons of* Greece *unnumber'd Woes,*
> *O Goddess, sing Full many a Hero's Ghost,*
> *Was driv'n untimely to th' Infernal Coast*
> *While in promiscuous Heaps, their Bodies lay*
> *A Feast for Dogs, and ev'ry Bird of Prey*
> *So did the Sire of Gods and Men fulfill*
> *His stedfast Purpose, and Almighty Will,*
> *What time the haughty Chiefs their Jars begun,*
> ATRIDES *King of Men, and* PELEUS' *Godlike Son*

The Reader may see, that instead of Mr POPE's *All the Grecian Woes*, there is in Mr. TICKELL's Translation, *Unnumber'd Woes* Instead of *The Souls of mighty Chiefs*, there is in Mr TICKELL's Translation *Many a Hero's Ghost* Instead of PLUTO's *gloomy Reign*, there is in Mr TICKELL, *The Infernal Coast* Instead of *Since great* Achilles *and* Atrides *strove*, there is in Mr TICKELL, *What time the haughty Chiefs their Jars begun* And instead of *Such was the Sov'reign Doom, and such the Will of* JOVE, which is in Mr POPE's Translation, there is in the other Gentleman's,

> *So did the Sire of Gods and Men fulfill*
> *His stedfast Purpose, and Almighty Will*

Which last comprehensive Verse expresses Two of the Attributes of the Deity, His Immutability, and his Omnipotence

I have now strong Temptations upon me to give the Reader a View of the many and gross Errors that are to be found in the Preface to this Translation, and nothing could hinder me from doing it at present, but the want of Time, which I hope will not be always wanting But I cannot miss the Opportunity that offers it self of vindicating the Reputations of several worthy Gentlemen, whom he has maliciously aspers'd with their Favour to him, and their good Opinion of him, and his Works, which is the old Trick play'd over again, of writing an Encomium upon Himself, and putting other Peoples Names to it I have the Honour to be acquainted with most of these Gentlemen, and I have that Knowledge of their Merit and their Discernment, that I dare engage, they would have been better pleas'd, if he had represented them as malignant Writers and Fools, that is, as Persons who have a great Contempt for him and his Writings, than they are with the undeserved Compliment which he endeavours to pass upon them, of their Respect for him, and their good Opinion of him and his Works Which puts me in mind of a Passage in the Second Act of the *Plain-Dealer*, where *Novel* and Lord *Plausible* are giving Characters to *Olivia*, of *Manley*, who over-hears them.

Nov *You must know, Madam, he has a fanatical Hatred to good Company· He can't abide me.*

L. Plaus *O be not so severe to him, as to say he hates good Company For I assure you, he has a great Respect, Esteem, and Kindness for me.*

Manley *That kind, civil Rogue has spoken yet Ten thousand times worse of me than t'other.*

Before I take my Leave of the Reader, I think fit to acquaint him, That as Folly is contagious, by dwelling too much upon the Blunders of Mr POPE and the *Censor*, in the 16th Page of this little Treatise, I made a considerable Blunder my self A fair Warning for People not to have too much to do with the Writings of these People The Mistake which I speak of, is in the Observation upon the Line,

Murmuring they move, as when old Ocean roars

And this Mistake was considerably help'd on, by the Repetitions of HOMER There are in the Second *Iliad*, from the calling of the First Council, to the breaking up of the Second, no less than Three Similes, to illustrate the Motion of the *Grecian* Army, all taken from the Motion of the Waves of the Sea The First, from the Motion alone, and the Two others from the Motion, and the Noise that attends it Upon turning too hastily from the *Censor*, to the Original, without consulting the First Volume of the Translation I easily mistook the following Lines

Murmuring they move, as when old Ocean roars,
And heaves huge Surges to the trembling Shores
The groaning Banks are burst with bellowing Sound,
The Rocks remurmur, and the Deeps rebound

I easily, I say, mistook these Lines for a Paraphrase of the First Simile, which are indeed a Paraphrase of the Second, which is this

——— ——— —— Οἱ δ' ἀγορήνδε
Αὖτις ἐπεσσεύοντο νεῶν ἄπο, καὶ κλισιάων
Ἠχῇ, ὡς ὅτε κῦμα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης
Αἰγιαλῷ μεγάλῳ βρέμεται, συμαραγεῖ δέ τε πόντος

Which is thus in English Prose,

The Grecians *came rushing from their Ships and their Tents, bellowing like the Waves of a roaring Sea, when they are broke against the Rocks of the Shore, and the great Deep resounds with the Noise*

Here the Reader may easily see, that the Mistake which I made, does by no means rectify that of the Translator, nor make the Absurdity one Jot the less, of comparing a *Murmur* to a *Roar*.

I know very well, that the Favourers of the Translator may say, That the Latin Poets, and especially VIRGIL, have often usurped the Word *Murmur*, to express a *great Noise*, as *Æneid.* I

Illi indignantes magno cum murmure montis
Circum claustra fremunt

And again, *Ibid.*

Interea magno misceri murmure pontum,
Emissámque hyemem sensit Neptunus

And a Third time, in the same

Unde per ora novem vasto cum murmure montis
It mare proruptum

They will say too, That 'tis lawful to introduce new Words from *Latin*, as the *Latins* did from the *Greek* Well, I grant this to be true, provided there be Necessity for it, and it be done sparingly and discreetly. But the making *Murmur* to signify a *great Noise* in *English*, is not to introduce a new Word, but entirely to change the Signification of an old one, and to make it have a Meaning directly opposite to that which Use has given it

Quem penes arbitrium est, & jus & norma loquendi

Murmur has been always taken for a soft, a gentle, and an agreeable Sound and therefore to make it all at once signify a loud, a rough, and a frightful Sound, would not be bold, but rash But to begin to do this, by placing it in the same Sentence with another Word, and making it answer to, and agree with that Word, to which it has always before had a Signification directly opposite, is downright Folly and Impudence And thus the Translator of HOMER has plac'd it,

Murmuring they move, as when old Ocean roars,
And heaves huge Surges to the trembling Shores
The groaning Banks are burst with bellowing Sound

What my Lord ROSCOMMON says of Words, is certainly true of the different Significations of them·

Words in one Language elegantly us'd,
Will hardly in another be excus'd
And some which Rome *admir'd in* CÆSAR's *Time,*
May neither suit our Genius, nor our Clime

Now let us endeavour to give a Reason, why the Word *Murmur*, which VIRGIL made use of more than once or twice, to express a *great* and a *terrible Sound*, can never be us'd in our Tongue, but in the Sense which it has so long obtain'd from Use, *viz* to express a *soft* and *agreeable one.*

The Word *Murmur*, which is both *Latin* and *English*, consists of Two Vowels and Four Liquids, and of those Liquids, Two are *R*'s, the most sonorous Letter of the Alphabet, but wherever the Word ends with a Consonant, which it

always does in our Tongue, and sometimes in *Latin*, those Liquids and Vowels so fetter and confine one another, that they cannot expand themselves, and exert their proper Sound. But wherever it ends in a Vowel, the Case is far otherwise, For there both the Liquids and Vowels exert themselves, and the *R* particularly becomes very sonorous Now VIRGIL, who is famous for adjusting his Sound to his Sense, for, as my Lord ROSCOMMON says,

Sublime or Low, Unbounded or Intense,
The Sound is still a Comment to the Sense

VIRGIL, I say, wherever the Noun, or the Verb derived from it, ends in a Consonant, employs it there in our *English* Sense, to express a gentle and agreeable Sound, but where-ever it ends in a Vowel, there he employs it to express a great and a terrible one, excepting one Passage in the Tenth Book, where the Context, and a peculiar Epithet, determine the Word in the softer Sense. But even there the Word *Murmura* expresses something that is Threatning, and consequently Dreadful We shall give Examples of both kinds and first for the Word when it ends in a Consonant. *Ecl* IX

Et nunc omne tibi stratum silet æquor, & omnes
Aspice, ventosæ ceciderunt murmuris *aura*

There is another Example of this in the First *Georgick*

Ecce, supercilio clivosi tramitis undam
Elicit illa cadens raucum per lævia murmur
Saxa ciet scatebrisque arentia temperat arva

We have another Example in the Tenth *Æneid*

Spumea semifero sub pectore murmurât *unda*

There is another in the Eleventh

——————— *Seu saxa morantur*
Cum rapidos amnes, clauso fit gurgite murmur,
Vicinæque fremunt ripæ crepitantibus undis

And another in the Twelfth.

——————— *Serpitque per agmina* murmur

Let us now show by Examples, how he employs the Word whenever it ends in a Vowel. Behold how he speaks of the Fury of the Winds, in the First Book of the *Æneis*

——————— *Hic vasto rex Æolus antro*
Luctantes ventos tempestatésque sonoras
Imperio premit, ac vinculis & carcere frænat
Illi indignantes magno cum murmure *montis*
Circum claustra fremunt

A little lower he uses it to express the Roaring of a Storm·

Interea magno miscere murmure *pontum,*
Emissámque hyemem sensit Neptunus ———

And 'tis employ'd in the same Book to express the noisy Rage of a Torrent

Unde per ora novem vasto cum murmure *montis*
It mare proruptum

'Tis used in the Fifth Book to express the Bellowing of Mount *Ætna*.

At fessum quoties mutat latus, intremere omnem
Murmure Trinacriam & cœlum subtexere fumo

'Tis twice used in the Fourth Book to express the Sound of Thunder

Interea magno miscent murmure *cœlum*
Incipit

And a little lower in the same Sense

Arpeia hæc? an te, genitor cùm fulmina torques,
Nequicquam horremus? cæcique in nubibus ignes
Terrificant animos, & inania murmura *miscent?*

In the Fifth Book to express the Shouts and Applause of a Multitude

——— *Magnoque virûm se* murmure *tollit*

But now, since in *English* neither the Noun nor the Verb derived from it, ever can possibly end in a Vowel it never can be proper, for the Reasons above-mention'd to express any other Sense, than that of a soft and agreeable Sound, which it has always hitherto obtain'd Thus is this Translator equally condemned both by the Reason of the Thing, and by Use, which is the absolute Master of Languages, and by his ridiculous placing the Word, and making it agree with, and answer to *Roar*, to which it has always hitherto had a Signification, as directly opposite, as *soft* is to *loud*, or *agreeable* is to *dreadful*. What I have said above, is enough to show, that it is impracticable to introduce it in our Language, in the Sense in which VIRGIL has just been shown to have sometimes us'd it Otherwise, the way of introducing it with Discretion, had been to place it with Words which express no Sound of themselves, but which by their Context and Connexion, should determine it to signify a contrary Sound, to that which it has been hitherto always us'd to express; which is the Method that VIRGIL took with it

Thus have I endeavour'd to show the Reader, that this little Author, who has been lately so much in Vogue, has neither Sense in his Thoughts, nor *English* in his Expressions, and that ALEXANDER POPE has sent as many *Bulls* abroad into the World, as ever did his Name-sake POPE ALEXANDER. And now let him, if he pleases, have recourse to his old Method of Lyes and Slander, and print a Second Dr NORRIS's Account. The Story is too long to be told at present; the Reader who has Curiosity enough to be acquainted with it, may hear it from Mr CURLL the Bookseller, by whom he will hear of a Proceeding, so black, so double, and so perfidious, that perhaps a Villain who is

capable of breaking open a House, is not capable of That. However, notwithstanding the Provocations which he has given me, I have for my own sake found no Fault with his Writings, but what I did believe to be really there, as knowing well, that Readers do not judge by the Passions of Writers, but by their own Reason. But what my Reason has suggested to me, that I have, with a just Confidence, said, in Defiance of his Two clandestine Weapons, his Slander and his Poyson.

FINIS.

TO HENRY CROMWELL, ESQ;
ON THE VIS COMICA
1717, 1721

October 11. 1717

SIR,

WHEN I had the favour of a Visit from you the other Day, I was in a great deal of Pain, and had been so for a Day and a Night before you saw me, and continued so for the same space of Time after you left me, and then I voided a Stone about the bigness of a Pea, and so thanks be to God, have been ever since at Ease

BUT what perhaps may surprize you, is this, That in the midst of all this Misery, I read over four Comedies of *Terence, viz.* The *Eunuch*, the *Heautontimorumenos*, the *Adelphi*, and the *Phormio* These I read over in the two Evenings of my Illness, in the *Cambridge* Quarto Edition, a very convenient one for a Person of my gravity, in a Winter's Evening, tho' he who had the Care of the Edition, understood nothing of the Stage In the two Mornings of my Illness, I read over Mrs *Dacier*'s Comment upon the Four Comedies, and upon the Life of *Terence* writ by *Suetonius*. I have told you more than once, that when the Commentators had sometimes led me into a Bog, my own Common Sense had help'd to guide me out again You may guess what a deference I pay to the Herd of Commentators when you will see by what follows, that I have the Assurance to contradict Monsieur *Le Fevre* and Mrs. *Dacier* his Daughter, for whose Learning, Judgment, and fine Discernment I have always had a singular Regard and Esteem

YOU know very well, Sir, that *Suetonius* in the latter end of his Life of *Terence*, has mention'd some Verses of *Julius Cæsar*, in which that Emperor calls *Terence* a Demy *Menander*, and complains that the *Vis Comica* was wanting to that Comick Poet

> *Tu quoque, Tu in summis, O dimidiate Menander*
> *Poneris, & merito, puri Sermonis Amator,*
> *Lenibus atq, utinam scriptis adjuncta foret vis*
> *Comica, ut æquato virtus polleret Honore*
> *Cum Græcis, nec q, in hac despectus parte jaceres*
> *Unum hoc maceror, & Dolco tibi deesse Terenti*

Mrs *Dacier* in her Remarks upon that part of the Life says, That it was the Opinion of her Father Monsieur *Le Fevre*, that by the *Vis Comica*, *Cæsar* meant the Passions, from which Opinion the Daughter dissents for the two following Reasons First, Because the Passions are natural and essential to Tragedy, but incidental to Comedy. Secondly, Because it is impossible to preserve the Characters, as *Terence* has admirably done, without making them Speak upon occasion with as much Passion as that occasion requires, which is not only justly, but very finely observ'd And, Indeed we find that the Passions

in *Terence*, upon great surprizes are extream lively and strong. And when *Horace* tells us in his Art of Poetry, that Comedy sometimes usurps upon Tragedy, and has Passions which are next to Tragical, He brings his Example from the *Heautontimorumenos* of *Terence*.

Interdum tamen, & vocem Comœdia tollit,
Iratusque Chremes tumido Delitigat ore

But the Explication which Mrs *Dacier* her Self, gives of the Words of *Cæsar*, is not a jot better than her Father's For by *Vis Comica*, says she, *Cæsar* meant the Vivacity of the Action, and the tying and solving the Knot of the Intrigue, which is wrong, for two Reasons. First, Because these both belong to Tragedy as nearly as they do to Comedy And, Secondly, Because, if *Cæsar* had understood by his *Vis Comica*, what Mrs. *Dacier* thinks he did, he could never have call'd *Terence* a Demy *Menander* For *Terence*, having the Business of two of *Menander*'s Comedies in one of his, and the *Grecian* Comedy being of as great a length as the *Roman*, *Terence* must consequently have more Intrigue, and a greater Vivacity of Action than *Menander*, and consequently, if *Cæsar*, by his *Vis Comica*, had meant the Intrigue, and the vivacity of Action, He would have nominated *Terence*, a Double, instead of a Demy *Menander*

But since I have Declared my self not at all satisfied with either the Father's or the Daughter's Explication, you may perhaps expect that I should give my own. I shall do it with Submission, but upon this Condition, that if I am in the wrong, you and your Commentators shall set me right.

I am apt to believe both from the Terms, and the Reason of the Thing, that by the *Vis Comica*, must be meant something Comical and peculiar to Comedy For the chief Force of any kind of Poem, must consist in that which makes the Characteristick of it, and which distinguishes it from all other Poems As the chief Force of Tragedy must proceed from the moving Compassion and Terror strongly, and the Chief Force of Epick Poetry from the exciting Admiration, Powerfully, so the chief Force of Comedy must consist in exciting Laughter. By the *Vis Comica*, then can never be meant the bare Vivacity of the Action, and the tying and solving the Knot of the Intrigue, which is common to both kinds of Dramatick Poetry, as has been observ'd above, but the lively Ridicule resulting from the Intrigue, the Ridicule of the Incidents, and especially of the Catastrophe, which yet is but a part of the *Vis Comica*, for there is likewise the Ridicule of the Characters proceeding from their several Humours, and the Pleasantry of the Sentiments and of the Dialogue. When *Cæsar* therefore says, that *Terence* is but a Demy *Menander*, what does he say, but that *Terence* had turn'd four or five of *Menander*'s Comedies into Latin, and lost half the Ridicule and the Pleasantry of that *Athenian* Poet, in Translating him That this was *Cæsar*'s Meaning is plain to me, not only from the Reason and the Nature of the Thing, which has been shewn above, but from the great Delight which *Cæsar* took in the *Ridiculum*, and the great Encouragement which he gave to the *Mimes* of *Laberius* and *Publius Syrus*

which were low Farces, compos'd on purpose only to make People Laugh; as likewise from the Method which *Terence* took in his Versions· For taking two of *Menander's* Plays into one of his, he must of Necessity leave a great part of his Dialogue behind him, and by consequence, a great part of his Pleasantry So that the same thing happen'd to *Menander* formerly, which has befallen *Moliere* in our Days Several *English* Authors have translated Parts of him, but not one of them has enter'd into that *naiueté* which is the purest Source of his Pleasantry, (as indeed it is of Pleasantry in general) for what the *French* call *naiueté,* which is a charming Simplicity, dictated by pure Nature, is almost always Original For there is something in it so easie, so free, so flowing and so natural, as flies the restraint of a Copy I do not pretend to say, that there was none of the *naiueté* of *Menander* in *Terence*, but I may venture to say after *Cæsar,* that there is not above half of it, and consequently, not above half his Pleasantry, tho' at the same time, I believe that there is more of this Quality in *Terence,* than ever there was in a Copy, and if the God of Laughter does not always attend upon *Terence, Venus* and the *Graces* never leave him 'Tis my humble Opinion, that there is no Dialogue extant in any Language, which has half the Charms of the *Terentian* Dialogue; what comes nearest to it, is that of *Etherege* in Sir *Fopling Flutter.* I, who have been acquainted with *Terence* above forty Years, am now more delighted with him than ever And sure that Beauty must be no common Charmer, in whom Time shall discover new Graces, and whom long possession, renders more desireable

THUS have I given you my Sentiments If what I take to be the Sense of *Cæsar,* be not your own, I desire you would set me right.

I am, &c

LETTERS TO STEELE AND BOOTH

1719, 1721

To *Sir* Richard Steele,

Patentee of the Theatre in Drury-Lane

SIR,

THO' *at the time of writing this, I am almost overwhelm'd both with* Sickness and Grief, yet I cannot forbear making a just Complaint to you for your being the Occasion of both these, either by actually breaking your Word with me, or being perfectly passive while your Managers broke it, which, if it has not reduc'd me to immediate Necessity, yet has brought me within the Danger of it, and consequently within the Apprehension of it, which is as grievous almost as the Thing And that this Complaint is but too justly grounded, you your self will acknowledge, when I have laid my Case before you which I shall do in as few Words as I can

It was upon the 27th of *February*, 171$\frac{4}{5}$, that I receiv'd a Letter from Mr *Booth* by your Direction, and the Direction of the Managers under you, desiring me to dine at your House on the 28th, and after Dinner to read the Tragedy of *Coriolanus* to you, which I had alter'd from *Shakespear* You cannot but remember, Sir, that upon reading it, the Play with the Alterations was approv'd of, nay and warmly approv'd of, by your self, Mr *Cibber*, and Mr *Booth*, (the other Manager was not there) and that Resolutions were taken for the acting it in the beginning of this Winter Now I appeal to your self, if any Dramatick Performance could be more seasonable in the beginning of a Winter, when we were threatned with an Invasion from *Sweden* on the North, and from *Spain* on the West, than a Tragedy whose Moral is thus exprest in the last Lines of the Play

> *—They who thro' Ambition or Revenge,*
> *Or impious Interest join with Foreign Foes,*
> *T' oppress or to destroy their native Country,*
> *Shall find, like* Coriolanus, *soon or late*
> *From their perfidious Foreign Friends their Fate*

I am sure, Sir, I need not tell one of your Understanding, that this Moral is so apparently the Foundation of the Dramatick Action, and must appear to every Spectator and Reader to be so truly the genuine Result of it, that if I had not said one Word of it, every Reader and Spectator would have been able to have suggested so much to himself.

Well, Sir! when the Winter came on, what was done by your Deputies? Why, instead of keeping their Word with me, they spent above two Months of the Season in getting up *All for Love, or the World well lost*, a Play which has indeed a noble first Act, an Act which ends with a Scene becoming of the Dignity of the Tragick Stage But if *Horace* had been now alive, and been either

a Reader or Spectator of that Entertainment, he would have passed his old Sentence upon the Author

Infelix operis summâ quia ponere totum
Nescivit

For was ever any thing so pernicious, so immoral, so criminal, as the Design of that Play? I have mention'd the Title of it, give me leave to set before you the two last Lines

And Fame to late Posterity shall tell,
No Lovers liv'd so great, or dy'd so well

And this Encomium of the Conduct and the Death of *Anthony* and *Cleopatra*, a Conduct so immoral, and a Self-murder so criminal, is, to give it more Force, put into the Mouth of the High-Priest of *Isis*, tho' that Priest could not but know, that what he thus commended, would cause immediately the utter Destruction of his Country, and make it become a Conquer'd and a *Roman* Province Certainly never could the Design of an Author square more exactly with the Design of *White-Hall*, at the time when it was written, which was by debauching the People absolutely to enslave them

For, pray Sir, what do the Title and the two last Lines of this Play amount to in plain *English*? Why to this, that if any Person of Quality or other shall turn away his Wife, his young, affectionate, virtuous, charming Wife (for all these *Octavia* was) to take to his Bed a loose abandon'd Prostitute, and shall in her Arms exhaust his Patrimony, destroy his Health, emasculate his Mind, and lose his Reputation and all his Friends, why all this is well and greatly done, his Ruine is his Commendation And if afterwards in Despair, he either hangs or drowns himself or goes out of the World like a Rat, with a Dose of Arsenick or Sublimate why 'tis a great and an envied Fate, he dies nobly and heroically It is, Sir, with extream Reluctance that I have said all this For I would not be thought to affront the Memory of Mr *Dryden*, for whose extraordinary Qualities no Man has a greater Veneration than my self. But that all Considerations ought to give Place to the Publick Good, is a Truth of which you, of all Men, I am sure, can never doubt

And can you believe then, after having recommended Virtue and Publick Spirit for so many Years to the World, that you can give your Subalterns Authority to preach up Adultery to a Town, which stands so little in need of their Doctrine? Is not the Chastity of the Marriage Bed one of the chief Incendiaries of Publick Spirit, and the Frequency of Adulteries one of the chief Extinguishers of it, according to that of *Horace*

Fœcunda culpæ secula, nuptias
Primum inquinavere, & Genus, & Domos,
Hoc Fonte derivata clades
In patriam populumque fluxit

For when Adultery's become so frequent especially among Persons of Condition, upon whose Sentiments all Publick Spirit chiefly depends, that a great many Husbands begin to believe, or perhaps but to suspect, that they who are

called their Children are not their own; I appeal to you, Sir, if that Belief or that Suspicion must not exceedingly cool their Zeal for the Welfare of those Children, and consequently for the Welfare of Posterity.

As I had infinitely the Advantage of *All for Love* in the Moral of *Coriolanus*, I had it by Consequence in the whole Tragedy, for the *Coriolanus*, as I have alter'd it, having a just Moral, and by Consequence at the Bottom a general and allegorical Action, and universal and allegorical Characters, and for that very reason a Fable, is therefore a true Tragedy, if it be not a just and a regular one, but 'tis as just and as regular as I could make it, upon so irregular a Plan as *Shakespear*'s. Whereas *All for Love* having no Moral, and consequently no general and allegorical Action, nor general and allegorical Characters, can for that Reason have no Fable, and therefore can be no Tragedy. 'Tis indeed only a particular Account of what happen'd formerly to *Anthony* and *Cleopatra*, and a most pernicious Amusement

And as I had the Advantage in the Merit of *Coriolanus*, I had it likewise in the World's Opinion of the Merit and Reputation of *Shakespear* in Tragedy above that of Mr *Dryden* For let Mr *Dryden*'s Genius for Tragedy be what it will, he has more than once publickly own'd, that it was much inferior to *Shakespear*'s, and particularly in those two remarkable Lines in his Prologue to *Aurenge-Zebe*

And when he hears his Godlike Romans *rage,*
He in a just Despair would quit the Stage

And in the Verses to Sir *Godfrey Kneller*

Shakespear, *thy Gift, I place before my Sight,*
With Awe, I ask his Blessing ere I write,
With Reverence look on his majestick Face,
Proud to be less, but of his Godlike Race

And the same Mr *Dryden* has more than once declar'd to me, that there was something in this very Tragedy of *Coriolanus* as it was writ by *Shakespear*, that is truly great and truly *Roman*, and I more than once answer'd him, that it had always been my own Opinion. Now I appeal to you and your Managers, if it has lost any thing under my Hands.

But what is more considerable than all this, your Deputy Lieutenants for the Stage have ten times the Opinion of the Advantage which *Shakespear* has over Mr *Dryden* in Tragedy, than either I or the rest of the World have Ever since I was capable of reading *Shakespear*, I have always had and have always exprest that Veneration for him, which is justly his due, of which I believe no one can doubt, who has read the Essay which I publish'd some Years ago upon his Genius and Writings. But what they express upon all Occasions, is not Esteem, is not Admiration, but flat Idolatry.

And lastly, I had the Advantage of the very Opinion which those People had of their own Interest in the Case. They knew very well that it was but twelve Years since *All for Love* had been acted And they were likewise satisfied, that from its first Run as they call it, to the beginning of this last Winter, it had never brought four Audiences together At the same time there was no Occa-

sion to tell them, that the *Coriolanus* of *Shakespear* had not been acted in twenty Years, and that when it was brought upon the Stage twenty Years ago, it was acted twenty Nights together.

And now, Sir, I shall be oblig'd to you, if you will acquaint me, for what mighty and unknown Reason, the *Coriolanus*, notwithstanding yours and their warm Approbation of it, notwithstanding your Words solemnly given to act it, as soon as it could conveniently be brought upon the Stage this Winter, notwithstanding the Merit of the Play it self (I speak of *Shakespear's* part of it), notwithstanding the World's and their own Opinion of the superior Merit of *Shakespear* to Mr *Dryden* in Tragedy, and their very Opinion of their own Interest in the Case, nay notwithstanding the exact Seasonableness of the Moral for the Service of King *George* and of *Great Britain*, which above all things ought to have been consider'd by those who call themselves the King's Servants, and who act under his Authority I say, Sir, I should be extremely oblig'd to you, if you would tell me what powerful Reason could so far prevail over all those I have mention'd, as to engage them to postpone the *Coriolanus*, not only for *All for Love*, but likewise for that lamentable Tragick Farce *Cæzar Borgia*, from which no Body expected any thing but themselves; and a Comedy after it call'd *the Masquerade*, from which they themselves declar'd they expected nothing

March 26. 1719

I am, &c.

To Judas Iscariot, *Esq*;

On the present State of the Stage.

Sir,

I Have been about to write to you every Post for these ten Days, but one Accident or other has still diverted me, but I shall now make more than amends, for *Ingentem tibi Epistolam Impingam*

If I had had the greatest Inclination imaginable to accept of the Invitation which you sent me by your Familiar, yet something has happen'd which would have been a Just, tho' a Ridiculous Impediment. For I had given my word to go another way, in order to pull a certain Beast out of a Ditch, who had fal'n into it, thro' a more than Bestial Stupidity, which engag'd him to look upon things above him, instead of grazing and following the Instinct of Nature. But to speak plain *English*, and return to your Invitation; who could have expected any such thing, from one who had so barbarously abandon'd his old Acquaintance, who had never so much as once in Twenty Years miss'd an opportunity of serving him, and abandon'd him contrary both to Friendship and Politicks. For a Man who deserts his Friend in an Affair in which 'tis reasonable that he should espouse him, does two Things at once to his own Disadvantage. For first, he shews the World that he has no Body's Interest at heart but his own, which Indifference the World, as soon as it perceives it, will be sure to return in Kind Secondly, he gives a pretty convincing Proof,

that he has not Capacity enough to understand his own Interest, for he who in any Point that is reasonable is deaf to his Friend's Interest, is certainly blind to his own Now what Dependance can I have on a Person who make it evident to me, that he neither cares for my Interest, nor understands his own? If you had laid aside the Alteration of *Coriolanus* for better Plays, there had been a plausible Apology for your Breach of Promise But to sacrifice me to Fools, was Impudent as 'twas Barbarous I have read the noble Stuff which you have acted this Winter, all but *Busiris*, which was not publish'd when I left the Town But some Persons, whom I have seen in this place, tell me there is a Rape in it. If that is true, it has a Fault in it for which nothing can make Atonement A Rape is the peculiar Barbarity of our *English* Stage Neither *Grecians* nor *Romans* would suffer it, nor can the *French* at present bear it The very Apprehension of a Rape, tho' the thing did not follow it, damn'd the *Theodore* of *Corneille*, which, if you will believe Monsieur *Hedelin*, is one of his best Tragedies I would fain know from you, who have had a twenty Years Experience of the Stage, for what Reason the Women, who will sit as quietly and passively at the Relation of a Rape in a Tragedy, as if they thought that Ravishing gave them a Pleasure, for which they have a just Apology, will start and flinch like unback'd Fillies, at the least Approach of *Rem* to *Re* in Comedy, unless that Approach happens to be made in the House of Bondage I have been sometimes apt to entertain a Suspicion, that 'tis not the luscious Matter which disturbs them in Comedy, but the secret implicite Satire upon the Sex For a Woman in Comedy never grants the last Favour to one to whom she is not marry'd, but it proclaims the Man's Triumph and her Shame It always shews her Weakness and often her Inconstancy, and sometimes her Fraud and Perfidiousness But a Rape in Tragedy is a Panegyrick upon the Sex For there the Woman has all the Advantage of the Man For she is suppos'd to remain innocent, and to be pleas'd without her Consent, while the Man, who is accounted a damn'd Villain, proclaims the Power of Female Charms, which have the Force to drive him to so horrid a Violence But to return to the other Plays, which you acted this last Winter I have read two Comedies without one Jest in them. But you will say, perhaps, that the Play-House was throng'd for eight or ten Days together at the Representation of these Comedies, perhaps so But then, if it was so throng'd at the Representation of damn'd Plays, I hope my Ears will no more be stunn'd with the Noise of the Improvement of a general Taste, and that for the future no Consequence will be drawn from the Numbers of an Audience to their Capacity For the very same Reason that the Builder's Trade, the Carpenters and the Joyners are so very much improv'd, for the very same Reason that so many fine Houses, so many beautiful Streets, so many stately Squares, and, as it were, whole Towns are building in your North-West Suburbs, for that very same Reason is your Theatre crowded A Penetration that comes far short of Conjuration, may suffice to shew, that the Numbers of the Nobility and Gentry of the Town, and consequently of their Dependants, are exceedingly augmented by some great Events which have happen'd of late Years, *viz* the Revolution, the Union with *Scotland*, the Re-

turn of our Armies from the Continent, and the King's Accession to the Crown. But as for the Improvement of a general Taste, 'tis so great a Blunder, that it could never be thought of among considerate People. 'Tis improv'd indeed with a vengeance, 'tis refin'd in a glorious manner! improv'd as the Taste of a Green-sickness Girl, who leaves palatable Meat for Charcoal, refin'd as the Taste of an Hysterick Woman, who is cherish'd by a Stink, and sickens at a Perfume; or as the Taste of a modern Letcher, who, like a Swine, prefers a Sirreverence to the finest thing in the World The ingenious Diversions, which they follow'd this Winter, their Masquerades, their *Italian* Farces, and their *French* Tumblings, cannot chuse but shew the great Refinement of their Taste. If the general Taste were improv'd, two things would certainly follow, good Plays would be writ, and damn'd ones would not be endured But *Shakespear*'s Plays you will say were crowded, and *Tom. D'Urfey*'s neglected this Winter Be it so I shall shew you in my next, that the Generality of an Audience, in spight of their Practice, have it both in their Heads and their Hearts, to value *Tom D'Urfey*, and to despise *Shakespear*

Hampton-Court.
April 3 1719

I am,
Your, &c

To JUDAS ISCARIOT, *Esq*,

On the Degeneracy of the Publick Taste

SIR,

ABout the middle of the last Month I sent you a long Letter, in which I endeavour'd to shew the Extravagance of that Opinion, that there is at this time among us an Improvement of the general Taste, with relation to Poetry and the *Belles Lettres* And I promis'd in my next to shew the Error or the Falacy of those, who pretend to maintain that Opinion from the crowded Audiences at the Representation of *Shakespear*'s Plays, and the thin ones at those which were writ by Mr *D——y* I promis'd to shew that notwithstanding this Practice of the present Frequenters of the Play-House, they have it both in their Heads and their Hearts to value Mr *D'Urfey* and to despise *Shakespear*, that neither their Approbation nor their Contempt is their own, but assumed and borrowed, and that they approve by Vogue and by Fashion, as a late noble Poet has told us

Their private Wish obeys the publick Voice,
'Twixt Good and Bad Whimsey decides, not Choice,
Fashions grow up for Taste, at Forms they strike,
They know what they would have, not what they like

I promis'd to shew, that the one of these Authors has been esteem'd, and the other contemn'd by Men of Sense so long, that the Approbation of the one, and the Contempt of the other, is come at last to make an Impression on the Rabble, when I mention that Word, I do not mean such a Rabble as you have sometimes on the Stage at *Julius Cæsar* or at *Coriolanus*, but such a Rabble as is but too often beheld in your Pit and Side-Boxes

A very great Part of those who pretend to be in Love with *Shakespear*, if he were now living, and his most celebrated Plays were to be acted *De novo*, without a Cabal, without Character or Prepossession, wou'd Hiss and Damn the very Things of which they are now the fashionable Admirers, which seems plain to me from this very Reason, because the modern Plays which they most approve of, are the very Reverse of *Shakespear's*, with respect either to his Excellencies or his Faults.

Shakespear is very justly celebrated for the Truth and Justness of his Characters, for the Beauty of his Sentiments, for the Simplicity and Dignity of his Dialogue, and for his moving the Passions powerfully by the meer force of Nature. But the present Spectators of Tragedies approve of those most, in which the Passions are mov'd least. They will endure no Modern Tragedy, in whose principal Character Love is not the predominant Quality Now Love predominating in the principal Character, too often falsifies and confounds those Characters, and by Consequence but too often destroys the Beauty of the Sentiments, because no Sentiment can be beautiful, which is improper in him who speaks it. Besides, there are not three of our modern Tragedies, which have any thing like those Sentiments which abound in *Shakespear*, Sentiments, which, at the same time that they shew Sagacity and Penetration, are easie, just, and natural

The modern Readers and Spectators of Tragedies will endure no Tragedy which has the Simplicity and *naiveté* of *Shakespear's* Dialogue, a Simplicity, wherever the occasion requires it, attended with Force, and Dignity, and Pomp, and Solemnity Instead of that noble and natural Dialogue, they are for a flatulant Style, in which the Poet puts the Change upon himself, and speaks almost always himself, instead of making his Characters speak

But as the Readers and Spectators of Modern Tragedies approve of those most, which are the very reverse of *Shakespear's* with respect to his Beauties and Excellencies, so they declare very loudly against his Faults. The Faults of *Shakespear*, which are rather those of the Age in which he liv'd, are his perpetual Rambles, and his apparent Duplicity in some of his Plays, or Triplicity of Action, and the frequent breaking the Continuity of the Scenes The present Spectators declare against this, in appearance, but at the same time approve of this Multiplicity of Action in some Modern Plays, concealed by a Jumble and a Confusion which is incomprehensible and altogether unintelligible Another of *Shakespear's* Faults is the Length of Time employ'd in the carrying on his Dramatick Action. The present Spectators are extreamly shock'd at this in a modern Tragedy, but at the same time approve of those in which the Unity of Time is preserved by offending all Common Sense.

If a Modern Poet in one of his Tragedies should shew any Thing like *Shakespear's* Rambles, should introduce a Tragedy upon the Stage, which should begin in *Europe* and end in *Asia*, like the Moor of *Venice*, that Play would be exploded and damn'd with very great Damnation But the Modern Spectators of Tragedies greatly esteem and are fond of those, in which the Unity of Place

is preserv'd, sometimes by whimsical comick Absurdities, and sometimes by dreadful and prodigious Extravagancies.

From all this I conclude, as I said before, that the Spectators of modern Tragedies, having the greatest Esteem for those, which have least of *Shakespear's* Excellencies, and declaring loudly against his Faults, would damn *Shakespear,* if living

Nor can I believe that several who pretend to be passionate Admirers of *Milton,* would treat him if living in any other manner for the following Reasons.

Because they are so fond of nothing as of that soft and effeminate Rhyme, which makes the very Reverse of the Harmony, and of the manly, and powerful, and noble Enthusiasm of *Milton*

Because the Generality of Poets and Wits his Contemporaries did not esteem him, tho' they were by no means inferior in Understanding to his pretended living Admirers *Willmot* Earl of *Rochester* never so much as mention'd him, in his Imitation of the Tenth Satyr of the first Book of *Horace.* When he came to imitate that Passage, *Forte epos Acei, ut nemo Varius ducit,* instead of *Milton* he names *Waller* And when that noble Peer was some Years afterwards ask'd by Dr *Burnet,* since Bishop of *Salisbury,* for which of the Modern Poets he had most Esteem, he answer'd without the least Hesitation, for *Boileau* among the *French,* and *Cowley* among the *English* Poets Mr. *Rymer* in his first Book of Criticism treated the *Paradise Lost* with Contempt, and the generality of the Readers of Poetry, for twenty Years after it was published, knew no more of that exalted Poem, than if it had been writ in *Arabick* Mr *Dryden* in his Preface before *the State of Innocence,* appears to have been the first, those Gentlemen excepted whose Verses are before *Milton's* Poem, who discover'd in so publick a Manner an extraordinary Opinion of *Milton's* extraordinary Merit And yet Mr. *Dryden* at that time knew not half the Extent of his Excellence, as more than twenty Years afterwards he confess'd to me, and as is pretty plain from his writing *the State of Innocence* For Mr *Dryden,* in that Poem, which is founded on the *Paradise Lost,* falls so infinitely short of those wonderful Qualities, by which *Milton* has distinguish'd that noble Poem from all other Poems that one of these two Things must be granted, either that Mr *Dryden* knew not the Extent of *Milton's* great Qualities, or that he design'd to be a Foil to him. But they who knew Mr. *Dryden,* know very well, that he was not of a Temper to design to be a Foil to any one.

I hope I have said enough to convince you that the Approbations and Censures of the Generality of an Audience are deriv'd from Sentiments which are not their own, and which are the Effects of Authority, and not of Reason. When Men who are, and are esteem'd, Persons of more than ordinary Judgment, have declar'd themselves from time to time, during a Century, or half a Century, concerning Poems Dramatick or others, those Declarations are the Cause, that other Persons at length, being guided by the Light which is held out to them, fondly imagine that it was kindled by that Particle of Heav'nly Fire which they fancy to be within them. But the numerous and violent Cabals, which are form'd to support or decry Dramatick Writings, may serve instead of a thousand Arguments to convince the most obstinate, that there is no such

thing as a general Taste among us. It being absolutely impossible that great Numbers of Persons of a fine Discernment and a true Taste should conspire to extol a Blockhead at the Expence of a noble Art, at the Expence of their own Reputation and the Reputation of their Country, and consequently at the Expence, in a good measure, of that Country's Power and Interest You and your Brethren, who are the present Managers of the Play-House, have of late very justly shewn the extremest Contempt for the general Taste, pretending to set off damn'd Plays, by the glare of new Habits. Which Conduct of you, the Emperors, and Kings, and Princes of the Drama, recalls to my Remembrance what *Boccalin* says of some Princes of *Parnassus*. They had half ruin'd themselves, says that merry *Italian*, by the Expence they had been at to preserve and perfume Sirreverences Yet still, says he, the more Cost they were at, and the more Sweets they bestow'd upon them the more damnably their Conserves stunk in the Nostrils of all who had really Noses Perhaps, if you take the Word in the most diffusive Sense, there never was a general good Taste for Poetry, among any People in the World, if you except the *Athenians*. But there never was so general a one in *England* as there was in modern *France* and *Italy*, before the Opera and some other Things debauch'd it in both those Countries

There has not one great Poet appear'd in *France* since the beginning of Cardinal *Richlieu*'s Ministry, but he has been protected and encourag'd, and his Merit, as fast as it could spread, has been generally acknowledg'd. I wish I could as truly affirm the same thing of *England*. The great Qualities of *Milton* were not generally known among his Countrymen till the *Paradise Lost* had been publish'd more than thirty Years But when that admirable Poet was among the *Italians*, the Greatness of his Genius was known to them in the very Bloom of his Youth, even thirty Years before that incomparable Poem was writ, witness the Epigram of *Selvaggi*, an *Italian* Poet, of which *Dryden*'s Epigram which is under *Milton*'s Picture is nothing but a Paraphrase

Græcia Mœonidem, jactet sibi Roma Maronem,
Anglia Miltonum, jactat utrique parem

Nay, *Salsiki*, a *Roman* Poet, sacrifices the very Honour of his Country, that is, of modern *Italy* to him, by preferring the *Italian* Poetry of *Milton* even to that of *Tasso*

Cede Meles, cedat depressâ Moxéius urnâ
Sebetus Tassum desinat usque loqui
At Thamesis victor cunctis ferat altior undas,
Nam per Te, Milto, par tribus unus erat

And *Giovanni Baptista Manso*, a Noble *Neapolitan*, who had been the intimate Friend of *Tasso*, and the great Patron of *Marino*, while they were living, gives extraordinary Commendations to *Milton*, tho' he was then but a Youth among them, as appears by his *Latin* Verses addrest to that noble *Italian*,

Ergo ego Te Clius, & magni nomine Phœbi
Manse pater, jubeo longum salvere per ævum,
Missus Hyperboreo Juvenis peregrinus ab axe

Milton had then been so far from writing the *Paradise Lost*, that he had never so much as thought of that Subject, but had at that time determin'd, after his Return to *England*, to write an Epick Poem upon the Exploits of *Arthur* and the Knights of the Round Table, as appears by the same Verses to *Manso*

Arthurumque etiam sub Terris bella moventem
Dicam, atque invictæ socialı fœdere mensæ
Magnanimos Heroas, & (o modo spiritus adsit)
Frangam Saxonicas Britonum sub marte phalanges

Thus, you see, the *Italians*, by his juvenile Essays, discover'd the great and growing Genius of *Milton*, whereas his Countrymen knew very little of him, even thirty Years after he had publish'd among them the noblest Poem in the World

But as the general Taste of *England* could be never said to be good, it was never so bad as it is at present, a certain Proof of which, is, that Writings both Dramatick and others were never so infamous as they now are And Taste and Writing always keep Pace with each other. When *Shakespear* first appear'd among us, the Generality of his Readers and his Spectators were much better able to judge of him than they are at present Because, as he was a very natural Writer, and they were without Prejudice, without Prepossession, and without Affectation, and without the Influence of a Coxcomical, Senseless Cabal, they were at Liberty to receive the Impressions which Things naturally made on their Minds

Hampton-Court,
May 25 1719

To Sir Richard Steele

Declaring the Reasons for which I publish'd the two Volumes of Select Works

SIR,

I Here send you by the Bearer, several Pieces in Verse and Prose, writ formerly by me, and lately printed in two Volumes, but I send them not without a double Design on you For first, I desire that you wou'd have the Goodness to oblige your Managers to make me some Recompence this Winter for the Wrong which they did me the last. Secondly, I desire that you will give me leave to say something concerning the Pieces contain'd in these two Volumes, and more particularly concerning the Motive which oblig'd me to write the chief of them at the first, and to publish them lately together, which I shall do with Pleasure to one who has done so much Good in the same Cause in which most of them were writ

Several of the Pieces in Verse and Prose, and three of the Plays, were writ in the Cause of Liberty The narrative Poems of greater Length were all of them written upon Great and Publick Occasions, and were design'd as so

many Panegyricks upon those Illustrious Persons whose Great and Heroick Actions had made them Benefactors to *Great Britain* and Liberty.

It has always been my Opinion, that a free Nation can never be too zealous in maintaining their Liberties, because we have been taught by too many fatal Events, that they have at last been often lost by the Security and Corruptions of those who had for several Centuries enjoy'd them Witness the ancient *Grecians* and *Romans*, and the ancient and modern *Spaniards* and *French* But whenever the Liberties of a great Nation are in manifest Danger, there all the several Members of it, who are not abjectly base, will use their utmost Efforts in defending them The Liberties of *Great Britain* have in our own Memory been in so much Danger, that they have been twice in thirty Years retrieved from immediate Ruin, first by the Revolution, and secondly by the Accession of King *George* to the Imperial Crown of this Island, but even now they by no Means appear to me to be entirely secur'd

Since the Revolution, things appear to have been strangely reverst in *Great Britain* with regard to Liberty In four or five Reigns immediately preceding the Arrival of King *William* of Immortal Memory, the Court was for Arbitrary Power, and the People appear'd strenuous for Liberty But since that time, the Court has for the most part contended for Liberty, and the People, I mean too great a Part of them, have declar'd for Slavery Now, if ever we should come to be under a King, who wou'd sacrifice his Protestant Dissenting Subjects to the High-Church Clergy, we should quickly see whether the Liberties of a Nation are most secure, when a considerable Part of the People (who are their natural Guardians) are resolv'd to defend, or determin'd to resign them In the mean time, Sir, it must be acknowledg'd, to the immortal Honour of the present King, that by endeavouring to secure the Dissenters from such a Treatment in time to come, he is taking the most effectual Method to immortalize Liberty.

Thus, Sir, have I acquainted you with the only Motive of writing the chief of these Poems, which was the Apprehension I had of the Danger, which the Liberties of my Country were in, and consequently the Liberties of the Christian World, of which ours are the strongest Bulwark I wrote them not then as one who espous'd a Party, but as a Lover of my Country, and one zealous to promote the Happiness of *Great Britain*. I have been so far from having any ambitious Aims or any sordid Views of Interest, that I have been contented to see several of the publick Rewards engross'd by some who are luke-warm, and by others who are *Jacobites* in Whig Cloathing, while I have remain'd very poor in a very advanc'd Age But one Thing indeed I have sometimes been apt to think exceeding hard, and that is, that these lukewarm Persons, and these *Jacobites* in Whig Cloathing, should be suffer'd to make use of the Power which they have acquir'd by their Falshood, to the utter Ruin of one who has behav'd himself all along with the utmost Sincerity in the noblest Cause of Liberty

Thus, Sir, have I laid before you the Motive which engag'd me to write the greater part of the Pieces which are contain'd in the two Volumes. I shall

now shew you, how the same Motive oblig'd me to use my Endeavours to preserve them, if they should appear worthy of it, and consequently to publish them in the two fore-mention'd Volumes. It was in *October*, 1716, that I desir'd a Bookseller to collect them for me I thought that after so much Time had pass'd since the writing them, I should be capable of forming as true a Judgment my self of them, as any other Person whatsoever, who has no better Judgment in Poetical Matters than I have, or that the Precept of *Horace, nonum prematur in annum,* must be false and vain.

Upon a very slow and deliberate Perusal of them, I could not but conclude, that with all their Faults they were not altogether depriv'd of that noble Fire, which alone can make them pleasing, nor of that Justness and Solidity which alone can make them lasting I believ'd that if they were publish'd together, they might be able one Day to do some Good to the publick, and no Discredit to me

And I was the more encourag'd to venture on this Publication, because, Sir, you may be pleas'd to remember, that they had been favourably receiv'd by the most illustrious Persons of both Parties for their Judgment in Poetry, and their Knowledge of the *Belles Lettres,* by the late Earls of *Godolphin* and *Halifax,* Mr *Maynwaring* and others among the Whigs, and by the present Duke of *Buckingham* and my Lord *Lansdown* among the Tories And if any Temptation could make me vain, it would be the favourable Opinions of the last two Noble Persons, because as their Judgments in matters of Poetry are unquestion'd they can never be suppos'd to be partial to one, who has all his Life-time appear'd very zealous in contrary Principles to those of a Party which they by some have been suppos'd to favour My Lord *Lansdown,* by making me a Present so noble, as never has been made by a Subject to any Author now living, sufficiently declar'd that what I had writ had not been altogether displeasing to him And 'tis to the warm Approbation which the Duke of *Buckingham* gave to the Poem on the Battel of *Blenheim,* that I owe the Honour of being first known to the late illustrious Earl of *Godolphin,* whose good and great Qualities, and the Benefits which *Great Britain* receiv'd from his good and his wise Administration, make me proud to own him for the first and greatest of my Benefactors.

Thus, Sir, I found Encouragement to preserve these Pieces, and especially the Poems writ in the Cause of Liberty But I was convinc'd at the same time, that the only way to preserve them would be to publish them together. They were in a great many different Hands, and some of them in the Hands of such who were mortal Enemies to the Cause in which they were written Some of them had been very incorrectly printed. The very Subject which ought to recommend them to all *Englishmen,* as well as the Harmony without Rhyme in several of the Poems, made some of them for the present less pleasing to above half the Readers of Poetry Some of them that had once appear'd with Applause seem'd to have been forgot For all things of late Days have been manag'd by Cabal and Party, and there seems to have been a Conspiracy in the

Commonwealth of Learning, among Fools of all Sorts, to exalt Folly at the Expence of Common-sense, and make Stupidity triumph over Merit in the very Dominions of Wit, which has been one of the Causes why Things are reduced to that deplorable State upon our *British Parnassus*. *Apollo* and the Muses seem to have abandon'd it, disdaining that their Divinities should honour a Place with their Songs, where Fools and Pedants, Buffoons, Eunuchs and Tumblers have so often met with Applause

Who could have thought, if he had been told twenty Years ago, that he should outlive Tragedy and Comedy, that he had been promis'd a Life of not quite twenty Years? Yet 'tis very plain that the Promise had extended no further, such is the Power of Cabal and Party

I have all along had a great Aversion to the making a Party, or the entring into a Cabal, and have sometimes look'd upon it with Horrour and sometimes with *Contempt* Who that has Common-sense can forbear laughing, when he sees a Parcel of Fellows, who call themselves Wits, sit in Combination round a Coffee Table, as Sharpers do round a Hazard Table, to trick honest Gentlemen into an Approbation of their Works, and bubble them of their Understandings?

And yet I have all along known, that nothing in the greater Poetry can grow immediately popular without a Cabal or Party I have a long time been convinced, that the more sublimely any thing is writ in Poetry, and the nearer it comes to Perfection, the longer it will be before it grows popular, without such a Cabal, because the more sublimely it is writ, and the nearer it comes to Perfection, the more it is rais'd above the Apprehensions of the Vulgar. And yet notwithstanding this Knowledge, I have all along resolv'd to have no Reputation, or to owe it to my Writings

Thus, Sir, you see the Reasons, why the Writings that make up these two Volumes, or at least the greater Part of them, had been in danger of being lost, if I had not taken Pains during my Life-time to correct and publish them together. There is one more Reason remaining, and that is, the Malice of those People whom the World calls Poets, whose Hatred I have been proud to incur, by speaking bold and necessary Truths in the behalf of a noble Art, which they have miserably abus'd by their vile Poems, and their more vile Criticisms. And yet 'tis from these People that the foolish Readers of Poetry, which are nine Parts in ten, take their Opinions of Poets and their Works, little believing, or once imagining, that these Persons are of all Mankind the very worst qualify'd to judge of their own Art as having neither the Capacity, nor the Impartiality which are requisite for the judging truly For it will be found, generally speaking, that Poets, Painters, and Musicians, are capacitated less than other Men to judge of Poetry, Painting and Musick. This, I must confess, may appear to some to be so bold a Paradox, that I shall endeavour to make it out both by Reason and Authority, tho' I know very well at the same time, that You can make no Doubt of it. The Generality of Poets, Painters and Musicians, are such by the meer Power of a warm Imagination. And 'tis very rarely that a strong Imagination and a penetrating Judgment

are found in the same Subject. We need go no further than *Boileau* to hear that a celebrated Poet is often a contemptible Judge.

Tel excelle a Rimer qui Juge sottement,
Et tel s'est fait par ses Vers distinguer dans la ville,
Qui jamais du Lucain n'a distingué Virgile

As for what relates to Painters, I shall content my self with the Citation of a Remark from the ingenious and judicious Author of the Observations upon *Fresnoy*'s Art of Painting, translated by Mr *Dryden* 'Tis the Fiftieth Remark, upon these Words of Mr *Dryden*'s Translation, 'As being the Sovereign Judge of his own Art.'

This Word, Sovereign Judge or Arbiter of his own Art, pre-supposes a Painter to be fully instructed in all the Parts of Painting, so that being set as it were above his Art, he may be the Master and Sovereign of it, which is no easie Matter Those of that Profession are so seldom endow'd with that supream Capacity, that few of them arrive to be good Judges of Painting· And I should many times make more account of their Judgment who are Men of Sense, and yet have never touch'd a Pencil, than of the Opinion which is given by the greatest part of Painters All Painters therefore may be call'd Arbiters of their own Art, but to be Sovereign Arbiters belongs only to knowing Painters

What is said by this ingenious Gentleman of Painters, is exactly true of Musicians For which I have the Opinion of more than one Master among them, and as to the Truth of this Observation with relation to Poets, I have said enough above

But as Poets are not capable, so neither are they impartial Judges I speak of those who are only Rhimesters For a great Master is for the most part as impartial as he is knowing, but for the rest, the Readers of Poetry would do well to consider, that if a Mistress who is courted by a great many passionate Rivals, should ask any one of them his Opinion of the rest, 'tis ten to one that he would prefer him most, whom he esteem'd least, and whom he believ'd least capable of getting that Mistress from him

Thus, Sir, have I acquainted you with the Motive which oblig'd me to write the greater Part of these Treatises, and which afterwards engag'd me to publish them in the two Volumes, which you will receive with this I hope I shall not be thought troublesome, if in a second Letter I say something in particular of the Pieces both in Verse and Prose However these two Letters will at least convince you of the good Opinion which I have a long time entertain'd both of your Discernment and your Impartiality

Sep 1 1719

I am, SIR,
Your most Humble and
most Obedient Servant,
JOHN DENNIS

DEDICATION TO *THE INVADER OF HIS COUNTRY*

1720

My Lord,

I Take the Liberty to Dedicate to Your Grace *The Invader of his Country*, which is the *Coriolanus* of *Shakespear* alter'd by me And I have presum'd to do this without asking Your Leave, because this is a Dedication of an extraordinary Nature, and an Application to Your Grace for Justice, in a Cause that is determinable by Your Grace alone, by vertue of Your Office, as all Causes of the like Nature, ever since I could remember, have been decided in the last Appeal by Your Grace's Predecessors.

My Lord, *Coriolanus* throws himself at Your Grace's Feet, in order to obtain Justice of You, after having received as injurious Treatment from the petulant Deportment of two or three Insolent Players, as ever he formerly did at *Rome* from the Brutal Rage of the Rabble. He has been banish'd from our Theatre by the one, thro' a mistaken Greediness of Gain, as the other formerly expell'd him from *Rome* thro' a groundless Jealousy of Power.

My Lord, when I tell the World that *Coriolanus* has been unjustly banish'd from our Theatre by two or three Insolent Players, I am sure all those will be apt to believe me, who will reflect with Indignation and Disdain, that that *Roman* is not the first Nobleman whom they have audaciously dar'd to exclude from thence And I hope this provoking Reflection will oblige Your Grace to vindicate Your own just Right, and the Crown's undoubted Prerogative

If the Concern which I have in this Cause were the only thing in Question, I should make a Conscience of giving Your Grace any Trouble about it But, my Lord, 'tis a Cause of far more extensive and more important Consequence 'Tis the noble Cause of Your Country, in which Your Grace has been so Active and so Successful and in which this Play was alter'd, 'tis the Cause of Dramatick Poetry, the Cause of the *British* Muses, and of all those whom They vouchsafe to inspire 'Tis Your Grace who is to determine whether these shall Flourish for the future, and do Honour to *Great Britain*, and consequently to augment, in some measure, the Interest and Power of Your Country, or whether the best Professors of the noblest Art, and the Art it self, must die 'Tis Your Grace who is to determine, whether Gentlemen who have great Capacities, who have had the most generous Education, who have all their Lives had the best and the noblest Designs for the Service of their Country, and the Instruction of Mankind, shall have their worthy Labours supported and render'd effectual to the great Ends for which they intended them, or whether they must all be sacrific'd to two or three Insolent Actors, who have no Capacity, who have had no Education, who have not the least Concern for their Country, who have nothing in their Heads or in their Hearts but low Thoughts, and sordid Designs, and yet at the same time have so much Pride,

and so much insupportable Insolence, as to dare to fly in the Face of the greatest Persons in *England.*

I will now lay the Matter of Fact before Your GRACE, by which I believe you will very easily Discern, that there was a Conspiracy from the beginning, between the three Members of this separate Ministry, as they are pleas'd to call themselves, for the Destruction of this Play. They were engaged to Act it the last Winter by their Words solemnly given, and the acting of it then had been most seasonable, when the Nation was in the uneasy Expectation of a Double Invasion from *Sweden* on the *North,* and from *Spain* on the *West* of *England.* Instead of keeping their Words with me, they Postpon'd a Play, that was writ in the Cause of their Country, in the Cause of their Sovereign, whose Servants as well as Subjects they call themselves, for the most Absurd and Insipid Trifles that ever came upon any Stage They began the Winter with preaching up Adultery to the Town by the Mouth of a Dramatick Priest They ended it much after the rate at which they began it, by teaching Ladies how they may Cuckold their Husbands without the Apprehension of a Discovery; as if any License, or any Patent, would bear these People out in Debauching the People, or as if such a Practice were not sufficient to disannul any Patent. My LORD, in the beginning of this Winter they began to rehearse the Play, after they had dispos'd some of the Comick Parts to Persons who were wholly unfit for them, and maim'd two of the principal Tragick Scenes to that Degree, that I could hardly know them After about five Weeks Rehearsal, the tenth of *November* was fix'd for the Acting the Play. I could not prevail with them to put it off for a Week longer, notwithstanding it was most apparently their Interest more than mine, because there was a daily Expectation of the KING's Arrival. My LORD, when the Tenth of *November* came, these three Religious Persons were, to the wonder of all that heard of it, attack'd with Scruples of Conscience They were inform'd that it was the Third Day of a Young Author at the other House, and it would be Cruel, it would be Barbarous to have my First Day upon the other's Third Thus did these good-natur'd Gentlemen take an occasion from a pretended Tenderness to exercise a real Barbarity. My LORD, I was very easily prevail'd with to put off the Play, but little thought, at the same time, that they design'd to put it off for a Day only I was very much surpriz'd when I found by the Bills, that the Play was to be Acted the very next Day, and that consequently *Friday* was to be my Third Day Now, My LORD, *Friday* is not only the very worst Day of the Week for an Audience, but this was that particular *Friday,* when a Hundred Persons who design'd to be there, were either gone to meet the KING, or preparing here in Town to do that Duty, which was expected from them at His Arrival.

Thus, My LORD, did these good, human, tender-hearted Managers take an occasion to exercise a real Barbarity upon their old Acquaintance, to whom they and their Stage are more oblig'd than to any Writer in *England,* from a pretended Tenderness to one who is a meer Stranger to them, and from whose Success they could expect nothing but the lessening of their Gain. My LORD

the Play was Acted on *Wednesday* the 11th to an Audience of near a Hundred Pound, for so much they own'd to me It was favourably received by the Audience. There did some Malice appear twice, but it was immediately drown'd by the utmost Clamours of Applause On *Thursday* the Play was Acted again to an Audience of between Fifty and Threescore Pounds. And on *Friday* to an Audience of between Sixty and Seventy Pounds Considering the Disadvantages under which we lay, here were fair hopes for the future And on *Friday*, after the Play was done, these tender-hearted Managers caus'd another to be given out, to the Astonishment of the Audience, the Disappointment of those who had reserv'd themselves for the Sixth Day, and the Retrenching three parts in four of my Profits, and this contrary to an Ancient Rule, which has been always observ'd till now by those who have at any time had the Government of a Playhouse, and that is, never to give over a new Play which is favourably received by an Audience as long as it brings Charges And, My LORD, *nothing can be more reasonable and equitable than the Observation of this* Rule For since the Poet ventures his Interest in his Play, which is sometimes *his All, and his Reputation into the bargan, which is his Hope of future Gain*, can any thing be more Just, than that the Masters or Managers of a Play-house should venture their Gain upon a probable prospect of future Profit, the loss of which for two or three Nights they will hardly feel, rather than by laying down a Play abruptly, absolutely ruin the Author, who perhaps has done his part to please

Now, my LORD, I appeal to Your GRACE, if here was not a fair Prospect of Success for the future The Play had been acted three Nights together, to a Hundred, to Sixty, and to Seventy Pound The Play was receiv'd the first Night with Applause The KING, and the Court, and the Parliament, were all coming to Town But notwithstanding all our reasonable Expectation, the *Managers gave out another Play insolently declaring, that no Play was worth* their Acting any longer than it brings a Hundred Pound Now, my LORD, they cannot but know that several Plays which have been but indifferently follow'd the first Days, have afterwards come to be admir'd Plays, and to bring crowded Audiences The best Play which can be writ by an Author who has not a Cabal, will hardly bring a Hundred Pound upon the second and fourth Nights, and the worst that can be writ by a Poetaster who has a Cabal, may do a great deal more As long as the publick Taste is so vitiated as it is at present, bad Plays are like to be more crowded than good ones So that, by their own Declaration, as long as these Persons have the Management of the Play-house, there can be no Improvement of the publick Taste, good Writers are sure to be discourag'd, and the Art of the Drama, in a little time, is certain to be lost, and the Art of Writing is sure to be followed by the Art of Acting For great Actors are not to be made but by Original Parts, and as 'tis an eternal general Rule, that a Copy has neither the free Spirit nor easy Grace of an Original, so the Copy of a Copy is still more faint, and the several succeeding Copies grow weaker still the further they descend from the Original.

till all Life and all Resemblance comes at last to be lost. But if any one happens to object to him, that when a young Man who has a Talent for Acting comes to Act a Part of which he has seen neither the Copying nor Original Actor, that Part is to him an Original one To him I answer, that most of our Poets having had either the Address or the Weakness (I leave it to Your GRACE to determine which) to write to the Manners and the Talents of some particular Actors, it seems to me to be absolutely impossible, with Submission to Your GRACE's Judgment, that any Actor can become an admirable Original, by Playing a Part which was writ and design'd for another Man's particular Talent.

Thus have I laid before Your GRACE the Reasons why the Conduct of the present Managers must destroy the very Species of Dramatick Poets and Players And these Reasons, which I hope are clear in themselves, are confirm'd by infallible Experience It being evident from Fact, that all our principal Dramatick Poets and Players have been form'd while our Theatres were under the Lord Chamberlain's Regulation, and that both Writing and Acting have gradually fall'n off, since the Players have pretended to exclude him from his Jurisdiction over them And, my LORD, 'tis a melancholy thing to consider, that there is not at present in *Great Britain* one promising Genius, or promising Actor, growing up for the Stage

As every Branch of Poetry in *England* must fall with the Dramatick, there being here no constant visible Encouragement for Poets, but what is deriv'd from the Stage, I appeal to Your GRACE, whether it is worth while, to turn Poetry, which is the noblest, and perhaps the only Original Branch of the *British* Learning, out of the Nation, only to advance the Lucre of three Actors

Thus, My LORD, have I laid this Cause before Your GRACE, not without flattering my self that I have fully made it appear to You, that I have been us'd with extream Injustice by the Managers of the Play-house Before this Play came upon the Stage, it had the Approbation of some of the very best Judges in *England*, who are so, and are universally acknowledg'd to be so, and who are too exalted both by their High Stations, and the Greatness of their Minds, to say a thing to me, which they did not think I have had this Play long enough by me to form as true and as sure a Judgment of it my self, as any one can do who understands Poetical Matters no better than my self. And as a Man who is opprest is allow'd to speak Truth in his own behalf, I humbly conceive, that nothing comparably to it has been produced at the Theatre in *Drury-Lane*, since these People had the Management of it, not excepting Mr. *Cibber's Heroick Daughter*, who, for ought I know, may be more Heroick than the Daughter of *Corneille*, but there is this remarkable Difference between them, that *Corneille's* is Beautiful and Spiritual, and Mr. *Cibber's* Ugly and Insipid

My LORD, I humbly beg Your GRACE's Pardon, for speaking these few Words in my own behalf, which I do not absolutely despair of obtaining, when I consider that *Cibber* has lately employed thirty Pages in his own fulsom Commendation

My LORD, the Mention of this Player naturally brings me to another thing which Your GRACE is now to determine, and that is, whether this is not only mine, but the Cause of Dramatick Poetry it self, of all the Writers, and of all the Lovers of it I hope I have made it appear, that all these join with me in this Petition to Your GRACE for a Redress of intollerable Grievances, which none but the KING and Your GRACE can Redress, that we who have scorn'd to be Slaves to our Princes, may be no longer subject to the ridiculous Tyranny of our own wretched Creatures, our own Tools and Instruments, that They may no longer set up for Judges in their own Cause, which *Englishmen* would never allow to their Kings, that They may no longer usurp a Government, which they have neither Capacity, nor Equity, nor Authority to support, and of which Your GRACE is the Lawful Monarch How glorious will it be for Your GRACE to Protect and Preserve so noble an Art, and the only reasonable publick Diversion that ever was yet invented! And how much will it endear Your GRACE's Name and Memory to all the Writers and Lovers of Dramatick Poetry, both present and to come! My LORD, as all those Persons will be highly pleased with an Alteration in the Management of the Stage, they certainly expect it from Your GRACE's Beneficence, from Your Love to Your Country, from Your Knowledge and Love of Letters, and from the Greatness of Your Mind. I am,

My LORD,
Your GRACE's
most Obedient, and
most Humble Servant,
John Dennis

THE CHARACTERS AND CONDUCT OF SIR JOHN EDGAR, CALL'D BY HIMSELF SOLE MONARCH OF THE STAGE IN DRURY-LANE; AND HIS THREE DEPUTY-GOVERNORS. IN TWO LETTERS TO SIR JOHN EDGAR

1720

To Sir *John Edgar*

Dirut, ædificat, mutat quadrata rotundis,
Quod petut spernit, repetit quod nuper omisit,
Æstuat, & vitæ Disconvenit ordine Toto Hor

Sir JOHN,

THE World has a long Time wonder'd that you, who have so many Years endeavour'd to pass for a Person of the greatest Probity of the Age, should constantly chuse to go by an *Alias*, which is almost always an infallible Sign of a Knave But notwithstanding your setting forth in Disguise, during this Season of *Masquerades*, I no sooner took up your Paper, but I found several as distinguishing Marks of your Mind, as your Black Peruke, and your Dusky Countenance are of your Right Worshipful Person The Pedantry of your *Motto*, the Singularity of your Style, which has a Smack of *Taperarian*, as *Lucy's* had of *Patavinity*, your impertinent Praise of your Son, your diffuse Description of him, of his Person, his Parts, his Address (*id populus curat scilicet*) and above all, that Characteristical Stroke of Vanity, where you tell us, that you are very well entertain'd in an Assembly, where those who in other Conversations pass for fine Gentlemen, and fine Ladies, would be uninform'd Savages, all these denote you to be a certain Person, whom the King has graciously vouchsaf'd to Knight, and who has since with wonderful Goodness, Modesty, Wisdom, and Gratitude, bewail'd in Publick, that his Majesty has been so Gracious

Well! my dear Knight, thou seest I have found thee out, and having found thee to be my old Acquaintance, I may make a little more free with thee, than if thou wert a meer Stranger. Yet however I may mislike thy Design, I cannot but commend the Greatness of thy Spirit, who being a Knight in Reality, wilt no longer be a Squire not even in Masquerade, which has more than once oblig'd a Dutchess to dwindle into a Dairy Maid, but art resolv'd, like a true Man of Honour, to be tenacious of it alone and in the Dark.

But 'tis Time to come to the Business. You say you are engaged, by the generous Concern of an old Lady, to undertake in this publick Manner, the Preservation and Improvement of the *English* Stage If I presume now to give you a little wholesome Advice, will not you be Angry?

Lay aside this foolish Design. You have neither Capacity, nor Learning, nor Authority, for such an Undertaking. What! Do you pretend to set up

for a Preserver and Improver of the publick Tast? You, who have done more *to corrupt it, and to destroy it, than any* Hundred Men in all *England?* You, *of whose Errors in Judgment in your* Lucubrations and Speculations, one *might compile whole* Volumes? You, who by your Criticisms, and by your *Conduct, have brought the Stage to a Sort of a Loosing Loadum,* where they who write worst, are sure to succeed best Once more, I say, lay aside this foolish Design, or rather this foolish Pretence, for 'tis not your Design to improve any Thing, but your own Privy-Purse, Sir *John*, and you have been Twenty Years in improving that, and are just where you begun, so unlucky you are at improving, Sir *John* The Truth of the Matter is this You, and your Viceroy, *C————r*, and the rest of your Deputy Governors, have got the *Ill-will of the Court*, and Town, by *exerting several noble Qualities, too well known both to Court and Town, to be mentioned here.* Now your Interests being dependant on each other, and as it were the same, you have concerted and contrived between you, like to *Bessus*, and the Brothers of the Sword, to play the Game into each others Hands, so to retrieve your Interests, and your false Reputations and to cast a Mist before the Eyes of those who never were clear-sighted In order to this, you are to cry them up for accomplish'd Actors, and for inoffensive irreproachable Persons, and they are to extol you to the Skies, for a noble-minded, bright, and most generous Patron, and *C————r* is to place you among the Gods, as the *Romans* did their Emperors, by making you fly like an Eagle to them

There is not one of those few Readers, who have vouchsaf'd to read the Papers call'd the *Theatre*, but see through the Design of them. While you and your Deputies, like Four Babies, put your Fingers before your Eyes, and being Blind your selves, fancy that no body else can See

For do but consider with what intolerable Blunders you begin You doubt not, you say, but you shall bring the World into your Opinion, that the Profession of an Actor, who in the other part of his Conduct is irreproachable, ought to receive the same kind Treatment, which the World is ready to pay all other Artists I will not quarrel with you about your *English* here I shall let that alone till the end of the Letter At present I shall only take Notice of Things You must give me Leave at present only to tell you, that you are running a Way that is quite Counter to the Improvement of the Stage For to improve the Stage, it would be necessary to admonish your Deputies to mend their Faults, and to augment their Talents, whereas you are for annihilating the first, and magnifying to such a Degree the last, as to imply that there is no Room for improving them But the Truth of the Matter is, that tho' the Conduct of your Actors were Irreproachable, which no body will affirm but your self, and their Talents in their Kind incomparable, which neither they nor you believe, yet would they by no Means be equal to some other Artists

Yet this Paradox you pretend to maintain by the Authority of *Cicero*. As if the greatest Authority in the World could signify any Thing against Reason and Experience, which are both against you, as we shall shew anon I shall at

present maintain, that the Authority of *Cicero* is as much against you, as either Reason, or Experience.

To shew you that I am resolved to agree with you, as much as I possibly can, I will not quarrel with the Sense of your pretended Quotation from *Cicero*. I will only quarrel with the Application of it *Cicero*, you say, observes, in the first Book of his Offices, *That Persons are to be esteemed Genteel, or Servile, according as the Arts or Capacities in which they are employed, are Liberal, or Mechanical He esteems those Liberal, in which the Faculties of the Mind are chiefly employed, and those Mechanical, in which the Body is the more laborious Part* Now from hence you are pleased to infer, that the Employment of an Actor depending upon the Labour of the Mind, more than upon that of the Body, a good Actor ought as much to be valued and esteem'd as any other Artist whatever A very surprizing Inference! For to convince you that this Passage of *Cicero* can never be screw'd nor tortur'd to the Advantage of Actors, that Orator, in his Oration for *Archias* the Poet, asserts in the Compass of four Lines, what is contradictory of each of the Branches of the foresaid Inference For speaking of the Concern which the *Romans* had lately shewn for the Death of *Roscius* he thus argues from it, to the Advantage of *Archias Ergo ille Corporis motu, tantum amorem sibi conciliarat à nobis omnibus Nos animorum incredibiles motus, celeritatemque ingeniorum negligemus?*

Now here the *Roman* Orator plainly asserts two Things First, That the Employment of an Actor depends more upon the Body than upon the Mind And Secondly, That the Esteem which we ought to have, ev'n for an excellent, inoffensive, irreproachable Actor, is infinitely less than what we ought to have for several other Artists By the way, we shall take Occasion to convince you anon, that excellent inoffensive, irreproachable Actors, are now-a-days black Swans

But suppose we should allow that the Employment of an Actor depends more on the Mind than it does on the Body, is it not monstrous to conclude from thence, that an Actor ought to be as much esteem'd as any other Artist whatever? The Employment of a Pedant certainly depends more upon the Mind than it does on the Body But shall we infer from thence, that a Pedant ought to be as much esteem'd, as an accomplish'd Divine, or a consummate Statesman?

But you are pleas'd, Sir *John*, to proceed to still greater Wonders *For*, say you, *if there be no Objection against what the Orator says, that Men are to be consider'd only from their Abilities*, (by the way, the Orator never said any thing like it,) *let them severest Enemies name the Profession, which requires Qualifications for the Practice of it, more elegant, more manly, more generous and more ornamental, than that of a just and pleasing Actor* That is to say in plain *English*, That a just and pleasing Actor has Qualifications as elegant, as manly, as generous, and as ornamental, as any one of any Profession whatever That is to say, that *Dogget* and *Ben Johnson*, being just and pleasing Actors, have Qualifications as elegant, as manly, as generous, as ornamental, as ever had formerly Archbishop *Tillotson*, or my Lord Chancellor *Bacon*

Now, Sir John, can you forbear laughing, upon the reading this, at the *Repetition of your own Extravagance? But besides that all this is monstrously and ridiculously false, and the reverse of common Sense,* you knock your own pretended Design on the Head, which is the Improvement of the *British Stage,* and are the very worst Enemy that the Actors can possibly have. For by augmenting the Pride of these People by your vain Assertions, you are sure at the same time to augment their Insolence, their Impudence, their Ignorance and their Arrogance, which will render them absolutely unimproveable, and bring them further into Disgrace with the Court and Town, till they become at last insupportable. Therefore 'tis plain, from your taking this Method, that either you do not design the Improvement of the Stage, notwithstanding your Pretence, or that you do not understand it

But I, who really and sincerely intend the Improvement of the Stage, will shew that I understand it better than you, and will be a better Friend to these People, by shewing them what They really are, and by that means rendring them humble, and consequently docile and improveable For I pretend to shew both you and them, that Actors are so far from having the great Qualities of extraordinary Men, that they have not the Understanding and Judgment of ordinary Gentlemen, because they have not had their Education

I defy any one to name so much as one great Actor in my Time, who had had a generous Education, that is, who had from his Youth been train'd up to Arts and Sciences Nor do I know of any one great Actor, since the Establishment of the Stage in *England,* who had extraordinary Parts

Shakespear, indeed, had great Parts, but he was not a great Actor

Otway and *Lee* had both Education and Parts, but they were wretched Actors, which soon oblig'd them to quit the Stage, and take up a nobler Employment

There cannot be a more certain Sign of the Meanness of Actors Capacities, than their being the worst Judges in the World of the very Things about which they are eternally employ'd. And the present Actors, who are the Managers of the Play-House, have given all the World an irrefutable Proof, that they have still less Knowledge of Plays than had any of their Predecessors For have not they turn'd Booksellers *mal à propos,* and given a Hundred and twenty Pound for the Copy of a Play, for which none of their Predecessors would have given Five Pound? Perhaps they may say, that they depended upon the Interest of the Author, and a numerous Cabal. A very foolish Dependance! and which sets in a full Light their want of Understanding For tho' the Interest of an Author, and a numerous Cabal, may go a great way towards a Theatrical Success, they will be so far from availing a Bookseller, that on the contrary, the Publishing of a damn'd Play, which has had Success upon the Stage, is very certain to put an End ev'n to that Success

The very Employment of an Actor makes him less capable of understanding Plays, than those who have other Affairs, and other Diversions. For as a Sot and a Rake, who runs from Tavern to Brandyshop, from Brandyshop to Tavern,

and is continually swilling, deadens his Palate, and depraves his Taste to that degree, that he is utterly incapable of distinguishing between brew'd and sophisticated Liquors, and the pure and generous Juice of the Grape So Players, who are always swallowing their Parts, and getting by Rote with equal Application, and equal Earnestness, what a Person who has a noble Genius produces, and what a wretched Poetaster scribbles, become utterly incapable of distinguishing between the pure and golden Stream that flows from the immortal Fountain of *Hippocrene,* and that which springs from a muddy Source

Their sordid Love and Greediness of Gain, contributes not a little to the corrupting their Understandings For when a foolish Play happens to have a Run, as they call it, their sordid Temper inclines them to believe it good It immediately becomes what they call a Stock Play; and is regarded as a Standard.

If you can gain so great a Point, as to make Players pass for Men of great Abilities, and for inoffensive irreproachable Persons, you will stem a strong Current, which has prevail'd in the World for above Two Thousand Years. At *Rome,* during the Purity of the Commonwealth, they were accounted infamous, and the *Censors* of the Republick never fail'd to remove them from the Tribe in which they found them, to a lower In *France* they are always excommunicated, and no Priest will, or dares to absolve them, till they are in the Article of Death Here in *England,* they have always been look'd upon as Vagabonds and Rogues by Statute, unless they have been under the Protection of our Kings, or of some of our *English* Peers Yet in this last Case, I have been credibly inform'd, that, for great Misdemeanors, they have been sent to *Whitehall,* and whipt at the Porter's Lodge. And I have heard *Jo Haines* more than once ingenuously own, that he had been whipt twice there.

If *C————r,* in the Days of King *James,* or King *Charles* the First, had dar'd to treat a Lord Chamberlain with half the Insolence that he has lately done the present, he would have been made an errant Bullbeggar His Bones would have been as bloody, as his Head is raw

I have now shewn you, what the Sense of the best and wisest Nations is, and has been, with relation to Actors If I may be allow'd to speak my own, I am inclin'd to believe that good Actors, as long as they are irreproachable in the rest of their Conduct, ought to be encourag'd and esteem'd, yet to be encourag'd and esteem'd as Actors, not as Gentlemen, nor as Persons who have a Thousand times their Merit But that ev'n the best Actors, with the most unblameable Conduct, are never to be trusted with Power The trusting People with Power, who have neither Birth nor any Education, is sure to make them insolent, not only to Poets by whose Labours they live, but to Persons of the very first Quality in *England.*

Besides what has happen'd lately, I remember the Time in a former Reign, when Three Peers of *England,* a Duke and Two Earls, both the one and the other some of the most Illustrious of their respective Benches, wanted Power

to get one poor Comedy acted, a certain insolent, impertinent Actor, who has lately reviv'd his Insolence with large Additions, had (thro' old *Rich's* Weakness, whom he led by the Nose) Power to withstand them all

Well then, Sir *John*, I would have good Actors, as long as they are inoffensive, esteem'd and encourag'd as Actors, that is, as the Tools and Instruments, and Machines of the Muses, as the Apes of a Poet's Meaning, and the Eccho's and Parrots of his Voice But if they once dare to grow insolent, if they behave themselves like Beggars on Horseback, and not only ride furiously as soon as they are up, but endeavour to ride over those very Persons who but the *Moment before mounted them, they ought to be us'd like Indians who run* a-muck in their own Country, or like Dogs who run mad in ours

I come now to consider Actors in particular, as they are at present upon the *English* Stage, which you say you prefer to any other in *Europe* I will not dispute that with you, because it signifies nothing to the Purpose But has the *English* Stage made any Improvement, since it has been under the Intendency of this separate Ministry? Has it not vilely degenerated? Are there either the great Actors that were upon it Thirty Years ago, or any such new entertaining Comedies as from Time to Time appear'd upon it? Is there any Promise of a future Poet? Is there any Promise of a future Actor? No, all is going to Ruin The Stage is sinking under you, and there is no Hope of saving it but by getting it out of the Hands of the Separate Ministry

I know very well, that the present Managers of the Stage, empty by Nature, and vain by Success, value themselves abundantly upon their crowded Audiences But how little Discernment, nay, how little common Sense is requir'd, to know, that their full Audiences are only the Effects of the Numbers of their Spectators increas'd by several great Events which have happen'd of late Years, as, the Revolution, the Union, the King's Accession to the Crown and the Return of our Armies from the Continent? This is the only Reason why the Audiences are fuller than they were formerly, when they were far better entertain'd

But while the Stage is thus sinking under you, by the Conduct of your Deputies, and your own, you are bragging that they will exalt it higher than those of the *Grecians*, and *Romans*, like a frank Godfather, you Promise and vow strange Things in their Names, which like most other Godfathers, and other Godchildren, neither they nor you will ever keep, or perform But is there any Thing in the Course of Nature, that can encourage you to make such a Promise? For you may take my Word for it, the World has done taking you for a Conjurer, and is come to believe that you deal with the Devil only, like other Sinners Is there then any Thing in the Course of Nature, that can encourage you to make such a Promise? Is Ruin become the Road to Exaltation? Or must the Stage be buried like a Plant, in order to rise and Flourish?

But, Sir *John*, I am heartily sorry, for your Sake, that you made any Mention of the *Grecian* Stage You had better have stuck to that of *Rome*. For if we may judge of the future by the past, you will be much more Æmulous

of the *Roman* Stage, than the *Grecian* The *Grecian* Stage was supported by great Originals. The *Roman* Stage, for the most Part, by Copies of those Originals. The *Romans* had very few Plays that were worth one Farthing, but what they borrow'd from the *Grecians,* as you, and your Deputy Governor, borrow from the *French* The Romantick Lady, in the *Tender Husband,* is taken from the *Precieuses Ridicules* of *Moliere* But there is this Difference between *Moliere's* Comedy and yours

Moliere's Comedy was very seasonable, And for that very Reason, among others, was very entertaining and instructive It appeared at a Time, when the Family of the *Precieuses* was as numerous at *Paris,* as that of the *Coquettes* is at present in this wicked Town But that Large and Fantastick Family disappear'd at once upon the Acting of that Comedy, like Nocturnal Vapours upon the rising of the Sun But the Romantick Lady, in the *Tender Husband,* is so singular a Monster, that she can neither be instructive nor delightful For if a Comick Poet does not Paint the Times in which he lives, he does nothing at all But the Reading Romances, and Books of Knight Errantry, had long been out of Fashion, before the *Tender Husband* appear'd

The Lying Lovers is made up of Two Plays of *Corneille, The Lyar,* and *The Sequel of the Lyar* I shall say no more of it, than that it is a very wretched Copy of a very indifferent Original For Comedy was not the Talent of *Corneille* Your Champion, and your Deputy Governor, has made as bold with the *French,* as you, and to as good a Purpose, he has bravely turn'd the *Tartuffe* of *Moliere* out of Ridicule But then to commute for that Offence, he has with equal Bravery Burlesqu'd the *Cid* of *Corneille* We may guess, as I said before, at your future Conduct, by your past You, and your Deputy Governor, will go on to borrow from the *French,* and continue to rail at them. 'Tis not enough for some People to Rob, unless they likewise Murder. But how generous was the Conduct of the old *Romans,* when compar'd with yours? They borrow'd from the *Grecians,* as you do from the *French,* and came short of the *Grecians* in what they Borrow'd, as you Two do of the *French* But then they frankly own'd the Obligations they had to them, and own'd them their Superiors If *Horace* imitated *Pindar,* as he did very much, He had the Modesty and the Prudence to affirm, that *Pindar* is Inimitable

But the Mention of the *Grecian* and *Roman* Stage, recalls to my Remembrance, that neither the *Athenians,* nor the *Romans,* would by any Means suffer their Actors to have the Management of their Stage, nor would it ever be suffer'd in *France,* if the Actors were not all Excommunicated, who being consequently look'd upon as a living Portion of the Damn'd, and the Devil's advanced Guard, no Man of Condition dares appear at the Head of them

That Players shou'd have the Management of the Stage, you see was contrary to the Sense of the Ancient *Grecians* and *Romans,* and is suffer'd by the *French,* only on the Account of their being under Excommunication How it was managed among us, before the Reign of King *Charles* II. I will not pretend to tell exactly But I have strong Reasons to believe, that it was always under

the Inspection and Regulation of the Court. For Forty Years after the Restoration, it was always under the Regulation of my Lord Chamberlain. And during those Forty Years, it flourish'd exceedingly, and was illustrious for Great Wits, and famous for Great Actors The great Writers have disappear'd, and the few good Actors who remain, are like to have no Successors The Muses have abandon'd it with Disdain, as scorning to be controll'd by Wretches, who neither know nor value their Merit, and who, like the Dunghill-Cock in *Æsop*, when they find a Jewel, reject it for a Barley-Corn Yet you, forsooth, pretend to make it outvy all that ever appear'd at *Athens*, by running counter to those very Methods, which rais'd the *Athenian* Stage so high But to make the Extravagance and the Ridicule of this appear more strongly, I will endeavour to shew you, what the Virtues and the Capacities of your Deputies are, who are to bring about this great Event I will send you their several Pictures very graphically drawn, and you are too gallant a Person, Sir *John*, to take it ill, if by the Light of their Pictures, I set your own before your Eyes

I will begin with your Deputy Governor, who being living, yet speaketh not I will shew you, what his Religion, his Zeal, his Piety are, what his Moral and Social Virtues, his natural Affection, his Concern for his Wife and Children, and his Regard for the rest of Men I shall dwell longer upon his Intellectual Qualities, because his is all the Power of the Stage, to whom his Brother Ministers are but Cyphers, and you a mere Nominal Sovereign, an errant Duke of *Venice* I shall give you a Taste of his great Learning, and of his Knowledge of the Art of the Stage I shall shew you how deeply he is read in History which he talks of, and how conversant he is in that Dramatick Poet, whom he most pretends to admire I shall then appeal to your own partial Judgment, whether this is not a proper Governor for the Stage, a Worthy Judge of the Works of Art, and highly qualified to approve or condemn the Plays which Authors bring you I shall leave it to your own partial Judgment, whether a Theatre, with so sanctified and so understanding a Person at the Head of it, so illustrious for his Virtue and for his good Nature, is not certain to make that Theatre outvye all that ever appear'd at *Athens*, is not sure to give our Neighbours a Pattern of a Wise, a Learned and a Virtuous Stage

What *Butler* tells us of the Religion of *Hudibras*, is justly applicable to the Deputy Governor

For his Religion it is fit
To match his Learning and his Wit

For having neither Wit by Nature, nor Learning by Education, he has Religion neither by Nature nor Education But here, Sir *John*, I desire that you would not mistake me I do not pretend that a Player ought to act the Saint· But then I wou'd not have him Impious, I wou'd not have him Blasphemous The Deputy Governor has not so much as the first Principles of Natural Religion, without which there can be no Government, and no Society among Men. This irreproachable, inoffensive Person has a thousand times denied the very Being of a God He has made his Brags and his Boasts of that senseless Infidelity He has told all the World, that he retain'd it lately, when he believ'd he was in

the Article of Death. O, the Manly, the Elegant, the Generous, the Ornamental Qualifications of a Miscreant, who is stupid enough to believe, that though there is Mind and Spirit in his wretched Carcass, there is none in the Heavens! For the Christian Religion, he does not modestly doubt of it, nor dispute candidly against it, but attacks it with the most impudent and outrageous Insolence. 'Tis credibly reported, that he spit on the Face of our Saviour's Picture at the *Bath*, with Words too execrable and too horrible to be repeated

As Religion is the only solid Foundation of every Moral Duty, we ought not to be surpriz'd, if he who owns that he is wholly destitute of that, is void of all Moral and Social Virtues He has neither Tenderness for his Wife, nor natural Affection for his Children, nor any sympathizing Regard for the rest of Men. He has, in the Compass of two Years, squander'd away Six Thousand Pounds at the *Groom Porter's*, without making the least Provision for either his Wife or his Children He has not the least Regard for the rest of Men, and has had the Impudence to declare that if he were on one Side of the Way, and some miserable Creature were on the other, rack'd with the most tormenting Pain, and roaring aloud for Succour, He would not cross the Chanel to give him Ease, nor to save him from Death and Damnation And yet this Caitiff pretends to be Loyal As if it were possible for any one to *Honour the King*, who *neither fears God, nor regards Men* Thro' what Motive can he be Loyal? We can give some Account of our Loyalty, Because the King protects us by his Just, his Mild, and his Gracious Government, protects us in our Civil and Religious Rights, protects our Relations, our Friends and Companions, who are all of them dear to us, and whose Happiness is, by Reflection at least, our own But *C*————*r* has neither God nor Religion, Relation, Friend, nor Companion, for whom he cares one Farthing What Interest can he, who centers wholly in himself have to be Loyal to a good and gracious King? He must be for Absolute Power in his Heart, and would do his Business best in an Arbitrary Reign He must be qualify'd for consummate Villany, and would be a rare Tool for a Tyrant

I should now proceed to give an Account of his Intellectual Qualifications But I am oblig'd to postpone such an Account a little, in order to the acquainting you, that it has been for some Time Matter of Wonder to me, that this extraordinary Person, who *neither fears God, nor regards Men*, should fall down and idolize you, and that you, who for so many Years together have had nothing in your Mouth but Religion, Honour, Conscience, Justice, Benevolence, Innocence, should pretend to make one, who *neither fears God, nor regards Men*, pass upon the World for an inoffensive, irreproachable Person, nay, for one of manly, elegant, generous, ornamental Qualifications What can be the Meaning of this, Sir *John*? Have you really a Mind to throw off the Mask at last, and to own to the World, that all those plausible Words, Religion, Honour, Conscience, Justice, Beneficence, Innocence, with some *Nomenclators* mean one and the same Thing, and that is, private Interest? That they are with some Persons, nothing but a sort of a conjuring Cant, a kind of a *Hocus*

Pocus Language, by virtue of which, he who uses them, does all his Tricks of *Legerdemain* without being discover'd, and calls the Money out from other People's Pockets into his own? Is this the Case, Sir *John*? Or are you pleas'd with your Deputy's offering Incense to you, after his spitting in the Face of our Saviour? Or are there some extraordinary Qualities, which being common to you both, cause this Union of Affections, and this Sympathy of Souls?

I believe I have hit the Mark This last is certainly the Thing There are several extraordinary Qualities which are common to both of you, which have caus'd this Union of Affections, and this Sympathy of Souls

In the first place, you have both of you risen from very inconsiderable Beginnings You, Sir *John*, if I have not been misinform'd, are descended from a Trooper's Horse, and your Deputy Governor was begot by a Cane-Chair upon a Flower-Pot There is no great Harm in all this But then you have both of you shamelesly flown in the Faces of the very Persons who rais'd you

In the Second place, You are both of you great Squanderers, one of you an avaritious Squanderer, and the other both an avaritious and a vainglorious one His Purse and yours seem to be contriv'd, like a certain Knight's Fish-Pool, the Purses let out Gold, as the Fish-Pool does Water, as fast as they take it in

Your Deputy, in the Compass of two Years, has thrown away Six Thousand Pounds at the *Groom-Porter's*, without making the least Provision for his Family, yet Hope still remains at the Bottom of the Box for him, for which Reason, he is hopelesly undone

You, Sir *John Edgar*, have been a Squanderer in Three Elements Some of your Gold has been consum'd in *Rosycrucian* Fire When you and *Burnaby* the Poet, and *Tully*, the late Warden of the *Fleet*, enter'd into an Indenture Tripartite, as *Face*, and *Subtle*, and *Doll Common* had done before you, but with this Difference, that these last were Cheats, whereas you and your Brethren were Gulls With an Eagerness, like that of Sir *Epicure Mammon*, were you embark'd in the Search of your *Aurum potabile*, when you us'd to say to one another, over your Midnight Suppers, *Drink, and be Rich*

Some of your Pelf has been wasted in the Smith's Forge, not out of any sordid Desire of Gain, but Zeal for the Service of the Ladies Petticoats

More has been lost in the vast Depths of the Ocean, in Quest of Cod-Fish and old Lang.

What noble Designs, and what glorious Projects for the *Censor of Great Britain*, and for the Auditor General of the Universe? Still more of your Money has been scatter'd in Air, where for so many Years you have been building Castles, and will continue to build, to squander, and to consume, till the Earth gets the better of her Sister Elements, and you and your Projects disappear together

There is a Third extraordinary Quality, Sir *John*, which is common to you and your Viceroy, which is, That you have both of you, for several Years together, been the celebrated Authors of other People's Works. Your Muses

have a pretty near Resemblance with a certain Comedian's Wife, who passing with the Cully who married her for a Virgin, had several Children by other Persons, before her Husband lay with her I make no doubt but that your Muses are the more agreeable to both of you, because they are so very prolifick without any Trouble of yours. For you are sure of the Profit, and you have both of you enough of that Sort of Philosophy which is of the natural Growth of *Tipperary*, to despise the Infamy Which puts me in mind of a notorious Tragedian, who being admonish'd by his Friends not to marry a certain Strumpet, of whose acquir'd Attractions he was grown very fond, because such a Marriage would bring Shame and Infamy upon him, swore by G———, that he lik'd her the better for it

With how great Satisfaction, nay, with how great Joy, with how great Transport have I often reflected, that you and your Viceroy have infinitely surpass'd old *Villers Bays* of *Brentford*! That he has entirely submitted to his two younger Brothers, *Dicky Bays*, and *Colley Bays*, of the Hundred of old *Drury*! You are come to contemn his obsolete Rules, his *Regula Duplex*, his Rule of Transversing and Transposing (Tho' I think, by the way, Sir *John*, you were formerly often in at the latter) You are come to despise his Rule of Record, his Rule by way of Table-talk You have shewn, that you look with Scorn on his Rule of Invention, and his *Drama* Common-Place-Book He, poor Mortal, was contented to glean here and there a Sentence, sometimes from *Plutarch*, sometimes from *Seneca*, and sometimes from modern *Montaign* Whereas you have found a shorter way to *Parnassus* You and your Viceroy bravely and boldly seize upon other Men's Plays, cause new Title-Pages to be printed and so, to the Amazement of some few Readers, they pass with the rest for your own

I was formerly so weak as to think, that nothing was more a Man's own than his Thoughts and Inventions Nay, I have been often inclin'd to think that a Man had absolute Property in his Thoughts and Inventions alone I have been apt to think with a great Poet, that every Thing else which the World calls Property, is very improperly nam'd so

> ——— ——— *tanquam*
> *Sit proprium quidquam, puncto quod mobilis Horæ,*
> *Nunc prece, nunc pretio, nunc vi, nunc sorte suprema,*
> *Permutet Dominos, & cedat in altera Jura*

The Money that is mine, was somebody's else before, and will be hereafter another's

Houses and Lands too are certain to change their Landlords, sometimes by Gift, sometimes by Purchase, and sometimes by Might, but always, to be sure, by Death But my Thoughts are unalterably and unalienably mine, and never can be another's They are out of the Reach of Fortune, that disposes of all Things else 'Tis not in the Power of Fate it self, to alienate, or transfer them, it can only make them pass for another's, or annihilate them and cause them to be swallowed and lost in the Abyss of Time.

I have therefore formerly been inclin'd to think, That nothing ought to be so sacred as a Man's Thoughts and Inventions: And I have more than once observ'd, That the impudent Plagiary, who makes it the Business of his Life to seize on them, and usurp them, has stuck at no other Property, but has dar'd to violate all that is Sacred among Men.

But here of late, the wonderful Operations of your self and your Viceroy, and your more wonderful Success upon them, have so confounded me, that I know not what to think.

As I have wonder'd at the noble Assurance with which you and your Deputy Governor have surpass'd your Elder Brother of *Brentford* in the Quickness of becoming an Author, so, Sir *John*, if you will pardon a little Digression, I will felicitate you upon those dextrous Politicks, by which you have so much refin'd upon his, and by which, when you bring any Thing upon the Stage, you secure Success to your Works For old *Bays* was contented with the Printing a Hundred Sheets, in order to insinuate his Play into the Boxes But you, Sir *John*, upon the like Occasion, have, by way of Lucubration and Speculation, printed a Hundred Thousand Sheets He, poor Wretch, was satisfy'd with placing a Dozen or two of his Friends in the Pit, who were instructed to do their Duty But you, Sir *John*, upon such an Occasion, have order'd a Thirty Pound Dinner to be got ready at the *Rose*, where, like another *Arthur*, you and your Knights of the Round Table, have eat and drunk your selves up to Success, and have become invincible In short, you have almost fill'd the Pit and Galleries with your own Creatures, who have been order'd, at some certain Signals, to clap, laugh, huzza, to clatter their Canes and their Heels to such a degree, that the Hissing of a Hundred Snakes could no more be heard, than in the Uproar and Din of a Battel

I begin to perceive, that, before I was aware, I have run into too great a Length for a Letter, for which I heartily beg your Pardon I shall finish your Viceroy's Picture in a Second Letter, which shall follow immediately upon the Heels of this, and afterwards I shall proceed to the rest

I am,
SIR,
Yours, &c

LETTER II

Ecce autem simulia omnia, omnes congruunt
Unum cognoris, omnes noris ———
Hic in noxâ est, Ille ad defendendam causam adest,
Cum Ille est, Hic præsto est, tradunt operas mutuas
Terent

SIR,

I Have now read over Five or Six of your Papers, but the more I read of them, the more demonstrative Proof I have, that the Advice which I gave you in my former Letter is sound, and that is, Never to meddle with Criticism, nor the Improvement of the Dramatick Art. For tho' in the other Papers which make no mention of that Subject, there is not so much as the Shadow

of that fine Raillery, and that agreeable Pleasantry, which are to be found in some of your Lucubrations, and in some few of your Speculations; and that for a very good Reason, Because Letters do not so easily arrive from the Dead, as they formerly did from *Ireland*. Yet is there something tolerable in them. Whereas the Three first, in which you pretend to criticize, and to talk in the old Cant of the Improvement of the Stage, are altogether absurd and extravagant. For which there is this very good Reason to be given, that when you talk of Morality and Mankind, and the Knowledge of the World, you may, like your Elder Brother of *Brentford*, make use of other People's Wit and Judgment, that is, of your Common-Place-Book But when you criticize, you must make use of your own

In reading over your Second Paper, I know not whether I thought you or your Viceroy the more *wrong-headed* Person of the Two For he has writ such a Letter in it, which none but he could write, and you have publish'd and commended such a Letter in it, as none but you could publish and commend

The Intention of your Paper, call'd *The Theatre*, is most apparently to support, in Defiance of the Court and Town, a Parcel of impudent Players, in Pride, Presumption, Folly, Ignorance, Insolence, and this the Viceroy calls a most generous Design And immediately after, he thinks to make amends for his real Arrogance and his Insolence, by an hypocritical, canting Humility He is pleas'd to say, That you cannot but be sensible, that the *English* Actors stand upon a more precarious Foot, than Persons of any other Profession whatsoever But surely, Sir *John*, these Thoughts are very lately come into your Viceroys Head For if he has thought himself all along upon a more precarious Foot, than any Person of any Condition whatever, how comes it that he has all along shewn more Impudence, and more Insolence, than any Person of any other Profession whatever? He seems to envy the Happiness of the *French* Actors, because they are under absolute Protection, forsooth, not considering that for that very Reason they are subject to absolute Chastisement

If a *French* Actor had written such a flagrant Epistle in *France*, as a certain late *British* Actor did lately to a certain *British* Knight, what do you think Sir *John*, would have become of him? Would he have been quit for being silenced, after he had flown in the Face of all the Ministers, the Duke Regent and the King himself? Or would he have been now Rowing in the Gallies, upon the Sustenance of Bread and Water, with a Head like that of an old Statue, without either Ears or Nose? But there is nothing in this Letter, which is so very extravagant, or which moves my Indignation so much, as this Wretches insinuating that he's an accomplish'd Actor Than which nothing can be more Impudent For the Truth of the Matter is, that he acts nothing at all well He sometimes appears pretty well upon the Stage, when he is the real Thing which the Poet designs, as a ridiculous, incorrigible, impudent Fop in Comedy, and a bold, dissembling, dangerous, undermining Villain in Tragedy. And sometimes in Tragedy he blends the Fop and the Villain together, as in *Jago* for Example, in the *Moor of Venice*, and there you have the Vice-Roy entire

And here, Sir *John*, this worthy Person is for referring it to the Publick, whether he is an accomplished Actor or no. Here again he is for expressing great Humility, and making a Shew of great Gratitude; 'tis forsooth the pure Will and Pleasure of the Publick, that must at last determine upon his Merit, 'tis thither only that he must fly for Grace or Favour, and from their Sentence there can be no Appeal. Why then, Sir *John*, he is utterly undone. For the Publick, you may depend upon it, does him the same Justice that I do The Publick will neither be imposed upon by his counterfeit Humility, nor his insipid Cajolery. The Publick is not so very weak, but that they know that they are composed of particular Persons, and that he who has affronted so many of the best and the noblest of those particular Persons, can never have any real Regard for the rest. The Court is certainly the noblest Part of the Publick Next to which, are the Persons of Quality, and Gentlemen of the Town.

Has he not behav'd himself to both these with intolerable Insolence? Has not the one silenc'd him, and the other compell'd him to make his Entrance and *Exit* upon the Stage, both in the same Moment, and in such a manner as never Actor did before?

Your Reflections, Sir *John*, upon the foresaid Letter, are, like all the rest, very surprizing You say, That *'tis plain by this Letter, the Theatre both wants an Advocate, and deserves one* As by the *Theatre* you mean the Managers, I have shewn pretty well above, how far they deserve an Advocate But for God's Sake, Sir *John*, how came they to want an Advocate? They wanted none before you came among them, that is, before this Winter Last Season they were in high Favour, both with the Court and Town Nay, for Seven Years together, they have, clear of all Charges, got every Year, a Thousand Pounds a Man. From which 'tis clear, that they were under neither Want, nor Distress, till this Winter How come they to want an Advocate now? How come you to take no Notice of the Reason of this Distress? Or are you for improving their Vices only? There can but one Reason in Nature be given, why they should want an Advocate this Winter, any more than they did the last. And that is, because their Vices, which we have nam'd so often, their Impudence, their Pride, their Insolence, are grown to such a flaming Height, that the World can endure them no longer But instead of Reproving and Reprimanding them for these Vices, you are pleased to insinuate, that they ought to be indulged in them, lest Correction and Chastisement should render them less capable of playing their Parts well, which is as much as to say, that if any of them should commit High-Treason, or a Murder, they ought not to be hanged for it, for fear it should spoil their Acting. But there is a great deal of just such Logick as this, every where in these blessed Papers

The Paragraph that begins at the bottom of the Third Column, in this Second Paper, is an unparallel'd one, and shews what vast Improvement of the Stage we are to expect from you, and how perfectly you understand it. You say that in *France*, they are delighted either with Low and Fantastical Farces,

or Tedious and Declamatory Tragedies How rarely this sounds from one now, who has himself brought their Plays upon the *English* Stage, and set his own Name to them, from one, of whose Poetical Works they make up the better Half, and lastly, from one, who in his Speculations has so often, and so fulsomly commended the bare Translations of those Originals which he here decries? 'Tis true, one of their own celebrated Authors has accus'd *Corneille* of being sometimes a little Declamatory, but neither he, nor any one before your self, has ever accus'd *Racine* of it How angry were you once with the Town, for not liking that wretched Rhapsody, the *Phedra* of Captain *Ray*, which is nothing but a Medley of Two Tragedies of *Racine, The Phedra*, and *The Bajazet*, both murder'd in the mingling them. And now *Racine* himself, it seems, is grown Contemptible to one, who formerly so much admir'd an absurd Imitation of him I am very willing to allow, that we have had Tragick Poets in *England*, who have had more Genius than the *French* But 'tis not enough to have Genius, a Man must have Art too, which few of our Tragick Poets have had This is the Judgment of no less a Master than *Horace*.

——— *Ego nec Studium sine Diuite venâ,*
Nec rude quid prosit video Ingenium, alterius sic,
Altera poscit opem res & conjurat amice
Horat Art Poet

The Author who would write an accomplish'd Tragedy, must know what a Whole and its Parts are If without them he has the finest Things in the World in his Tragedy, he will come under the Censure of *Horace*

Infelix operis summa, quia ponere totum
Nesciet ———
Horat Art Poet

I fancy, Sir *John*, that you are an utter Stranger to the Works of that great Poet, or sure you could never affirm in Contempt of his Authority, what you assert at the end of this Paragraph, that a Dramatick Work can never be Gracefully executed under the Restraint of Rules, and particularly of the Three Unities, that the *French* fall into the Absurdity of thinking it more masterly to do little or nothing in a short Time, than to invade the Rules of Time and Place, to adorn their Plays with Greatness and Variety. Surely, Sir *John*, you wrote this after the Third Bottle. What, do you pretend to improve an Art, by crying down the Rules of it? Do you pretend to improve it by Chance? for it must be done by Rule or Chance, there is certainly no Third Way You say that a Dramatick Work cannot be gracefully executed under the Restraint of Rules The very Reverse of Truth. And therefore a Noble Poet, and Critick, who has Ten Thousand Times your Judgment, has said the very Reverse of what you affirm That a Dramatick Design cannot be gracefully executed without the Rules, and particularly without the Unities. The Passage is in the *Essay on Poetry*, which has always pass'd with the best Judges, for the Standard of true Judgment, and with the Commendation of which, my Lord *Roscommon*, who was himself so great a Judge, has begun his Essay on Translated Verse

The Passage in the Essay on Poetry, which is the Contradiction of yours, is as follows.

> *The Unities of Action, Time, and Place,*
> *Which, if observ'd, give Plays so great a Grace,*
> *Are, though but little practis'd, too well known*
> *To be taught here, where we pretend alone*
> *From nicer Faults to purge the present Age,*
> *Less obvious Errors of the* English *Stage*

Now here the Noble Author asserts Two Things, First, that the observing *the Unities of Action, Time, and Place, give a great deal of Grace* to Plays Secondly, that the not observing these Unities, is destructive of Grace in Plays; for by neglecting them, he affirms, that an Author commits obvious and palpable Errors, and certainly Errors, and the Graces in Writing, are Two very different Things

Thus, you see, Sir *John*, that you are condemn'd by this Noble Writer, who for Forty Years together, has justly pass'd with People of all Parties, Ranks and Degrees of Men, for the greatest and surest Judge of these Matters in *England* And you see that he does not only condemn your Sentiment, but that his Sentence reaches your very Terms I had shewn you before, that *Reason* is *against* you For to talk of improving an Art, by declaring against the Rules of it, must be a Jest to every Painters and Fidlers Prentice in Town Now let us see, whether Experience, and the Practice of the Stage, declare for you I am afraid we shall find, upon a strict Scrutiny, that the very best of our Plays are the most Regular *Heroick Love*, and the *Orphan*, are certainly Two of the best of our Tragedies, and they are as certainly Two of the most regular The *Fox*, the *Alchymist*, the *Silent Woman* of *Ben Johnson*, are incomparably the best of our Comedies, and they are certainly the most regular of them all If you will not take my word for this, let us see what *Ben* says himself to the Matter, in his Prologue to the *Fox*

> *Nor made he his Play from Jests stoln from each Table,*
> *But makes Jests to fit his Fable,*
> *And so presents quick Comedy refin'd,*
> *As best Criticks have design'd*
> *The Laws of Time, Place, Persons he observeth,*
> *From no needful Rule he swerveth*

Now, do not you see by this last Line, that it was the Opinion of the greatest of all our Comick Poets That the Rules were absolutely necessary to Perfection?

To return to the *French* Because you have been told, that the *French* Genius has neither the Force nor Sublimity of the *English*, therefore you conclude, that the Rules are in fault Whereas I have clearly shewn you, that nothing perfectly beautiful can be produc'd in the *Drama*, without the Help of the Rules. You ought therefore to have ask'd your self this Question, Whether the *French* Dramatick Poets would not have writ worse, if they had not been sustain'd by them? Whether the Rules are not Props and Supports to

the Weakness of the *French* Genius? Whether their Dramatick Poets, who wrote before the Rules were introduc'd among them, are comparable to those who have writ since? Whether *Garnier, Tristan, Rotrou,* were equal to *Corneille* and *Racine*? All the World knows that they are not.

You should likewise have consider'd, whether *Corneille,* who introduc'd the Rules among them, was acquainted with them when he first began to write? So far from it, that he himself owns, that he did not so much as know that there were Rules You should then have ask'd this Question, Whether the Dramatick Poems which he wrote before he was acquainted with *Aristotle,* are comparable to those which he wrote, after he came to be convinc'd of the Necessity and Efficacy of his Rules? Any one who has read his Works, could have told you, that there is no manner of Comparison between them. It had then been Time to consider, whether the Genius of *Shakespear* himself would not have appear'd brighter and more glorious, if he had writ regularly.

This, Sir *John Edgar,* may be depended upon, That if you know any one who calls himself a Poet, and who is offended at Rules, that is, at Criticism, know, that that Aversion is a never-failing Mark of a very vile Scribbler. Know, that there never was in the World, nor ever will be, a Legitimate Epick, or Dramatic Poet, but he was fond of Criticism, and of Rules, nay, he was himself a Critick, a just, a great, a severe Critick, and a Religious Observer of Rules

The Rules of Poetry constitute the Art of it, which he who does not throughly understand, can never be a great Poet For how should any one perfectly practise an Art, which he does not perfectly understand? Can any one believe, that *Homer, Sophocles* and *Euripides,* did not write regularly, and were not great Critick*s*, when one of the most penetrating of all the old Philosophers has taken the very Rules of the Art from his Observations of the Method which they took to succeed? The extravagant and absurd Aversion which we have shewn so long to Critick*s*, and to Rules, is one Cause at least that the very Species of Poets is shortly like to be extinguish'd in *Great Britain*

'Tis now about a Century and a Half since the first Theatre was erected among us Why have we since that Time improv'd in almost every Art, except Dramatick Poetry? Our Architecture is become quite another Thing We are come to contemn our old *Gothick* and barbarous manner of Building, and are perfectly convinc'd, that the ancient *Grecian* and *Roman* manner is not only more beautiful and more harmonious, but more useful and more convenient. We have since that Time made a very great Progress in Musick Our National Painting is likewise vastly improv'd So are likewise the Mechanick Arts. We have excell'd the very Nations, from which we have taken them And tho' we are esteem'd by our Neighbours to be but very indifferent Inventors, we are very justly thought by them to be the greatest Improvers in the World

For what Reason, then, have we made no Progress in our Dramatick Poetry? Why has the first who appear'd among us, ev'n in the Infancy of our Stage, surpass'd all his Successors in Tragedy, by the Confession of those very Successors? Why has *Ben Johnson* excell'd all in Comedy, who have attempted

it after him? What Cause can be assign'd for this, but that our Architects, Painters, and Masters of Musick, have been humble and docile enough, to study and follow the Rules of their Art, and to be corrected both by foreign Examples, and by domestick Remonstrances? Whereas the Persons whom we have call'd Poets, being very proud, and very ignorant, have rejected all these with Disdain. Which puts me in mind of the following Lines of my Lord *Roscommon*, in his Translation of *Horace's Art of Poetry*

Why is he honour'd with a Poet's Name,
Who neither knows, nor would observe a Rule,
And chuses to be ignorant and proud,
Rather than own his Ignorance, and learn?

Which Lines, if they do not shew *Horace's* Sense exactly, yet shew my Lord *Roscommon's*, which is of no small weight

Yet, after all, Sir *John*, to shew you that I am neither a Bigot, nor a Slave to the Rules, my Opinion is, That whereas the Rules are only Directions to an Epick or Dramatick Poet, for the Attainment of Sovereign Beauty, whenever it may happen, by very great Chance, that Sovereign Beauty can be better attain'd by suspending one of them for that Time, than by a too rigid Observance of it, then, by consequence, the grand Rule is, resolutely to suspend it And such a masterly Neglect of it for the Time, shews a Poet to be both discreet and bold

For as 'tis the Prerogative of a King, to suspend the Execution of a Law, when such a Suspension is, and appears to be absolutely necessary for the Safety and Welfare of the Publick, which is the great Law, to which all other Laws ought to be subservient, and consequently, for the procuring or promoting of which, there is not one of them but what ought to be broken, as upon all other Occasions they ought to be kept inviolably So 'tis the Prerogative of a Poet, to set aside a Rule of his Art, or a Rule of an Art subservient to his own, whenever 'tis necessary for the Ennobling of his Art, and the Enriching the Commonwealth of Learning

However, this is a Law of eternal Obligation, That whereever great Beauties can be shewn with the Rules, as well as they can without them, there the Rules ought always to remain most sacred and inviolable The Reason is plain: Because when the Surprize and the Emotion is over, which is caus'd by the Power of great Beauty, the Reader, who comes to be cool and calm, is apt to look for Defects, and if he finds them, tho' not in the Part where the Beauties lye, yet in the whole, he is apt to be shock'd.

In my humble Opinion, this ought to be the certain Signal for breaking thro' a Rule, in order to shew great Beauties, when the Beauties, which by that masterly and noble Neglect, adorn a particular Part, are powerful enough to make more than Compensation for the Defect, which by the Irregularity accrues to the whole But since, as we observ'd before, the Beauties will be still more powerful, if the Rules are preserv'd, a Poet ought to make his utmost Effort, in order to gain that Point And if that Point can be gain'd by making

those Efforts, the Poet who fails to use them, either thro' Sloth, or any other Cause whatever, becomes altogether inexcusable.

And now, Sir *John*, I appeal to any impartial Man, if it is not apparent, from what you and I have said of the Rules, That you and your Deputies are fit to be the Managers of no Stage, unless it be that of a Mountebank, into which you are turning that of *Drury-Lane*, as fast as possibly you can. For there are Mountebanks in every Profession, and the sure Mark of a Mountebank in any Profession, is declaring against the Rules of his Profession, the bestowing pompous Titles upon himself, and high *Encomiums* upon himself and his *Nostrums*.

I have known a grave Divine turn Mountebank; and travelling *North-West*, set up his Stage at every Market-Town, where he has vended his Heterodox Opinions, as a Physical Empirick does his sophisticated Medicines.

I have likewise been acquainted with a Politick Mountebank, who contradicting the fundamental Maxim of the Politicks, has affirm'd, That Dominion, especially if it be an *Aristocracy* is founded, not on the Strength of Men's Possessions, but on the Weakness of their Minds

I have likewise known a Salt-Water Mountebank, who has pretended to find out a way to sail, like the Witch in *Macbeth*, to *Aleppo* in a Sieve, and catch Fish enough in his Voyage to ruin all the Fishmongers

I know a certain vile Scribbler for the House in *Drury-Lane*, who is an errant Mountebank, not only for Railing at the Rules, but for Metamorphosing Tragedy into Comedy, and Comedy into Tragedy He has writ two Tragedies, the Language of which is peculiarly adapted to excite Laughter And the Comedies, which are his own, perform the Effects of Tragedy He never offers at a Jest, but the very offer at it moves a Terror, and 'tis no sooner out, but it moves Compassion

I had gone thus far, and had a very great Length to come, for of the Six Papers that are now extant, I have hardly gone thro' two, when, by a most surprizing Piece of News, I was forc'd to break off in this Place abruptly. For News is come to me this very moment, that Sir *John Edgar* is certainly defunct, and that the Patent is struck speechless by a syderal Blast So that I am at a Loss what to do To proceed, would look like Insulting And how to make an end, I know not I must desire some Person, into whose Hands this Letter may come, to do it for me, who may know, perhaps, much better than I do, what Ceremonies are stated, and what Compliments are usual, between a Mortal and a Ghost

Jan the 23d.
$17\frac{1}{10}$.

FINIS

THE CHARACTERS AND CONDUCT OF SIR JOHN EDGAR, AND HIS THREE DEPUTY-GOVERNOURS. DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LATE SEPARATE MINISTRY. IN A THIRD AND FOURTH LETTER TO THE KNIGHT. WITH A PICTURE OF SIR JOHN, DRAWN BY A PEN, EXACTLY AFTER THE LIFE

1720

LETTER III

To Sir *John Edgar*

My Dear Knight,

SINCE I perceive that there is like to be a long Commerce of Paper Civilities between us two, I think we could not do better, for the making the Correspondence perfectly easie to us both, than to continue, as we have begun, to throw off all manner of Ceremony, and to treat each other with that Familiarity, which is so becoming our long and old Acquaintance This is then one branch of the Cartel establish'd between us, that thou should'st seem not to remember that the King has made me a Gentleman, and that I should not fail to forget that he ever made thee a Knight So that for the future I shall be downright *What-d'ye-call* with thee, and thou my dear Knight shalt be plain *Jack Edgar* with me In which branch of the Cartel, thou hast by much the Advantage of me For my diminutive Honour was establish'd by no less than two Patents, the one granted by the late Queen, and the other by His present Majesty, whereas thine was conferr'd only by a transitory Blow given upon thy Shoulder-blade, which when some jeering malicious Persons heard of, they said, they rejoyc'd that Honour was got so near as within a Foot of thy *Pericranium*

But now to enter upon business, how agreeably was I surpriz'd with that notable Distinction in the beginning of thy eleventh Paper, which makes thy Apology for thy going by an *Alias* And that is, that when a Man goes by an *alias,* in order to commit a Robbery, or a Murther, or lye with his Neighbour's Wife, why that is not so well But when an old Soldier of the Queen takes up a *nom-de-guerre,* only for the promotion of Virtue, why that is a laudable Action. Now here cannot I forbear for my Life using the same expression to you, which was formerly us'd to another old * Soldier.

Di vestram fidem!
Quanti est sapere! Nunquam accedo ad te, Quin abs te abeam Doctior

For my part, I have all along been weak enough to believe, that to go by an *alias* is a manifest Cheat, and that every Impostor means Interest and not

* *Thraso* in the Eunuch of *Terence*

Virtue. But this notable Distinction has almost convinced me, that if the writer of a Libel puts but a sham Name to it, he has a Dispensation by that *alias* to injure, slander, and threaten all that is Powerful and Noble in *Great Britain.* But that if any one pretends to write ev'n a just Satire, upon the vilest Poetaster or Politicaster, between *Dover* and the *Orcades,* without putting any Name at all to it, why the Action is abominable, it cries aloud for the extremest Vengeance, and deserves Death without Mercy But, honest *Jack Edgar,* I have one scruple in my Head *Boileau* was certainly a Man of true Judgment, of nice Honour and a very just and admirable Satirist His Censures were always just, and so were his Praises, if you except a very few addrest to his Great Monarch Merit and Virtue were always Sacred to him, and Vice and Folly the objects of his Scorn and Hatred Now when he publish'd a Book of Satires, which were chiefly levell'd at the *Edgars* and *Ironsides,* who flourish'd then at *Paris,* that is, at a number of Coxcombs who dar'd to appear upon *Parnassus,* without any lawful Summons thither, or in plain *English,* without either Genius or Judgment, you know very well, *Jack Edgar,* that he put no name to his Book

The violence and virulence of the contending Parties in *England,* have, I am afraid, been one great cause, why we have had no just Satire in *England,* since the Author of *Hudibras* publish'd his, which seems to me, to be a very just one on Hypocrisy But you are not to be told, that the Author of it put no Name to it We have since had Libels which have pass'd for Satires, as *Absalom* and *Achitophel,* the *Medal, Mac Fleckno,* and the *Dispensary* They are indeed, if you please, beautiful Libels, but they are every where full of Flattery or Slander and a just Satire admits of neither In the two first, how many were abus'd only for being true to the Religion and Liberties of their Country? And on the other side, some were extoll'd only for being false to both The attempt to lessen *Shadwell* in *Mackfleckno,* is every whit as unworthy of Satire For *Shadwell* pretended to no Species of Poetry but the Comick, in which he was certainly very much superiour to *Dryden*, as the latter acknowledges by a very fair implication in his *Preface* to the *State of Innocence,* which was writ before the Quarrel between them began The business of Sir *Samuel Garth* in his *Dispensary* was to expose much better Physicians than himself, for no other reason but because they were not of his Opinion in the affair of the *Dispensary* Now tho' these were Libels, and very injurious, yet the Authors justly thought it more creditable to suffer them to be publish'd without any Name, rather than to make use of false ones

I am heartily glad, my dear Friend, that I have pleas'd thee so, by saying that thou hast done more harm to the Stage, than any hundred Men in all *England.* For say'st thou, the World is so Wicked, that 'tis hardly a Disparagement to be great ev'n in Ill But I am afraid, honest *Jack,* thou mistakest me For when I accus'd thee of doing this harm to the Stage, I did not affirm, that thou didst it altogether through a sinister Design or a wicked Motive of Interest, but that there was always a mixture with the other two,

of want of Knowledge and Judgment And tho' it may be reputable in this wicked World to be great in Ill, I believe it will hardly ever be creditable to be great in Folly I do not say, but that there may be a very wise Man, who may know nothing of Theatrical matters But then this Person who does not know them, must not pretend to know them, nor to dictate to the World in an affair which he does not at all understand. For there is a wise and a knowing Ignorance, an Ignorance that reflects upon its self, and restrains him who has it from exposing or hurting himself or others, by undertaking things which he does not in the least understand.

And now, my dear Friend, thou art for mounting that War Horse a-fresh, from which I shew'd thee descending Methinks I see thee upon him in all thy Accoutrements, thy cock'd Hat, thy broad Sword, thy Shoulder Belt, and thy Jack Boots, and a hugeous merry Figure thou makest upon him But when thou talkest of planting thy self behind King *William* the Third against *Lewis* the Fourteenth, does not thy Memory fail thee a little? If thou meanest planting thy self behind the Coach of King *William*, I have nothing to say against that But I never heard a great deal of thy attendance on him when he got on Horse-back He seldom *held* the Honour of thy Company, to express my self in the quaint Dialect of thy elder Brother of *Brentford*, either on the *Boyne* or the *Shannon*, or the *Maese*, or the *Sambre* Thou hadst that aversion for the effusion of Christian Blood, that rather than go into the Field with thy broad Sword, and thy dead-doing Hand, to make piteous Slaughter of the Enemy, thou mad'st it thy choice to stay here at Home, and make wicked Jokes with thy *Irish* Goose Quill, upon the Funerals of thy Friends

But here, my dear Friend, thou art in a terrible fuss about going to Law Thou pretend'st to be even Mad, that thou art hinder'd from going to Law, the Law is not open to thee, thou hast not the freedom of the Law But, *Quære peregrinum vicina rauca reclamat* For do not we all know that thou art up to the Ears in Law, that thou hast been up to the Ears in Law these twenty Years, and wilt be up to the Ears in Law, if thou shouldst live these hundred Years? Can we forbear laughing then, to hear thee cry out, that thou shouldst be the happiest Man in the World, if thou couldst but go to Law? Ah, my dear Friend, I could name some certain Persons, who if they were no more restrain'd from going to Law than thou art, would be happy indeed But what is it that hinders thee from going to Law? The Gate of Madam Justice, like that of Hell, is open at all Hours Free Ingress is denyed to none that have but Money to pay their Entrance, Egress, I must confess, is not altogether so easie What is it then that thou pretendest should restrain thee from going to Law? Hast thou not Money to pay thy Lawyers? Or art thou suing some unaccountable Debtors, who having Money to spare for their Liberalities and their Profusions, have that irregular greatness of Soul, that they scorn to pay a just Debt till it comes to Execution, and who instead of discharging, or so much as owning the Obligation they have to thee, pretend to keep thee at Arms length, and bid thee open Defiance? Should that be the

Case, I believe I can give thee wholsome Advice Know then, that there is a certain notable Serjeant at Law, with a hard Name, who, if thou repairest to him, will instruct thee in an admirable Method of dealing with such Persons. But at the same time I cannot help acquainting my dear Friend, that he ought to be asham'd to have the word Law in his Mouth, as long as he pretends to undo an Act of the Legislature, by an Act of the Executive Power.

We are come now from Law, by a Whirl of Imagination, to Conjurers and Hoop Petticoats But why will you go abroad for Intelligence, which you may have at home, or go for Counsel to the Deputy, when you may be advis'd by the Principal? For does not every Mortal who reads your Papers, say, the Devil in Hell is in you? Besides, how come you so earnest to get a Patent for the Hoop, which you were so eager to demolish in your wonderful Speculations?

But, my dear Friend, thou hast been pleas'd in this thy eleventh Paper, to return the Title of Pedant, by which I saluted thee in one of my former, according to thy usual Method of giving what is thy own, to those who do not in the least deserve it Tho' I plainly perceive that thou art not quite so proud of this Title, as thou art of that of *Knight*, yet to shew thee that I saluted thee with proper Greeting, I shall endeavour to prove, that however disagreeable the Sound of Pedant may be to thee, thou art certainly the Thing, and in order to this, will endeavour to shew thee what a Pedant, and Pedantry are, of which in thy Lucubrations and Speculations thou hast so often treated

> *In proper terms, such as Men smatter,*
> *When they throw out and miss the matter*
> Hud

The Pedant then is, literally and originally speaking, he who has the Instruction of Boys, and the Pedant in the figurative Appellation, which is now come to be the common one, is he who in his Conversations with Men, or in his Writings to Men, shews the qualities of an Instructor of Boys. Now Boys not being come to the use of their Judgment, nor the force of their Imagination, are chiefly instructed by Memory Their Instructors therefore never argue with them, but only dictate to them, and make use of Authority instead of Reason with them And to exert their Authority the more, and to cause it to make the stronger Impression, they dictate with a haughty and imperious Air, which sometimes is augmented to such a Degree, by Weakness, Ill-Breeding, Pride and Choler, that it becomes insupportable, even to their dearest Friends and Relations And if their Pupils are backward in receiving their Instructions, or give them the slightest Provocation, they treat them with all those Flowers of Rhetorick, with which those Persons are always inspir'd, who frequent the sonorous Nymphs of the Floud, that haunt the Banks of the vocal *Thames* between the *Bridge* and the *Tower*.

Thus have I shewn, that the Pedant, in the Acceptation in which the Word is commonly us'd, has the same qualities with an Instructor of Boys, the chief of which qualities are a dogmatizing Spirit, a presumptuous Arrogance, and a soaring Insolence.

Now the Man of Sense, and the Gentleman, being diametrically opposite to the Pedant, must be one, who in his Conversations and in his Writings, has the qualities of one who converses with or writes to Men. Now he who knows the World, and converses with, or writes to Men, always Argues, and never Dictates; as well knowing, that reasonable Creatures are to be convinced by Reason, and not by Authority And as Reason and Truth are calm and modest things, he never assumes the Dictatorian Air, is never Haughty, never Insolent

But if at any time, he barely asserts, he does it with Modesty, if not with Diffidence, as very well knowing, that, tho' a Man by an insolent decisive Air, may pass upon those who are govern'd by Fancy or Opinion, it never fails to render him suspected to those who are resolv'd never to submit to any Opinion till they be convinced by Reason, which latter sort only may be truly said to be Men He therefore treats his Companion or Reader with respect, and would look upon it as a scandalous Indignity, the breaking out into those Tropes and Figures which are so much in use, with those who converse with, or who write to Boys, of what Age, or Rank, or Condition whatsoever those Boys are, whether they are in Infancy, or Youth, or Virility, or Gravity or Decrepitude, whether they are Ignorant or Learned Boys, of the Lees of the People, or of Equestrian Dignity

And now by applying all this to my very worthy Friend, I make no doubt but to make it appear, not only that thou hast the Spirit of Pedantry in thee, equal to any of thy Contemporaries or Predecessours, but that thou hast by Nature and Genius, what they have acquir'd by Industry and hard Labour, (for thou art certainly an illiterate Pedant) and art the very Cock Pedant of all the Nest of Pedants For besides, that in all thy Writings, whether Papers or Pamphlets, whether *Lucubrations, Speculations, Guardian, Lover* or *Englishman,* I hardly ever knew thee argue once, thou hast carried Authority to a more ridiculous Height, than ever Pedant before thee did For if the rest of thy Brethren have had the Extravagance, and the Presumption, to bear down Human Reason, by downright Human Authority, they have still had so much shadow of Modesty left, as to attempt it by the Authority of others, and not by their own If shoals of modern Pedants have arriv'd to that height of Extravagance, as to pretend to decide Disputes, where Reason alone ought to prevail, by an *Ipse dixit*, yet none before thy self has had the Arrogance and the Impudence to do it by an *Ipse dixi* But thou hast often set up thy own Authority, not only against Human Reason, but against all other Human Authority. Thou hast thought thy own dogmatick Assertion, enough to establish any Opinion, which thy private Interest requir'd, and like an Absolute Monarch upon the Throne of Pedantry, hast believ'd it sufficient to say, *Car tel est notre plaisir*

I must confess that several of the *Tatlers* have Wit and Humour in them, a fine Raillery, and an agreeable Pleasantry; and some of the *Spectators* likewise have some of these good Qualities, but I have powerful reasons to believe, that for the most part the good Qualities in those Writings are deriv'd

from thy Correspondents, and that only the Pedantry of them is thine. For when thou endeavourdst to entertain the World with a Paper call'd the *Guardian*, after that Mr *Addison* had abandon'd thee, and Mr. *Manwaring* was entirely employ'd against the *Examiner*, I found nothing in that Paper of the Qualities of the other, but only thy eternal Dogmatizing, and the haughty and pedantick Air of a School-master Nay, in this Paper thou wert dwindled into a Pedant, even according to the Litteral Acceptation of the Words, and appear'dst every Morning with thy formal Instructors amidst thy Boys and thy Girls.

I come next to the Vindication of thy Beauty But here, my dear *Jacky* Boy, let us be serious a little. Thou knowest I am thy Friend, and wish thee well I would not have thee make thy self a Jest and a By-word, and a Butt to all the World Thy Beauty, Man! Why, thou mayst as well brag in thy old Age of thy Dancing a Jig I never heard thee mention'd by any Woman, for these three Years last past, but thou either wentst by the Appellation of the Black Knight with her, or she said she could resemble thee to nothing so nearly as to the Knave of *Clubs* I receiv'd the following Letter from a Friend, immediately upon the publication of the 11th and 12th *Theatre*

Dear Sir,

'YOURS of Yesterday I receiv'd this Morning I have seen the noble Knight's Pro-'duction which you mention, and could not but laugh to read of the Knight's 'Tears I suppose they were produc'd by the Author of the two Letters questioning his 'Beauty, which he takes some pains in a most ridiculous manner to vindicate He 'seems patient enough under the Confutation of his Reason and Understanding, to 'which he replyes not one Word But the *Beau Garcon* of Sixty cannot bear an attack 'on his Beauty, and is forc'd to write Letters to himself like other old Beaux, from 'suppos'd Ladies, to vindicate what he never possess'd The Knight has discover'd a 'great deal of Malice, and utter'd a great deal of Slander in his last Paper, but this 'Verse of *Dryden*'s will fit his Performance

'In his Felonious Heart tho' Venom lyes,
'It does but touch his Irish *Pen and dyes*

'I am, &c'

This is only under one Man's Hand, but this, you may depend upon it, is the Voice of the People And whereas thou sayst, that thou art so far from having a dusky Countenance that all Orders of Men smile on thee, thou putst me in mind of part of a Dialogue between Monsieur *Nathaniel Paris*, and his Cousin *Hippolita* in the *Gentleman Dancing Master* of the late Mr. *Wycherly* 'Tis in the beginning of the Third Act

Mons Am I so happy den Cousin in the *bon* quality of making People laugh?

Hipp Mighty Happy, Cousin

Mons. De-grace?

Hipp. Indeed

Mons Nay, *Sans vanitie*, I observe that wheresoever I come, I make every body Merry, *Sans vanitie, Da*

Hipp I do believe you do

Mons Nay, as I march in de Street, I can make de dull Apprentice Laugh and Sneer.

Hipp. This Fool is as apt I see as an ill Poet, to mistake the Contempt and Scorn of People, for Applause and Admiration.

Thus far the *Gentleman Dancing Master* But tell one thing my dear Friend, has an *Owl* a dusky Countenance? Most certainly, a very reverend dusky Countenance Now does not an *Owl*, wheresoever it appears, make every mortal Smile?

And now, if I should call upon thee, according to thy pretended desire, to see what treatment a Ghost would give a Mortal, I have reason to question very much, whether thou wouldst appear to me, for thou knowest I am in the number of those things, which during thy whole Life time, have always been most terrible to thee, I mean in the number of thy Creditors Thou hast ow'd me these two Years twelve *Guineas*, for the first Payment of twelve certain Receipts, which upon taking the Receipts, thou didst promise to pay in a Week. But since that time, I never could see either the Money or the Receipts, so that, if I should enquire for thee, the answer that *Snug* thy Servant would make, would certainly be, the Ghost will not appear to Day

I am, *&c*

LETTER IV.

To Sir *John Edgar*

My Excellent Friend,

I Come now to consider thy twelfth Paper, in which thou pretendst to Draw Pictures, for which thou art just as much Qualifyed as thou art to Criticize, for to draw Characters, and to Criticize, requires the same Talent, that is, Judgment, which God and Nature have never vouchsafed to endow thee with And therefore, all who know thee an errant Bungler, that is, all who do know thee, are very well satisfyed, that they are no more to expect any more Resemblance in thy Draughts, than from a Sign Post Painter, nay, not the twentieth part so much For no Sign Post Painter was ever yet such a Blockhead, as to Draw the Picture of a *Rat*, when he design'd that of an *Elephant*, or to Draw the Figure of an *Elephant*, when he design'd that of a *Rat* But now to whom is it not known, that thou hast given us the Picture of a *Wren*, instead of that of an *Eagle*, and the Picture of an *Eagle*, instead of that of a *Wren*? And after thou hast call'd thy dead Friend *Wren*, and thy self *Eagle*, does not every Body know, that thou hast not the knowledge of *Adam* in thee, nor art qualified to give Names to Creatures agreeable to their Natures? But as thou art able to draw no body, no body can have any occasion to draw thee Thy Name alone is thy Picture, and comprehends as severe and as entire a Satire in it as *Boileau* says that of the *Ass* does

Dont le nom seul en soy comprend une Satire

Thou canst draw no Picture, but it wants a Name to distinguish it, no one who names thee has occasion to draw any Picture of thee.

What! art not thou the famous Distinguisher, the celebrated Knower of the World, and of Merit, who art continually endeavouring to bespatter and expose Ministers of State, of admirable Abilities, and who have done the most important Services for their King, their Country, and the whole Christian World, and among whom, I have convincing Reasons to believe, there are such, who are as much thy Superiours in solid Learning, or in Polite Litterature; in Wit, and graceful Court-like Behaviour, and the fine Conversation of Gentlemen, as they are above thee in Sagacity and Penetration, in the profoundness of State Affairs, and the depths of Politicks? Art thou, I say, the famous Distinguisher, the celebrated Knower of the World, and of Merit, who at the same time that thou art vainly and impertinently endeavouring to expose and ridicule these Illustrious Patriots, are most ridiculously attempting to make two or three paultry Players, pass upon the World for Men of Manly, Generous, Elegant, Ornamental Qualities? After this need any one care whom 'tis thou Censurest, and whom 'tis thou Commendest? And yet to make thy Judgment manifest still further, at the same time that thou art endeavouring to expose those whom the King most confides in, and whom he most values, thou art at every turn printing thy insipid Madrigals in the Praise of His Majesty, and still the Burthen of thy Song is the same with that of an old *Starling*, who is moulting his borrow'd Plumes in a Cage, Dick *is a Bird for the King!* Dick *is a Bird for the King!* But how much preferable to thine is the Song of the *Starling?* Tho it does not mean what it says, like thee, yet it does not like thee, mean something contrary to it. The Bird itself is not such a Beast as not to know, that a Libel upon all a Man's best Friends, can never be interpreted a Panegyrick upon the Man Thus we see, that thou never Censurest, and never Commendest by Reason and by Judgment, because Reason and Judgment are things which thou never hadst. But thy Dislike, or Approbation, proceeds perpetually from thy Passions, thy Malice, and thy Interest, but especially from the last, which is thy great *Diana*

I come now to an Error of thy Understanding, about which I shall use the more Words, because thou sayst thou hast so often repeated it and that is, *'tis generally for want of Judgment, that Men set up for the Character of being Judicious*

And here I cannot for my Soul forbear talking to thee in the Language of thy Brother of *Brentford, Thou art mighty Ignorant poor Man, my dear Friend is very Silly, I gad he is* For to what purpose can this jingle of Words serve, but to rattle in the Noddle of a *wrong-headed* Fellow? For was there ever any Mortal who was not reckon'd a Beast and an Idiot by his own Acquaintance, but who set up for the Character of being Judicious in the Profession which he had embraced? Does not a *Shoe-maker*, a *Taylor*, a *Hosier*, set up for the Character of being Judicious in the nature and fashion and make of Shoes and Stockings, and Coats and Breeches and Cloaks? Does

not a *Mercer* set up for the Character of being Judicious, in the nature and fashion of Stuffs and Silks, and Brocades? Does not a *Stock-Jobber*, or an *Exchange Broker* set up for the Character of being Judicious, in the Turns, the Rise and Fall of the Publick Funds? When ten or more *Clergy-men* Preach for a vacant Benefice, does not each of them pretend to be more skilful and Judicious in the ways of Salvation, than his other Antagonists? Wouldst thou Fee a Lawyer in an important Cause, who should tell thee seriously, that he did not set up for having more Judgment than his Neighbours in Statute and Common Law? Wouldst thou trust thy Life upon a dangerous Crisis, in the Hands of a Physician, who should assure thee, that he had no more Judgment in Physick than one of his Patients? But to come to Authors, does not every one who publishes a Book in any Art or Science, pretend to instruct at least some of his Readers? But which of his Readers can he pretend to Instruct, but those who are more Ignorant than himself in the matters of which he treats? But if he supposes that some of his Readers are more Ignorant than himself in the matters of which he treats, does not he set up for the Character of being more Judicious in those matters than they are?

When *Copernicus* publish'd his System of the World, did not he pretend to a little more Judgment in *Astronomy*, than some who had gone before him and others who liv'd at the same time with him, and who still adher'd to the *Ptolemaick* System? When *Des Cartes* publish'd his System of Natural Philosophy, did not he by those wonderful Discoveries of the motion of the Earth, and others, pretend to a little more Judgment in that Science, and to penetrate further into the Secrets of Nature than those who had gone before him? When the Celebrated *Harvey* gave the World his Treatise of the Circulation of the Blood, could he have oblig'd and adorn'd the Common-wealth of Learning by that noble and useful Discovery, if he had not set up for the Character of having more Judgment in *Anatomy*, than either his Predecessours, or his Contemporaries? And when Sir *Isaac Newton*, whose Merit is above what the Muses themselves can Commend, oblig'd and astonish'd the Learned World by his Immortal and unparallel'd Treatises, those Treatises which have made him an Honour to his Country, an Advancer of the noblest Learning, and an Enlarger of the Empire of the Mind, what, did he pretend to no more Judgment in *Mathematicks*, than the herd of Mathematicians?

Is it not now most apparent, that every one sets up for the Character of being Judicious in his own Profession, and his own Art? Why then should not that be allow'd to a Poet, which is granted to all the rest? And why should it be denyed by thee of all Men, and be denyed in a Paper, in which you are doing the very same thing which you pretend to ridicule in others? For are not you pretending to write a Paper here for the Improvement of the Stage? And how doest thou pretend to Improve it by endeavouring to impose upon the World according to thy laudable Custom, and setting up for the Character of being more Judicious in Theatrical matters, than most of your Readers, or by speaking the Truth, and telling the World that thou art a very Silly Fellow,

and an eternal Jabberer about matters of which thou understandest not a Syllable? What is become now of that fine Maxim, *that 'tis generally for want of Judgment that Men set up for the Character of being Judicious*? Why, thou errant Trifler! Thou ridiculous *Maxim Monger*! Thou hast a hundred such pretty Jingles in thy wonderful Speculations, I mean the Speculations which are peculiarly thine, and to which thou hast set thy Mark, Maxims which are calculated for Understandings of the same Latitude with thine, and which are under the same Elevation of Pole, Maxims which shew'd thee as blind as *Hector*, or *Pompey*, or *Cæsar*'s Offspring, that came into the World but Yesterday But as I have now some leisure to consider them, I will try, if by my little Art I can Couch the Cataracts of thy Understanding.

But the mischief of it is, that there is this difference between a four Leg'd Puppy, and a two Leg'd one, that whereas a four Leg'd one is Blind but for nine Days, a two Leg'd one does not only come into the World Blind, but for the most part continues to be Blind, when he comes to be an old Dog

To this blessed Maxim, thou art pleas'd to subjoyn these Words, *Every body of any standing in Town, knows that the dullest and most stupid Writers we have had, have set up for Criticks*, why yes, truly this has been the Cant for forty Years together, among Persons of thy noble Understanding The Cry has gone round, that 'tis impossible for any one who has shewn himself a Critick by his Prose, to shew himself a good Poet by his Verse, which was occasion'd first, by the late Mr *Rymer*'s publishing a very dull Tragedy of *Edgar*, after he had publish'd a Book in Prose, in which there was a great deal of good and just Criticism 'Tis true indeed, *Edgar* was so absurd a Monarch, that he seem'd to be a forerunning Type of thy self, who wert to strut upon the Stage in the succeeding Century, under the same Heroick Name From this accident, the Poetasters of the Age, who believ'd it their Interest to fix a Brand upon Criticism, immediately cryed out, and made all their Disciples repeat after them, that no Critick could be a Poet, not considering that one of the greatest of the *Roman* Poets, and one of the greatest of the *French*, were Criticks by Profession, as well as Poets, *and set up for the Character of being Judicious in their own Art*, nay, and had the Impudence to appear publickly out of Humour with some Popular Scriblers, who had had Success But to return to Mr *Rymer*, whether that Gentleman's ill Performance proceeded from his want of Imagination, without which no Man can make a Poet, let him have what Judgment he will, or from his want of Exercise and Practice, we should have been better able to determine, if that Judicious Gentleman had writ more If Mr *Rymer*'s Tragedy is an ill one, neither *Shakespear*'s or *Ben Johnson*'s first Dramatick Poems were Masterpieces, and neither *Ben* nor *Shakespear*, if they had left nothing behind them but these, would have pass'd with Posterity for great Poets But whatever was the Reason of Mr *Rymer*'s Miscarriage, if these Authors had only infer'd from it, that a Man may sometimes have the Theory of an Art which yet he may not be fully qualifyed to practice with Success, nothing could have been

more just. But for them to draw not only a general Inference from a particular Fact, but an Inference so very absurd, as that a Man cannot Practice an Art with Success, for no other reason, but because he has shewn that he Understands it, was Bestial and Abominable I am afraid, my dear Friend, that it will be found upon enquiry, that the very contrary of this is an eternal Truth He who Practices an Art with Success, which he does not understand, is most infallibly an ill Artist, notwithstanding all his Success, and is indebted for that Success, to the gross Ignorance and Barbarity of those whom he has the Luck to please.

If ever that Assertion, that the dullest and most stupid Writers which we have had, have set up for Criticks, is prov'd, it must be by thy Example For as there is not one Author alive, who has set up for Criticism so much as thou hast, there is not in all *Great Britain* so stupid and so dull a Writer as thou art, when thou art left to thy self

To make good both the Branches of this Assertion when old *Bickerstaff* publish'd his *Tatlers*, did he set up for a Critick, did he set up for the Character of being Judicious or not? Let us see what he says himself in his Dedication to the late Mr *Maynwaring*

The general purpose of this Paper is to expose the false Arts of Life, and to pull off the Disguises of Cunning, Vanity and Affectation, and to recommend a general Simplicity in our Dress, our Discourse, and our Behaviour No Man has a better Judgment for the Discovery, or a nobler Spirit for the Contempt of all Imposture, than your self, which Qualities render you the most proper Patron for the Author of these Essays

Thus far old *Bickerstaff* Now this as I take it, is setting up for something more than the Character of being barely Judicious, tis setting up for Sagacity, tis setting up for Penetration, which are the Accomplishments, and the Perfections of Judgment Now if it be true, that 'tis generally for want of Judgment, that a Man sets up for the Character of being Judicious, what shall we say of the Man who sets up for the Character of Sagacity, for the Character of Penetration? For such a one arrogates a hundred times more to himself, than one who sets up for the Character of being barely Judicious in passing his Judgment on the Works of Authors To know the Hearts of Men requires infinitely more Capacity, than barely to know Books A Book, alas, has but one meaning, whatever it speaks it thinks But the Heart of Man has Folds and Doubles, and Recesses innumerable Yet thro' all these hast thou pretended to pierce, and consequently hast pretended to Criticism, of a nobler and more difficult Nature, than any Author living But though thou didst pretend to do all this, what thou really didst of it was by the Sagacity and Penetration of others And when thou hadst got ingenious Tools to write thee into an Income of two Thousand Pounds a Year, thou couldst not be satisfyed, till like the most dull and stupid of all Writers thou hadst writ thy self out of it again

The Courtship which Sir *Martin Mar-all* made to Mrs. *Millesant*, and that which thou didst formerly make to Dame *Fortune*, and to Madam *Fame*, will certainly make a Parallel that will run upon all Four. Sir *Martin* had a mind to Mrs *Millesant*, but not having Capacity, nor Address to gain her, he prevail'd upon *Warner* to do that for him, but to do it in such a way that Sir *Martin* was to have the Credit and the Benefit of it Now the Lady being a Lover of Musick, Sir *Martin* was to give her a Lesson upon the *Theorbo*, and a Song In order to this Sir *Martin* is to appear in a Balcony, at a distance from her, with a Lute in his Hand, and the Motions of a Thrummer, and the Grimaces of a Singer, while *Warner* is to Sing and to Play for him behind the Curtain Well! All this was very well concerted, but the Success of all was to depend upon the Signal agreed upon between them, and that was, that Sir *Martin* should leave off his Grimaces, and his Thrummings upon his dumb Lute, upon the Ringing of a Bell. But the foolish Knight was so full of his Mistress and himself, that tho' the Bell rung twice, yet his Hand and Jaws still went, and expos'd him to the Scorn of his Mistress and the Chambermaid

I will leave thee, my dear Friend, to apply all this to thy self But I cannot forbear taking notice, that it was very imprudent in thee not to leave off upon the Bells ringing twice, that is upon the Bell that rung for Mr *Maynwaring*'s, and Mr *Addison*'s Funeral

I come now to some of the pretended Facts of which thou hast been pleased to accuse me, and I will begin with that which relates to Mr. *Congreve* and Mr *Addison*, upon whom thou sayst I have been more severe than upon any other Persons As for being severe upon Mr *Congreve*, tis a figure in Speech, which *Jeremy* says in *Love for Love*, interlards the greatest part of his Conversation As for Mr *Addison*, I must confess, I did write the *Remarks upon Cato*, but I did not basely flatter and fawn upon Mr *Addison* while he was living, and then more basely insult him as soon as he was Dead. I did not while he was living, write a flattering fulsom Dedication to him, in which I made him a Thousand times greater than my self, and then as soon as he was Dead write a flattering fulsom Dedication to my self, in which I made my self a Thousand times greater than him A little below there is another extraordinary Figure, where thou pretendst to insinuate that I have been us'd by some People so as a Man of Honour ought not to be us'd. Who are those People? Thou canst not, thou darest not name them Because then the Lye would appear too gross and palpable I'll tell thee whom I have us'd at that rate, and that is, thy Friend thy Priest thy Worshipper, thy Viceroy. Thou either knowest or oughtest to know that I have beat him, and I do not know but I might have been provok'd to do as much by his Wooden God, if he had dar'd to offer to my Face, what he has basely writ Thou sayst that my Pamphlet is so cruel, that it could be writ by none but a Coward I believe I have given other sort of Proofs of my Courage, than one who in the time of a Bloody War, for twenty Years together, took the King's Pay as a Soldier, and never was in

any Action, than one who for twenty Years together fought as he writ, by Proxy. The Cruelty of a Coward consists not in Words but Actions Then, then, was the Cruelty, then was the Cowardice, when upon a certain Night in *November* last, three villanous Foot-Pads rob'd a poor defenceless Passenger of all that he had, and said that they did it by a Deputation from thee And thou wert afterwards pleas'd to abet this Action, and call those Foot-Pads, Men of Manly, Elegant, Generous, Ornamental Qualities. *Hinc illæ Lachrymæ* From hence arose those *Crocodile* Tears, which thou hast shew'd in some of thy Papers.

Didst thou not shew thy Courage in a notable manner, by giving such Language in thy *Theatres,* after having declar'd against single Combat by thy Lucubrations, and against Siege and Battle by thy Conduct? Was it not Bravely and Heroically done to call upon both the Living and the Dead to revenge thy Cause upon one of Sixty Five, and to endeavour to set both the *King*'s Horse and Foot Guards upon one of Sixty Five? For my part, I have always firmly believ'd, that I have more true Courage than any one, than whom I have more Understanding For if Fortitude is a Virtue, of which I know no Man who doubts, it must depend upon the Reason and not upon the Complexion, but if it depends upon the Reason, then the stronger the Reason is, the stronger must be the Virtue And I have always thought, that as God and Nature have given to Man the Dominion over Beast, they have so far given to reasonable Men the Dominion over Blockheads, that they are rather born to scorn them than to fear them And I appeal to all my Acquaintance in Town, of whom there are several living of 30 and 40 Years standing, if these Sentiments were ever contradicted by any Action or Accident of my Life

But if by the continual Fears thou hast given me, thou meanst, as thou seemst to insinuate, my apprehensions of Persons to whom I may owe Money, thou of all Men hast as little reason to upbraid me with these Fears as the others For who was it that lay skulking so many Years, at the *Tilt-yard Sutlers,* when he was so strongly possess'd with Fear, that he could not think himself in safety, unless he had the Horse and Foot-Guards for his Security? When the late facetious *Daniel Purcel* gave him the name of Major General *Hide*; and the chief Maxim of his Life seem'd to be, *Qui bene latuit bene vixit* If I had the Misfortune to be an Insolvent Debtor, I should have this Apology to make for my self, that my Insolvency would not be owing to any Extravagance or want of taking Pains, but to the hard, not to say the unjust Usage which I have met with in the World, and in great part to your Injustice and Barbarity, and the Injustice and Barbarity of those who deriv'd their Power from you. The being an Insolvent Debtor, is rather to be pitied than condemn'd, when it has not been occasion'd either by Profuseness or Idleness, but the being in Debt is both odious and contemptible in one, who is at the same time a Squanderer, a Bankrupt, and an Oppressor. But yet to shew you that I am not in the condition which you imagine, I have for these last four Years lodg'd continually in the Neighbourhood of *White-hall,* and I appeal to the

Honourable Board of Greencloth, if during that time, so much as one Complaint has been preferr'd against me.

I should now say something of the Falshoods, of which you accuse me, in my two former Letters, and of the Ingratitude of which thou pretendest to accuse me, for writing against those, who have endeavour'd to serve me As these two Letters will be shortly follow'd by a *Fifth* and a *Sixth*, I shall endeavour to shew in them, who are the Lovers of Truth, and who are the Slanderers, who are the Benefactors, and who the Unjust and Oppressors. And then, if with thy little Understanding, thou hast not lost all Sense of Shame, I shall cause thy dusky Countenance to turn Red, as the Morning does, or as a *Lobster* boil'd

But having said more already than I design'd to do at present, and you having heard more than thou hadst a mind to hear, I shall take my leave for a little time, only adding, that as thou hast form'd a Fantom in thy Mind, which thou wouldst pass upon the World for thy Friend, and which every impartial Man who has seen it, has declar'd to be just as like to me, as a *Wren* is like to the late Mr *Addison*, or as thou art like to an *Eagle*, I shall, by way of Gratitude or Acknowledgment, subjoin to these Letters, the Picture of my dear Friend, and I appeal to all who shall see it, if I am not the happier Painter of the two, and draw the livelier Resemblance And so at present, my very worthy Friend, I heartily bid thee Farewel

The PICTURE of Sir *John Edgar*

SIR *John Edgar*, of the County of ——— in *Ireland*, is of a middle Stature, broad Shoulders, thick Legs, a Shape like the Picture of *somebody* over a Farmers Chimney, a short Chin, a short Nose, a short Forehead, a broad flat Face, and a dusky Countenance. He us'd to compare himself to an *Eagle*, and to oblige the first Fool that he met with, to give it under his Hand that he was so But neither his Nose, nor his Eyes, nor his Discernment, nor his broad flat Face, nor his dusky Countenance were held to be Aquiline He was believ'd to be in all these more like to another Bird than an *Eagle* Yet with such a Shape, and such a Face, he discover'd at Sixty that, he took himself for a Beauty, and appear'd to be more mortify'd upon his being told he was Ugly, than he was by any reflection that was ever made upon his Honour or his Understanding

He is a Gentleman born, Witness himself of a very Honourable Family, certainly of a very Ancient one. For his Ancestours flourish'd in *Tipperary* long before the *English* ever set Foot in *Ireland* He has Testimony of this more Authentick than the *Heralds* Office, or than any Human Testimony, for God has mark'd him more abundantly than he did *Cain*, and stamp'd his Native Country upon his Face, his Understanding, his Writings, his Actions, his Passions, and above all his Vanity The *Hibernian* Brogue is still upon all these, tho long Habitude and length of Days have worn it from off his Tongue

He is the greatest Pretender but one, of the Age in which he lives; a Pretender both to Understanding and Virtue, but especially to the latter. But some malicious People have thought, that he made constant Court to that venerable Lady, not out of any Affection which he had for her Person, but because he was struck by the Charms of the Joynture which he believ'd might follow her. And they were confirm'd in this Opinion, by observing the Quarrels, which he had every Day with one or other of her four Daughters. Yet this pretended Passion did him great Service It was to him *Major Domo, Factotum, Housekeeper, Cook, Butler, Taylor* and *Sempstress*, because we live in a noble Climate, where Persons who are universally known to be Cheats and Sharpers, keep their Coaches by being so.

Yet to one of the Daughters of that venerable Lady, he paid great respect in Publick, *videlicet,* to Madam *Justice* And to gain her Favour, and obtain her Protection, he thought it not beneath him, to admit the meanest of her Servants and Officers into the greatest familiarity with him So that there was no respect of Persons among them. But it was *Jack* and *Tom,* and *Will* and *Hal,* and *Dick* with them. But he always combin'd with these her Servants to injure and abuse her in Private, and unknown to her play'd a hundred Pranks with them to the prejudice of her Interest and Reputation, which were not long kept so very Private, but the World took notice that neither he nor the Servants car'd one Farthing for the Mistress they pretended to serve He would very often do Extravagant things, very seldom Generous ones, and never by his good-will Just ones Yet was he a great pretender to Generosity, but Generosity with him was squandring away his Money upon Knaves and Fools who flatter'd him Thus a Bubble is a very generous Creature to the *Shark* who preys upon him, and a Beggar is generous to the Vermin that feed upon him

He had that seeming respect for the Laws of his Country, and appear'd to be so delighted with them, that tho' he had the Happiness of enjoying them as much as the most zealous of his Fellow Subjects, even as those to whom one may say, the Zeal of the Law hath eaten them up, yet that he might be sure the Correspondence between them might be for Life, he had, thro' a greatness of Soul peculiar to him, assum'd a noble Resolution that would never suffer him to pay any one a Farthing, 'till it came to Execution Yet notwithstanding all this he was not satisfy'd, but was always crying out Law, Law, more Law, more Law.

He appears to be mighty zealous for the Rights of the People, and to be terribly afraid of the return of the old Aristocracy, by which he has got the nick Name with some of *Aristocracy Edgar* No Man had ever so much in his Mouth, Benevolence and Beneficence to Mankind, as he, which to his Creditors seems a great fable For, say they, since he hates us who have most oblig'd him, to that degree, that he cannot endure to see our Faces, how can he possibly love the rest? He us'd one while to call himself the *Christian Heroe,* till it grew a publick Jest For the People would not allow him to be a Heroe,

because, tho he had been a Soldier so many Years in the time of a Bloody War, he never had been present either at Siege or Battle, and he could not possibly, they us'd to say, be a Christian, because he us'd constantly to spend the Mornings in Cursing *the Houshold of Faith*, tho' they came in shoals to his Levees, out of pure Zeal to exhort him to do his Duty

He valued himself exceedingly, upon being a great Improver, and a great Reformer, tho' the truth of the matter is, that he never had half Skill enough to improve any thing, nor half Virtue enough to reform any thing During the time that he was Governour of the *Bear-Garden*, the Diversions of that place were more Stupid and Barbarous than ever they were known to be before, and the wild Beasts more mischievous and untractable And he was especially so far from Reforming any thing, that it was generally observ'd, that the greater part of those who had been most intimate with him, were very far from being more Virtuous than their Neighbours, tho' he never fail'd of doing one thing in order to the making them so and that is, entring them in the School of Adversity

Now as for *Temperance*, another Daughter of the abovementioned venerable Lady, he caresses and courts her all the live-long Day, and compliments her as the Queen of Morals, and the Empress of Life But as soon as the Night approaches, then sparkling Champaign puts an end to her Reign.

He judiciously believes, that by preaching Abstinence up by Day-light, he has made an honourable Composition for his drinking three Bottles by Candle-light

We may say of his Fortitude, what *Butler* said of *Hudibras*'s Wit, He may be Master of a very great deal, but thro' abundance of Modesty is shie of making any Parade of it, but reserves it for an occasion which no body can divine. For he has declar'd against single Combat by his Writings, and against Siege and Battle by his Conduct and Actions, that is, by staying at home in a time of War, with a Commission in a Pennyless Pocket, and choosing rather to run the Risk of being taken Prisoner by the *English*, than of being kill'd by the *French*

Now as for *Prudence*, the fourth Daughter, he has a Magnanimity which teaches him utterly to despise her, and to regard her as an abandon'd Person, that prostitutes her self to the lowest Mechanicks He therefore makes it the business of his Life to Affront her, and abuses her in all his Conversation, his Writings and his Actions, of which there can be no stronger Testimony, than his mortally disobliging his cordial tho' partial Friends who rais'd him, and going over to a Party whom he had exasperated beyond any possibility of a sincere Reconcilement

He is so great a Friend to Union, that almost all Orders and Ranks of Men are united in his Person For he has been Poet, Orator, Soldier, Officer, Projector, News-monger, Casuist, Scribe, Politician, Fish-monger, Knight and Gold-finder, and what is never enough to be admir'd, he has been all these, by virtue of other Mens Capacities Like a very Patentee, he has per-

form'd the Functions of all these by Proxy, and by Deputy. As an Author he Writ by Proxy, as a Soldier by Proxy he fought, He is so given to do every thing by Proxy and by Deputy, that one would swear he lies with his Mistress by Proxy and by Deputy, as several honest worthy Gentlemen of his Antiquity are us'd to lie with theirs.

Tho no Man in *Great Britain* is so fit a Subject for Satire as himself, yet has he been always writing waggish Lampoons upon others And whenever he exposes a Lord in one of his Libels, he has got a trick of affronting him ten times more by way of begging his Pardon

He has been always begging something of the Government, and tho he has obtain'd ten times more of it than he deserv'd, yet he grumbling thinks they have given him nothing, because he has retain'd nothing, and is outragiously angry with some of the great Officers of the Crown, because they have refus'd to wast the whole time of their Administration in *pouring Water into a Sieve*

He had one while, as I hinted above, obtain'd a Patent to be Governour of the *Bear-garden*, tho that Patent was invalid and void, by vertue of a previous Statute. Yet when he thought himself establish'd in that Post, he chose a *Bear*, a *Baboon*, and a *Wolf* for his Deputy Governours, but partly growing Lazy, and being partly convinc'd that the Deputies were fitter for Government than the Principal, he abandon'd all to them, who conducting themselves by their Bestial Appetites, play'd such Pranks, that both Governours and Deputies were all remov'd, and the *Bear-Garden* turn'd into a *Theatre* Which Conduct of his puts me in mind of one *Sempronius* a *Roman* Knight who was made Director of the *Ludi Fescennini*, a rough sort of *Bear-Garden* Drama, in use among the uncultivated *Romans*, before they were polish'd by the *Grecian* Arts, into which Employment he introduc'd three Wretches as his Deputies, who were the utter ruin of that Diversion. For these four Persons had not among them all as much Judgment as a *Ballad maker* And yet upon having this paultry Office conferr'd upon him, *Sempronius* most vainly and impertinently usurp'd the name of *Censor*, which coming to alarm the true *Censors*, they enquir'd into his Life, upon which finding him to be the greatest *Fourbe*, and the greatest Impostor, that had appear'd among them since the Foundation of the City, they turn'd him with Disgrace out of his Government, dismounted him, and took his Horse from him, and not contented with this, banish'd him from *Rome* itself, and upon his Departure, caus'd the same general Lustration to be made, that was us'd, when a certain boding, broad, flat, dusky-fac'd Prodigy had been hooted from out the Walls

Postscript

IF upon perusing this piece of Painting, or upon reading the preceeding Letters, any honest impartial Gentleman shall say, as they did upon reading the two Former, that I ought not to enter into the private Concerns of Life, I desire them to consider, that these Letters, tho written in Prose, were design'd

to be Just and Legitimate Satires, and that the private Concerns of Life are the just and adæquate Subjects of Satire, and make the chief Beauties of the ancient Satirists, that is, of *Lucilius, Horace, Persius* and *Juvenal.*

The unmasking of Hypocrites is the great business of Satire, according to that of *Horace* in the first Satire of his Second Book.

> ——————— *Est Lucilius ausus*
> *Primus in hunc operis componere carmina morem,*
> *Detrahere & pellem, nitidus quâ quisque per ora*
> *Cederet, introrsum Turpis* ———

But how is it possible, for the most part, to unmask a Hypocrite without entring into the private Concerns of Life?

Juvenal tells us in his first Satire, that all Human Actions, all the Passions of Men, all their Desires, and all their Inclinations, are the constant Subjects of his Satire

> *Quidquid agunt Homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,*
> *Gaudia, Discursus, nostri est farrago Libelli*

Now will any one pretend that the private Concerns of Life are not included in these Verses?

I must confess the celebrated *French* Satirist has been a little more retentive, but yet they must know very little of him, who are to be told that he sometimes enters into the private Concerns of Life, which once more are the just and adæquate Subjects of Satire But then the Satirist ought to take care that the Censures are always Just, and that either the Vices Satiriz'd are very Flagrant, and of pernicious Example, or the Persons egregious Hypocrites

FINIS.

TO MATTHEW PRIOR, ESQ; UPON THE ROMAN SATIRISTS

1721

SIR,

WHen you seem'd to approve of the Translation of the seventh Satire of the second Book of *Horace*, which was translated by one of my Friends, that Approbation was the more pleasing to me, because it confirm'd me in my own Opinion of it, and oblig'd me to acquiesce in the Judgments which some of my Friends have given of it, whom I have always chiefly consulted in my Doubts about poetical Matters And now, Sir, I come according to my Promise to consult you about the Preference which several Partizans of the *Roman* Satirists have given to their respective Favourite Authors and to know from you which of them are in the right, or rather whether they are not all in the wrong You know very well, Sir, that *Rigaltius Scaliger* the Elder, *Lipsius* and *Holiday* prefer *Juvenal* to *Horace* and *Persius* That *Dacier*, *Heinsius*, Monsieur *de la Bruyere* and several others, prefer *Horace* to *Persius* and *Juvenal*, that Mr *Dryden* endeavours to divide the Palm between *Horace* and *Juvenal*, and to prefer *Horace* for Instruction, and *Juvenal* for Delight, that he gives *Horace* the Preference for Instruction, because says he he is the more general Instructor, but that he gives the Priority to *Juvenal* for Delight, because he is most delighted with him, and so makes his own Taste the Argument for preferring him But tho' we shou'd grant, Sir, that the Generality of Readers are more delighted with *Juvenal* than they are with *Horace*, because *Dryden* is more delighted with him, yet is it not very much to be question'd, whether the Author who gives the most general Delight is the most delightful Author? Now Sir, your old Friend Monsieur *Despreaux*, tho' 'tis evident that he was more pleas'd with *Horace* than he was with *Juvenal*, because he has imitated him more, yet he had more Judgment than expresly to prefer the one to the other, because he knew very well, that there can be no true Preference where there can be no just Comparison, and that there can be no just Comparison between Authors whose Works are not *ejusdem generis*, and that the Works of those two Satirists are not *ejusdem generis* For do not you believe, Sir, that Mr. *Dryden* is in the wrong where he affirms that the *Roman* Satire had its Accomplishment in *Juvenal*? For is there not Reason to believe that the true *Roman* Satire is of the Comick kind, and was an Imitation of the old *Athenian* Comedys, in which *Lucilius* first signaliz'd himself, and which was afterwards perfected by *Horace*, and that *Juvenal* afterwards started a new Satire which was of the Tragick kind? *Horace*, who wrote as *Lucilius* had done before him, in Imitation of the old Comedy, endeavours to correct the Follies and Errors, and epidemick Vices of his Readers, which is the Business of Comedy. *Juvenal* attacks the pernicious outragious Passions and the abomin-

able monstrous Crimes of several of his Contemporaries, or of those who liv'd in the Age before him, which is the Business of Tragedy, at least of imperfect Tragedy. *Horace* argues, insinuates, engages, rallies, smiles; *Juvenal* exclaims, apostrophizes, exaggerates, lashes, stabbs There is in *Horace* almost every where an agreeable Mixture of good Sense, and of true Pleasantry, so that he has every where the principal Qualities of an excellent Comick Poet. And there is almost every where in *Juvenal*, Anger, Indignation, Rage, Disdain, and the violent Emotions and vehement Style of Tragedy Can there then be a just Comparison made between these two Satirists, any more than there can be between a Tragick and a Comick Poet? If Mr *Dryden* were now living, would he compare *Nat Lee* with *Etherege*, the former of which never touch'd upon Comedy, and the other never attempted Tragedy? would he prefer *Nat Lee* to *Etherege*, as he does *Juvenal* to *Horace*, because the Thoughts of *Lee* are more elevated than those of *Etherege*, his Expressions more noble and more sonorous, his Verse more numerous, and his Words more sublime and lofty? would he not have believ'd, that if *Etherege* had writ Sir *Fopling* in the same Style, that *Nat Lee* wrote *Alexander*, he would have been as merry a Person as *Penkethman* was when he acted *Alexander*? Would he not in all probability have judg'd that *Lee* is more delightful to those who are more pleas'd with Tragedy than they are with Comedy, and that *Etherege* is more delightful to those who are better entertain'd with Comedy than they are with Tragedy? Now, Sir, ought not we to make the same Judgment of *Horace* and *Juvenal*, and to affirm *Horace* to be more delightful to those who are more pleas'd with Comedy than they are with Tragedy, and that *Juvenal* is more delightful to those who are better entertain'd with Tragedy than they are with Comedy? And that perhaps for that very reason he was more pleasing than *Horace* to Mr *Dryden*? Will not the Tragick Satire, which like Tragedy fetches its Notions from Philosophy and from common Sense, be in all probability more acceptable to Universities and Cloisters, and all those Recluse and Contemplative Men, who pass most of their time in their Closets, all which Persons are suppos'd to have Philosophy from Study, and common Sense from Nature? And will not the Comick Satirist, who owes no small Part of his Excellence to his Experience, that is, to the Knowledge of the Conversation and Manners of the Men of the World, be in all likelihood more agreeable to the discerning Part of a Court, and a great Capital, where they are qualify'd to taste and discern his Beauties, by the same Experience which enabled their Authors to produce them? And above all things, must it not be most agreeable to a Polite Court, where that dexterous Insinuation, that fine good Sense, and that true Pleasantry, which are united in the *Horatian* Satire, are the only shining Qualities which make the Courtier valuable and agreeable? And will he not take more delight in the *Horatian* Satire than in the Tragick Eloquence of *Juvenal*, not only because he is qualified by Nature and Experience to relish the Beauties of it, but because the Pleasure which he receives from it, is subservient to his Interest, which is always his main Design, and Improves and

Cultivates those Talents which are chiefly to recommend him to those who are to advance him?

It will be needless, Sir, to detain you any longer, by enquiring into the Preference which *Casaubon* has so injudiciously given to *Persius* above *Horace* and *Juvenal*, or into the Preference which he particularly gives to the fifth Satire of *Persius* before this of *Horace*, the Translation of which has occasion'd the Trouble which I now give you, and which, you know, Sir, is writ upon the same Subject. Your Friend, Monsieur *Dacier*, tells us that *Casaubon* by this Opinion prefers the University to the Court. I appeal to you, Sir, if the Satire of *Horace*, the Translation of which comes after this Letter, does not speak for it self, and justifie the Assertion of Monsieur *Dacier*

I am,
SIR,
Your, &c.

LETTERS ON MILTON AND WYCHERLEY

FROM THE *PROPOSALS FOR PRINTING BY SUBSCRIPTION . . . MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS, WRITTEN BY MR JOHN DENNIS*

1721-1722

LETTER I

OBSERVATIONS ON THE PARADISE LOST *of* MILTON

To *Dr* S——

SIR,

I Was no sooner determin'd within my self to make some Observations on the *Paradise Lost* of *Milton*, than I resolv'd to direct them to you, because you know the Truth of some Facts which I shall be oblig'd to relate, and because I have observ'd in you a better Taste of the greater Poetry, than in most of those with whom I have lately convers'd, which having premis'd, I shall without more Preamble enter upon the Subject of which I design to treat.

I believe, Sir, that I have told you more than once, that I, who have all my Life-time had the highest Esteem for the great Genius's of the Ancients, and especially for *Homer* and *Virgil*, and who admire them now more than ever, have yet for these last Thirty Years admir'd *Milton* above them all for one thing, and that is for having carried away the Prize of Sublimity from both Ancients and Moderns And in most of the Treatises which I have publish'd for Thirty Years, even in those in which I have been unhappily engag'd to detect and to blame the Errors of some of my Contemporaries, I have not been able to forbear pointing at several of the matchless Beauties of *Milton* In the *Remarks on Prince* Arthur, I cited at large the sublime Description of *Satan* in the first Book of that Poem, and the Speech of that fallen Arch-Angel in the fourth, which begins with that noble Apostrophe to the Sun.

In the *Advancement and Reformation of modern Poetry*, which was publish'd in 1700, I shew'd the vast Advantage which *Milton* had over *Ovid*, and ev'n *Virgil* himself, in his Description of *Chaos* and the Creation

In the *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*, which Book was publish'd in 1704, you know very well, Sir, that I cited at large the Description of the Descent of *Raphael* in the fifth Book, and the glorious Hymn to the Creator in the same Book, and likewise the divine Colloquy between God and *Adam* in the eighth Book

Some Persons who long since the Publication of the forementioned Treatises began to write Notes on the *Paradise Lost*, have made particular mention of the same Beauties which I had mark'd out before, without making any mention of me. Tho' you know very well, Sir, that I can bring unquestionable Proof that those Persons had read the forementioned Treatises, and read them with

Applause, but I should not be in the least concern'd at the treating me so unfairly and ungenerously, if they had done Justice to *Milton*, thro' the Course of their Criticisms, of which they have grossly fail'd in the following Respects.

I. They have not allow'd that *Milton* in the Sublimity of his Thoughts surpass'd both Ancients and Moderns.

II. In their Observations which they have made on the *Paradise Lost*, they have insisted too much upon things in which *Milton* has Equals, instead of dwelling intirely on that Sublimity which is his distinguishing and Characteristick Quality, and which sets him above Mankind

III. In citing Passages from him which are truly sublime, they have often fail'd of setting his Sublimity in a true Light, and of shewing it to all its Advantage

IV In those Passages whose Sublimity they have set in a true Light, they have not observ'd, to the Honour of *Milton*, and our Country, that the Thoughts and Images are Original, and the genuine Offspring of *Milton*'s transcendent Genius

V. They have not shewn how *Milton*'s Sublimity is distinguish'd from that of all other Poets in this Respect, that where he has excell'd all other Poets in what he has exprest, he has left ten times more to be understood than what he has exprest, which is the surest and noblest Mark, and the most transporting Effect of Sublimity

To shew that they who have writ Observations on the *Paradise Lost*, have not done Justice to *Milton*, with regard to the five forementioned Articles, is the Design and Subject of the Letters I intend to send you, which shall rather be frequent than long, my Design being to amuse and entertain you, and not to fatigue and tire you.

Decem. 9, 1721

I am, &c.

LETTER II

Observations on the PARADISE LOST *of* MILTON

To *Dr* S——

SIR,

I Affirmed in my last that the Persons who had writ Comments upon the *Paradise Lost* of *Milton*, had not done Justice to the great Author in several Respects which are there particularized And,

First and principally in this, that they have not acknowledg'd that he has born away the Prize of Sublimity from both Ancients and Moderns

What I asserted in my former, I shall endeavour to prove in this, but on this Condition, that you will give me your Opinion of what I write to you, with that Frankness and that Unreservedness which is due to our Friends, whenever they consult us, and depend upon our Judgment and our Sincerity.

Of all the Commentators on the *Paradise Lost*, Mr. *Addison* was certainly the most ingenious, if he was not the most learned, but he has not given *Milton* his full Due, either thro' want of Discernment, or want of Impartiality. In the 17th Page of the small Edition of his Notes upon the *Paradise Lost*, he has these Words of the Author

Milton's *chief Talent, and indeed his distinguishing Excellence, lies in the Sublimity of his Thoughts. There are others of the Moderns who rival him in every other part of Poetry, but in the Greatness of his Sentiments he triumphs over all the Poets both Moderns and Ancients*, Homer *only excepted*

But as when a Man departs from Truth, which is the only bond of Union and Agreement, both of our Sentiments with those of others, and of our Sentiments with themselves, he is ready immediately to differ from, and to grow inconsistent with himself, Mr *Addison*, who expresly here either equals or prefers *Homer* for the Greatness of his Sentiments before *Milton*, contradicts himself at least no less than twice in the Course of his Observations for says he, in the *7th* Page of the foresaid Edition, *There is an undisputable and unquestion'd Magnificence in every part of* Paradise Lost, *and indeed a much greater than could have been form'd upon any* Pagan *System* Now if there is a greater Magnificence in every Part of *Milton's* Poem, there is by Consequence a greater Sublimity than there is in the *Iliads*, which was form'd upon a *Pagan* System

Again in the 92d Page of the foresaid Edition, Mr *Addison*, speaking of the Excellence of *Milton's* Performance in the Sixth Book of his Poem, delivers himself thus

Milton's *Genius, which was so great in it self, and so strengthned by all the helps of Learning, appears in this Book every way equal to his Subject, which is the most sublime that could enter into the Thoughts of a Poet.*

Now Sir, if *Milton's* Subject is the most sublime that could enter into the Thoughts of a Poet, and his Genius is every way equal to his Subject, it follows that *Milton* is more exalted than any Poet who has not a Subject so elevated, and consequently than *Homer*, or any other Poet ancient or modern

But as in the 91st Page of the foresaid Comment. Mr *Addison* takes a great deal of Pains to shew the Greatness of one particular Passage of *Homer*, and to describe it, after *Longinus*, in all those chosen Circumstances, which may make it appear to be noble and exalted, which Pains he has not taken with any other Passage, we may reasonably conclude that he believ'd this to be the most lofty of any that are in the Works of *Homer*, as indeed it really is Now as there is a Passage in the 6th Book of *Paradise Lost*, which was produced upon a parallel Occasion, let us see if we cannot find by comparing them, for the Honour of our Country, that the Passage of our *Briton* is as much superior to that of the *Grecian*, as the Angels of the one are more potent than the

other's Gods, or as the *Empyrean* Heaven is more exalted than *Ossa, Pelion* or *Olympus*

In order to this, Sir, give me leave to lay before you the Words which Mr. *Addison* makes use of to set forth the masterly Strokes of *Homer.* After he has told us, that there is no question, but that *Milton* had heated his Imagination with the Fight of the Gods in *Homer,* before he enter'd upon the Engagement of the Angels (of which, by the way, I do not believe one Syllable, I would sooner believe the greatest Absurdities of the *Alcoran*) he is pleas'd to add what follows

Homer *there gives us a Scene of Men, Heroes, and Gods, mix'd together in Battle.* Mars *animates the contending Armies, and lifts up his Voice in such a manner, that it is heard distinctly amidst all the Shouts and Confusion of the Fight* Jupiter *at the same time thunders over their Heads, while* Neptune *raises such a Tempest, that the whole Field of Battle and all the Tops of the Mountains shake about them The Poet tells us, that* Pluto *himself, whose Habitation was in the very Center of the Earth, was so affrighted at the Shock, that he leapt from his Throne* Homer *afterwards describes* Vulcan *as pouring down a Storm of Fire upon the River* Xanthus, *and* Minerva *as throwing a Rock at* Mars, *who he tells us cover'd seven Acres in his fall*

With these imaginary *ne plus ultra's* had Mr *Addison* so fill'd his Capacity, that when ten thousand greater Beauties are before his Eyes, he stops short of them, and never in the least discerns them, as you will see immediately, for thus he goes on

As Homer *has introduc'd into his Battle of the Gods every thing that is great and terrible in Nature,* Milton *has fill'd his Fight of good and bad Angels with all the like Circumstances of Horror. The Shout of Armies, the Rattling of brazen Chariots, the hurling of Rocks and Mountains, the Earthquake, the Fire, the Thunder, are all of them employ'd to lift up the Reader's Imagination, and give him a suitable Idea of so great an Action With what Art doth the Poet represent the whole Body of the Earth trembling, even before it was created.*

Thus with this very pretty trifling Remark does Mr. *Addison* stop short, within the very touch of one of the vastest and the sublimest Beauties that ever was inspir'd by the God of Verse, or by *Milton's* Godlike Genius, when the very next Lines, the very next Words, strike and astonish us with such wonderful Ideas, as are able to lift up the Reader's Imagination to a thousand times a greater Heighth than either the Shout of Armies, the Rattling of brazen Chariots, the hurling of Rocks and Mountains, the Earthquake, the Fire, or the Thunder. But that these Beauties may be seen in all their Lustre, and in all their Glory, give me leave to set the whole Passage before you

Th' Arch-Angel's Trumpet through the vast of Heav'n
Resounded, and the faithful Armies rung
Hosanna to the Highest nor stood at gaze
The adverse Legions, nor less hideous join'd
The horrid Shock now storming Fury rose
And Clamour, such as heard in Heav'n till now
Was never, Arms on Armour clashing bray'd
Horrible Discord, and the madding Wheels
Of brazen Chariots rag'd, Dire was the Noise
Of Conflict, over head the dismal Hiss
Of fiery Darts in flaming Volleys flew,
And flying vaulted either Host with Fire
So under fiery Cope together rush'd
Both Battles main, with ruinous Assault
And inextinguishable Rage, all Heav'n
Resounded, and had Earth been then, all Earth
Had to her Center shook What Wonder? when
Millions of fierce encountring Angels fought
On either side, the least of whom could wield
These Elements, and arm him with the force
Of all their Regions

But now, Sir, if Millions of fierce encountring Angels fought on either Side, and the very least, the very weakest of so many Millions had Power to rend this Globe of Earth and Ocean from its Axle, and whirl it with its dependent Atmosphere thro' the Æthereal Regions, what must be the unutterable, the inconceivable Effect of so many Millions furiously contending against each other, and each of them exerting all his might for Victory? When

——————— *Each on himself relied,*
As only on his Arm the Moment lay
Of Victory

These are amazing, these are astonishing Ideas, worthy of the great Original Fight, the Battle of the *Empyrean*

But now, Sir, if the least, if the weakest of so many Millions as fought on either Side, had Strength to remove this Globe of Earth with its dependent Elements, what could not the greatest of them, what could not *Lucifer*, what could not the Prince of the Arch-angels, *Michael*'s next to Almighty Arm do? The following Lines, and our own Reflections on them, may a little help to inform us.

——————— *Long time in even Scale*
The Battle hung, till Satan, who that Day
Prodigious Pow'r had shewn, and met in Arms
No Equal, ranging through the dire Attack
Of fighting Seraphim confus'd, at length
Saw where the Sword of Michael *smote and fell'd*
Squadrons at once

But now, Sir, of whom were these Squadrons? Why,

> *Squadrons of those the least of whom could wield*
> *These Elements, and arm him with the Force*
> *Of all their Regions*

What must the Power of that Arch-angel be, who with one Stroke of his Sword could fell whole Squadrons of those,

> *The least of whom could wield these Elements,*
> *And arm him with the Force of all their Regions?*

But let us proceed to the Combat of the two Arch-angels, and we shall see something more in a Passage that is wonderfully sublime, and worthy the Mouth of the Angel who relates it.

> *They ended Parle, and both addrest for Fight*
> *Unspeakable, for who, tho' with the Tongue*
> *Of Angels, can relate, or to what Things*
> *Liken on Earth conspicuous, that may lift*
> *Human Imagination to such height*
> *Of Godlike Power For likest Gods they seem'd,*
> *Stood they or mov'd, in Stature, Motion, Arms*
> *Fit to decide the Empire of great Heav'n*
> *Now wav'd their fiery Swords, and in the Air*
> *Made horrid Circles, two broad Suns their Shields*
> *Blaz'd opposite, while Expectation stood*
> *In horror, from each Hand with speed retir'd*
> *Where ere was thickest Fight, th' Angelic Throng,*
> *And left large Field, unsafe within the Wind*
> *Of such Commotion*

Now who were these that retir'd with so much Speed, and could not hear the very Wind of the Weapons of the two Arch-angels, and were threatned with Destruction by their very Motion? Why, this Angelick Throng were the same whom the Angel mention'd above,

> *The least of whom could wield these Elements,*
> *And arm him with the Force of all their Regions*

So that we find, computing by just Proportion, that *Michael* the Prince of the Arch-angels, or *Lucifer* before his Fall, had Might enough to confound and destroy in a Moment the whole Dominion of the Sun, to crush all the Planetary Worlds depending on him, and whirling them through the immense Regions of the Sky, to scatter and disperse them in empty infinite Space. These, Sir, are vast, these are prodigious Conceptions, and the Poet was so sensible that his Genius, though mighty as ever was that of a Mortal, and seeming to be inspir'd by that very Angel whom he introduces relating this, he was so sensible that his Genius sunk under his vast Conceptions, that when he compares the two contending Arch-angels to two Planetary Worlds broke loose, and crushing and confounding each other, and sees this Image so vast

in itself, and yet so little answering to his vaster Idea, he finds himself oblig'd to express himself as follows.

> ——— *From each hand with speed retir'd*
> *Where erst was thickest Fight, th' Angelick Throng,*
> *And left large Field, unsafe within the Wind*
> *Of such Commotion, such as to set forth*
> *Great Things by small, if Nature's Concord broke,*
> *And War among the Constellations sprung,*
> *Two Planets rushing with Aspect malign*
> *Of fiercest Opposition in mid Sky*
> *Should combat, and their jarring Spheres confound*

The Conflict of two Worlds crushing and confounding each other, appear'd but trivial and light to him, to express his Idea of the Combat of the two Arch-angels, and therefore he says, that he's oblig'd *to set forth Great things by Small*

What immediately follows accounts for all this, and is transcendently Sublime

> *Together both with* next to Almighty Arm
> *Uplifted, imminent, one Stroke they aim'd,*
> *That might determine, and not need repeat*
> *As not of Power at once*

That Expression *with next to Almighty Arm*, includes more than the Thoughts of the greatest Reader can ever comprehend, which recalls to my Remembrance, that noble, that wonderful Image, which the Poet gives of *Satan*, in the second Book of this exalted Poem

> *The Stygian Council thus dissolv'd, and forth*
> *In order came the grand infernal Peers,*
> *Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seem'd*
> *Alone th' Antagonist of Heav'n*

I defy any one to name any thing so sublime in *Homer*, as the latter End of this Passage above.

I am sensible, that this Letter runs into too great a Length, and 'tis high time to conclude it I have endeavour'd to prove in it, that there is a Sublimity in *Milton*'s Battle of Angels, infinitely superiour to that which is in the Battle of *Homer*'s Gods and Heroes in the twentieth Iliad And as I have set sublime Beauties before you, of which neither Mr *Addison*, nor my Lord *Roscommon*, have taken the least Notice, so in my next I shall make an Objection which has not been yet made If I have any where pass'd the Bounds of the Epistolary or the Didactic Stile, you will have the Goodness to consider, that it was next to impossible to resist the violent Emotions which the Greatness of the Subject rais'd in me

Jan 20 172½

I am, Sir,
Yours, &c.

LETTER III.

Observations on the PARADISE LOST *of* MILTON.

To Dr. *S*———

SIR,

AS in my last I endeavour'd to shew Beauties in *Milton*, which no one had taken Notice of before me, and greater Beauties than any which I believe had been taken Notice of I shall in this lay before you an Objection, which no one that I know of has made against those very Machines of *Milton*, from the Force and Power of which those sublime Beauties were drawn

Most of the Machines then in *Paradise Lost*, have the appearance of something that is inconsistent and contradictory, for in them the Poet seems to confound Body and Mind, Spirit and Matter At the latter End of the first Book we find this Passage,

> *Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest Forms*
> *Reduce their Shapes immense*

Now Form and Shape suppose Extension, and Extension implies Matter Besides, he has given them solid Arms and Armour, which can be employ'd by Body only, as Helmet, Spear, Shield, Sword, and has shewn both his good and his bad Angels Cap-a-pee in Armour

To which all the Answer that can reasonably be made is, That both the good and the bad Angels, though in themselves pure Spirits and uncompounded Essences, yet on occasion, either voluntarily assume Bodies, or by superiour Power and divine Command are oblig'd to assume them And that this was *Milton*'s Notion of the thing, the following Verses in the first Book incline us to believe

> ——————————— *Spirits, when they please,*
> *Can either Sex assume, or both, so soft*
> *And uncompounded is their Essence pure,*
> *Not ty'd or manacled with Joint or Limb,*
> *Nor founded on the brittle Strength of Bones,*
> *Like cumb'rous Flesh, but in what Shapes they please,*
> *Dilated or condens'd, bright or obscure,*
> *Can execute their airy Purposes,*
> *And works of Love or Enmity fulfill*

This is the best Answer I can give to the Objection I have made, and if you are not satisfy'd with it, I desire you would send me your own, for it concerns us to invalidate the most important Objection that can be made to the greatest of our *English* Poets, and perhaps against most of the Machines which are employ'd in the Christian Poetry. And here let me deplore one Unhappiness that attends our modern Poetry For tho' the Machines with which the Christian Religion supplies us, must be allow'd to be greater, more

wonderful, and more terrible, than any which the Pagan Religion affords us, they are less delightful For that which comes nearest to humane Nature, must in Poetry be most delightful to it, but the Gods and Goddesses of the *Grecian* and *Roman* Poetry, being feign'd to have manifest Bodies, and apparent humane Shapes, and the agreeable Distinction of Sexes, come incomparably nearer to humane Nature, than the Machines of the Christian Poetry, and are therefore more delightful to it, and likewise for the following Reason, because we have, beyond all Comparison, more clear and distinct Ideas of them, than we have of the Christian Machines.

Jan. 24. 172½.

I am, Yours,

POSTSCRIPT.

I Am sorry, that while I was writing what is above, it was not in my Thoughts to acquaint you, that there seems to me to be a vast Difference between some of the Machines of *Milton* and others, with regard to their Justness When the good Angels, first *Raphael*, and afterwards *Michael*, were feigned by the Poet to be commanded by God to appear before our first Parents, it was very justly suppos'd by him that they assum'd Bodies, and that they appear'd to them in some Form that came near to humane Shape, because it is impossible that any thing but Body can be the true Object of humane Sight, and because every Body that appears, must appear in some certain Shape or Form, and *Milton* could know of no Shape that had more Dignity than the humane. But with all the Veneration that I have for this great Poet, I cannot help thinking, that when in the first and second Books of his Poem, which yet are transcendently Sublime, he describes the fall'n Angels in Shapes that come near to humane, and describes them as having three of the five Animal Senses, *viz* seeing, hearing and feeling, when he paints them after this manner, communing only one with another in their own infernal Regions, immediately after their Fall, and yet acquaints us at the same time that they are incorporeal Beings, and pure and uncompounded Essences, methinks his Paintings, as to that Point, are not so easily to be justified I know indeed very well, that *Cowley* in the first Book of his *Davideis*, and *Tasso* in the fourth Canto of his *Gierusalemme*, have describ'd those fall'n Angels as having Bodies, and something like humane Shapes, though on Occasions on which they commune only with one another in their own infernal Regions But then, as neither *Cowley* nor *Tasso* have formally and expresly declar'd, as *Milton* has expresly and formally done, that those evil Spirits are incorporeal Beings, and pure and uncompounded Essences; they leave the Reader's Imagination free to fancy, that those fall'n Angels have Bodies, and as they assert no Notions that may be taken to be inconsistent, they have avoided the giving their Readers the

occasion of believing, that there is in their Descriptions of those fall'n Angels any real Contradiction, or the trouble of shewing, that what is thought to be a real Contradiction, has but the false Appearance of one.

LETTER IV

A Defence of Mr Wycherley*'s Characters in the* Plain-dealer

To *William Congreve*, Esq,

SIR,

I Have lately heard, with some Indignation, that there are Persons who arraign the ridiculous Characters of our late Friend Mr *Wycherley*, for being forsooth too witty; mov'd, I suppose, by the wise Apprehension that they may be of dangerous Example, and spread the Contagion of Wit in this Witty and Politick Age, an Age so very Witty, and so very Politick, that it is always like to be an undetermin'd Question, whether our Wit has the Advantage of our Politicks, or our Politicks of our Wit

As soon as I heard of this Accusation, I resolved to write a Defence of Mr *Wycherley*, and to direct this Defence to you, for the following Reasons Because you had a true Esteem for Mr *Wycherley*'s Merit, as well as had your humble Servant, Because you are allow'd by all to be an undoubted Judge of the Matter in debate, and Because an express Vindication of Mr *Wycherley*'s ridiculous Characters, is an implicite one of some of your own

The forementioned Persons pretend that Mr. *Wycherley* is included in the following Censure of the late Duke of *Buckingham*, and a Passage in Mr *Dryden*'s Preface to his Translation of *Fresnoy*.

> *Another Fault which often doth befall,*
> *Is when the Wit of some great Poet shall*
> *So overflow, that is, be none at all,*
> *That ev'n his Fools speak Sense as if possest,*
> *And each by Inspiration breaks his Jest*
> *If once the Justness of each Part be lost,*
> *Well may we laugh, but at the Poet's Cost*

Now, Sir, I cannot believe the late Duke of *Buckingham* so much as thought of Mr. *Wycherley* in this severe Censure, not only because the Censure is not true with regard to Mr *Wycherley*, as shall be prov'd below, but because the Duke, who knew the Value of Money as much as another, would never have done so generous a thing by our deceased Friend, as the lending him 500 *l.* upon his own single Bond, during his Father's Life-time, if he had look'd upon Mr. *Wycherley* as a ridiculous Author, and he must have look'd upon him as such, if he had believ'd that he did not preserve the Justness of his Characters

> *If once the Justness of each Part be lost,*
> *Well may we laugh, but at the Poet's Cost*

But let us come to the Passage in Mr *Dryden*'s Preface to *Fresnoy*, which is in the 43d Page of *Lintot*'s Edition.

I know a Poet (says he) *whom out of Respect I will not name, who being too witty himself, could draw nothing but Wits in a certain Comedy of his ev'n his Fools were infected with the Disease of their Author. They overflow'd with smart Repartees, and were only distinguish'd from the intended Wits by being call'd Coxcombs, tho' they did not deserve so scandalous a Name*

Thus far Mr. *Dryden*, who in this Passage doth certainly reflect upon Mr *Wycherley*, and particularly upon his *Plain-dealer* But having reason to believe, that this is wrongfully objected to him, I shall vindicate him against Mr. *Dryden*, and all his Abettors, and make no doubt but I shall make it appear, that by this rash Censure, he has shewn himself no more a capable Judge of Comedy, than just to that Friendship which he profest to have for Mr *Wycherley*, or to that Regard which he ought to have had for his own Sentiments, and his own Sincerity. For, Sir, at this rate, what becomes of the Encomium which he has given to you before your *Double-dealer*? What could prevail upon him, in his Verses before that Play, to tell you that you had

The Satire, Wit, and Strength of manly Wycherley?

What could he mean by commending you for having the Wit of Mr. *Wycherley*, if that Wit is only a Disease, and serves to no purpose but to make you falsify your Characters? And why should he praise you for having Mr. *Wycherley*'s Strength, when that Strength, according to him, must be Weakness it self? And at this Rate what becomes of his Advice to Mr *Southern*, before a certain Play of his,

But if thou would'st be seen as well as read,
Copy one living Author, and one dead
The Standard of thy Style let Etherege *be,*
For Wit, th' Immortal Spring of Wycherley

I always thought till now, that there was a very wide difference between a Disease and Immortality, and am still inclin'd to believe, that if copying the Wit of Mr *Wycherley* was necessary to make another succeed, the Original could neither be absurd nor improper in Mr *Wycherley* himself

And, Sir, at this rate, what becomes of the Character which Mr. *Dryden* formerly gave Mr *Wycherley* in his Preface to the *State of Innocence*? where he declares the Author of the *Plain-dealer* to be the greatest Comick Poet of the Age, one whom he is proud to call his Friend, and one who by the just and general Satire contain'd in that very Comedy had oblig'd all virtuous Men, as well as all Lovers of Poetry

This is the Substance of that Passage, which I cannot pretend to give verbatim, because I have not seen the Play for several Years, but you have the Sense and Meaning faithfully And now, Sir, of what Force can the

Passage in the Preface to *Fresnoy* be against Mr. *Wycherley*, when 'tis plain that Mr *Dryden* himself has three times contradicted it?

If the Business were to be decided by Authority, there would not be very great ones wanting to justifie Mr *Wycherley* As first, that of *George* Duke of *Buckingham*, who writ the *Rehearsal*, who not only shew'd his Judgment by writing that celebrated Play, but shew'd the Esteem which he had for Mr. *Wycherley*, by the Benefits which he conferr'd on him, and by his frequent conversing with him

Next follows *John* Earl of *Rochester*, who, if he was a true Judge of any sort of Poetry, it was certainly of Comedy Now he in his Imitation of the tenth Satire of the first Book of *Horace*, told us that

> *None have touch'd lately on true Comedy,*
> *But hasty* Shadwell, *and slow* Wycherley

Anon he adds,

> *But* Wycherley *earns hard whate'er he gains,*
> *He wants no Judgment, and he spares no Pains*

Mr *Shadwell*, who could not but have a true Taste of Comedy, since he was so just a Writer of it, tells his Audience, in his Prologue to *Bury Fair*,

> ——— *The* Plain-Dealer, *and Sir* Fopling *you*
> *Have seen, and justly have applauded too*

If I would bring the Authority of Persons who are now living, I could bring indisputable ones, as my Lord *Lansdoun*'s, Mr. *Prior*'s, and your own.

But if any one is presumptuous enough to pretend, that all these are mistaken, while he himself is in the right, if 'tis alledg'd by him that no Authorities, no not the greatest, are of any Force against Reason and Matter of Fact, and that this Reason and Matter of Fact, which have been hid from so many discerning Judges, have been evident to him alone, I shall endeavour to prove two things both by Reason and Fact, contrary to the Objections of this presumptuous Accuser, and the foresaid Censure of Mr *Dryden*, and those are, first, that Mr *Wycherley*'s Coxcombs are really Coxcombs, and very justly deserve that scandalous Name, and secondly, that they are not only fairly, but vastly distinguish'd from the intended Wits

First then, Mr *Wycherley*'s Coxcombs are really Coxcombs And here we must observe that Fool and Wit are so far from being Terms that are incompatible or contradictory, that they are not so much as Terms of Opposition, there being several Persons who are call'd Wits, and who by the Vigour and Fire of their Constitutions are enabled sometimes to say what they call smart and witty things, who have not one grain of Judgment or Discernment to distinguish Right from Wrong or Truth from Falshood, and that therefore the 523d Reflection of *Rochefoucault* is certainly very Just· *On est quelque fois un sot avec de l'Esprit, mais on ne l'est jamais avec du Jugement* 'It may

'happen (says he) that a Man may be a Fool who has Wit, but he never 'can be so who has Judgment.' The Vanity of those whom they call Wits has made them pretend that there is a full Opposition between Wit and Fool, but the only true and full Opposition is between him that is a Fool, and him who is Wise.

It would not be altogether fair to shew the Folly of those whom they call Wits from the Conduct of their Lives, because I have known several of them whose Actions have not been entirely in their Power, but I have known very few of them who have had the use of Reason I do not speak of Authors, but of those who have got the Reputation of Wits, from the Liveliness and sometimes from the Looseness of their Conversation I have in the course of my Life converst with a great Number of them, but I have been acquainted with very few of them who could argue Logically, when I say Logically, I do not mean Syllogistically or Pedantically, but reasonably, closely and conclusively

I desire in the next Place to observe, that as 'tis the Business of a Comick Poet to correct those Irregularities and Extravagancies of Men's Tempers which make them uneasie to themselves, and troublesome and vexatious to one another, for that very Reason, your witty Fools are very just Subjects of Comedy, because they are more troublesome and shocking in Conversation to Men of Sense, than any other sort of Fools whatsoever Such a Fool with all his smart Repartees, as Mr *Dryden* calls them, his snip snap, his hit for hit, and dash for dash, is but too often impertinent, impudent, insolent, opinionated, noisie, fantastical abusive, brutal, perfidious, which shews the Solidity of that Reflection of *Rochefoucault* which is the 518*th* *Il n'y a point des Sots si Incommodes que ceux qui ont de l'Esprit* "There are no Fools so troublesome "as the Fools who have Wit"

Now such are Mr *Wycherley's* Fools in the Comedy of the *Plain-dealer* My Lord *Plausible*, Major *Oldfox*, the Widow *Blackacre*, and *Jerry*, have each of them several of these Qualities, and *Novel* has them all He is impertinent, impudent, insolent, conceited, noisie, fantastick, abusive, brutal, perfidious He says nothing but what a brisk Coxcomb may very well be suppos'd to say who will venture at all, and who having a good Memory keeps the top Company in a Town over-run with Wit, as *London* was at the Time of the writing of that Comedy What is said by him and the rest in the several Scenes in which they appear, is either trifling and superficial, or utterly and ridiculously false, or appears to be a Repetition of what the Men of Sense in the Play have said before them, whereas what *Manly*, *Freeman* and *Eliza* say is always sensible, and is therefore always true

As 'tis the Business of a Comick Poet to paint the Age in which he lives, which if he doth not paint, he doth nothing at all, Mr *Wycherley* had by no means shewn himself so great a Master in Comedy, as he has done, if he had not brought these witty Fools upon the Stage, because in the Reign of King *Charles* the Second they in all Places abounded The People whom they call'd Wits were to be had every where, nay were not to be avoided, any more

than Toasters, Punsters, and Newsmongers are now-a-days, but good Sense and Reason were to be found in as few Places then as they are in our Days. But now, Sir, I come to shew that the Coxcombs in the *Plain-dealer* are not only fairly and justly, but vastly distinguish'd from those whom Mr *Wycherley* design'd for sensible Characters For *Manly, Freeman* and *Eliza* every where make it appear, that with their Wit they have Judgment, and consequently make great and important Observations, and have therefore a thousand times more Wit than the foresaid Coxcombs For he who has Wit without Judgment is but a half Wit, and therefore has but imperfect Views, and makes but superficial Reflections, whereas he who has Judgment, has home Views, and makes profound Reflections

And therefore some have been of Opinion that Judgment doth not differ from Wit, unless it be in the Greatness and the Extent of the Light it affords us *On s'est trompe lors qu'on a crû que l'Esprit et le Jugement etoient deux choses differentes* (says the Duke of *Rochefoucault*, Reflection 122) *Le Jugement n'est que la grandeur de la Lumiere de l'Esprit, cette lumiere penetre le fonds des choses, elle y remarque tout ce qu'il faut remarquez & aperçoit celles qui semblent imperceptibles ainsi il faut demeurer d'accord que c'est l'etendue de la lumiere de l'Esprit qui produit tous les Effets qu'on atribue au Jugement.* That is, 'They are deceiv'd who believe that 'Wit and Judgment are two different things. Judgment is nothing but 'the Greatness of that Light which the Understanding affords us 'Tis a 'Light which pierces to the very Bottom of things, observing every thing in 'them which ought to be observ'd, and perceiving every thing which was 'thought to be imperceptible We ought then to conclude that 'tis the Extent 'of the Light which the Understanding affords us that produces all the Effects 'which are attributed to the Judgment'

All that we have advanc'd would be manifest as the Day, if we were to go thro' the principal Scenes in which the Characters of either sort appear I know not but I may perswade my self to do that one Day, provided that what I have already said has the good Fortune to prove agreeable to you In the mean while I cannot help making one Observation upon the Scene in the second Act, where *Novel* intends to give an Account of the Guests at my Lady *Autumn*'s Table, by which it will appear how industriously Mr *Wycherley* avoided the making his Dramatick Persons speak out of their Characters For *Novel* who is to give the Account is always interrupted by *Olivia*, that the Wit of that Scene may be in a more proper Mouth than his, yet so quick are the Returns, and so great is the Vivacity of that admirable Scene, that it has dazled and deluded most of his Readers, and prevail'd upon them to imagine, that *Novel* has a full share in the Wit of it, tho' he has not so much as a half quarter share in the very Dialogue of it.

Thus, Sir, I have endeavour'd to defend the *Plain-dealer* against the foresaid Accusation, as far as my present Avocations would give me leave If it appears to you, who are so great a Judge of these matters, that I am in the

right in what I have said, I make no doubt but I have done an agreeable thing to you, in doing Justice to the Merit of our deceased Friend, and setting it in a true Light. But if I happen to be mistaken, which yet I will not believe, till I hear from you, that I am so, I will make no Excuse for my self but what one whom you have the greatest Regard for has already made to my Hand.

Vellem in amicitia sic erraremus, et isti
Error, virtus nomen posusset honestum
Hor

At the same time I am very far from believing that the *Plain-dealer* is a faultless Play, for where is the Play or the Poem that is without Fault? But since these People have not hit on the true Faults, it becomes his Friends to say nothing at all concerning them

Aug 1, 1721

I am, Sir,
Yours, &c

OF PROSODY

1722

SIR,

I HERE send you in complyance with your Desire, my Sentiments concerning the Harmony of our *English* Poetry, which is a short Essay towards an *English* Prosody, and I heartily wish that I could send you any Thing that could be of any Use, or any Addition to so good, so useful, and so generous a Work as the *Grammar*, which you are about to publish a second time.

CHAP. I

Of Numbers

THERE are two Things to be considered in the Harmony of our *English*, and indeed of all *Gothick* Poetry, and those are *Numbers* and *Rhyme*

A numerous Discourse, or a Discourse that is writ in *Numbers*, is a Discourse whose Parts are measured by such a Number of Feet or of Syllables· *Numbers* are necessary to all Sorts of *Poetry*, both *Gothique* and *Antique*. But the Ancient *Græcians* and *Romans* arriving, by the Advantage of their Language and the Fineness of their Ears, to a great Perfection in *Numbers*, utterly contemned and rejected *Rhyme* Whereas the *Gothick* or modern *Poets* vainly imagine that they can supply the Defect of *Numbers* in their unmusical Idioms by the Use of *Rhyme*.

Numbers are made musical and delightful to the Ear by Strength, Sweetness, and Variety. Consonants express strength, but if unseasonably accumulated are harsh and disagreeable Vowels supply Sweetness, and especially Diphthongs, but too many of them banish Force. The agreeable Mixture of Vowels and Consonants causes a charming Combination of Strength and Sweetness But Vowels and Consonants are to be so mingled, that Vowels or Consonants may prevail according as Force or Sweetness is more required It is partly for this Reason, that there is more Force and more Sweetness in the Ancient *Græcian* or *Roman*, than in the modern or *Gothick* Poetry, because in the Ancient *Græcian* and *Roman*, and especially in the former, the Vowels and Consonants are more finely mingled than they are in the modern Languages.

The Variety of *Numbers*, and the avoiding of Monotony, is caused in *Poems*, which consist of only one Sort of *Verse*, by the various mingling of Vowels and Consonants, and by the different placing of Accents and Cadences (of which last we shall say more immediately) The *Numbers* in our usual *Pentameters*, which is the Verse that we call *Heroick*, are divided into equal and unequal, and the *Pentameter* is diversified by the Judicious using the one or the other, according as the Subject requires. The *Numbers* are equal, when the *Accents* lye upon equal Syllables, and they are unequal when the *Accents* lye upon odd Syllables

CHAP. II.

Of Measure and Cadence

AS *Numbers* imply Measure, they likewise include Cadence The Measure of our *English* Verse is different, according to the different kinds of it. The Measure of our common *Pentameter* or *Heroick* Verse is usually ten Syllables, but sometimes when there are *Dactyles*, 'tis extended to *eleven* or *twelve*, as in this Verse of *Dryden*

Thee Saviour, Thee the Nations Vows confess

In our *Stanza's*, according to the different kinds of them the Measure differs Two of our *Poets*, have writ long *Poems* in *Stanza's*, *Spencer*, and Sir *William Davenant* The *Stanza* of Sir *William Davenant* is what they call the *Quaternion*, which consists of four *Pentameters* with alternate *Rhyme* The *Stanza* of *Spencer* consists of nine Verses, the eight first of which are *Pentameters*, and the ninth is an *Alexandrine* or an *Hexameter* But the *Stanza* is certainly very improper for long and noble *Poems* It seems to belong in a peculiar manner to our *Lyrick* Poetry

The Measures of our *Lyrical Stanza's* are as different as the *Odes* which are writ in those *Stanza's* There is the Regular *Stanza* and the Irregular. The Irregular *Stanza* belongs to the *Ode* which is Vulgarly called *Pindarick*, in which no one *Stanza* unless by chance answers exactly to another The Regular *Stanza* is that, whose Measures and the different placing of its *Rhymes* answer exactly to every one of the same *Ode*, and even of these there is a vast Variety, as every one knows who is acquainted with our *Poets* who have writ *Odes* and *Songs*, as *Suckling*, *Waller*, *Cowley*, *Sedley*, *Wilmot*, *Sackvile*, with a long *et ceteri*

To treat of *Cadence* as one ought to do, would require an entire Treatise. The Word seems to me to be a *Metaphor* drawn from the *Dancing-School*, where it properly signifies a Pause or a Fall from Motion to rest Taken metaphorically, it signifies a Pause in Sound, or a Fall from Sound to Silence, or from a stronger Sound to a softer, and is regulated by the natural Stops of the Sense, and influenced by the *Accents* In our most musical *Pentameters* or *Heroicks*, the Pauses which are most remarkable, are those which are in the Middle of a Verse, or those which are at the End of it

The Pauses in the Middle of the Verse, are either upon the fourth Syllable, as in these Verses of *Denham*

Tho' deep, yet clear, tho' gentle, yet not dull,
Strong without Rage, without oreflowing full

Or upon the Sixth, as in the following Verse of *Roscommon*

Vain are our Neighbours Hopes, and vain their Cares

The Pause at the End of a Verse ought to be greater than any Pause that may precede it in the same Verse, and the Pause at the End of a Couplet ought to be greater than that which is at the End of the first Verse.

But it is not necessary that the Pause at the End of a Couplet should be a full one, that is, a Point, it is often a *Colon*, often a *Semicolon*, often a *Comma* only But if the *Rhyme* is carried on to the third Verse, which causes the three to be called a *Triplet*, then is it necessary there should be a full Pause, that is, a Point, especially if the last Verse of the three is an *Hexameter*, as it often happens.

CHAPTER III

Of Rhyme.

I Come now to say something of *Rhyme*, that *Gothick* Pretence to Harmony. *Rhyme* then is nothing but a Similitude of Sound between the last Syllable or Syllables of one Verse, and the last Syllable or Syllables of another Verse, either immediately following the former, or following at the Distance of two or three Lines at the most For if the first Syllable of the intended *Rhyme* be lost to the Ear before the second reaches it, there either can be no *Rhyme*, or at the best but a very Imperfect one

Rhymes are either single or double, or treble, but because double and treble *Rhymes* are confined to one sort of *Poetry*, which is seldom writ now by People of this World, unless it be to advance the Glory of one who has been several Years in the other, I shall be contented to treat of single *Rhymes* alone

A single *Rhyme* then is a Similitude of Sound between the last Syllable of one Verse, and the last Syllable of another Verse following it at the forementioned Distance And single *Rhymes* are divided into half and imperfect *Rhymes*, and whole and perfect ones A half and imperfect *Rhyme* is, where there is a Similitude with a Difference The Difference lies chiefly in the Pronunciation, but sometimes too in the Orthography We have an example of both these Differences in six Verses of *Waller*, which are in the Copy, which the Country is supposed to present to the *Countess* of *Carlisle*

A rural Judge dispos'd of Beauty's Prize,
A simple Shepherd was preferr'd to Jove,
Down to the Mountains from the partial Skies
Came Juno, Pallas, *and the Queen of Love,*
To plead for that which was so justly giv'n,
To the Bright Carlisle *of the Court of Heav'n*

Now here are two imperfect *Rhymes*, the Syllables of the first *Rhyme*, *Jove* and *Love*, agree in the Orthography, but differ in the Pronunciation. The Syllables of the second *Rhyme*, *giv'n* and *Heav'n*, differ both in the Pronunciation and the Orthography. But then this Passage of *Waller*, is so spiritual, so courtly, and so gallant, and the Numbers considered apart from the

Rhymes are so very good, that the Reader abandons himself to the Pleasure they give him, and is not at leisure to consider any Imperfection of the *Rhyme* If there is any Thing amiss in this Passage 'tis, that 'tis a great deal too courtly and too gallant for the Country But Mr. *Waller* is so happy a Genius, that his very Faults are great Beauties.

Another Thing that renders the *Rhyme* imperfect is, when one of the Words, whose last Syllable helps to constitute it, is a Polysyllable, and the Accent does not lie on the last Syllable As for Example, we find the following Lines in *Waller*'s Translation of Part of the Fourth Book of *Virgil*.

Her Resolution to dispatch and die,
Confirm'd by many a horrid Prodigy

Now here the latter Syllable of the *Rhyme* is not half pronounced, and consequently the *Rhyme* is imperfect, or the Accent must be wrongfully laid upon the last Syllable, which must make the Reader appear to be an Ignorant Person

A whole or perfect *Rhyme* is, where there is a Similitude of Sound without any Difference, or in other Words, where there is a thorough Identity of Sound, which appears in pronouncing the two Syllables which make the *Rhyme*, tho' perhaps they may differ something in the Orthography; as in these Lines of the fore-mentioned Verses of *Waller*

Carlisle, *a Name which all our Woods are taught,*
Loud as their Amarillis, *to resound*
Carlisle *a Name which on the Bark is wrought*
Of every Tree that's worthy of the Wound

Now here *Taught* and *Wrought*, tho' they differ in the Orthography, yet agree perfectly in the Pronunciation, which latter ought chiefly if not solely to be regarded in framing the *Rhymes* The two Lines of *Waller* immediately following the four which were last mentioned have a perfect *Rhyme*, whose Syllables agree both in Orthography and Pronunciation

From Phoebus' *Rage, our Shadows and our Streams*
May guard us better than from Carlisle's *Beams*

But these perfect *Rhymes* are more or less sweet or more or less sonorous as they are more or less composed of *Mutes* or *Liquids*, or *Vowels* or *Diphthongs*

Thus Sir in complaisance to you have I gone thro' the four Things which have been thought to conduce to the Harmony of modern *Poetry*, which are Numbers, Measure Cadence, and Rhyme, of these the three first consist of several different Sounds which are dependant one of another.

Rhyme, as I observed heretofore, is wholly Independant of the other three, and consists in the greater *Poetry*, but of two Sounds which are Unisons Now unisons can make no Harmony which must always consist in the Agreement of different Sounds So that *Rhyme* consisting of Unisons, can have no

Harmony in it self, and being Indepeudant of Numbers, Cadence, and Measure can never promote the Harmony which they produce. And a *Poet's* constant Application to *Rhyme*, diverts his Attention in a great degree from Numbers, Measure, and Cadence, and consequently is a severe restraint upon the three Producers of Harmony And as it diverts the Application of the Writer, so by seizing the Attention of Vulgar Readers, it diverts them from the other three. Thus you have what I have been able to write upon this Subject, during a great and dangerous Indisposition I shall be glad if it proves either useful or agreeable to you

A DEFENCE OF SIR FOPLING FLUTTER, A COMEDY WRITTEN BY SIR GEORGE ETHERIDGE

1722

THE PREFACE

THE following Defence of the Comedy of Sir *Fopling Flutter*, not only contains several Remarks upon Comedy in general, Remarks that are equally necessary for the Writing it successfully, and for the Judging of it surely, but every Article of that Defence, is a just Censure of a certain Comedy now in Rehearsal, if I can depend upon the Account which I have had of it, from several who have read it, or to whom it has been read And that the Account which I have had of it is very just, I am apt to believe, not only from the Judgment and Sincerity of the Persons from whom I had it, but likewise from the scandalous Methods that are us'd, to give it a false and a transitory Reputation

I have formerly made Mention of Poetical Mountebanks The Author of the Comedy now in Rehearsal, has all the Marks of an Empiric of *Parnassus* His Play has trotted as far as *Edinburgh* Northward, and as far as *Wales* Westward, and has been read to more Persons than will be at the Representation of it, or vouchsafe to read it, when it is publish'd

Another certain Sign that a Man is an Empiric, is, when he gives high *Encomiums* to himself, and his *Nostrums*, and pretends at the same Time, that those *Encomiums* are given by others Now, Advertisements have been sent to the News-Papers to this Effect, That the Comedy now in Rehearsal, is, in the Opinion of excellent Judges, the very best that ever came upon the *English* Stage Now, no Body could send that Advertisement but the Author, or one of his *Zany's*, by his own Contrivance, or, at least, Connivance. No one could send such an Advertisement, or give such a Judgment, but a Fool, or a Knave, a Knave, if he did it with a Design to impose on the World, and a Fool if he did it in the Sincerity of his Heart For, to declare with Judgment, that a Play is the very best that ever came upon the *English* Stage, requires vast Consideration, profound Reflection, and a long, long Comparison And what Mortal is qualify'd to pass such a Judgment upon a single momentary Reading? He who sent those Advertisements then, sent them with a Design to impose upon the World, or is an arrant Ass But 'tis highly improbable, that a Fool who knows nothing of the Matter, should give himself the Trouble to send such an Advertisement, or that any one else should do it but the Author, or the Author's *Zany's* by his Subornation For whose Interest could it be but theirs, to endeavour to impose upon the World? But now, if it shall appear by the following Treatise, that the Author of the Dramatick Piece in Rehearsal, knows nothing of the Nature of True Comedy, then how foolishly arrogant are those insolent and impudent Advertisements? These very Ways of

Proceeding, sufficiently declare the Author's Consciousness of his own Incapacity; for a noble Genius will scorn such infamous Methods, and will resolve to owe his Reputation to his Merit, and not to tricking Artifice These are some of the Methods which the present Managers of the Stage have us'd to ruine the *Dramas*, and with it all other Human Learning, which is in some Measure dependant on it For since Cabal and Trick, and the Favour and Interest of three or four sordid Wretches, have been found necessary for the obtaining Success, every one who is duly qualify'd to write for the *Stage*, has either with a just Disdain refus'd it, or has undertaken it with extream Reluctancy. The *Drama* therefore is like to be lost, and all the Arts dependent on it, therefore every one who is concern'd for the Honour of his Country, ought to do his utmost Endeavour to prevent a Calamity which will be so great a Disgrace to it And all who are concern'd for the Honour of the *KING*, ought to reflect with Indignation, that by the Malice, and the basest *Breach of Trust* of Persons whom His Majesty has appointed to encourage Literature, all the gentle Studies of Humanity are like to be either entirely lost, or extreamly impair'd, in his otherwise auspicious Reign.

A DEFENCE of Sir *Fopling Flutter*

A Certain Knight, who has employ'd so much of his empty Labour in extolling the weak Performances of some living Authors, has scurrilously and inhumanly in the 65th Spectator, attack'd one of the most entertaining Comedies of the last Age, written by a most ingenious Gentleman, who perfectly understood the World, the Court, and the Town, and whose Reputation has now for near thirty Years together, surviv'd his Person, and will, in all Probability, survive it as long as Comedy shall be in vogue, by which Proceeding, this worthy Knight has incurr'd the double Censure, that *Olivia* in the *Plain-Dealer* has cast upon a certain Coxcomb, *Who rather*, says she, *than not flatter, will flatter the Poets of the Age, whom none will flatter, and rather than not rail, will rail at the Dead, at whom none besides will rail*

If other Authors have had the Misfortune, to incurr the Censure of ill-nature with unthinking deluded People, for no other so much as pretended Reason, than because to improve a noble Art, they have expos'd the Errors of popular Writers, who ow'd their Success, to the infamous Method of securing an ignorant or a corrupt Cabal, when those Writers were not only living, but in full Prosperity, and at full Liberty to answer for themselves, what Appellation must he deserve, who has basely and scurrilously attack'd the Reputation of a Favourite of the comick Muse, and of the Darling of the Graces, after Death has for so many Years depriv'd him of the Means of answering for himself?

What the Knight falsely and impudently says of the Comedy, may be justly said of the Criticism, and of the whole 65th Spectator, that 'tis a perfect Contradiction to good Manners and good Sense He allows this Comedy, he says, to be in Nature, but 'tis Nature in its utmost Corruption and Degeneracy.

Suppose this were true, I would fain know where he learnt, that Nature in its utmost Corruption and Degeneracy, is not the proper Subject of Comedy? Is not this a merry Person, who, after he has been writing what he calls Comedy for twenty Years together, shews plainly to all the World, that he knows nothing of the Nature of true Comedy, and that he has not learnt the very first Rudiments of an Art which he pretends to teach? I must confess, the Ridicule in Sir *Fopling Flutter*, is an Imitation of corrupt and degenerate Nature, but not the most corrupt and the most degenerate, for there is neither Adultery, Murder, nor Sodomy in it But can any Thing but corrupt and degenerate Nature be the proper Subject of Ridicule? And can any Thing but Ridicule be the proper Subject of Comedy? Has not *Aristotle* told us in the Fifth Chapter of his Poeticks, that Comedy is an Imitation of the very worst of Men? Not the worst, says He, in every Sort of Vice, but the worst in the Ridicule And has not *Horace*, in the Fourth Satyr of his First Book, reminded us, that the old *Athenian* Comick Poets made it their Business to bring all Sorts of Villains upon the Stage, Adulterers, Cheats, Thieves, Murderers? But then they always took Care, says a modern Critick, that those several Villanies should be envelop'd in the Ridicule, which alone, says he, could make them the proper Subjects of Comedy If this facetious Knight had formerly liv'd at *Lacedemon* with the same wrong turn'd Noddle that he has now among us, would he not, do you think, have inveighed against that People, for shewing their drunken Slaves to their Children? Would he not have represented it as a Thing of most pernicious Example? What the *Lacedemonians* did by Drunkenness, the Comick Poet does by that and all other Vices He exposes them to the View of his Fellow Subjects, for no other Reason, than to render them ridiculous and contemptible

But the Criticism of the Knight in the foresaid Spectator, is as contrary to good Manners, as it is to good Sense What *Aristotle* and his Interpreters say of Tragedy, that 'tis infallibly good, when it pleases both the Judges and the People, is certainly as true of Comedy, for the Judges are equally qualify'd to judge of both, and the People may be suppos'd to be better Judges of Comedy than they are of Tragedy, because Comedy is nothing but a Picture of common Life and a Representation of their own Humours and Manners Now this Comedy of Sir *Fopling Flutter*, has not been only well receiv'd, and believ'd by the People of *England* to be a most agreeable Comedy for about Half a Century, but the Judges have been still more pleas'd with it than the People They have justly believ'd (I speak of the Judges) that the Characters, and especially the principal Characters, are admirably drawn, to answer the two Ends of Comedy, Pleasure, and Instruction, and that the Dialogue is the most charming that has been writ by the Moderns That with Purity and Simplicity, it has Art and Elegance, and with Force and Vivacity, the utmost Grace and Delicacy This I know very well, was the Opinion of the most eminent Writers, and of the best Judges contemporary with the Author, and of the whole Court of King *Charles* the Second, a Court the most polite that ever *England* saw

Now, after this Comedy has pass'd with the whole People of *England*, the knowing as well as the Ignorant, for a most entertaining and most instructive Comedy, for fifty Years together, after that long Time comes a Two-Penny Author, who has given a thousand Proofs thro' the Course of his Rhapsodies, that he understands not a Tittle of all this Matter, this Author comes and impudently declares, that this whole celebrated Piece, that has for half a Century, been admir'd by the whole People of *Great Britain*, is a perfect Contradiction to good Sense, to good Manners, and to common Honesty. *O Tempora! O Mores!*

The Knight certainly wrote the forementioń'd Spectator, tho' it has been writ these ten Years, on Purpose to make Way for his fine Gentlemen, and therefore he endeavours to prove, that Sir *Fopling* is not that genteel Comedy, which the World allows it to be. And then, according to his usual Custom, whenever he pretends to criticise, he does, by shuffling and cutting and confounding Notions, impose upon his unwary Reader, for either Sir *George Etheridge*, did design to make this a genteel Comedy, or he did not If he did not design it, what is it to the Purpose, whether 'tis a genteel Comedy or not? Provided that 'tis a good one For I hope, a Comedy may be a good one, and yet not a genteel one The *Alchimist* is an admirable Comedy, and yet it is not a genteel one. We may say the same of *The Fox*, and *The silent Woman*, and of a great many more But if Sir *George* did design to make it a genteel one, he was oblig'd to adapt it to that Notion of Gentility, which he knew very well, that the World at that Time had, and we see he succeeded accordingly For it has pass'd for a very genteel Comedy, for fifty Years together Could it be expected that the admirable Author, should accomodate himself, to the wrong headed Notions of a would be Critick, who was to appear fifty Years after the first Acting of his Play A Critick, who writes Criticism, as Men commit Treason or Murder, by the Instigation of the Devil himself, whenever the old Gentleman owes the Knight a Shame?

To prove that this Comedy is not a genteel one, he endeavours to prove that one of the principal Characters, is not a fine Gentleman I appeal to every impartial Man, if when he says, that a Man or a Woman are genteel, he means any Thing more, than that they are agreeable in their Air, graceful in their Motions, and polite in their Conversation But when he endeavours to prove, that *Dorimont* is not a fine Gentleman, he says no more to the Purpose, than he said before, when he affirm'd that the Comedy is not a genteel Comedy, for either the Author design'd in *Dorimont* a fine Gentleman, or he did not If he did not, the Character is ne'er the less excellent on that Account, because *Dorimont* is an admirable Picture of a Courtier in the Court of King *Charles* the Second But if *Dorimont* was design'd for a fine Gentleman by the Author, he was oblig'd to accommodate himself to that Notion of a fine Gentleman, which the Court and the Town both had at the Time of the writing of this Comedy. 'Tis reasonable to believe, that he did so, and we see that he succeeded accordingly For *Dorimont* not only pass'd for a fine Gentleman with

the Court of King *Charles* the Second, but he has pass'd for such with all the World, for Fifty Years together And what indeed can any one mean, when he speaks of a fine Gentleman, but one who is qualify'd in Conversation, to please the best Company of either Sex?

But the Knight will be satisfy'd with no Notion of a fine Gentleman but his own A fine Gentleman, says he, is one who is honest in his Actions, and refin'd in his Language If this be a just Description of a fine Gentleman, I will make bold to draw two Consequences from it The first is, That a Pedant is often a fine Gentleman For I have known several of them, who have been Honest in their Actions, and Refin'd in their Language The second is, That I know a certain Knight, who, though he should be allow'd to be a Gentleman born, yet is not a fine Gentleman I shall only add, that I would advise for the future, all the fine Gentlemen, who travel to *London* from *Tipperary*, to allow us *Englishmen* to know what we mean, when we speak our native Language.

To give a true Character of this charming Comedy, it must be acknowledg'd, that there is no great Mastership in the Design of it Sir *George* had but little of the artful and just Designs of *Ben Johnson* But as Tragedy instructs chiefly by its Design, Comedy instructs by its Characters, which not only ought to be drawn truly in Nature, but to be the resembling Pictures of our Contemporaries both in Court and Town Tragedy answers to History-Painting, but Comedy to drawing of Portraits

How little do they know of the Nature of true Comedy, who believe that its proper Business is to set us Patterns for Imitation For all such Patterns are serious Things, and Laughter is the Life, and the very Soul of Comedy 'Tis its proper Business to expose Persons to our View, whose Views we may shun, and whose Follies we may despise, and by shewing us what is done upon the Comick Stage, to shew us what ought never to be done upon the Stage of the World.

All the Characters in Sir *Fopling Flutter*, and especially the principal Characters, are admirably drawn, both to please and to instruct First, they are drawn to please, because they are drawn in the Truth of Nature, but to be drawn in the Truth of Nature, they must be drawn with those Qualities that are proper to each respective Season of Life

This is the chief Precept given for the forming the Characters, by the two Great Masters of the Rules which Nature herself dictated, and which have been receiv'd in every Age, for the Standards of writing successfully, and of judging surely, unless it were with Poetasters, and their foolish Admirers. The Words of *Horace*, in his *Art of Poetry*, are these, *v* 153

Tu, quid ego & populus mecum desideret, audi
Si sessoris eges aulæa manentis, & usque
Sessuri, donec cantor, vos plaudite, dicat,
Ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores,
Mobilibúsque decor naturæ dandus, & annis

And thus my Lord *Roscommon* has translated it

Now hear what ev'ry Auditor expects,
If you intend that he should stay to hear
The Epilogue, and see the Curtain fall,
Mark how our Tempers alter with our Years,
Then give the Beauty proper to each Age,
And by this Rule form all your Characters

And now see the Character that *Horace* gives of a Person who is in the Bloom of his Years.

De Arte Poetica, v 161

Imberbus tandem juvenis custode remoto,
Gaudet equis, canibúsque, & aprici gramine campi,
Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper,
Utilium tardus provisor, prodigus æris,
Sublimis, cupidúsque, & amata relinquere pernix

And thus the 'foresaid Noble Poet translates it

A Youth that first casts off his Tutor's Yoke,
Loves Horses, Hounds, and Sports, and Exercise,
Prone to all Vice, impatient of Reproof,
Proud, careless, fond, inconstant, and profuse

Now, *Horace*, to shew the Importance of this Precept, as soon as he has done with the Characters of the four Parts of Life, returns to it, repeats it, and enforces it

Ibid, v 176

——————— *Ne fortè seniles*
Mandentur juveni partes, pueróque viriles,
Semper in adjunctis, ævóque morabimur aptis

That a Poet may never be guilty of such an Absurdity, says he, *as to give the Character of an Old Man to a YoungMan, or of a Boy to a Middle Ag'd Man, let him take Care to adhere to those Qualities, which are necessarily or probably annexed to each respective Season of Life*

If a Dramatick Poet does not observe this Rule, he misses that which gives the Beauty, and the Decorum, which alone can make his Characters please

As *Horace* is but an Epitomizer of *Aristotle*, in giving Rules for the Characters, that Philosopher gives us more at large the Character of a Person in his early Bloom, in the 14th Chapter of the Second Book of his Rhetorick

Young Men, says he, *have strong Appetites, and are ready to undertake any thing, in order to satisfy them, and of all those Appetites which have a Relation to the Body, they are most powerfully sway'd by Venereal ones, in which they are very changeable, and are quickly cloy'd For their Desires are rather acute than lasting, like the Hunger and Thirst of the Sick They are prone to*

Anger, and easily provok'd, vehement in their Anger, and ready to obey the Dictates of it. For by Reason of the Concern which they have for their Honour, they cannot bear the being undervalu'd, but resent an Affront heinously. And as they are desirous of Honour, they are more ambitious of Victory For Youth is desirous of excelling, and Victory is a Sort of Excellency Thus far *Aristotle.*

And here it may not be amiss to shew, that this Rule is founded in Reason and in Nature In order to which, let us see what *Dacier* remarks upon that Verse of *Horace,* which we cited above

Mobilibúsque decor naturis dandus, & annis

Behold, says he, a very fine, and very significant Verse, which tells us, if we render it Word for Word, *That we ought to give to moveable Natures and Years their proper Beauty. By moveable Natures* (says *Dacier*) Horace *means Age, which still runs on like a River, and which, as it runs, gives different Inclinations to Men, and those different Inclinations make what he calls* Decor, *the Beauty proper to the Age For every Part of Man's Life has its proper Beauties, like every Season of the Year He that gives to Manly Age the Beauties of Youth, or to Youth the Beauties of Manly Age, does like a Painter, who should paint the Autumn with the Ornaments of Summer, or the Summer with the Ornaments of Autumn*

A Comick Poet, who gives to a Young Man the Qualities that belong to a Middle Ag'd Man, or to an Old Man, can answer neither of the Ends of his Art. He cannot please, because he writes out of Nature, of which all Poetry is an Imitation, and without which, no Poem can possibly please. And as he cannot please, he cannot instruct, because, by shewing such a young Man as is not to be seen in the World, he shews a Monster, and not a Man, sets before us a particular Character, instead of an allegorical and universal one, as all his Characters, and especially his principal Characters, ought to be, and therefore can give no general Instruction, having no Moral, no Fable, and therefore no Comedy

Now if any one is pleased to compare the Character of *Dorimont,* to which the Knight has taken so much absurd Exception with the two forementioned Descriptions, he will find in his Character all the chief distinguishing Strokes of them For such is the Force of Nature, and so admirable a Talent had she given Sir *George* for Comedy, that, tho' to my certain Knowledge he understood neither *Greek* nor *Latin,* yet one would swear, that in drawing his *Dorimant,* he copy'd the foresaid Draughts, and especially that of *Aristotle* ' *Dorimont* is a young Courtier, haughty, vain, and prone to Anger, amorous, false, and inconstant He debauches *Lovet,* and betrays her, loves *Belinda,* and as soon as he enjoys her is false to her

But 2dly, The Characters in Sir *Fopling* are admirably contriv'd to please, and more particularly the principal ones, because we find in those Characters,

a true Resemblance of the Persons both in Court and Town, who liv'd at the Time when that Comedy was writ. For *Rapin* tells us with a great deal of Judgment, *That Comedy is as it ought to be, when an Audience is apt to imagine, that instead of being in the Pit and Boxes, they are in some Assembly of the Neighbourhood, or in some Family Meeting, and that we see nothing done in it, but what is done in the World. For it is,* says he, *not worth one Farthing, if we do not discover our selves in it, and do not find in it both our own Manners, and those of the Persons with whom we live and converse*

The Reason of this Rule is manifest For as 'tis the Business of a Comick Poet to cure his Spectators of Vice and Folly, by the Apprehension of being laugh'd at, 'tis plain that his Business must be with the reigning Follies and Vices. The violent Passions, which are the Subjects of Tragedy, are the same in every Age, and appear with the same Face, but those Vices and Follies, which are the Subjects of Comedy, are seen to vary continually Some of those that belonged to our Ancestors, have no Relation to us, and can no more come under the Cognisance of our present Comick Poets, than the Sweating and Sneezing Sickness can come under the Practice of our contemporary Physicians What Vices and Follies may infect those who are to come after us, we know not; 'tis the present, the reigning Vices, and Follies, that must be the Subjects of our present Comedy The Comick Poet therefore must take Characters from such Persons as are his Contemporaries, and are infected with the foresaid Follies and Vices.

Agreeable to this, is the Advice which *Boileau*, in his *Art of Poetry*, gives to the Comick Poets

> *Etudiez la Cour, & connoissez la ville,*
> *L'une & l'autre est toujours en modeles fertile,*
> *C'est par lá que Moliere illustrant ses ecrits,*
> *Peutetre de son Art eut remporté le prix, &c*

Now I remember very well, that upon the first acting this Comedy, it was generally believed to be an agreeable Representation of the Persons of Condition of both Sexes, both in Court and Town, and that all the World was charm'd with *Dorimont*, and that it was unanimously agreed, that he had in him several of the Qualities of *Wilmot* Earl of *Rochester*, as, his Wit, his Spirit, his amorous Temper, the Charms that he had for the fair Sex, his Falshood, and his Inconstancy, the agreeable Manner of his chiding his Servants, which the late Bishop of *Salisbury* takes Notice of in his Life, and lastly, his repeating, on every Occasion, the Verses of *Waller*, for whom that noble Lord had a very particular Esteem, witness his Imitation of the Tenth Satire of the First Book of *Horace*

> Waller, *by Nature for the Bays design'd,*
> *With Spirit, Force, and Fancy unconfin'd,*
> *In Panegyrick is above Mankind*

Now, as several of the Qualities in *Dorimont's* Character were taken from that Earl of *Rochester*, so they who were acquainted with the late Sir *Fleet-*

wood Shepherd, know very well, that not a little of that Gentleman's Character is to be found in Medley

But the Characters in this Comedy are very well form'd to instruct as well as to please, especially those of *Dorimont* and of *Loveit*, and they instruct by the same Qualities to which the Knight has taken so much whimsical Exception, as *Dorimont* instructs by his Insulting, and his Perfidiousness, and *Loveit* by the Violence of her Resentment and her Anguish For *Loveit* has Youth, Beauty, Quality, Wit, and Spirit And it was depending upon these, that she repos'd so dangerous a Trust in *Dorimont*, which is a just Caution to the Fair Sex, never to be so conceited of the Power of their Charms, or their other extraordinary Qualities, as to believe they can engage a Man to be true to them, to whom they grant the best Favour, without the only sure Engagement, without which they can never be certain, that they shall not be hated and despis'd by that very Person whom they have done every Thing to oblige.

To conclude with one General Observation, That Comedy may be qualify'd in a powerful Manner both to instruct and to please, the very Constitution of its Subject ought always to be Ridiculous Comedy, says *Rapin*, is an Image of common Life, and its End is to expose upon the Stage the Defects of particular Persons, in order to cure the Defects of the Publick, and to correct and amend the People, by the Fear of being laugh'd at That therefore, says he, which is most essential to Comedy, is certainly the Ridicule

Every Poem is qualify'd to instruct, and to please most powerfully by that very Quality which makes the Fort and the Characteristick of it, and which distinguishes it from all other Kinds of Poems As *Tragedy* is qualify'd to instruct and to please, by Terror and Compassion, which two Passions ought always to be predominant in it, and to distinguish it from all other Poems, *Epick Poetry* pleases and instructs chiefly by Admiration, which reigns throughout it, and distinguishes it from Poems of every other Kind. Thus *Comedy* instructs and pleases most powerfully by the Ridicule, because that is the Quality which distinguishes it from every other Poem The Subject therefore of every Comedy ought to be ridiculous by its Constitution; the Ridicule ought to be of the very Nature and Essence of it Where there is none of that, there can be no Comedy It ought to reign both in the Incidents and in the Characters, and especially in the principal Characters, which ought to be ridiculous in themselves, or so contriv'd, as to shew and expose the Ridicule of others. In all the Masterpieces of *Ben Johnson*, the principal Character has the Ridicule in himself, as *Morose* in *The Silent Woman, Volpone* in *The Fox,* and *Subtle* and *Face* in *The Alchimist* And the very Ground and Foundation of all these *Comedies* is ridiculous 'Tis the very same Thing in the Master-pieces of *Moliere*, The *Misanthrope*, the *Impostor*, the *Avare,* and the *Femmes Savantes* Nay, the Reader will find, that in most of his other Pieces, the principal Characters are ridiculous, as, *L'Etourdi, Les precieuses Ridicules, Le Cocu Imaginaire, Les Facheux,* and *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, L'Ecole des Maris,*

L'Ecole des Femmes, L'Amour Medecin, Le Medecin Malgré luy, Le Mariage Forcé, George Dandin, Les Fourberies de Scapin, Le Malade Imaginaire. The Reader will not only find, upon Reflection, that in all these Pieces the principal Characters are ridiculous, but that in most of them there is the Ridicule of *Comedy* in the very Titles.

'Tis by the Ridicule that there is in the Character of Sir *Fopling,* which is one of the principal ones of this *Comedy,* and from which it takes its Name, that he is so very well qualify'd to please and to instruct What true *Englishman* is there, but must be pleas'd to see this ridiculous Knight made the Jest and the Scorn of all the other Characters, for shewing, by his foolish aping foreign Customs and Manners, that he prefers another Country to his own? And of what important Instruction must it be to all our Youth who travel, to shew them, that if they so far forget the Love of their Country, as to declare by their espousing foreign Customs and Manners, that they prefer *France* or *Italy* to *Great Britain,* at their Return, they must justly expect to be the Jest and the Scorn of their own Countrymen.

Thus, I hope, I have convinc'd the Reader, that this Comical Knight, Sir *Fopling,* has been justly form'd by the Knight his Father, to instruct and please, whatever may be the Opinion to the contrary of the Knight his Brother.

Whenever *The Fine Gentleman* of the latter comes upon the Stage, I shall be glad to see that it has all the shining Qualities which recommend Sir *Fopling,* that his Characters are always drawn in Nature, and that he never gives to a young Man the Qualities of a Middle-aged Man, or an old one, that they are the just Images of our Contemporaries, and of what we every Day see in the World, that instead of setting us Patterns for our Imitation, which is not the proper Business of *Comedy,* he makes those Follies and Vices ridiculous, which we ought to shun and despise, that the Subject of his *Comedy* is comical by its Constitution, and that the Ridicule is particularly in the Grand Incidents, and in the principal Characters For a true Comick Poet is a Philosopher, who, like old *Democritus,* always instructs us laughing

FINIS

REMARKS ON A PLAY, CALL'D, THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS, A COMEDY

1723

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY

SIR,

I Take the Liberty of addressing the following Sheets to you, without the Formality of asking your Leave I have for a long Time thought that such a Formality proposes an implicite Bargain, which is very liable to be turn'd into Ridicule. This was the Opinion of the late Earl of *Halifax,* who had receiv'd more Addresses of this Nature, than any Man of his Time The End of this Epistle, is, to return you my humble Thanks for Obligations past, for Obligations laid not only upon me but upon my Country, when you endeavour'd to serve it so warmly, by opposing that desperate Scheme which had like to have proved so fatal to it, and by advising, after the Mischief was done, the Use of Lenitives, rather than of Corrosives, which might have thrown all Things into Confusion Another Intention of this Address, is, to implore your Protection for the expiring Arts, for those noble Arts in which you have been educated, and which have rais'd you to this envied Heighth, as it were, on purpose that you may prove their Protector and Preserver You are not to be told, Sir, and it would be easy to prove it to the rest of the World, that the Studies of Humanity in *Great Britain* have flourish'd with the Stage, and that with the Stage they must in time decline I speak not only of every other Branch of Poetry, but even of that manly Eloquence which appears so conspicuous in you, whenever you are pleas'd to display its Charms to an August Assembly But the Stage is just upon the Point of sinking, unless an Arm so powerful as yours shall vouchsafe to support it A *Wat Tyler,* a *Jack Straw,* and a *Jack Cade* of *Parnassus,* have by Encroachments got the entire Direction of it from its easy Patentee, and seem resolv'd, like their Namesakes of old, to advance the Rabble and Scum of *Parnassus,* and to oppress or demolish all whom God and Nature have plac'd above them The Dramatick Piece on which I have writ the following Remarks, has, with a thousand Faults, and a thousand Weaknesses, been palm'd upon the World by shameful Artifices for a Wonder of Art and Nature And that no one may presume to detect the Fraud, the Author has insolently dar'd to fly for Protection to the King himself. But the Author ought to have known, that it can never be the Design of so good and so wise a King, to shelter Error from the Attacks of Reason He ought to have known, that the King has declar'd his Intention to encourage real Merit, that Learning and Arts may flourish, by which Glory may accrue to His Reign, and Honour to *Great Britain.*

You know very well, Sir, that there has not been in *Europe* these thousand Years a Prince more haughty than *Lewis* XIV. a Prince more jealous of his

Authority, and more ambitious of Glory You know, Sir, that almost all his Poetical Subjects, who knew the darling Passion of his Soul, address'd some of their Works to him You know very well, Sir, that most of them had been rewarded by him. And yet when *Boileau*, in a Discourse address'd to that King himself, and afterwards prefixed to his Works, expos'd and ridiculed the greatest Part of those Pieces, you know very well, Sir, that that discerning Prince, who saw that his true Interest and his solid Glory depended upon the Advancement of Arts, and upon the encouraging real Merit was so far from being offended with *Boileau* for the Liberty he took in that Discourse, that it recommended him to his Favour

I do believe, from my very Soul, that 'tis the Intention of so wise a Prince as the King, to encourage Arts and Learning, and I should have believ'd it, tho' the King had never told us so, because I know it to be his true Interest And therefore I can never believe that 'tis the King's Intention any more to patronize Ingorance and Error in the Writings of his Subjects, than to protect their Vices and Follies of any other Kind For Ignorance and Error, and Vice and Folly, must estrange the Hearts of his Subjects from him, only Ignorance and Error, and Vice and Folly, can favour and indulge that Superstition, and that false Religion, which are his mortal Enemies And yet it has happen'd by I know not what sort of Caprice of Fortune, or of Fate that Arts and Learning have, of late, sensibly if not precipitately, declin'd Never did such a Crowd of ill Plays and miserable Poems appear in so short a Time We have hardly seen one good one And what is yet more surprising the most stupid of all those Plays and Poems, have been address'd to the King himself One would swear, that the Authors were wild enough to expect, that Pensions Gratuities, and Salaries, should be appointed to encourage Stupidity, and to mortify Sense and Merit The very Boast and Glory of the *British* Muse is Comedy, in which *Great Britain* excels every other Country Nay we can shew more good, and more entertaining Comedies, than all the rest of *Europe* together During the whole Reigns of King *Charles*, King *James*, and King *William*, there hardly pass'd a Year without one or two, and sometimes three During the Reign of King *William* alone, we had seven or eight very agreeable ones, only from two Gentlemen, Sir *John Vanbrugh* and Mr *Congreve* But since that pernicious Licence was granted to four sordid Players, during the late Queen's Time, we have hardly had one that has been worth one Farthing

Sir, As the King, upon his Accession to the Crown, came a Stranger among us, and as the Ministry had then, and have had almost ever since, Affairs of greater and more immediate Importance, than those of the Theatre, the aforesaid Grant of the late Queen was unhappily renew'd, since which the Stage has yearly declin'd, and does decline daily, and every Branch of Human Learning daily declines with it *Etenim omnes artes, quæ ad Humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, & quasi cognatione quadam inter se continentur* Thus all the Branches of Human Learning are like to be lost, or very much impair'd, unless you generously undertake to support them If the Condition in which they are, were but known to the King, I am confident,

he would not suffer them to be driven from among us during his Reign, as he regards either his own Interest and Glory, or the Interest and Glory of the Nation which he governs Nor is it beneath the greatest and the wisest Minister to take care of Arts and Letters Two of the greatest that ever were in the World, *Mœcenas* and Cardinal *Richlieu*, are chiefly famous for the Protection they gave to them Whenever, in any Nation, Human Learning has been diligently and impartially cultivated, at that Time that Nation has flourish'd, its King has been glorious and belov'd, and his Ministers renowned and happy. I am,

SIR,
Your most Humble
Most Obliged, and
Most Obedient Servant,
JOHN DENNIS.

THE PREFACE

WHEN sometime before the acting of Sir *Richard*'s Play, I observed the scandalous Artifices that were practis'd to procure Success to it, and was acquainted with the double Cheat which was to be impos'd on the Town, upon their Pockets, and upon their Understandings, I thought I should deserve the Favour of the Publick, if I discover'd and prevented so gross an Imposition, and so palpable an Affront But instead of meeting with the Thanks which I expected, and which I thought I had merited by the Service I intended them, I found myself in the same Situation that *Surly* was upon discovering the Cheat in the *Alchymist*, for not only *Face* and *Subtle*, who were Joynt-partners in carrying on this Poetical Cheat made vehement Outcries, and spread various Slanders, and engag'd several of their Bubbles to believe them, and disperse them, but they obliged the most Senseless of all their Bubbles to repeat the Scurrility which they dictated to them This immediately not only recall'd *Butler*'s Verses to my Remembrance,

Doubtless the Pleasure is as great,
Of being cheated, as to cheat
As Lookers-on feel most Delight,
That least perceive a Juggler's Slight
And still the less they understand,
The more th' admire his Slight of Hand,

but made me suspect that *Butler* in this hardly came up to the full Truth, because the foolish Part of the World loves more to be cheated, than the knavish Part does to cheat The Generality of Mankind are sure to love him, who imposes on them, and to hate him who opens their Eyes, For he who cheats them, does it by entertaining some pleasing Passion But he who undeceives them holds the Glass to them, and shews them Truth and themselves, a mortifying Sight Now, whenever you put a Man out of Concert with

himself, you put him out of Humour with you likewise. All the Time the grand Cheat of the South Sea was carrying on by the first Directors, I constantly observ'd, that if any one at any Time was so hardy as to tell any one of the Subscribers that he was cheated, it made him terribly out of humour with him who told him so, and augmented his implicit Faith in the Directors who cheated him, and redoubled his Respect and Esteem for them

The double Cheat above-mention'd, which was contriv'd by *Face* and *Subtle* in Concert, but executed chiefly by *Subtle*, was perhaps the most audacious that ever was impos'd on the Capital of a great People, by Persons who pretended at the same Time to act by publick Authority And I know not which is the more impudent Part of it, the using such scandalous Methods, to make the most absurd and most insipid Entertainment that ever came upon the *English* Stage, pass for the very best, or the raising the Prices for a Hum-drum Representation, which they had nicknamed a Comedy, and the raising them on the Account of the Scenes, forsooth Sir *William Davenant* was the first who brought Scenes upon the Stage, towards the Middle of the last Century, and to defray the Expence of them, from time to time, rais'd the Theatrical Receipt above a third Part higher than it was before The Pit, which was before but eighteen Pence, was rais'd to Half a Crown, The Boxes, which were Half a Crown before were advanc'd to four Shillings, the first Gallery from a Shilling to eighteen Pence, and the upper Gallery, from Sixpence to a Shilling So that, as I said before, there is above a third Part of each Night's Receipt, even at the common Prices, allow'd for the Scenes Now what shall we say of these most sordid Wretches, whose Avarice is no more to be satisfied than the barren Womb or the Grave? They are not contented, it seems, with getting, even at common Prices, each of them a thousand or fifteen Hundred Pounds a Year, which enables them to live in shameful Luxury, disgraceful to *Great Britain* They are not contented to loll each of them in his gilded Chariot, as often as they vouchsafe, at their own Expence, to give the Publick a *Farce* without Doors, and to look down upon the transitory Bubles, who support them They are not contented to enjoy their unmerited Gains, without paying any Thing out of them either to Poor or Publick, and that at a Time when Offices, Salaries, Pensions, when every Mortal, every Thing is tax'd They are not content to be thus unaccountably indulg'd, but at the same Time they must impose upon the Publick, and wrong their Audiences of twelve hundred Pounds, as they certainly did, during, what, in their Theatrical Cant, they call the Run of their last *Rhapsody*

Some People take Success to be a Proof of Merit in Writers, whereas in the Degeneracy of Taste, if 'tis attended with a Cabal, 'tis a certain Proof of the want of it All the *Roman* Satirists were out of Humour with the successful Scriblers of their Times, because as it appears by what they say of them, they ow'd their Success to Cabals, and to the repeating their Works to Assemblies Witness what *Horace* says of *Fannius* in the 4th Satire of the first Book.

——————— *Beatus Fannius, ultro*
Delatis capsis & imagine cum mea nemo
Scripta legat, vulgo recitare timentis ———

And what *Juvenal* says in the beginning of his first Satire,

Semper ego Auditor tantum? nunquamne reponam,
Vexatus totiens Rauci Theseide Codri?
Ergo impune mihi recitaverit ille togatas
Hic elegos?

But besides undeserved Success, the *Roman* Satirists had another Provocation to Satire, and that was Hypocrisy, when Persons who were void of all Morality pretended to a more rigid Virtue than all the rest of the World, and it was this chiefly that mov'd the Spleen of *Lucilius*, as *Horace* tells us in the first Satire of his second Book.

——————— *est Lucilius ausus*
Primus in hunc operis componere carmina morem,
Detrahere & pellem, nitidus quâ quisque per ora,
Cederet, introrsum turpis

But if such vile Wretches ever arrived to such a Height of Impudence as to pretend to teach Virtue to the rest of the World, the Provocation then became insupportable, and the Satirist began with Fury.

Ultra Sauromatas fugere hinc libet, & glacialem
Oceanum, quotiens aliquid de moribus audent,
Qui Curios simulant, & Bacchanalia vivunt
Juv Sat 2

As I make no doubt but that upon the publishing this little Treatise there will be the same Outcries against Critics and Criticism, which have been formerly so often raised, I shall lay before the Reader what the late Earl of *Shaftsbury* writ in Defence of them, with a great deal of good Sense, and Address, and Penetration The Passage is in the 230th Page of the first Volume of the *Characteristicks*

" *Nor should I suspect the Genius of our Writers, or charge them with* " *Meanness and Insufficiency on the account of this Low-spiritedness which* " *they discover, were it not for another sort of Fear, by which they more plainly* " *betray themselves, and seem conscious of their own Defects. The Critics, it* " *seems, are formidable to 'em The Critics are the dreadful Spectres, the* " *Giants, the Enchanters, who traverse and disturb them in their Works These* " *are the Persecutors, for whose Sakes they are ready to hide their Heads,* " *begging Rescue and Protection from all good People, and flying in particular* " *to the Great, by whose Favour they hope to be defended from this merciless,* " *examining Race. for what can be more cruel than to be forc'd to submit to the* " *rigorous Laws of Wit, and write under such severe Judges as are deaf to all* " *Courtship, and can be wrought upon by no Insinuation or Flattery to pass by* " *Faults, and pardon any Transgression of Art?*

" To judge, indeed, of the Circumstances of a modern Author by the Pattern " of his Prefaces, Dedications, and Introductions, one would think, that at the " Moment, when a Piece of his was in hand, some Conjuration was forming " against him, some diabolical Powers drawing together to blast his Work, and " cross his generous Design, he therefore rouzes his Indignation, hardens his " Forehead, and with many furious Defiances and Avaunt-Satans! *enters on his " Business, not with the least regard to what may justly be objected to him in a " way of Criticism, but with an absolute Contempt of the Manner and Art " itself*

" Odi profanum vulgus & arceo, *was in its time, no doubt, a generous Defi- " ance, the* Avaunt *was natural and proper in its place, especially where Religion ' and Virtue were the Poets Theme, but with our Moderns the Case is generally " the very reverse, and accordingly the Defiance or* Avaunt *should run much " after this manner As for you vulgar Souls, mere Naturals, who know no Art, " were never admitted into the Temple of Wisdom, nor ever visited the Sanctu- " aries of Wit or Learning, gather yourselves together from all Parts, and " hearken to the Song or Tale I am about to utter, but for you Men of Science " and Understanding, who have Ears and Judgment, and can weigh Sense, scan " Syllables, and measure Sounds, you who by a certain Art distinguish false " Thought from true, Correctness from Rudeness, and Bombast and Chaos from " Order and the Sublime, away hence! or stand aloof! whilst I practise upon " the Easiness of those mean Capacities and Apprehensions who make the most " numerous Audience, and are the only competent Judges of my Labours*

" Accuracy of Workmanship requires a Critick's Eye, 'tis lost upon a vulgar " Judgment Nothing grieves a real Artist, more than that Indifference of the " Publick, which suffers Work to pass uncriticiz'd Nothing on the other Side, " rejoices him, more than the nice View and Inspection of the accurate Ex- " aminer, and Judge of Work 'Tis the mean Genius, the slovenly Performer, " who knowing nothing of true Workmanship, endeavours by the best outward " Gloss, and dazzling Shew, to turn the Eye from a direct and steddy Survey " of his Piece.

" What is there which an expert Musician more desires than to perform his " Part in the Presence of those who are knowing in his Art? 'Tis to the Ear " alone he applies himself, the critical, the nice Ear Let his Hearers be of " what Character they please Be they naturally austere, morose, or rigid; no " matter so they are Criticks, able to censure, remark, and sound every Accord " and Symphony What is there mortifies the good Painter, more than when " amidst his admiring Spectators, there is not one present who has been us'd to " compare the Hands of different Masters, or has an Eye to distinguish the ' Advantages or Defects of every Stile? Thro' all the inferior Orders of Me- ' chanicks, the Rule is found to hold the same In every Science, every Art, the " real Masters, or Proficients, rejoice in nothing more, than in the thorough ' Search and Examination of their Performances by all the Rules of Art, and ' nicest Criticism Why therefore (in the Muses Name) is it not the same with

" *our Pretenders to the Writing Art, our Poets and Prose Authors of every* " *kind? Why, in this Profession are we found such Critick-Haters, and indulg'd* " *in this unlearn'd Aversion, unless it be taken for granted that as Wit and* " *Learning stand at present, in our Nation, we are still upon the Foot of* " *Empiricks and Mountebanks*

" *From these Considerations, I take upon me absolutely to condemn the* " *fashionable Custom of inveighing against* Criticks, *as the common Enemies,* " *the Pests, and Incendiaries of the Commonwealth of Wit and Letters. I* ' *assert, on the contrary, that they are the Props and Pillars of this Building,* " *and that without the Encouragement and Propagation of this Race, we should* " *remain as* Gothick Architects *as ever*

Thus far the late most ingenious and most judicious Earl of *Shaftsbury* has gone in the Defence of Criticks and Criticism I shall desire to say a little in my own particular Defence I have been long since represented, by Persons who have never read what I have writ, as one who likes nothing, and one who makes it his Business to find out Faults, and never discovers Beauties Upon my publishing lately the Defence of Sir *Fopling Flutter*, this Accusation was renew'd, tho' it was a Contradiction in Terms. It being impossible that any one can write a Defence of a *Dramatick* Poem, which he does not like; or commend a Comedy, in which he finds no Beauties The Truth of this Affair is, that no *English* Author of any Note has commended so many *English* Poets, as I have I shall give a List of some of them, *Shakespear, Ben Johnson, Milton, Butler, Roscomon, Denham Waller, Dryden, Wycherly, Otway, Etherege, Shadwell, Crown, Congreve, Phillips* These are some of those whom I have occasionally commended, and in some of them too have found out Beauties, which every one could not discover,

If any one believes, that in some Places of the following Sheets I have been too harsh, and too severe, I desire such a one to consider, that I have been basely wrong'd, and barbarously us'd, by the Persons upon whom I may be thought to be too severe And as the Wrongs which have been done me, do not come within the Cognizance of the National Law, nor under the usual Forms of the National Equity, I am as to this Matter, in a State of Nature with those Persons, and am authoriz'd by the Law of Nature to do myself Justice, as far as it may be done, without offending the Laws of my Country, or impartial Equity

REMARKS ON THE PREFACE TO THE *Conscious Lovers*

THE Author tells us in the Beginning of his Preface, That *this Comedy has been receiv'd with universal Acceptance* Whether he is in the Right, or not, I appeal to the World The Reason which he gives for this universal Acceptance is very extraordinary *It has been receiv'd*, says he, *with universal Acceptance, for it was in every Part excellently perform'd.* Is it not a pleasant Humility in a Dramatick Writer, to affirm, that he is indebted for his whole

Success to the Actors? I was apt to believe, at the first Sight, that this was an affected Modesty, and a counterfeit Humility But when I went a little further, I began to think I was mistaken, and that the Author was in earnest, for he seems to be apprehensive, that the Applause of the Reader would hardly be so general as was that of the Spectator, and he does his Endeavour to induce the Reader not to pass a Judgment of the Play, till he has seen it acted· *It must be remembred,* says he, *that a Play is to be seen, and is made to be represented with the Advantage of Actors, nor can appear but with half the Spirit without it* Now there have been several Plays writ in several Languages, which were never design'd to be seen. There are two of our own. The Tragedy of *Sampson,* by *Milton*, and the *State of Innocence,* by *Dryden* 'Tis true, indeed, most Plays are design'd by their Authors to be seen, but that is not the chief Design of a Dramatick Writer, who has a good Genius For such an Author writes to all Countries, and to all Ages, and writes with the lively Hope, that his great Master-pieces shall outlive the very Language in which they are compos'd. When Sir *Richard* says, That a Play can appear but with half the Spirit, unless we see it acted, I would fain ask, on whom he designs to impose this? If he who reads a Play is qualified to read and to judge, he reads it with a truer and juster Spirit than can be supplied by any Company of Actors If such a Reader happens at any Time to be better pleased with the Representation of a Play than the reading it, 'tis an infallible Sign, that such a Play is a very wretched Performance

But let us see how Sir *Richard* goes on *The greatest Effect,* says he, *of a Play in reading it, is to excite the Reader to go see it, and when he does so, it is then a Play has the Effect of Precept and Example* Good God! is it possible that this could come from any one but a Man who is resolv'd to shew that he takes all his Readers to be Ideots? When we read the Tragedies of *Sophocles* or *Euripides,* or the Comedies of *Aristophanes, Plautus,* or *Terence,* is the greatest Effect they have upon us, the exciting us to go to see them acted? When Sir *Richard* read the *Andria* of *Terence,* was the exciting him to go to see it acted the greatest Effect that it had upon him? No, the greatest Effect that it had upon him, was the Desire to see another Play acted, and that was his own deplorable Imitation of the *Andria*

But a Play, says he, *has only, in the Representation, the Effect of Example and Precept.* So that 'tis not the Dramatick Persons, it seems, 'tis not *Timoleon, Scipio, Bontus,* who are to be the Examples of Virtue to us, no, 'tis the Players, I warrant, who represent them, 'tis Mr *Booth,* Mr *Robert Wilks,* and Mr *Colley Cibber,* whose Heroick Virtue we are to imitate, and by whose Actions we are to be instructed

But Sir *Richard* goes on, and tells us, That the chief Design of the *Conscious Lovers* was to be an innocent Performance Now there are a hundred innocent Performances upon the *British* Stage But perhaps he meant a Performance that should have nothing but its Innocence to recommend it, and should, by consequence, be thought the only Play of its Kind. But in that he is mistaken, for there is one more, and that is, the Performance of *Bays* in the *Rehearsal,*

which is, indeed, incoherent, incongruous, impertinent, insipid, and ridiculous, but certainly a very innocent Performance I am afraid it will appear by the following Sheets, that the *Conscious Lovers* has no small Share of some of these Qualities, and has nothing valuable but barely the Catastrophe. And here I cannot but observe, that Sir *Richard*, who has upon so many Occasions inveigh'd against the Rules, and particularly, in that notable Paper call'd the *Theatre*, owes the only entertaining Scene of his Play to the Observation of a Rule of *Aristotle*, which is, That the Discovery should be immediately follow'd by the Change of Fortune, that is, by the Catastrophe Sir *Richard*, indeed, without ever dreaming of *Aristotle*, had it from *Terence*, who took it from *Menander*, who had it from the Precept of that great Philosopher, and from the Practice of *Sophocles* and *Euripides* For the tragick and comick Poets frequently borrow'd their Hints from one another, but, at the same time, took Care to do it with Judgment, and not to intrench upon each other's Province And therefore we see, that the Discovery in *Terence*, and the Reconciliation of *Simo* to *Pamphilus*, is comprehended in a narrow Compass, and has nothing in it of those violent Transports of Grief which are inconsistent with Comedy.

Versibus exponi Tragicis res comica non vult,

says *Horace* in his *Art of Poetry*, which *Boileau* has imitated in the two following Lines of his

Le Comique ennemi des soupirs & des pleurs
N'admet point en son des Tragiques Douleurs

But I beg the Reader's Pardon for this Digression, and now return to the Preface

As to the Quarrel in the fourth Act, I shall speak to it in its Place. In the mean time I am of the Number of those, who believe that this Incident, and the Case of the Father and Daughter, are not the proper Subjects of Comedy When Sir *Richard* says, that any thing that has its Foundation in Happiness and Success must be the Subject of Comedy, he confounds Comedy with that Species of Tragedy which has a happy Catastrophe When he says, that 'tis an Improvement of Comedy to introduce a Joy too exquisite for Laughter, he takes all the Care that he can to shew, that he knows nothing of the Nature of Comedy Does he really believe that *Moliere* understood the Nature of it I say *Moliere*, who in the Opinion of all *Europe*, excepting that small Portion of it which is acquainted with *Ben Johnson*, had born away the Prize of Comedy from all Nations, and from all Ages, if for the sake of his Profit he had not descended sometimes too much to Buffoonry. Let Sir *Richard*, or any one, look into that little Piece of *Moliere*, call'd, *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*, and he shall find there, that in *Moliere*'s Opinion, 'tis the Business of a Comick Poet to enter into the Ridicule of Men, and to expose the blind Sides of all Sorts of People agreeably, that he does nothing at all, if he does not draw the Pictures of his Contemporaries, and does not raise

the Mirth of the sensible Part of an Audience, which, says he, 'tis no easy Matter to do. This is the Sense of *Moliere*, tho' the Words are not his exactly.

When Sir *Richard* talks of a Joy too exquisite for Laughter, he seems not to know that Joy, generally taken, is common like Anger, Indignation, Love, to all Sorts of Poetry, to the Epick, the Dramatick, the Lyrick; but that that kind of Joy which is attended with Laughter, is the Characteristick of Comedy, as Terror or Compassion, according as one or the other is predominant, makes the Characteristick of Tragedy, as Admiration does of Epick Poetry

When Sir *Richard* says, That weeping upon the Sight of a deplorable Object is not a Subject for Laughter, but that 'tis agreeable to good Sense and to Humanity, he says nothing but what all the sensible Part of the World has already granted, but then all that sensible Part of the World have always deny'd, that a deplorable Object is fit to be shewn in Comedy. When Sir *George Etherege*, in his Comedy of *Sir Fopling Flutter*, shews *Lovett* in all the Height and Violence of Grief and Rage, the Judicious Poet takes care to give those Passions a ridiculous Turn by the Mouth of *Dorimant* Besides that, the Subject is at the Bottom ridiculous For *Lovett* is a Mistress, who has abandon'd her self to *Dorimant*, and by falling into these violent Passions, only because she fancies that something of which she is very desirous has gone beside her, makes herself truly ridiculous. Thus is this famous Scene in the second Act of *Sir Fopling*, by the Character of *Lovett*, and the dextrous handling the Subject, kept within the Bounds of Comedy But the Scene of the Discovery in the *Conscious Lovers* is truly Tragical. *Indiana* was strictly virtuous She had indeed conceiv'd a violent Passion for *Bevil*, but all young People in full Health are liable to such a Passion, and perhaps the most sensible and the most virtuous are more than others liable But besides, that she had kept this Passion within the Bounds of Honour, it was the natural Effect of her Esteem for her Benefactor, and of her Gratitude, that is, of her Virtue These Considerations render'd her Case deplorable, and the Catastrophe downright tragical, which of a Comedy ought to be the most comical Part, for the same Reason that it ought to be the most tragical Part of a Tragedy

Before I take my Leave of Sir *Richard*'s Preface, I cannot help saying a Word to his Song, which he has brought in here by Violence, to the great Surprize of the Reader, for no other End, than to shew that he is as notable at Metre as he is at Prose He seems as much concern'd for the Omission of it in the Representation of his, as *Bays* in the third Act of the *Rehearsal* is for the Neglect of his, nay, and to have as high an Opinion of it, as that merry Bard discovers that he has of his, when he says to *Johnson, What! are they gone without singing my last new Song? 's Bud, would it were in their Bellies I'll tell you, Mr* Johnson, *if I have any Skill in these Matters, I vow to Gad this Song is peremptorily the very best that ever yet was written You must know it was made by* Tom Thimble*'s first Wife, after she was dead.*

So that this Song of Mr *Bays* too, as well as his Brother Sir *Richard*'s, is a Love-Song, design'd just as judiciously, express'd just as passionately, but more

harmoniously, more freely, and better contriv'd for Melody. And yet from the Omission of this Song of his, does Sir *Richard* take an occasion to affront the finest Artist of his kind in the World, and to treat Signor *Carbonelli* like a Country Fidler, who sings *John Dory* at Wakes and Fairs to Hobnail'd Peasants and Milk-Maids

I thought here to take my Leave, but the Sight of *Terence* and *Cibber* together provokes me to go a little farther.

Jungentur jam gryphes equis ævoque sequenti
Cum canibus timidi venient ad pocula damæ
Virg

Sir *Richard* says, that he is extremely surpriz'd to find what *Cibber* told him prove a Truth, that what he valued himself so much upon, the Translation of *Terence,* should be imputed to him as a Reproach Sir *Richard* knew very well, that *Cibber* had said so many false Things with relation to this Play, that he might be very well surpriz'd to find Truth come from him, especially upon that Subject But Sir *Richard* is mistaken, *Cibber* is constant to himself, and does not deviate from Falshood upon this Occasion No Mortal reproaches Sir *Richard* with his Translation of *Terence* He has shewn clearly, that he is not capable of translating any one Scene of him But tho' he had been never so capable, he ought to have known that a Translation of *Terence,* by the best Hand in the World, would not succeed upon the *English* Stage. He ought to have known the Defect, that the *Romans* themselves, who liv'd some time after him, and especially *Cæsar,* found in that Comick Poet The great Objection to him was, that he wanted the comick Force, that is to say, that he had not in his Comedies that Humour and Pleasantry which are so agreeable to the Nature of Comedy For the Force of any kind of Writing consists chiefly in that which distinguishes it from all other Kinds Now the Ridicule being that which distinguishes Comedy from every other kind of Poetry, the *Comick Force* must consist in that But how came it to pass then, that five of the six Comedies of *Terence* succeeded upon the *Roman* Stage? The Answer is plain, because the Generality of the *Romans,* at the Time they were writ, knew no better The *Roman* Comedy in general had but little of that agreeable Pleasantry that is fit to divert Men of Sense, which occasion'd the following Censure of *Quintilian In Comœdia maxime claudicamus licet* Varro *dicat Musas, Æli*n Stolonis *sententia,* Plautino *sermone locuturas fuisse, si latinè loqui vellent licet Cæcilium veteres laudibus ferant licet* Terentii *scripta ad* Scipionem Africanum *referantur quæ tamen sunt in hoc genere elegantissima, & plus adhuc habitura gratiæ si intra Versus trimetros stetissent Vix levem consequimur umbram, adeo ut mihi sermo ipse* Romanus *non recipere videatur ullam solis concessam Atticis venerem, quando eam ne* Græci *quidem in alio genere linguæ obtinuerint* And therefore, when *Shadwell* undertook to write a Comedy upon the Plan of the *Adelphi,* he, who very well knew the Nature of his Art, and by consequence knew what was defective in the *Roman* Comedy, took particular Care to supply from his own Invention the Ridicule that was

wanting in that, and it was by using that Method that he made the *Squire of Alsatia* a very good and very entertaining Comedy *Moliere*, who writ upon the same Plan, has done the very same Thing in his *L'Ecole des Maris*. He has done the very same in his *Fourberies de Scapin*, which is writ upon the Plan of the *Phormio*, but in the latter, he has gone too far, and shamefully, to use the Expression of *Boileau*, coupled *Terence* with *Jack-Pudding*, a Conjunction as scandalous as Sir *Richard* had made of *Terence* and his Friend *Cibber*. I heartily congratulate both of them upon this their mutual Friendship They are *par nobile fratrum*, a Pair so pious, so good, so human, so virtuous, so religious, that they are perfectly secur'd, even in the midst of a treacherous World, of each other's mutual Fidelity, because there is not in the World that Third Person who is fit to be a Friend to either The Knight was too humble, when he attributed the great Success of his Play to the Players in general, the Success is only due to himself, and to his virtuous Friend, that is, to that Cabal which was so industriously conven'd by them, and to those Artifices which were with so much Skill conducted by them They have done greater Services than this for each other, and have secured the Stage to themselves alone, which they regard as their proper *Domain*, and therefore every Stranger who for the future comes upon their Ground, is to be esteem'd a Trespasser. In the mean Time, they have resolved between themselves, to make the Town swallow any Entertainment which they shall think fit to provide for them, and they seem agreed to vouch for each other *Cibber* is to make Affidavit, that the Knight's Gudgeons are Cod-Fish and Sea-Carp, that arriv'd by the last Fish-Pool, and the Knight is to give it upon his immaculate Honour, that *Cibber*'s Strickle-Bats and Millers-Thumbs are either Mullets or Turbuts And they seem to have made a formal Order, That the Town shall believe them, under the Penalty of being treated with the same Anathema's that *Martin* and *John* were treated by *Peter* in the *Tale of a Tub*, that is, if you will not give Credit to what we tell you, rather than believe your Senses, G——d eternally damn you. *Cibber* indeed has receiv'd some transitory Rebukes upon taking this Resolution, but he still keeps firm to his Point, and is resolved to carry it

REMARKS ON THE *Conscious Lovers*.

I HAVE determin'd to make some Remarks, with Brevity and Impartiallity, upon a late Dramatick Performance, call'd, *The Conscious Lovers*, a Comedy. That I may be then certainly able to determine whether the great Success of it is owing to uncommon Merit, or to those extraordinary infamous Methods which I have lately taken Notice of in a former Treatise, and which, if there is not a sudden Stop put to them, will occasion the utter Downfal of the Stage, and of all the Arts dependent on it

'Tis an Observation of *Aristotle*, in the sixteenth Chapter of his *Poeticks*, that there should be no Incident in the Action of a Tragedy, which should be without its Reason, because the Absurdity of the Incidents would destroy the

Probability of the Action, and turn poetical Fiction into downright Falshood. Now, if upon this Account 'tis requir'd that all the Incidents should be reasonable in Tragedy, 'tis still more requisite in Comedy, where the Probable is more necessary, and the Wonderful less tolerable But now this whole Dramatick Performance seems to me to be built upon several Things which have no Foundation, either in Probability, or in Reason, or Nature. The Father of *Indiana,* whose Name is *Danvers,* and who was formerly an eminent Merchant at *Bristol,* upon his Arrival from the *Indies,* from whence he returns with a great Estate, carries on a very great Trade at *London* unknown to his Friends and Relations at *Bristol,* under the Name of *Sealand* Now this Fiction, without which there could be no Comedy, nor any thing call'd a Comedy, is not supported by Probability, or by Reason, or Nature 'Tis true, he tells his Daughter, in the fifth Act, towards the Top of the 82d Page, That when his Misfortunes drove him to the *Indies,* for Reasons too tedious to be mention'd at the Time he spoke, he chang'd his Name of *Danvers* into *Sealand* When his Misfortunes drove him out of his Country, those Misfortunes were Reasons sufficient to account for the changing his Name But is it probable, that at his Arrival in the *Indies,* or at his Return to *England* with a vast Estate, he should still retain the Name of *Sealand*? Is it natural to believe, that under that borrow'd Name he should conceal himself from his Family and all his Relations, as it appears by what his Daughter says, *Act* II *Page* 30. that he does? Is it credible, that he could be such a Monster, as never to send to *Bristol* after his Arrival from the *Indies,* to enquire after his Wife, his Sister, and his Daughter? and that he should feloniously marry a second Wife, without ever knowing what was become of the first? Is it reasonable to believe, that if he could be absurd enough to design this, he could ever possibly effect it? Is it possible that a Man can return from the *Indies* with a vast Estate, and the World should not know either what he is, or what he was when he went thither, especially when he traded to every Part of the Globe? Is there so much as one Man in *England* with a vast Estate, whose Original is not known? Or was there ever any one great Merchant of *London,* whose Family and Original was not known to the Merchants at *Bristol,* when betwixt the one and the other there is always so strict and constant a Communication?

But secondly, the filial Obedience of young *Bevil* is carried a great deal too far. He is said to be one of a great Estate, and a great Understanding, and yet he makes a Promise to his Father, not to marry without his Consent, which is a Promise that can do his Father only a vain imaginary Good, and may do him real Hurt A young Man of a great Understanding, cannot but know, that if he makes such a Promise, he may be oblig'd to break it, or perish, or, at least, be unhappy all the rest of his Life. Such a one cannot but know, that he may possibly be seiz'd with a Passion so resistless, and so violent, that he must possess, or perish, and consequently, if the Woman who inspires this Passion, be a Woman of strict Virtue, he must marry, or perish, or, at least, be mortally uneasy for the rest of his Life Children, indeed, before they come to Years of Discretion are oblig'd to pay a blind Obedience to their Parents But after

they are come to the full Use of their Reason, they are only bound to obey them in what is reasonable. Indeed, if a Son is in Expectation of an Estate from his Father, he is engag'd to a good deal of Compliance, even after he comes to Years of Discretion. But that was not *Bevil's* Case He enjoy'd a very good one of his Mother's, by vertue of a Marriage Article, and therefore it was unreasonable in him to make such a Promise to his Father, as it was unreasonable in his Father to urge him to it, especially upon so sordid a Motive as the doubling a great Estate. This is acting in a manner something arbitrary And it ill becomes an Author, who would be thought a Patron of Liberty, to suppose that Fathers are absolute, when Kings themselves are limitted. If he had not an Understanding of his own to tell him this, he might have learn'd from Mr *Locke*, in his sixth Chapter of his admirable *Essay on Government* *That every Man has a Right to his natural Freedom, without being subjected to the Will or Authority of any other Man Children, I confess,* says that great Man, *are not born in this full State of Equality, though they are born to it Their Parents have a sort of Rule and Jurisdiction over them when they come into the World, and for some Time after, but 'tis,* says he, *but a temporary one. The Bonds of this Subjection are like the Swadling Clothes which they are wrapp'd up in, and supported by in the Weakness of their Infancy Age and Reason, as they grow up, loosen them, till at length they drop quite off, and leave a Man at his own free Disposal.*

The same Author a little after adds, *That God having given Man an Understanding to direct his Actions, has allowed him a Freedom of Will, and Liberty of acting, as properly belonging thereunto, within the Bounds of that Law he is under But while he is in an Estate wherein he has no Understanding of his own to direct his Will, he is not to have any Will of his own to follow, he that understands for him, must will for him too, he must prescribe to his Will, and regulate his Actions But when he comes to the Estate that made his Father a Freeman, the Son is a Freeman too*

This holds, says that great Man, *in all the Laws a Man is under, whether Natural or Civil Is a Man under the Law of Nature? What made him free of that Law? What gave him a free disposing of his Property according to his own Will, within the Compass of that Law? I answer, a State of Maturity, wherein he might be suppos'd capable to know that Law, that so he might keep his Actions within the Bounds of it. When he has acquir'd that State, he is presum'd to know how far that Law is to be his Guide, and how far he may make use of his Freedom, and so comes to have it Till then some body else must guide him, who is presum'd to know how far the Law allows a Liberty If such a State of Reason, such an Age of Discretion made him free, the same shall make his Son free too. Is a Man under the Law of* England? *What made him free of that Law, that is, to have the Liberty to dispose of his Actions and Possessions according to his own Will, within the Permission of that Law? A Capacity of knowing that Law, which is suppos'd by that Law at the Age of Twenty one, and in some Cases sooner If this made the Father free, it shall make the Son free too. Till then we see the Law allows the Son to have no Will,*

but he is to be guided by the Will of his Father, or Guardian, who is to understand for him. And if the Father die, and fail to substitute a Deputy in this Trust, if he has not provided a Deputy to govern his Son during his Minority, during his want of Understanding, the Law takes care to do it, some other must govern him, and be a Will to him till he has attain'd to a State of Freedom, and his Understanding be fit to take the Government of his Will But after that the Father and Son are equally free, as much as a Tutor and Pupil after Nonage, equally Subjects of the same Law together, without any Dominion left in the Father over the Life, Liberty, or Estate of the Son, whether they be only in the State, and under the Law of Nature, or under the positive Laws of an establish'd Government.

I am sensible that this Quotation has been a great deal too long, and yet to set the Unreasonableness of *Bevil*'s Promise in a full Light, I am oblig'd to add what the same Author says a little lower in the very same Chapter, *viz. The Power of the Father extends not to the Laws, or Goods, which either his Children's Industry, or another's Bounty has made theirs, nor to their Liberty neither, when they are once arriv'd to the Enfranchisement of the Years of Discretion The Father's Empire then ceases, and he can from thence-forwards no more dispose of the Liberty of his Son, than of any other Man And it must be far from an absolute or perpetual Jurisdiction, from which a Man may withdraw himself, having License from divine Authority, to leave Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife*

From what I have quoted from so judicious and so penetrating an Author, I think it is pretty plain, that young *Bevil*, who dispos'd of part of his Estate without, nay, and as he might reasonably suppose, against the Consent of his Father, might *a fortiori* have dispos'd of his Person too, if it had not been for his unreasonable Promise, and that 'tis highly improbable, that one of the Estate and Understanding, which he is said to have, should absurdly make a Promise which might possibly endanger the Happiness of his whole Life. 'Tis said, indeed, in more than one Place of the Play, that the Son has uncommon Obligations to his Father, but we are neither told, nor are we able to guess what those Obligations are What uncommon Obligations can a Son, who has a great Estate in Possession, have to a Father of so sordid a Nature as Sir *John Bevil* shews himself? *Act* 4. *Page* 65 Besides, what Obligations can be binding enough to make a Man of a great Estate part with Liberty, with the very Liberty of his Choice, in the most important Action of his Life, upon which the Happiness of all the rest depends?

But as unreasonable as this Promise is, which young *Bevil* made to his Father, by which he gave away his Birthright, his Liberty, yes, the very Liberty of his Choice, in an Affair upon which his Happiness most depended, his Behaviour to *Indiana* is still more unaccountable He loves her, and is beloved by her, makes constant Visits and profuse Presents to her, and yet conceals his Passion from her, which may be perhaps a clumsy Expedient for the Author's preparing the Discovery, but is neither agreeable to Nature nor Reason· For 'tis impossible that any young Man in Nature in Health and Vigour, and in

the Height of a violent Passion, can so far command himself by the meer Force of Reason. I am willing, indeed, to allow that he may be able to do it by the Assistance of the true Religion But the Business of a Comick Poet is only to teach Morality Grace is not taught, but inspir'd The dreadful Mysteries of Christianity are but ill compatible with the Lightness and Mirth of Comedy; or with the Obscenity and Prophaness of a degenerate Stage, or with the Dispositions of an Assembly, compos'd of Persons who have some of them no Religion, and some of them not the true one. Besides that, nothing but a Doctrine taken from the moral Law can be a just Foundation of a Fable; which every true Comedy is

Nor is such a Behaviour any more agreeable to Reason, than it is to Nature *Bevil* loves *Indiana*, and is beloved by her She adores him, she dies for him, and he knows it He observes it, and observes at the same Time that so violent a Passion is attended with equal Anxiety, and that Anxiety is entirely caus'd by the perplexing Doubt she is in, whether she is beloved, or not, as appears by what he says himself, *Act* 2 *p* 27. Why then doth he not declare himself, and by that Declaration compose her Mind, and qualify her to expect with Patience the Benefit of Time? 'Tis indeed true, that he had promis'd his Father never to marry without his Consent, while his Father liv'd, but he had not promis'd him never to love without his Consent, for that would have been a ridiculous Promise, a Promise, the Performance or Non-performance of which was not in his own Power, and would depend entirely on what the People call *Chance*, and what Philosophers call *Providence* What could he mean then by not declaring himself? As the Love he had conceiv'd for *Indiana* was no Breach of the Promise he had made to his Father, so neither could he violate it by any Declaration of that Passion! What then, once more, can he mean by his Silence? His only reasonable way of proceeding had been to acquaint not only his Mistress, but his Father, and all the World, with the Passion which he felt for her, and with the Necessity he was in to marry her, or to be for ever miserable. Such a Declaration was not at all inconsistent with his Duty, and if his Father had either Reason or Compassion, would have caus'd him to relent, and to release his Son from a Promise, the persevering in which must prove unhappy, or fatal to him. If it should be said that such a Concealment of his Passion was necessary, that he might make a Retreat with Honour, in Case his Father should still be obstinate, to this I answer, That there was no Retreat for him, unless he would at the same time retreat from Virtue and Honour, that his Behaviour had fix'd and determined him, that by his Generosity and constant Visits, he had raised the Passion of *Indiana* to such a Height, that his leaving her would in all likelihood be followed by Madness, or by Self-murder, or by dreadful Hysterical Symptoms, as deplorable as either, of which, what passes between her Father and her in the fifth Act, is a sufficient Proof Beside, that such a Retreat would prove as fatal to her Honour as to her Person He had for some time made constant Visits, he had made very extravagant Presents to her, he had made no Declaration of the Affection he had for her, either to her or to

her Aunt *Isabella,* or acquainted any one with his Design to marry her, if he could obtain his Father's Consent. Now can any thing be more plain, than that such a Behaviour, if he left her, would ruin the Reputation of the poor Lady, and cause all the World to entertain such Thoughts of her as *Sealand* and *Myrtle* had already express'd? And thus I have endeavour'd to shew that the Behaviour of *Bevil* to *Indiana,* in his concealing his Passion from her, is as ridiculously whimsical, as that of *Cimberton* to her Sister *Lucinda*

The Catastrophe, I must confess, is very moving, but it would be more so, if it were rightly and reasonably handled, because it would be much more surprizing For the Surprize is, in a good Measure, prevented by the Behaviour of *Isabella* upon the first Appearance of *Sealand*, which if it had not been out of all Probability and Nature, would have prevented it more It was highly in Nature and Probability, that *Isabella,* upon the first discovering her Brother, should fly into an excessive Transport of Joy, and have run to embrace him, for when she is made to say, That her Brother must not know her yet, she is made to give no Reasons for it, nor can the Audience imagine any 'Tis not *Isabella* who says that, but the Author, who clumsily uses it to serve a Turn, for if she had discover'd herself to her Brother at his first Appearance, it had prevented the Audience's Sorrow and Compassion for the imaginary Distress of *Indiana,* and, consequently, their return to Joy But as *Aristotle,* and all the great Criticks after him, have taught us, that there is to be no Incident in a Dramatick Poem, but what must be founded on Reason, it happens, as we observ'd above, very unluckily here, that there is no Incident in the *Conscious Lovers* but what is attended by some great Absurdity For the Action of *Indiana,* in throwing away her Bracelet, is of the same Stamp, and is entirely the Author's, and not the Dramatick Person's, for it was neither necessary nor profitable, that *Indiana,* in the Height of her Agony, should so much as think of her Bracelet, or if she did think of it, should resolve to throw away the greatest Token that she had to remember her dead Mother, for whose Memory her Grief and Distress ought naturally to renew and redouble her Tenderness. But the Author is obliged to have Recourse to this as an awkard Expedient, tho' the best he could find, to bring on the Discovery But had he known any thing of the Art of the Stage, he would have known, that those Discoveries are but dully made, which are made by Tokens, that they ought necessarily or probably to spring from the whole Train of the Incidents contrary to our Expectation And how easy was it to bring that about here? For such a Discovery had been very well prepared, by what young *Bevil* says to *Humphrey* in the first Act, and by the Hint *Indiana* gives to *Sealand* in the fifth Act, which Hint the old Gentleman readily takes, for when she tells him she had been made an Infant Captive on the Seas, he immediately crys out, *An Infant Captive!* and, after some Interruption given by *Indiana,* he says, *Dear Lady! O yet one Moment's Patience, my Heart grows full with your Affliction, but yet there is something in your Story that* ——— She answers as if she were at cross Purposes, *My Portion here is Bitterness and Sorrow* To which he replies, *Do not*

think so. Pray answer me, Does Bevil *know your Name and Family?* So that a few Questions more, pertinently answer'd, would have brought on the Discovery. Now if the Discovery had been made this Way, and *Isabella* had not known her Brother at her first seeing him, but had come in to *Sealand* and *Indiana* just after the Discovery had been made, there would have been two Surprizes, both greater and more agreeable than now they are, and both of them without Absurdity

But now the Mention of the Infant Captive brings to my Remembrance the Circumstances of that Captivity, which are, to use Mr *Cimberton's* Expression, pregnant with Absurdity *Indiana,* it seems, with her Mother and her Aunt, are taken, in their Passage to the *Indies,* by a Privateer from *Toulon,* and carried into that Place Now where were they taken? It must be either in the Channel, or on the Ocean Now, in the first place, I never heard that *Toulon* set out any Privateers. Secondly, Suppose they did, 'tis improbable that a Privateer from *Toulon* should cruize in the Ocean, and much more improbable that they should rove as far as the Channel Thirdly, 'Tis highly improbable, that an *East-India* Vessel, which had Force enough to venture without a Convoy, should be taken by a Privateer Fourthly, Tis not a Jot more probable, that supposing a Privateer from *Toulon* should have taken such a Vessel, it should chuse to carry it into *Toulon,* rather than into *Brest,* or *St Malo* For how long must a Privateer be carrying an *East-India* Vessel from the Channel to *Toulon,* which is above a thousand Miles from the Channel, and little less distant from that Part of the Ocean o'er which our *East-India* Ships pass Now in so long a Voyage, the Privateer might very well be taken, and the Prize be retaken, whereas the latter might be carried to *Brest,* or *St Malo,* with a hundred Times less Danger.

Well! But let us suppose the Privateer got safely with his Prize into *Toulon* Does Sir *Richard* believe, that *Toulon,* is situate under one of the Poles, that neither Ship nor Passengers were heard of in so many Years? If *Indiana* was an Infant, *Isabella* was old enough to write, and if she was so indifferent or stupid as to omit it, the Captain of the Ship and his Mate would not fail to write to their Owners, to let them know the Fate of their Ship If there was no Passage for Letters directly thro' *France,* yet the Way of *Holland* was open, and upon the Arrival of those Letters, not only the whole *East-India* Company, but all *London* would have known what was become of the Ship, at a Time when so many News-Writers contended which could furnish the Town with most and the freshest News So that if *Sealand,* upon his coming from the *Indies,* had made but never so little Enquiry, he would have found that his Sister and Daughter had been at *Toulon* If he had made no Enquiry, he must have shewn himself a fine Gentleman, indeed, who would marry a second Wife before he was certain the first was dead· And it is impossible he could know that the first was dead, without knowing that his Sister and his Daughter were at *Toulon.*

I shall now compare the Relation that old *Bevil* makes to his Man *Humphrey*, in the first Scene of the *Conscious Lovers*, to that which *Simo* makes to *Sosia* in the beginning of the *Andria* But I shall only compare them at present with relation to the Incidents, I shall take an Opportunity afterwards to consider the Sentiments and Expressions by themselves

The beginning of the *Andria* is perfectly in Nature. *Simo* begins the Relation which he makes to *Sosia* with a grave and a solemn Air, suitable to the Disposition of Mind he is in, and the great Concern he is under Old *Bevil*, who is suppos'd to be in the same Disposition of Mind, and to lie under the same Concern, begins the Relation which he makes to *Humphrey* with an Impertinence dully gay, and therefore the beginning of the *Conscious Lovers* is entirely out of *Nature*

In the *Andria, Chremes*, a rich old *Athenian* Citizen, offers to bestow his only Daughter *Philumena* with a great Dowry on *Pamphilus*, the Son of *Simo*, who accepts that Offer for his Son The Match breaks off upon the Discovery which *Pamphilus* makes at the Funeral of *Chrysis* of his Passion for *Glycerium*. *Simo* the Father pretends that it still goes on, that he may take an Opportunity, from his Son's Refusal, of giving him a severe Reprimand

Si propter amorem uxorem nolit ducere,
Ea primum ab illo animadvertenda Injuria est,
Et nunc id operam do, ut per falsas Nuptias
Vera objurgandi Causa sit, si deneget

In the beginning of the *Conscious Lovers* there is a very absurd Imitation of this Passage in *Terence* Where old *Bevil* speaks thus to his Man *Humphrey*, concerning his Son

If there is so much in this Amour of his, that he denies upon my Summons to marry, I shall have Cause enough to be offended And then by insisting upon his marrying to Day, I shall know how far he is engag'd to the Lady in Masquerade, and from thence only shall be able to take my Measures

Now it seems plain to me, that *Simo* would have reason to be angry at his Son's Refusal, and that old *Bevil* would have none *Pamphilus* would refuse a Wife with a great Dowry, which he wanted, having nothing but what his Father supply'd him with, who, perhaps, might not be very easy in his own Circumstances. Besides *Glycerium* pass'd for a Courtezan, (which was not the Case of *Indiana*,) because she was believ'd to be the Sister of *Chrysis*, who was publickly known to be one And it would provoke any Father of a good Family, and who had all along liv'd with Reputation in the World, to find, to the Ruin and Disgrace of that Family, his only Son married to a Whore, or living with her as if he were married to her, which was against both Law and Custom at *Athens*, and a great deal more scandalous there, than it is in this Blessed Town, as is evident from what *Simo* says in that admirable Scene which is

between him and his Son and *Chremes*, in the fifth Act of this Comedy, where Nature is drawn with such masterly Strokes, and in such lively and glowing Colours.

Adeo impotenti esse animo, ut præter Civium
Morem, atque legem, & suæ voluntatem patris,
Tamen hanc habere studeat cum summo probro

But 'tis downright ridiculous in old *Bevil* to pretend to be offended, in Case his Son who is in Possession of a great Estate, and entirely independant on his Father, and one whom the Father himself calls a sober and discreet Gentleman, should refuse to marry at a Minute's Warning a Woman whom he does not like, and whom the Father chuses only with the sordid View of doubling a great Estate, when what they had already was more than sufficient Because the Father is sordid, must the Son be unhappy? Must the Son, who has bespoke a Dish for himself, take up with another that is his Aversion, only because his Father chooses it? The Passion which young *Bevil* had for another, is a just Cause of his Refusal, and if his Father is unreasonably offended, the Son, who has no Dependance upon him, may very reasonably be comforted As the Father knew very well that the Son had no Occasion for the Wealth which would come from the marrying *Lucinda*, so he did not believe his frequenting *Indiana*, whether he suppos'd her an honorable or a kept Mistress, would bring any Scandal either upon himself or his Family Witness what he says to *Sealand* in *Act* 4 *Page* 62 concerning this very Affair, *viz Sir, I can't help saying, that what might injure a Citizen's Credit may be no Stain to a Gentleman's Honour.* So that 'tis plain *Simo* had two important Reasons to be offended at his Son's Refusal, which old *Bevil* apparently had not because he rejected Wealth, which he wanted, and courted Infamy, for which no one can have an Occasion

The Relation of what passed between young *Bevil* and *Induna* at the Masquerade, is a very absurd Imitation of what passed between *Pamphilus* and *Glycerium* at the Funeral of *Chrysis Pamphilus* attends *Glycerium* to the Funeral of *Chrysis*, who pass'd for her Sister While the Body was burning, *Glycerium* in the Agony of her Grief, ran to the Fire, and was about to throw herself into it, when *Pamphilus*, half dead with Fear, runs to her catches hold of her, throws his Arms about her, and by that Action, and his tender Expostulation discovers the Violence of that Passion which he had hitherto conceal'd, upon which *Glycerium*, by an Action which manifested her habitual Love, weeping reclin'd her Head upon his Breast with a most moving Tenderness This is the Sense of that celebrated Passage But is but barely the Sense, for no Pen, no Tongue can express the Elegance and the Grace of *Terence*

But now let us see the Imitation of this in the *Conscious Lovers*. 'Tis in the first Scene of the Play, where old *Bevil* relates to his Man *Humphrey* what passed at the last Masquerade

Sir J. Bevil *You know, I was last* Thursday *at the Masquerade, my Son, you may remember, soon found us out He knew his Grandfather's Habit,*

which I then wore, and tho' it was the Mode, in the last Age, yet the Maskers, you know, follow'd us as if we had been the most monstrous Figures in the whole Assembly

Humphrey. *I remember, indeed, a young Man of Quality in the Habit of a Clown, that was particularly troublesome*

Sir J Bevil *Right He was too much what he seemed to be.*

Humphrey *I knew he had a Mind to come to that Particular* [Aside.

Sir J Bevil *Ay, he followed us, till the Gentleman, who led the Lady in the* Indian *Mantle, presented that gay Creature to the Rustick, and bid him (like* Cymon *in the Fable) grow polite, by falling in Love, and let that worthy old Gentleman alone, meaning me The Clown was not reform'd, but rudely persisted, and offer'd to force off my Mask, with that the Gentleman, throwing off his own, appear'd to be my Son, and in his Concern for me, tore off that of the Nobleman, At this they seiz'd each other The Company called the Guards, and in the Surprise the Lady swooned away, upon which my Son quitted his Adversary, and had now no Care but of the Lady, when raising her in his Arms, art thou gone, cried he, for ever ——— Forbid it Heaven! ——— She revives at his known Voice, ——— and with the most familiar, tho' modest Gesture, hangs in Safety over his Shoulder, weeping, but wept as in the Arms of one before whom she could give herself a Loose, were she not under Observation while she hides her Face in his Neck, he carefully conveys her from the Company*

Now there is this remarkable Difference between what pass'd at the Funeral, and what pass'd at the Masquerade, that every Thing that relates to the former, seems to be either necessary or profitable, and almost every Thing that relates to the latter appears to be improbable How injudicious an Imitation is the Behaviour of *Indiana* at the Masquerade, of the Behaviour of *Glycerium* at the Funeral Nothing can be more natural than the Freedom which *Glycerium* takes with *Pamphilus* She lov'd him, and was belov'd by him She was betroth'd to him, She had no Reserve for him The utmost Familiarities had pass'd between them She was with Child by him, and expected every Day that the Time of her being deliver'd was come

The Case of *Indiana* is very different, and her Behaviour is very inconsistent with her Character, 'tis true, she was in Love with young *Bevil*, but doubted very much whether that Love was reciprocal, he had been so far from taking the same Liberty with her that *Pamphilus* had done with *Glycerium*, that his Behaviour had been always very respectful, and yet *Indiana* uses the same Familiarity upon this Occasion with him, that *Glycerium* at the Funeral does with *Pamphilus*, she revives at his known Voice, which she heard, it seems, after she had lost all her Senses, and comes from Death to Life upon it, like the dead Men in the *Rehearsal* at the Voice of Poet *Bays*, and with the most familiar, tho' modest Gesture, hangs in Safety over his Shoulder weeping, but wept as in the Arms of one before whom she could give herself a Loose, were she not under Observation, and while she hides her Face in his Neck, he carefully conveys her from the Company.

Now this Behaviour is by no means consistent with the Character of *Indiana*; familiar and modest are not in this Case very compatible; and then what does Sir *Richard* mean by *wept as in the Arms of one before whom she could give herself a Loose?* If these Words have any Meaning, I would fain know what it is

In this first Scene there is another very ridiculous Imitation of what *Simo* says to *Sosia* in the first Scene of the *Andria*

> Simo *Et nunc id operam do, ut per falsas nuptias*
> *Vera obiurgandi causa sit, si deneget*
> *Simul, sceleratus Davus si quid Consili*
> *Habet, ut consumat nunc, cum nihil obsint doli*
> *Quem ego credo manibus, pedibusque obnixè omnia*
> *Facturum, magis id adeo, mihi ut incommodet,*
> *Quàm ut obsequatur Gnato* Sos *Quapropter?* Si *Rogas?*
> *Mala mens, malus animus* ——————
> *Nunc tuum est officium, has bene ut adsimules nuptias,*
> *Perterrefacias Davum, observes filium,*
> *Quid agat, quid cum illo consilii capiat*

Thus have I gone thro' the whole Train of Incidents, which are a Heap of Absurdities and Inconsistencies I have partly likewise gone thro' the Character of young *Bevil*, who is made up of Contradictions. He is one who differs from himself as much as from the rest of the World This Man of Conscience and of Religion is as arrant an Hypocrite as a certain Author 'Tis indeed a pleasant Religion that never seizes a Man but when he is upon the Point either of Love or Battle This Man of Conscience and of Religion dissembles with his Father most vilely, which Religion doth by no means allow, and so chuses rather to offend Heaven than an old sordid Blockhead, who pretends to treat one who is independent of him, and at Years of Discretion, like an arrant Boy, yet this the Son calls an honest Dissimulation, as he calls Breach of Trust the getting over a false Point of Honour In the first Scene of the second Act this Man of Religion is putting *Myrtle* upon a Fraud, and palming two counterfeit Lawyers upon old Mrs *Sealand*, a Practice which Religion and Morality both abhor

The Character of young *Bevil* therefore is made up of Qualities, either incoherent and contradictory, as Religion and Dissimulation, Morality and Fraud, or most ridiculously consistent, as Circumspection and Folly For one may say the same thing of young *Bevil* that *Scandal* in *Love for Love* says of and to *Foresight, That if ever he commits an Error, 'tis not without a great deal of Consideration, Circumspection and Caution* The Character therefore of young *Bevil* is not an Image of any thing in Life, and especially in common Life, as every thing in Comedy ought to be, but the Phantom of a feverish Author's Brain, as several of the other Characters likewise are

As young *Bevil* is the Character of such a young Man as is not to be found in the World, upon the foot of Nature, of which all true Poetry is a just Imitation, *Cimberton* is a Creature who is set as much below Humanity as *Bevil*

appears to be drawn above it, he is an Animal that is nothing so like a Man as a Monkey is, nor is he near so well qualified to entertain a Lady agreeably; he is so very monstrous, that one would not think he could be produced by any thing that had human Shape, and for the Credit of Human Nature ought, like a *Sooterkin*, to be demolished as soon as he appears

Most of the other Characters are faintly and coarsly drawn, which is very strange, if we consider the admirable Patterns that *Terence* has laid before him. The Characters of that Comick Poet I must confess are in no great Compass, but tho' they are few they are excellent, they are so strong in Nature, that they may be taken for the Life, may be taken for Persons rather than Pictures, and for real rather than dramatick Persons Sir *Richard* seems to be wholly ignorant of what *Boileau* has said of this Matter, who is one of the greatest of the *French* Poets, and one of the justest of their Criticks

Aux depens du bon Sens gardez de plaisanter
Jamais de la Nature il ne faut s'ecarter
Contemplez de quel Air un pere dans Terence
Vient d'un Fils amoureux gourmander l'imprudence
De quel Air cet Amant ecoute ses leçons
Et court chez sa Maistresse oublier ces chansons,
Ce n'est pas un portrait, une image semblable,
C'est un Amant, un Fils, un Pere veritable

That is,

Beware of being pleasant at the Expence of good Sense, and take care that you never go out of Nature Observe with what an Air a Father in Terence *reprimands his amorous Son for his imprudent Conduct, with what Air the Lover hearkens to his grave Remonstrances, then runs away to his Mistress to laugh at these musty Morals You would swear that you had before you the Things themselves, instead of a good Picture and a just Resemblance, you would swear you had before you a real Lover, a real Son, and a real Father*

The very Character of *Simo* in the *Andria* is admirable, and the Relation he makes to *Sosia* a Masterpiece, I never read it but I see the old *Athenian* before my Eyes in the very same Colours that *Davus* paints *Crito* the *Andrian* in the same Comedy

Cum facium videas, videtur esse quamvis pretu,
Tristis severitas inest in vultu, atq, in verbis fides

Whatever he says goes to my Heart, whereas old *Bevil* is an old fribling Blockhead, and that which comes from him scarce touches my Lips

But if in this Imitation of that Relation which *Simo* makes to *Sosia*, Sir *Richard* falls so very much short of *Terence* in his Incidents and his Characters, he is inexpressible Degrees below him in his Sentiments and his Dialogue.

The Sentiments of *Terence* are always true, are always just, and adapted to the Characters, His Dialogue is the most charming that is to be found among the *Roman* Authors Where is there that Purity, that Elegance, that Delicacy,

that Grace, that Harmony? If it has any Fault, 'tis too uniform a Politeness, the Servant speaking always with the same Grace and the same Elegance that his Master does. Setting that aside, 'tis every way accomplish'd. It has particularly for its Purity the Authorities of two of the best and greatest of the *Roman* Judges, *Cæsar* and *Cicero* *Cicero* says of this Comick Poet, that he is *optimus Author Latinitatis*, and all the World has seen the Verses that *Julius Cæsar* made upon the same Author

Tuque etiam in summis o Dimidiate Menander
Poneris, & merito puri sermonis amator, &c

But now the Sentiments in the *Conscious Lovers* are often frivolous, false, and absurd, the Dialogue is awkard, clumsy, and spiritless, the Diction affected, impure, and barbarous, and too often *Hibernian*. Who, that is concern'd for the Honour of his Country can see without Indignation whole Crowds of his Countrymen assembled to hear a Parcel of *Teagues* talking *Tipperary* together, and applauding what they say? I know very well that what I now say will alarm some People, and for that reason I shall shortly bring Examples of the Sentiments and the Diction in the *Conscious Lovers* so palpable and so flagrant, that they shall justify me in spight of the Obstinacy and the Clamours of his most foolish Admirers.

FINIS

THE CAUSES OF THE DECAY AND DEFECTS OF DRAMATICK POETRY, AND OF THE DEGENERACY OF THE PUBLICK TAST

1725(?)

IN the Reign of King Charles the second there flourishd a number of contemporary poets, who were most of them exellent in their Different manners, as Milton, Denham, Waller, Cowley, Butler, Dryden, Rochester, Dorsett, Otway, Wycherly, Etherege, Shadwell &c. In the Reign of King William things began apace to Degenerate, and yet evn then we had Two Comick poets, of whom one is still living, of each of whom we may boldly pronounce, that He is *magnorum Haud quaquam Indignus Avorum* But what have we now upon the British Parnassus? What Authours? What poetry? What successours to that Charming Choir whom we mentiond above, that Choir that with their enchanting notes charmd the Ears and ravishd the Hearts of Gods and men who Heard them? We may without the spirit of prophesie foresee that the condition of the British Parnassus will be in a little time and be in a great measure the very same that Isaiah foretold would be the state of Babylon Immediately after its fall *It shall never be inhabited* says the prophet, *neither shall it be Dwelt in from Generation to Generation But wild Beasts of the Desert shall lie there, and its Houses shall be full of Dolefull creatures, and owls shall Dwell there, and Satyrs* (that is, Apes and Monkeys and Baboons) *shall Dance there And the wild Beasts of the Islands shall cry in the Desolate Houses, and Dragons in their pleasant Palaces, and Her time is neer to come and Her Days shall not be prolonged*

The confeirmd stupidity that we see in most of the writers, who pretend at present to carry on the Commerce and the Trade of Parnassus, proceeds from the Degeneracy, the want of Judgment and the want of Tast of the Readers and the spectatours If there were numbers who could Judge Rightly the stage and the Presse would be Better suplied Noe Fools would presume to write, if there were not greater Fools to Admire them But They not only Admire them, but are Angry with any one who Does not, and expect that a man should renounce all Common Sense to accomodate Himself to their most Abandond Tast Nay, They will not only be Angry with Him, but will Hate Him, will calumniate Him, will rail like Beaten Cowards at Him, will be Bravos for nonsens and Hectours for Stupidity, Downright Bullies for the Drab Muses of Snow and of Addle Hill, the Two renownd Heads of the forked Grubstreet Parnassus.

To Trace all the Causes of the Degeneracy of The British Tast, since The Reign of Charles the second would Require a volume. I shall Hint at some of the chief as far as They relate to the Drama Dramatick poetry was soe extreamly accomodated to the Genius of the English before it was Debauchd

by Foreign Luxury, that at its very first appearance among us, it was encouragd by our Kings and warmly espousd by the people. There is a proof upon Record of the encouragement which Henry the Eighth gave to it. And what Countenance His Daughter Queen Elizabeth shewd to Shakespear, and what Honour she did to the Dramatick Art, by turning a Græcian Tragedy into English with that Hand that Held the Scepter, is known to all who are any thing acquainted with the progresse we have made in the studies and Arts of Humanity

In the Reign of Her Pacifick Successour, there were noe lesse than six Companys of Players on Foot at a Time, each of Them establishd by a Royal License. The first of them had the name of the Kings Company, the second of the Queens, The Third of The Prince of Wales, the Fourth of His Sister The Princesse Elizabeth, the fifth of the Prince Palatine of The Rhine, and the sixth was granted to one Daniel. And one who was at Head of one of those six Companys, Allen by name, acquird an estate large enough to found a Handsome Colledge at Dulwich in Surrey, and to endow it nobly; tho this famous metropolis was then Hardly a Third of what it is at present, and the Stage then wanted Two of its new atractive ornaments, which are scenes and women.

In the latter end of the Reign of King Charles the first the Theaters were for several years shutt up, thro the prevalence of Blind and Fanatick Zeal, and were not sufferd to be opend again till the Return of Charles the second As soon as the King was restord by the People, and Two of The Theaters by the King, tis incredible with what Ardour the people returnd and flew to their old pleasures All sorts of persons were charmd to that Degree with the True entertainments of the stage, that Two Companies of exellent Actours started upon a sudden as it were out of the ground, such as had never appeard in England before nor in all likely Hood will ever appear again The Audiences were English all or most of them, audiences that understood what They saw and Heard, and we had then none of those shoals of exoticks, that came in by the Revolution, the union, and the Hanover Succession, which tho They were events that were necessary all, and without which we had been undone, yet have They Hitherto had but an evil Influence upon the genuine entertainments of the stage, and the studies and arts of Humanity.

We had then none of those upstarts, who had been meanly born, and more meanly educated, and who had beyond their own expectation acquird pelf enough, some in the Army's, some in the Fleets, and some in the wrecks of the fraudulent Pacifique Ocean, to make an awkward Figure at our publick spectacles, and to assist in Bringing the Diversions of Smithfield to which They had been usd from their Infancy to be Theatricall entertainments

The nobility and ancient gentry were soe fond of the genuine entertainments of the stage, that They chose to signalize themselves by their Judgments of them, as the poets did by the writing them Theatricall Caballs were then unheard of, and those generous and sensible audiences scornd to use their Interest for a Foolish play, because the Blockhead who writt it, was their

acquaintance, or perhaps their foolish relation. They were wiser than to run counter to common sense thro the pride of showing their power. Evry play made its own Interest, and stood by its merit or fell thro the want of it, and evry new performance made generally those impressions on the Audience which They were by nature prepard to receive, without the least intervention of malicious prejudice or party præpossession

I must confesse the Town was now and then in the wrong, Deluded by the enchanting performance of soe just and soe great an Actour, as Mr Hart or Mr Mohun, or by the opinion They might have of a celebrated Authour who had pleasd them before But then there were several extraordinary men at Court who wanted neither Zeal nor Capacity, nor Authority to sett them right again There was Villers Duke of Buckingham, Wilmot Earl of Rochester, the late Earl of Dorsett, the Earl of Mulgrave who was afterwards Duke of Buckinghamshire, Mr Savil, Mr Buckley, Sir John Denham, Mr Waller &c. When these or the Majority of them Declard themselves upon any new Dramatick performance, the Town fell Immediately in with them, as the rest of the pack does with the eager cry of the stanch and the Trusty Beagles When The Town too lightly gave their aplause, to Half a Dozen Romantick, Rymng, whining Blustring Tragedies, allurd by their novelty and by their glare, then Villers Duke of Buckingham writt the *Rehearsall,* which in a little Time opend their eyes, and taught them to Despise what before They rashly admird And when upon the first representations of the *Plain Dealer,* the Town, as The Authour has often told me, appeard Doubtfull what Judgment to Form of it, the forementiond gentlemen by their loud aprobation of it, gave it both a sudden and a lasting reputation

The Theater was not then as it is now in Hands of Players, illiterate, unthinking, unjust, ungratefull and sordid, who fancy themselves plac'd there for their extraordinary merits, and for noe other end but to accumulate Pelf and bring Dishonour upon the Reign of the Best of Kings by sacrifising the British genius to their Insatiable avarice who reject the Best plays and Receive the worst, if the Blockheads who writt them, are but Sycophants enough to cringe to and fawn upon Half the Town, and by that means engage whole crowds of Fools to aplaud a senselesse Performance Their oracle of wit, is an Amphibious creature, Half Player, Half Poetaster, like that Leathern wingd animal, that takes its groveling flight in the Dusk, and passes for a singing Bird only with Beasts, and for a Beast with all the Tunefull choir. This Oracle of theirs some years agoe writt two Rhapsodies, whose *noms De Guerre* were Tragedies, but writt them at a long intervall one from the other. They were both soe vile that They were exploded and Hist evn by school Boys This did not soe far Discourage Him, but He has lately writt a third, which is ten times worse than either of the other Two Yet the other Two Managers wisely consented to lay out seven hundred pounds on the Embellishment of it, which puts me in mind of a passage in Boccalin, where, He tells us, that some certain virtuosi who belongd to Parnassus, had taken an odd conceit that They should gett a great Deal of money by perfuming Sir Reverences, but it fell out soe very

unluckily, that the more expence They were at in perfuming them, the more Damnably They stunk. Yet this very oracle rejected the *Ambitious Stepmother,* and *Mariamne,* and after having kept the Authours long in suspence Dismissd them at last with Insolence. By these Methods have these Blessed Managers frighted all men of Genius from the Theaters, and have not acted noe not soe much as one tolerable new Comedy, During their whole Ten years sub-administration of stage affairs; tho tis certain that Comedy is that species of Poetry, which is most agreable to the English genius.

At The Restoration The Theaters were in the Hands of Gentlemen, who had Done particular services to the Crown, and who were peculiarly qualifyd for the Discharge of that Important Trust They had Honour, learning, breeding, Discernment, Integrity, Impartiality and generosity Their chief aim was to see that the Town was well entertaind and The Drama improvd They alterd all at once the whole Face of the stage by introducing scenes and women, which added probability to the Dramatick Actions and made evry thing look more naturally. When any new Dramatick performance was brought them. They never askd who had seen it, who had recommended it, or what Numbers were to support it, They knew that if it had merit it would support it self, and of its merit, They were very well able to Judge By these Methods men of the finest parts were animated to write for the stage, and noe one was Discouragd by His obscurity or because He had not appeard before. And twas for this Reason that more good Comedies were writt from 1660 to 1700, During all which time The Theater was in the Hands of Gentlemen, than will be writt in a Thousand years if the Management lies in the Players

Nothing is more easie than to account for this by the Maxims, by which They are Governd. Their grand maxim is to gett money, and to sacrifise all things to their Insatiable Avarice Tis by full Houses that They Heap up pelf, and as their Houses are always filld by their old plays, They can be noe more by new ones. They thrive more by Indifferent Action now, than a very good company did by admirable Action formerly This as we observd before, has happend by the great augmentation of the numbers of the people The Revolution, The union and the protestant succession, has brought to this Town a vast number of strangers who formerly were not seen here And a new and numerous gentry has risen among us by the Return of our fleets from sea, of our Armies from the Continent, and from the wreck of the South Sea All these will have their Diversions and their easie partiality leads them against their own palpable interest to the Hundreds of Drury. They goe not thither because tis Just and Reasonable, but because tis become a Fashion. I have known men formerly wear little Hats with Brims about an Inch and a Half Broad, which could neither keep the Sun from their eyes, nor their Bodies from the rain, which was therefore against all Common Sense, but forsooth it was the fashion And the Fashion has more than once been too Hard for Common sense. The partiality of the Town makes the Managers of the Theatre in Drury Lane stick to their old Plays, and reject all new ones unlesse those which are forcd upon them For either a new play succeeds or it does not.

If it does not succeed, They are sure to have several Thin Houses, of which the other Theatre does not fail to make their Advantage. If it does succeed the whole profits of Three or Four nights goe away to the Authour Soe that all that is lost to them, besides the expence and pains of getting it up. Soe that They are sure to Thrive by their Indolence, and never fail to loose by their Industry. From hence comes their mortal aversion to new plays. and from hence their Insolent Treatment of those who write them that those who have Genius may be as much as possible Discouragd from such attempts Tis true at this rate the English Drama is like to be lost, to the Disreputation of England, and the opprobrium of those who support them Nay the profession of Actours is like to be lost, and these vipers are sucking the vital blood and Tearing out the entrails of their mother. For great Actours are only made by original parts and the further an Actour is remov'd from the original the more faintly He is like to perform the part Tis true the Gains of the Triumvirate in Drury are soe very great, that They would have all the Reason in the world to encourage new plays, if their avarice were not Insatiable Soe that I can see noe end of this grievance from them, unlesse I could see an end of their Covetousnesse But the older They grow, the stronger will that Infamous passion become and gather Force from their weaknesse, which always happens to base minds For the minds of sordid creatures Deeply immerst in matter, are always brought by age to bend towards Dirt with their Bodies Tis true indeed the Court may aply a Remedy to this grievance and soe may The Town The Court may doe it by taking their License from them, and giving a new one to Them or to others to be held only by this Tenour, that They shall Act Two new Comedies evry year and as many Tragedies, and by substituting men of known understanding in these affairs, and Honour and Impartiality to make the choice in case more than Two of each poem shall be offerd. The Town may putt an end to this grievance, by Dividing their favours more equally between the Two Theaters or rather by giving most encouragement to that which most encourages writers.

Another cause of the Decay of Poetry among us, and of evry other Branch of Human Litterature, is the partiall or undiscerning choice, that persons whose powr infinitely exceeds their capacity, and their Discernment, make of those writers and especially those creatures whom They call poets, on whom They conferr their favours They seem to have in their eye the Italian nobleman of whom Bishop Burnet speaks in His Letters, who when He was askd why He had made a certain Egregious Blockhead His Chapelain, answerd very bluntly, *because He could not find a greater*

They will tell you perhaps that The call which They make to præferment, is like that which is made by Heavn to eternall Happinesse. For when They gave Mr Bays a Hundred pounds a year and The Butt, and promisd Nichil the Reversion of Two Hundred a Year Doe they not follow the example of Heavn, as tis Deliverd to us by St Paul, in the first chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians? Doe They not tell us, that not many wise men after the flesh are called by them, but that They have chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wisdom of the wise, and that They have chosen the weak

things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and Base things of the world and things which are Despisd have They chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are?

For when They Rewarded the Madrigals of Bays, and the Poetry and the wit of Nichil, with places and with pensions, did They not really reward things which are not, to bring to nought things which are, that is, to Discourage and Destroy all poeticall Talents in those who were really possest of them? Did They not really Declare aloud, for Impertinence, Ignorance, Folly and Nonsense? Did They not really Declare mortall war against Learning, wit and sense?

In the Reign of Augustus Cæsar, when Mecænas and Agrippa were persons in powr, They bestowd their favours on the worthiest writers that Rome or the world could offer to them, on Virgil, Varius, Horace, the greatest and the noblest of the Roman Poets, and at the same time Held Bavius and Mævius in the utmost contempt But if some persons who are now in powr, had been in their places, Horace had been neglected, Virgil had been starvd, while Bavius had been Poet Laureat and Mævius Historiographer.

When persons who are entrusted with the Disposall of the publick offices, and with the Distribution of the publick Rewards, bestow them upon worthlesse wretches, and neglect those who are worthy, They make those whom They chuse and Themselves contemptible, They Disgrace Their master, and Betray the Trust Reposd in Them, and Doe whatever in Them lies, to make the whole nation Infamous.

When foreigners who have been present at our late Birth Day and our New years Day songs, return to Paris, to Madrid, or Rome, what account can we think They must give to their Countreymen, of our wit and sense and poetry, of our Judgment and our Discernment? Why, They will tell them that it is Doubtfull, whether the Meeter that is sung in our churches, or that which is sung in our Royal Palaces, is the more contemptible, or if They doe pretend to Decide the matter, They certainly give it in favour of our churches For Sternhold and Hopkins have been printed fifty times But our late Birth Day and new years Day songs have never been printed at all, have never been thought worthy evn of a Grubstreet presse, but have been like Births that were Dead before They were born, and perishd like abortions that never saw the Light

There are several other things which have contributed each of Them to Debauch the Tast of The people. But as They have been treated of formerly I shall at present take noe notice of them, that I may have Room to Dwell more largely upon a cause that Has not yet been handled, and that is False criticism.

All the pieces of criticism relating to the stage that were publishd before the Restoration, by Ben Johnson and Milton, or writt within Twenty Years after it, by Dryden, Villers, Sheffield, Rymer and Roscommon, were sound and good in the main. As long as The Dramatick Doctrine was sound and good the practise was soe likewise, tho it did not always come up to the perfection proposd by the præcepts But as when people are arrivd at that Height of

Iniquity as to suffer vice and Luxury to be preachd up with Impunity, tis noe wonder if a Deplorable corruption of manners spreads its self thro that people, Soe when we see that of late years soe much Dramatick criticism has been publishd, which has been the very Reverse of Reason, of Truth and of good sense, we ought not to be at all surprizd if the practise keeps pace with The Doctrine, and scarse any thing is brought upon the stage but extravagance, impertinence, absurdity, folly and nonsense

Now as They who have lately had the flagrant Impudence to preach up vice and Luxury in order to corrupt and Debauch the manners of a great people, are known themselves to be more flagitiously wicked than evn the most profligate of that people whom They corrupt and Debauch, tis as generally known that They who have publishd soe much extravagant and Impertinent Criticism, have themselves brought plays upon the stage, which have been of all others the most execrable and Abominable

For an Incontestable proof of this, let us examine the Doctrine and the practise of Three of Them The Doge of Drury Ægyptian Cibber, and the notable Authour of *Applepye.*

The Doge of Drury did formerly and in the Borrowd name of Sr John Edgar Declaim against the rules of the Art which He pretended to professe with soe much Zeal, that He seemd resolvd to Doe His utmost to Reduce the Art of Poetry to whimsey and Fanaticism, thro meer spight because He could not attain to it What was the consequence? Why, the very first play that was produced by Him after this Blessed Doctrine, was such a Heap of Absurdities and Inconsistencies as had never appeard upon the stage before Yet was it greedily swallowd by this easie Town for Twenty Days together Thus when the Headlong Belweather takes an extravagant leap, the Humble Flock that are more easily led than Driven, follow unanimously with as much præcipitancy as the Herd of Swine did when a Legion of Devils Drove them.

As for The Ægyptian He has been often heard to pronounce with that supercilious gravity that is soe becoming of Scaramouche, that there is a Rule for making a pudding but none for making a play Why Truly if we consider His manner of making one, we may easily beleive that there is noe great Art in the Case For as The wretch who turns Highway man Footpad or House Breaker, bids Defiance at once to all the Laws both of God and His Countrey, and supports Himself by plundering others of what They have gott by their Honest Industry, soe this outlaw of Parnassus who treats with this contempt all the Laws of Apollo, lives by plundering His Faithfull subjects of the Riches They have acquird by their Labours in their Lawfull callings

Moliere, among a great many other Beautifull Comedies, wrote the *Tartuffe* and the *Femmes scavantes,* and wrote both with the pleasantry of the Comick Genius and the Art and Regularity of a Great Master Of the first of these the Ægyptian made His *Non Juror,* and of the second His *Refusal,* turnd each of Them both out of Rule and out of Ridicule, and of two of the Masterpieces of one of the greatest writers of Comedy that ever livd in the world, made two very Tragick performances

Corneille writt Two Tragedies the *Cid* and The *Pompey* The first He tells us Himself that He took from the Spanish of Don Guihen De Castro, but has exceedingly improvd it, both as to genius and Art. The Spanish play takes up noe lesse than Three years time, which the French Authour has reduced to Twenty four Hours, and soe has given that probability to the Dramatick Action which was wanting to the Spanish play For a spectatour who can beleive that He sits in one place without eating or Drinking or sleeping for Three years together, may beleive that He sits from the creation to the consummation of all things.

The *Pompey* of Corneille has but little of the Two Tragicall passions Terrour and Compassion, and has still lesse of the Tendernesse of Love But some of the characters are soe great and the sentiments are soe noble, that They make as much amends for the want of the rest, as any thing can make amends for it. Corneille saw soe great a necessity for observing the Rules, that He has falsifyed the Truth of History in this Tragedy to preserve the unity of Time and place. The Action of this play in the Truth of History took up little lesse than a year, and passd in two Different places, Pelusium and Alexandria. Corneille reduced the Time to Twenty four Hours, and the place to an Antichamber of the King of Ægypts Palace in His Citty of Alexandria The Authour knew very well that probability is more necessary to The Drama evn than Truth Improbable incidents will only passe upon Fools A man of sense will not fail to cry out with Horace

Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic Incredulus odi

Now probability and consequently credibility Depends upon the Rules *Ce n'est que par ces Regles,* says Rapin, *qu'on peut etablir la Ressemblance Dans la Fiction, qui est l'ame De la poesie car s'il n'y a point D'unite De lieu, De Temps, et D'action dans les grands poemes, il n'y a point De vraysemblance*

Now this Contemner of the Rules Cibber has of these Two beautifull Tragedies made Two entertainments which have all the ridicule of Comedy in them

But now as Cibber has Declard that there are rules for a pudding, but that there are none for a play, Soe the Third Authour whom I have mentiond above, has done us the favour to acquaint us that there are Rules for Applepye but that there are none for poetry I am informd that He has writt what They call a Comedy. Tho I have neither seen it nor heard its character, nor have one jot the worse opinion of it for its being Rejected by the Ægyptian, yet whenever it comes to appear in the world if ever it Does come to appear, why then, if there is either a good or great Design in it, or a just and Regular conduct, with scenes that gradually each of them advance the Dramatick Action by the conduct of Reason, or characters new and Humorous, finely Drawn and Fairly Distinguishd, or that artfull simplicity, that easie and unaffected pleasantry which the subject seems to present, or lastly that elegant, gracefull, spirited, Terentian Dialogue, with which we are charmd in Etherege, why then I will be oblgd to own, that a man may write with tolerable successe in Comedy, who has lately publishd a long præface of almost seventy pages,

which has been esteemd by all the Reasonable world to be the *ne plus ultra* of extravagance and Impertinence

Tis true Indeed, the Knight and the Player mentiond above, Deliverd their opinion upon this Subject modestly, and Therefore They have nothing to answer for, but only the folly of it And the folly of it lay here, that Two persons should attempt to Demolish an Art, which They have all along profest and by which They have all along subsisted For if Poetry is not an Art, tis a meer whimsey and Fanaticism If tis an Art it must have a System of rules, as every art has, and that System must be known For there can noe more be an Art, that has a System of Rules which are not known, than there can be a Countrey which hath a Body of Laws that are not promulgated But there is for Poetry noe System of known Rules but those which are in Aristotle and His Interpreters, and therefor if They are not the Rightfull Rules poetry is not an Art But the Authour of *Apvlepye* has not only Dwelt upon this subject, thro a tedious præface of almost seventy pages, but has treated it with all that Insolent and that Impudent air which never fails to accompany supream Impertinence, and has treated all the great men, Græcians, Romans, English, and French, that During the space of two Thousand years, have either laid Down the Rules, or interpreted them, with all the contempt of a presumptuous Arrogant Pedant I shall therefore examine with all the Severity of Justice the Tedious Discourse in which this is Done, which is sometimes calld a Dedication, Sometimes a præface, and sometimes a Dissertation, for tho it may be all Three nominally, it is not one of them really

Tis a Dedication of such a nature, that if the name of the Patron were not præfixd to it, noe one could possibly tell to whom the Authour addrest it. Now an Authour who Dedicates a Book to a Great man, if He has neither been admitted to His Familiarity, nor is obligd to return Him thanks for great Favours receivd, ought to Draw the character of that great man after such a manner as may Justifie His choice, in order to which He is to Draw it true, otherwise He libells the great man and Ridicules Himself Tis true He is at full Liberty to give the Best likenesse provided He preserves the Ressemblance But unlesse that is preservd soe strictly as to Distinguish Him in such a manner, that all men who are acquainted with the great man's character may know the person without knowing the name, He does as Absurdly as a Bungling Painter, who should Draw the Picture of John a Nokes, or of John a Stiles, and then setting on The Top of it, the name of a person of the first Quality, should carry it to Him, and attempt to impose it on Him for His Individual Picture, Instead of the Reward which such a Dauber perhaps might expect, would He not really Deserve to be tossd in a Blankett? But The Authour of this Dedication has managd matters soe oddly, that if the name of His Patron were not præfixd to His Epistle, the Reader would imagine that He meant any one rather than Him. For when He pretends to pædagogue a person of the first Quality, for two Hours together, as the usher of a School does a Boy, and to lead Him, as He is pleasd to call it, into notions that contradict the sense of the most knowing men in these matters, and of the most polite and

most learned nations for the space of Two Thousand years could any one believe, if He did not see His name before it that the Authour meant the D of N, whose understanding and education and conversation is soe much superiour to His own?

If we consider this preliminary Discourse as a præface, tis a præface, that may as well be before any Book of Rymes as this, whether it be Tussars *Husbandry*, or Spencers *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, or His *Colin Clouts come Home again*, or Draytons *Owl* or His *Mooncalf*, but it would be ten times lesse absurd before a long poem of the Dramatick or Heroick kind, as before Draytons *Barons wars*, or Setles *Cambyses*, or His *Empresse of Morocco*. For before these last it would be only false and erroneous. But as it is placd now tis not only erroneous and false, but in a Sovereign Degree impertinent. For when He tells His Patron that perhaps He may expect, that in this Discourse He should say something of the Rules, Does He offer the greater affront to Right Reason or to His Patron? For of what Rules is it expected that He should say something? Why, of the Rules that Aristotle has laid Down for the writing Epick and Dramatick poems And where is it expected that He should say something of these? Why, in præface to a Collection of Songs and Madrigals and Bawdy Tales Good God! what a wonderfull expectation would that be? I Dare engage that the nobleman to whom this is Dedicated was soe far from expecting any such thing, that if He did but vouchsafe to cast His eye upon this præface, He never in all His life was more surprizd than at the Reading such a piece of extravagance Not only noe man of sense, not only noe man of litterature, but noe mortall whatever could possibly have any such expectation, unlesse perhaps some Mountainer in a Blue Bonnett and noe Breeches who by His second sight could foresee it The Authour of this Dedication could have nothing to Doe with Rules, unlesse it be those learned and elaborate Rules, which with soe fine an observation and soe Delicate a Tast, He has laid Down for the making of Applepye.

Tis a præface that is full of Inconsistencies and self contradictions He employs the greatest part of this Tedious Discourse in exclaiming against the Poetical art, and the rules which are laid Down for the attaining perfection in it, and yet at the same time threatens His Patron and His Reader, with a Translation of that very poeticall art and those very Rules from Horace, and of Monsieur Daciers long comment upon Them. Now why a Translation of things which He says are soe very uselesse and soe very insignificant? And why a Dull Translation of uselesse things which are soe very well writt in the original? At The same time, p 17, He Treats the Rules of Rhetorick with as little ceremony as He does the Rules of Poetry. And this the præface to a volume a Third part of which consists of a wretched Translation of the Rules of an Ancient Rhetorician, nay, for His greater confusion, He tells us in the præface to that Translation, that the ancient Rhetorician has writt His Treatise of Rules with a great Deal of Judgment He is pleasd to acquaint us, p. 33, that the Rules of Poetry serve only for Pedantry. And yet p. 47 commends the French criticks for taking Criticism out of Pedantry, and yet those very

criticks have gott their chief Reputation by explaining the Rules of Aristotle. He assures us, p 37, that nothing is valuable in Poetry, but what is original, and this before a collection of verses, a Third part of which is composd of very Indifferent translations from Ovid and Tibullus. If it had been true that nothing is valuable in poetry but what is original, yet He ought never to have said it in this Discourse. Because to assert that is to Damn a Third part of His following collection. But the assertion is utterly false Otherwise it would Damn the Eclogues of Virgil, the Comedies of Terence, and the Translations from Euphorion by Cornelius Gallus, which yet Virgil mentions with Honour. Soe that this worthy person, in order to impose a Falshood on His Reader, Bears false witnesse against Himself, and soe becomes a knave to His Reader and both a Fool and a knave to Himself And now is not this a Person of fine Judgment and of Fine consistency? Is not this a fitt person to overthrow the poeticall art, which has been maintaind by the Best men of the most knowing nations for Two Thousand years?

If we call this Discourse a Dissertation, there is nothing in it that makes it worthy of that name A Dissertation *supposes argumentation* And indeed all men of sense argue, whereas pedants only Dogmatize Noe, there is nothing in this Discourse that shews soe much as the shadow of an argument unlesse a passage that we touchd upon above, which is at the Bottom of the 37 p. *Poetry*, says the Authour of this Discourse, *in this Respect Resembles painting, noe performance in it can be valuable that is not an original, and the Reason is that to Imitate is purely mechanicall, whereas to write is a work of nature* Now if to imitate is purely mechanicall, why then all poetry is mechanicall because all poetry is an Imitation of nature Whoever writes poetically imitates, and evry work of nature that is poeticall, is a Downright imitation. Soe that this Authour neither understands what poetry is, nor what Imitation is, nor what a poeticall work of nature, but without understanding what He says throws out His words at Random, and as a man does His Arms who gropes His way in the Dark. Throughout this tedious Discourse He continually asserts or Denies, asserts without Truth, and Denies without Reason And sometimes He asserts things against common Sense, and sometimes against evn outward sense He tells us, p the 22, that Imagination and memory are both of them parts of Reason Now if the Imagination is a part of Reason, why then the stronger the Imagination is, the stronger must be the Reason And at that rate Reason must be stronger in madmen than in men in their Right senses. Imagination is often stronger in sleeping than it is in waking persons when the Reason does not at all exert it self, but seems to be quite extinguishd And in all those persons in whom reason is weak Imagination is the prevailing Faculty, as in Coxcombs, Fops and Beaus Now if memory is a part of Reason, why then the more extensive the memory is, the more comprehensive must be the Reason. And then Reason must be often more comprehensive in Fools than it is in men of sense. Beasts have often a greater Degree of memory than a great many men. But does it follow from thence that They have a greater Degree of Reason? But

these assertions are soe very extravagant and soe very flagrant that tis as shamefull almost to confute them as it is to assert them.

In the small Treatise of the education of Youth which Milton wrote to Mr Hartlib, after He has recommended Logick and Rhetorick He adds, *To which poetry would be made subsequent, or indeed rather præcedent, as being lesse sutle and fine, but more simple, sensuous and passionate, I mean not here,* says He, *the prosody of a verse, which They could not but have hitt on before among the Rudiments of Grammar; but that sublime art which in Aristotles Poeticks, in Horace, and The Italian Commentaries of Castelvetro, Tasso, Mazzoni and others, teaches what The Laws are of a True epick poem, what of a Dramatick, what of a Lyrick, what Decorum is, which is the grand masterpiece to observe This would make them soon perceive what Despicable creatures our common Rymers and Playwrights are, and shew them, what Religious, what glorious and magnificent use might be made of Poetry both in Divine and Human things*

Now in this passage of Milton there are Two or three Remarkable things First He tells you that the Art of Poetry, as tis Deliverd by Aristotle and Horace is a sublime art, whereas Mr W has told us just now that tis nothing but a sett of very obvious thoughts and observations. Now which shall we beleive of the Two, the writer of Madrigals and Bawdy Tales, or the Immortal Authour of the sublimest Poem that ever was writt in the world? Thoughts and observations may appear very obvious to one who has heard them a Hundred Times, tho He could noe more have come at Them, if He had not been told, than He could sail to America if Columbus had not Discoverd it, or than He can take the Height of the star of Another vortex.

The second thing Remarkable in the foregoing passage is this, That our Common Rymers and Playwrights are Despicable creatures, because They neither know nor practise the Rules Deliverd by Aristotle and His Interpreter Horace. For He only knows them who understands them Now would any one who understands the poetick of Aristotle, and particularly the seven chapters from the Twelfth to the 20, pretend to say that They contain only common Thoughts and observations? Can any thing be more plain than that before these Rules came among us, we did not soe much as know the very Foundation of a Tragedy, which is a Fable, unlesse one time in Twenty it was hitt upon by chance? Is there any thing like a Fable in the most celebrated Tragedies of Shakespear and consequently is there any instruction in them? If there any thing like a Fable, any thing like a generall morall in the *Hamlett*, the *Othello*, the *Mackbeth*, the *King Lear*, or the *Julius Cæsar* in all which the good and Bad perish promiscuously? The Authour of the Dissertation says, that *These observations or Rules, were primarily formd upon, and Designd to serve only as Comments to the works of certain great Authours, who composd those works without any such Help, and that the mighty originals from whence They were Drawn were composd without them.* Tis plain from the whole Tenour of Aristotles Treatise that it was Designd for the formation of future poets, and not for a comment on the then present or the past. The præfacer might as

Truly affirm that the Rhetorick of the same philosopher was Designd only as a Comment on Æschines and Demosthenes If the mighty originals, as He is pleasd to call them, from whence, the Treatise, He says, was Drawn, were composd before it, and without it, tis for that very Reason that Those mighty originals are most of them soe very imperfect, because these Rules were not known to their Authours They Hitt indeed upon some of them by the Force of nature, one upon one of them and another upon another of them, but scarse one of those poets knew them all, till Aristotle Drew them into a system For not Three of their Tragedies which remain come near to the perfection which Aristotles præcepts require There are Two Kinds of Fables, says Aristotle, upon which Tragedies are formd, The Simple and the Implex. Of These Two, says He, the Implex is the more perfect, because it is the more moving. Now the implex He tells us is a Fable, that has a Discovery or a change of Fortune or Both, but that, He tells us, is the most perfect which has both, and in which the Discovery is followd by such a change of Fortune as Immediately præcedes the Catastrophe which is causd by it Now not one of all the Græcian poets has come up to the perfection of such a poem, but Sophocles in His *Oedipus* only And perhaps it would be noe Hard matter to shew that we have among our English Tragedies two with Implex Fables, in each of which The Discovery and the change of fortune which is causd by it, and the Catastrophe which immediately follows them, and which is produced by them, are managd to more Advantage than They are in any of the Græcian Tragedies which remain, except the *Oedipus* of Sophocles only And this has happend not by any great Capacity of the Authour of those Two Tragedies, but purely by Bringing into practise the Doctrine He had learnd from Aristotle But this philosopher likewise tells us that evn most of The Græcian poets were Defective in the latter parts of those Tragedies which have simple Fables, that is, in Those parts which prepare and produce the Catastrophe

Any one would swear that the Præfacer who talks as He does above, had never read either Aristotle or these mighty originals For this is certainly the first Time that ever a Beautifull System of præcepts, Drawn from the Bottom of the most profound philosophy, and the Deepest knowledge of the Heart of man, was calld a Comment upon Authours Aristotle indeed did write something like a Comment upon the Græcian Tragedies, but that comment which was calld *Didascales* is unhappily lost. Now whether it is likely that that philosopher wrote two comments upon those Tragedies I leave to any one to Determine

After the præfacer has with the utmost Pedantick Haughtinesse rejected the rules which soe many great persons, men allowd by all the world to be great, have for soe many centuries, either præscribd or followd or approvd of, He comes with the most surprizing modesty in p. 30 and 31 to Dictate His own to us

But, since the known stated Laws of this Art, are, says He, *probably of soe little significancy, How, it will be said and by what means, shall a person born*

with a very good Genius for it, carry that gift of nature up to the utmost improvements and perfection it is capable of? Why, by carrying His enquiry, says He, *closely into men, manners, Human nature; by frequently viewing things as They are in Themselves and under their naturall Images, and by growing intimate with them, by being conversant with the writings of great poets, and by Tracing their Beauties, and striking out of His own Reflections improvements upon them, by studying severely the language He writes in, and by sifting all the Turns, graces, and Refinements it will admitt of, by adding to His own notions whatever He can gather from evry man of good sense and Tast He meets with.*

It seems then that the great men mentiond above, Aristotle, Horace, Boileau, Dacier, Bossu, were incapable of carrying their enquiry closely into men, manners, Human nature, and the præfacer is very Capable of it Yes indeed He shews a great Deal of knowledge of men and manners and Human nature Witnesse His Bawdy Tale of Thirsis and Daphne, where He makes an Innocent virgin, both talk and Act with as much experience, impudence and Lewdnesse, just in the very moment of loosing Her maidenhead, as the most learned Matron in Drury can Doe, who like the wench in Petronius began Her studies soe early, that she Does not Remember that ever she had a maidenhead And therefore this præfacer has shewn that He has not soe much knowledge of Human nature as a ploughman, a porter or a car man, who all know that a girl who has Her maidenhead can never talk nor act like a wench, who has servd a prenticeship at Mother Needhams And is this the man forsooth that in the 26 p pretends to be soe merry with the rules of the Drama? *A play ought to consist of neither more nor lesse than five Acts, there ought to be a Fable or Design in it, the manners are to be preservd, and He that is valiant in the first Act, must not be a Coward in the second, old men are to talk in the strain of old age, young men in that of youth, and masters, servants, suitable to their Respective conditions of life*

Thus He goes notably on I have spoke to the businesse of the Fable above. But as to the writing in character, had ever any mortall soe much need of the following præcept as He?

Interest multum, Divusne loquatur an Heros,
Maturusne senex, an adhuc florente Juventâ
Fervidus, an matrona potens, an sedula nutrix,
Mercatorne vagus, cultorne virentis agelli,
Colchus an Assyrius, Thebis nutritus an Argis

Is He capable of carrying a character thro a whole Dramatick poem, who is not soe much as capable of carrying one thro threescore Bawdy lines? Who in the Beginning of them makes His Daphne Innocent and a virgin, and yet before the end of this notable madrigal, makes Her talk and Act at such a Rate, that Ben Johnsons Dol Common compard to Her is a very Vestal

But to goe on, It seems that neither Aristotle, Horace nor Boileau, were conversant with the writings of great poets, but the præfacer is very con-

versant with them. Neither the Græcian, nor the Roman, nor the French man, were in the least capable of Tracing out their Beauties, and striking out of their own Reflections improvements upon them, but the præfacer is very capable of it. Neither the Græcian, the Roman, nor The French man are capable of letting us into the Deep secrets of poetry, but the præfacer, and the men of good sense and Tast that He meets with, that is, His fellow Clerks in the office of ordinance, are it seems very capable of it

After He has spent a great many pages to tell us, that Aristotle and Horace were Two pedantick coxcombs, and likewise Two Ignorant Apes, for that They were both the one and the other, is a most undeniable consequence from what He says, if it is but true, *viz* that the Rules which They have laid Down for Epick and Dramatick poetry are impertinent and insignificant, after He has employd several pages to acquaint us with this and likewise to assure us that Boileau, Bossu and Dacier are noe Better, nay that They are a great Deal worse, for persisting after soe many centuries, in the same Impertinencies, and Insignificancies, He proceeds to fall upon some of the most famous poets of His own Countrey, and He has particularly made choice of three who have been the greatest champions for the Rules, *viz* Roscommon, The late Duke of Buckingham, and Milton. My Lord Roscommons Translation of Horace's *Art of Poetry*, is He says, *thro the whole Low and prosaick, and has nothing of that spirit of Poetry or Beauty of Language, which alone*, says He, *makes the original pleasing.*

Now Mr Dryden had quite other sentiments of this Translation, and soe had Mr Waller, witnesse His exellent copy of verses præfixed to it, and these lines among the rest

The poet wrote to Noble Piso there,
A noble Piso does Instruct us Here,
Gives us a pattern in His flowing stile
And with Rich præcepts does oblige our Isle,
Britain whose Genius is in verse exprest
Bold and sublime but negligently Drest

But However this matter is, the præfacer ought to have Thought of the following lines of Catullus

Suus quoque attributus est error
Sed non videmus manticæ quod in Tergo est

The character that He gives of My Lord Roscommons Translation is certainly true of His own version of that ode of Horace which is at the end of this Impudent præface Scaliger who said He had rather have been Authour of the original ode, than to have been King of Arragon, if He were now alive, would not own the Translation to be Emperour of the universe

But He endeavours immediately to make my Lord Roscommon some amends, by assuring us, that, the merit of this noble Authour is in other Respects very great, and that He must be acknowledgd forsooth, ay marry must He, to have wrote extreamly well for the Age which He livd in What He means by other

respects I cannot imagine, it being certain that this Translation and the essay upon Translated verse, are the Two chief productions of that noble Lord. But when He tells us that my Lord Roscommon writt extreamly well for the age in which He livd, what Does He mean to Boast of, His Impudence or His Ignorance? Is He to be told that My Lord Roscommon was contemporary with Milton, Denham, Waller, Cowley, Davenant, Dryden, Villers, Sheffeild, Rochester, Dorset, Sedley, Butler, Wycherley, Etherege, Shadwell? Well then! considering the foresaid paltry Authours that He livd with He did extreamly well. But if He had livd with the Divine Bards that follow, with the Learned Poet Savage, with the Discreet and profound poet Nichil, with the Aspiring and Daring poet Welstead, the Ingenious Morris, the Facetious Giles Jacob, and above all the Immortal Cibber in Ægypt, if it had been the felicity of that noble Lord to have been contemporary with these Heavnly creatures what wonders would He not have Done?

To come to the *Essay on Poetry*, which was writt by the late Duke of Buckingham, I have often read it, and have always lookd upon it to be a very just and correct and valuable piece of Criticism My Lord Roscommon begins His *Essay upon Translated verse*, which is one of the finest small poems that is in the English Tongue, and the Master piece of that noble Lord, with the praise of it And as basely as this præfacer has maimd it, and as miserably as He has mangled it, yet in the maimd and Mangled parts which He has exposd there are præcepts that were of the utmost Importance to the then Dramatick Writers and some of them are soe to those who now apear. I must confesse there is one of them that has very little to Doe with the latter, which is that which follows

> *Another Fault which often Does befall*
> *Is when the wit of some great poet shall*
> *Soe overflow, that is, be none at all,*
> *That all His Fools speak sense as if possest*
> *And each by Inspiration breaks His Jest —*
> *That silly thing men call sheer wit avoid,*
> *With which our age soe nauseously is cloyd*

I must confesse it would be very absurd to propose this as a præcept to most of the Authours who write now Nature has taken care of this matter and has prevented reason Most of the Fools that are brought upon the Stage now speak perfectly like themselves, that is, very foolishly. Yet they are soe reasonable, that They think They should be in the wrong if They should shew more wit than their Authours their parents, or their Brethren their fellow Characters. But the unfitnesse of this præcept for the present times was not the Fault of the noble and Judicious Authour. He writt it at a time when noe mortall eye could foresee the Degeneracy and the stupidity to which poor Sodom is sunk. Her sons are not more unnaturall in their lusts, than They are in their Tast. What would He say, if He were present at one of our Pantomimes, and saw a Hundred Blockheads with long Bibs and longer perrukes laughing and clapping at the Delicious Diversion of Jack pudding? What

could He say, but that The Long Perruke was Invented by Midas for the Hiding His Asses ears, those asses ears which were soe Deservedly given Him, for being soe foolishly pleasd in the wrong place and passing soe foolish a Judgment?

Spectaret populum ludis attentus ipsis
Ut sibi præsentem mimo spectacula plura

After the præfacer has thus maimd and mangled the late Duke of Buckingham, He is pleasd to say to the noble person to whom He Dedicates: *I have here culld out the finest things, and the very flower of all I could meet with, in most of our Arts or Essays of Poetry· I will not now Dwell on the Depth of these wise sayings, or the uncommon elegancy with which They are Deliverd; but shall only inform your grace, that these are some of the most material of those sublime Truths, which have been handed Down from Age to Age, with* soe *great pomp, Authority and shew of learning, these are those wonderfull Discoveries, to the observation of which alone, it is affirmd, and to nothing else, the perfection of all good poeticall writings has been owing.*

O The vile prævaricatour! What man who had common sense ever affirmd that the perfection of all good poeticall writings was owing to the Rules alone? With what face can He say this to a person who has had soe generous an education as the Duke of Newcastle?

Horace, if The Præfacer had read Horace would have told Him quite the contrary

Naturâ fieret Laudabile Carmen an arte
Quaesitum est, ego nec studium sine Divite venâ,
Nec rude quid prosit video Ingenium alterius sic
Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amicé

Thus, we see Horace is of opinion, that the Rules can doe nothing without a genius, nor in epick and Dramatick poetry genius without the Rules.

Now to make it appear that this præfacer does not act fairly, He speaks contemptibly of the first line of the following Couplet, and leaves out the second, because it gives the reason and the necessity for the caution which is given by the first

That silly thing men call sheer wit avoid
With which our age soe nauseously is cloyd

For in The Quiet part of King Charles His Reign wit was a Downright Distemper epidemick and contagious, and there was scarse an Empty Headed wrong Headed Fellow in The Town, but who sett up for a witt, as there is scarse one shallow Coxcomb at this time of Day but who sets up for a Toaster or a punster, soe that the greatest part of the conversation at this blessed Juncture turns upon vice or Folly, upon Letchery or Conundrums

But the lines which makes the præfacer soe very much out of Humour with the late Duke of Buckingham are the Two which Immediately follow the præceding

Humour is all, witt should be only brought
To Turn agreably some proper thought

This is certainly a very just observation, an observation including an important præcept. Now if an Authour is conscious to Himself that He has writt what He calls a Comedy which has not one jot of Humour in it, certainly that Authour can be but very ill pleasd with a noble critick who had the Authority of the late Duke of Buckingham for telling us that unlesse Humour is the prevailing quality there can be noe such thing as Comedy

Thus has the præfacer with an air not only of superiority but of contempt, treated two celebrated Authours great by Quality, great by naturall and acquird endowments, the one of them a Duke and Peer of Britain, and who was always heard with the utmost attention, whenever in one of The most August Assemblies upon Earth He spoke upon important affairs, and this the præfacer has done in an Addresse to another Duke and Peer of Britain, who with all His good and His great Qualities can never beleive that the Republick of letters is more oblig'd to Him than to The late Earl of Roscommon and the late Duke of Buckingham If then the præfacer has made encomiums on the former, and treated the Two latter with Insolence, must not the former beleive that The Reason of this is, because He has still the power of bestowing favours, whereas the other Two are past it forever?

Nor has He Treated Milton with more Respect than those Two noble Authours, Milton who is soe justly the Admiration of Great Britain and not only of its great and its small Vulgar, but the Admiration evn of those who themselves have been most admird For He tells us in the 9 page of this wonderful præface, that the stile of Milton *is a Babel or confusion of all languages, a fault,* says He, *which can never be enough regretted in that Immortal poet* Now if Milton had that fault, why then this Immortal poet would be the vilest of all scriblers For noe exellence can make Atonement for the Defect of language in which the poet writes, as the Judicious Boileau has very justly observd in the 1 Canto of His *Art of Poetry*

Sur Tout, Qu'en vos ecrits que la langue Reverée
Dans vos plus grands excez vous soit Toujours sacrée,
En vain vous me frappez, d'un son melodieux,
Si le Terme est Impropre ou le Tour vicieux,
Mon esprit n'admet point un pompeux Barbarisme,
Ni d'un vers ampoulé l orgueilleux solecisme
Sans la langue, en un mot, l'Auteur le plus Divin
Est toujours, quoy qu'il fasse, un mechant ecrivain

When Milton was very young in Italy, He was complimented by the choicest of the Italian wits both at Florence and Rome and Naples upon the excellence of His Poetry both in Greek, Latin and the modern Italian Upon His Return to England, the persons who had then the Administration of affairs thought noe one soe qualifyed to be their Latin Secretary as He, noe one soe qualifyed to answer Salmasius as He What must we think now of the modesty and the Capacity of this præfacer, who was of opinion that this very Milton was not capable of writing His own Tongue, when He was turnd of Fifty? For that He was, when He began to write *Paradise lost* This is certain that either

Milton or He does not understand English I leave it to any one who has the least grain of common sense to Determine which of them.

The next celebrated Authour whom He either abuses or exposes is Sir William Temple. If Sr William Temple never said what He pretends that He has said, why then He has very grossly abusd Him. But if He has said, as the præfacer pretends, that the Rules never contributed in the least to the making a poet, then Sir William knew nothing of the *Æneis* of Virgil, where evry thing is regular, evry thing is artfull, evry thing is admirable As tis more than Twenty years since I read Sr William Temple, I cannot make oath that He never said what is imputed to Him, but till I see the very words in His works I can never believe it, because That gentleman did not use to pronounce soe Dogmatically of things which He could not know, and which He was not qualifyed to Determine, especially when the whole page where we find this, *viz* p 53, is full of most stupid and Impudent Falsities For a little Lower He tells us that Horace, has evn in His *Ars Poetica* thrown out several things, which plainly shew, He thought an art of Poetry was of noe use, evn while He was writing one, and the rest of the Greek and Latin poets He says are full of the same sentiments Whether the Impudence, or the Folly of such an assertion is greater tis very Hard to Determine, or the flagrant affront that is put upon the Duke of Newcastle, in supposing Him to be ignorant and easie enough to be thus grossly imposd upon.

After He has usd Horace, thus scandalously and Barbarously, after He has endeavourd to make Him Dwindle all at once from the great poet and the great Master to a most impertinent, Impudent Trifling coxcomb, for such He would be were what He here says of Him true, after He has Treated with the utmost contempt Three of His own Celebrated Countreymen, to shew at once His great Judgment and the singular Regard that He has to the Honour of His Countrey, in the 57 page of this wonderfull præface, He falls all at once to commending and cajoling the Polite French forsooth, for having *taken criticism out of Pedantry, and made it a Delightfull part of Learning by their elegant way of Treating it* Soe that His own Countrymen it seems, the late Duke of Buckingham and the late Earl of Roscommon were a parcell of Barbarous pedantick wretches, and soe were Aristotle and Horace, the French alone are elegant and polite, and have taken criticism out of Pedantry But How is this consistent with what He said before in the Thirty third page, where He tells us, that *as the Common Rules of Logick serve only for Disputing, soe the common Rules of Poetry serve only for Pedantry*? Now if this be true, and it be likewise as True that the French criticks have treated of nothing but the Common Rules of poetry, *vid*, the Rules which They have taken from Aristotle and Horace, Rules which to them are as unalterable, as the Laws of the Medes and Persians were to those Eastern people, How is it possible that the French can have taken criticism out of Pedantry? But nothing is more certain than that all the French criticks who have Treated of Poetry, for tis of those that the præfacer speaks, have unanimously aproved, explaind, confirmd and extolld the Rules of Horace and Aristotle. Bossu's Treatise of Epick poetry, was writt

only with a Design to shew that the practise of Homer and Virgil is in exact conformity to the Rules of Horace and Aristotle The Reflexions of Rapin upon Poetry are nothing but a comment on The Rules of Aristotle, as He tells us Himself at the latter end of His præface What Dacier has publishd is most apparently a comment upon the same Rules The Art of poetry of the Famous Despreaux is upon the same groundwork, who Remarkably in His third Canto, what the præfacer calls the Common rules, calls the rules of Reason. The passage is Remarkable enough to be inserted Here

Que le lieu De la scene y soit fixe et marqué,
Un Rimeur, sans peril, Dela les pryenees
Sur la scene en un jour renferme Des années,
Lá souvent le Heros D'un spectacle grossier,
Enfant au premier Acte, est Barbon au Dernier
Mais nous que la Raison a ses Regles engage,
Nous voulons qu'avec art l'action se menage,
Qu'en un lieu, en un jour, un seul Fait accomply
Tienne jusq'a la fin le Theatre Rempli

Which in English prose runs thus

Let the scene of each Tragedy be fixd and markd, a Rimer beyond the Pirenees mountains may, without Danger include whole years in one Single Day There often the Hero of a gothick and Barbarous spectacle, is an infant in the first Act and a gray Beard in the last But we whom Reason obliges to observe the Rules which itself has Dictated, we require that the Action should be artfully managd, That in one place, in one Day, one single action accomplishd, should keep the Theatre full to the very end of the play

There are in this passage of Boileau, two Remarkable things which concern the præfacer very much The first is what we partly observd above, that what the præfacer calls the Common Rules, Boileau calls the Rules of Reason Now the præfacer might have considerd, that They would hardly have been the Common Rules for Two thousand years together, if They had not been the Rules of Reason The second thing Remarkable in this passage is, that Boileau treats those writers who doe not observe them with soe much contempt, that He thinks them unworthy to be calld poets, but pronounces them Rimers or playwrights.

And now, sr, I leave you or any one to Judge if one of these Two things must be True, *vid* either that the Rules serve for something better than pedantry, or that the French Criticks who have been Rigid Assertours of Them have not taken criticism out of pedantry.

I Here Desire leave to make one observation and then to return to the 33 p. This præfacer has at evry turn soe much of pedantry in His mouth, that it puts me in mind of a saying in Scripture, *out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh.* Pedantry is certainly the yellow Jaundice of the mind, and the Poor soul that is infected with it, fancies He sees pedant in evry thing that is around Him But the præfacer will give me leave to tell Him, that pedantry does not consist in a mans using the Terms of His own art, that a

painter does not shew Himself a pedant by using *grouppes* and *contrast &c*, nor is a Master of musick ere the more a pedant for having often in His Mouth *ce sol, Fa ut,* and *Ge sol re ut* The pedant is litterally and originally speaking He who has the Instruction of Boys, and the pedant in the Figurative acceptation, which is now come to be the common one, is He whom His conversation with men, or His writings to men, shews the Qualities of an Instructour of Boys, the chief of which Qualities is an Insolent Dogmaticall spirit that eternally Dictates and never reasons Now if this is true, as I believe upon examination it will be found soe, then what an overgrown pedant must He be, whose very making His court is pedantry, and who addressing Himself to a great man, whose parts and education are as much superiour to His own, as His Quality or the High Employments which He has born in the state, pædagogues Him after a more Insolent pittifull manner, than ever any usher of a School did one of His Younkers who was Beginning to read Horace.

I now Desire leave to return to the 33[d] page, where there is a Blunder that puts me in mind of an entrance at the old Bull when Doctour Faustus was acted there, *vid, enter seven Devils solus*, For at the bottom of this page there is a Blunder that is seven Blunders solus He has there these notable words *What has given something like Authority to these wretched poeticall Documents, calld the Rules, is my Lord Roscommons Translation of Horace's Ars Poetica, from which,* says He, *nothing is oftner quoted than these lines*

Why is He Honourd with a poets name,
Who neither knows nor would observe a Rule

Is it not likely, says He, *that any one, that knew a Rule which He Thought a Reasonable one, would not be ruled by it if He could, the sense therefore is not very just in it self.*

Is it then possible? Has my Lord Roscommons Translation of Horace's poetick, a Translation which He is pleasd to call a canting Low prosaick Translation, a Translation, says He which has nothing of that spirit of poetry or Beauty of Language which alone make the original pleasing, Is it I say possible, that this imperfect Translation should give that sanction to the Rules which the Beautifull original could not give? Did my Lord Roscommons Translation give the Rules that Authority which They had Two Thousand years agoe in Greece? or which They had at Rome in The Time of Augustus Cæsar? Did that Translation give them that Authority which They formerly had in modern Italy, and which They have now in France? Did that Translation give them that Authority here which Ben Johnsons famd and perfect originals could not give? Were not the *Fox,* The *Alchimist,* and The *silent woman* formd upon them? Has not The Authour told us, before the first of them, that He was a strict observer of the rules, evn of the unities? Is it not more than Barely probable, that the conformity which They have to Reason and nature could alone give them that Authority which They have had Two Thousand years together with the greatest men in the most knowing nations of the world?

But not only this translation, it seems, with all its pretended imperfections, has givn this Authority, but what He says is the most erroneous passage of the whole translation has contributed most to the Doing this terrible mischief. For, says the præfacer I know noe part of the Translation that is oftner quoted than these lines.

Why is He Honourd with a poets name
Who neither knows nor would observe a Rule?

The sense here, says the præfacer, *is not very just in it self, much lesse is it the sense of Horace.* Whether tis the sense of Horace or not is a point of long Discussion to be Determind, and is reservd for an annotation at the end of this letter Let us only see at present why the sense is not just in it self, notwithstanding the reason that the præfacer gives to the contrary *It is not likely,* says He, *that any one, that knew a Rule, which He thought a Reasonable one, would not be ruled by it, if He could* page 33 Which is contrary to the experience of all ages All reasonable men believe that the Rules which Religion and philosophy præscribe for the conduct of Human life are reasonable, and They believe likewise, that it would be in their power to follow them, if They would be at the Trouble of subduing their passions But because They will not take soe much pains, therefore not one in fifty observe them. The case of the Rules of poetry and of those of life is in this respect exactly the same Some, like the præfacer, condemn them, for want of capacity to understand them, and others thro aprehension of the labour which They must undergoe to observe them

From Treating with contempt several eminent Authours who have with their labours oblig'd the commonwealth of learning He proceeds in the 38th page to the vilifying learning it self At The Bottom of which He has these words

What has been here said is not only true as it Regards Poets, but is likewise aplicable to almost all the great philosophers that have rose in former or late ages These for the most part have been men that have struck out their Discoveries, by the mere strength of a great genius, without treading in the steps of any who went before them, and without being much oblig'd to the assistance of learning, such among others were Des Cartes, Hobbes, and Locke

Now I would fain ask the Authour of the præface, How it is possible He should know this, since these were all three men of very great Learning. I Desire leave to tell Him now How He shall be convinced of the contrary, If there have been men, who have struck out their Discoveries by the mere strength of a great genius, I Desire Him to name one great philosopher or great poet who was an illiterate man, one whose works were transmitted with glory to posterity without the assistance of Learning. But noe such philosopher or poet is to be found But now let us change the word *Learning* for *knowledge,* for since there are noe Innate Ideas, Learning and knowledge are Terms synonimous, for all knowledge must be learning. And now let us see How The Authours latter period will run

These, that is, great philosophers and great poets *have for the most part been men, who have struck out their Discoveries by the mere strength of a great genius, without treading in the steps of any who went before them, and without being much obligd to the assistance of knowledge.* Now does knowledge illuminate the mind or does it not? Does the sun give light to the eyes? or can the mind have as many and as large views in profound ignorance, as in the refulgency of science, or the eye surrounded with utter Darknesse as many large and as pleasing prospects as in the Blaze of Day?

As He vilifies learning in generall, soe He treats several eminent Branches of it, with as much contempt as He treated some celebrated Authours.* He has Treated Logick, that is, reason or the Art of reasoning, as a thing that is only fitt to be forgott And indeed He seems utterly to have forgott it, throughout His whole præface He has endeavourd to Ridicule Rhetorick, and yet has publishd a Treatise of it

He treats Mathematicks, physicks and metaphysicks with the same contempt, and endeavours to make them little in order to make poetry great not considering that poetry is Dependent upon almost evry one of them, and They are evry one of them Independent of that. If poetry instructs tis by them alone it instructs, and if it pleases tis by them partly that it pleases. If poetry instructs to virtue tis by the aid of moral philosophy, and if it gives any other Instruction tis by the assistance of some other Branch of Learning If Lucretius instructs us in the philosophy of nature, tis by what He has learnt from the Doctrine of Epicurus If Manilius pretends to instruct us in the System of the Heavens, He teaches us noe more than what He learnt Himself from the Astronomers who went before Him Tis true indeed Poetry pleases partly by it self, by its spirit, its painting and its art But then it pleases too partly by its skilfull handling the subject of which it treats, and that subject is generally taken from some other Branch of Learning. Virgil could never have writt His *Georgicks* soe as to instruct and please, if He had not been both a geographer and a naturall philosopher Nor could He have writt His *Æneis* without both History and geography, nor could He ever have produced the fourth Book without the Help of natural philosophy, without a profound insight into the nature of Love, and of all those raging passions that accompany it, whenever it is unfortunate Nor could He with all His genius and with all His Art, have givn us the noble sixth Book, if He had not been versd in the metaphysicks of Pythagoras The poem that has done most Honour to England is Three Fourths of it metaphysicks, which part of learning if we should wholly explode, as much as the Authour of the præface contemns it, I am afraid we must banish machines from Poetry, and soe Turn Heroick Poetry quite out of the world.

Thus the great poet and particularly the epick, is obligd to be geographer, Historian, natural and moral philosopher, metaphysitian, with a long *et cætera.* But none of these are obligd to be poets Soe that as I Hinted above poetry is Dependent on all these, and these all Independent of that.

*P 34.

Yet notwithstanding what has been said above I believe I may say without the aprehension of the least Imputation of vanity, that I have ten times more esteem for a great poet, than the Authour of such a præface can possibly have. For certainly we may shew poetry very great without shewing the other Branches of learning little. And this is one thing that makes an admirable poet worthy the esteem and admiration of mankind, that almost all the Branches of learning meet in Him There is another thing that contributes still more to His greatnesse, and that is the exellence of His nature For qualities unite to constitute Him which very rarely meet in the same subject, and which are almost incompatible, as a Bright, a warm, a strong Imagination, and at the same time, a solid, a profound, a penetrating, a comanding Judgment, and then a memory, vast, comprehensive, Tenacious and capacious enough to be the spirituall Magazin of evry science and of evry art.

As Mathematicks Doe not afford those apparent suplies to poets and poetry, which the Arts that I have mentiond above doe, I resolvd to speak of that by itself The Authour of the præface treats that certain, that Divine science, which is alone worthy of the name of science, with as much contempt as He has done natural philosophy or metaphysicks *Of what advantage,* says He, *has that Boasted part of science been to mankind, except what has relation to it in mechanicks?* Now certainly never had any Authour who writt in Rhyme, lesse reason to ask that Question than He For does He not eat and Drink by mathematicks? And must He not have lost all sense of shame as well as all sense of gratitude, to exalt poetry by which He starves, above Mathematicks by which He grows Fatt? Is He not a little Clerk of the office of ordinance, an office that is Founded upon Mathematicks? without which there could be neither office nor ordinance For without mathematicks, noe cannon could be either made or levelld or in a military manner Dischargd, noe Fortification could be either raisd or attack'd or Defended Without mathematicks there could be noe navigation, noe comerce could be carried on or improvd And tis for this reason, that the strength, the security, the riches and the glory of Great Britain are exceedingly owing to Mathematicks As Arithmatick is certainly a part of Mathematicks, there could be neither office of ordinance nor any other office without it And as Musick is as certainly another part of it, and is at the same time a part of poetry or at least one of the greatest ornaments of it, therefore it ill becomes any one who has any pretention to poetry to vilifie a science which soe much adorns it Virgil who in the musick of His poetry was as far superiour to all other poets, as He was in the elevation of His genius or in His Admirable art, was a great Mathematician That Divine poet was blessd with an ear soe very fine and soe very Delicate, that tis credibly reported of a gentleman in the Court of Lewis the Fourteenth, Monsieur Couvert by name, that, tho He understood not one word of Latin, He could Distinguish a verse of Virgil from one of any other Roman poet only by the charming musick of it.

After He has Treated in a contemptuous manner Logick, Mathematicks, Physicks and metaphysicks, He comes in the 56 page of this wonderfull præface

to be soe favourable to History as to allow it to be more generally usefull than poetry. Thus whether this Authour exalts or Debases the Liberal Arts, He is equally in the wrong, and in the comparison which He has made between History and Poetry in this and the following page, He has plainly shewn that He is equally ignorant of the nature of each of them, and of the real Difference that is between the one and the other Aristotle in the ninth chapter of His poetick has told us that poetry, that is, Tragedy or epick poetry, for tis of those He is Treating, that poetry is more grave and more philosophick than History, that is, more moral and more instructive, and He has given a reason for His opinion which is undeniable and His French Commentatour in His Remarks upon that passage has givn more reasons than one The philosophers reason is, because poetry says things that are general, and History particular things Upon which says Dacier, There is nothing more solid and more reall, than the præference which Aristotle gives here to poetry over History, but we must not Imagine that His only Design is Here to shew us the exellence of this art His Intention is at the same time to Discover to us the nature of it. Poetry, says He, is more grave and more philosophick than History Indeed History is capable of instructing noe further, than it takes occasion from the actions which it relates, and as those actions are particular ones, it rarely happens that They are proportion'd to those who read them, there is scarce one among a thousand, with whose circumstances They happen to square, and evn the persons to whom They are suited, scarse find two occasions During their whole life time, upon which They can Reap any advantage from them The case with Poetry is very Different For as the things which it treats of are always general, (the action of Tragedy being always general and allegoricall and likewise the persons), it is by soe much more Instructive than History, as the things which it treats of have the Advantage of particular things, the latter being only suited to one, and the former to all the world Besides tis not actions which properly instruct but the Causes of Them The Historian rarely unfolds the causes of the Actions which He relates, They being almost always Hidden, and if He pretends to explain them, He rather gives us His own conjectures than Truths and certainties. But the poet, being intirely the master of His matter, advances nothing of which He does not render an exact reason, there is not soe much as one little Incident, whose causes and effects He does not unfold, In the third place, History makes use of narration only, whereas poetry has action, because tis an Imitation, evry thing in Tragedy is animated Now that which we only hear or read always moves us lesse than that which we see with our eyes. In the fourth place, History is generally cold and solitary whereas poetry associates Divinity and natural philosophy, and borrows the Help of the passions

Thus far Dacier. As for The Authour of the præface, it was as impertinent in Him to talk of poeticall Instruction before a collection of Madrigals and Bawdy Tales, as to speak of the Rules of Epick and Dramatick poetry, for what Instruction can the following collection give, unlesse tis to young girls to lie with men before They are married to them, and to cuckold them afterwards?

THE STAGE DEFENDED, FROM SCRIPTURE, REASON, EXPERIENCE, AND THE COMMON SENSE OF MANKIND FOR TWO THOUSAND YEARS. OCCASION'D BY MR. LAW'S LATE PAMPHLET AGAINST STAGE-ENTERTAINMENTS

1726

EPISTLE DEDICATORY

SIR,

THE following little Treatise is, to all Appearance, so very a Trifle, that I should not have the Assurance to address it to a Gentleman of your distinguish'd Rank, if my chief Design were not to engage you, in order to promote the Honour of your Country, and the Good of the learned World, to take upon you the Protection of the *British* Dramatical Muses, so far at least as to pronounce in their Favour. 'Tis the Sense of all who have the Honour to be acquainted with you, that you have a perfect Knowledge of the Merits of the Cause, and Ability and Authority to determine it in the last Appeal The *British* Dramatick Muses make this Request to you, *Sir,* who have been barbarously used both by their Friends and their Enemies, for by their Friends they have been more than once poorly deserted, and abandon'd to the Slanders and the unjust Accusations of their most inveterate Enemies

I appeal to you, *Sir,* if they are not idle Dreamers who believe, that a great, a powerful, and an opulent People can be without publick Diversions, or if it is fitting they should be without them I appeal to you, *Sir,* if a great and a brave People, by being often assembled and pleased together, will not be the more pleased with one another, and the more among themselves united.

But as all Pleasures and Diversions, both publick and private, are barbarous or gentle, rational or sensual, manly or effeminate, noble or base and degenerate, 'tis agreed on by all the sensible World, that the publick Diversions of a free Nation, ought neither to be barbarous, nor sensual, nor base, nor effeminate, because publick Diversions of the first Kind reflect Dishonour upon a brave Nation, and Diversions of the other three Kinds have a natural Tendency to the introducing a general and total Corruption of Manners, which is inconsistent with Liberty.

The publick Diversions which are at present establish'd in *Great Britain,* are either the Combats of our modern Gladiators, or the *Italian* Opera's, or the Masquerades, or Tragedies and Comedies, which are the only genuine legitimate Entertainments of the Stage

As for the first of these, the Combats of our modern Gladiators, I appeal to you, *Sir,* who by travelling have had the Advantage of knowing the Sentiments and Manners of other Nations, if they are not regarded by all *Europe,* except-

ing our selves, with Horror, and esteem'd to be neither agreeable to the Spirit of Christianity, nor to the Manners of a civilized People.

As to the *Italian* Opera's, they are allow'd by all the impartial World to be sensual and effeminate, compared to the genuine Drama, and a greater real Promoter of wanton and sensual Thoughts than ever the Drama was pretended to be, because too great a Part of them consisting of Softness of Sound, and of Wantonness of Thought, they have nothing of that good Sense and Reason, and that artful Contrivance which are essential to the Drama No, you know very well, *Sir*, that good Sense and Reason, and every strict Attention to an artful Design, are so many natural and moral Restraints upon wanton and sensual Thoughts.

I now, *Sir*, desire Leave to say something concerning Masquerades, which Mr. *Law* affirms to be more innocent than the Drama, which is a frontless Assertion, and the very Reverse of Reason I remember one of our Comick Poets observes, that young Ladies run a greater Risk of their Reputations by being familiar with Fools, than with Men of Sense, because Fools have but one Way of passing their Time with them So Masquerades having neither the Sense of the Drama, nor the Sound of the Opera, Persons of both Sexes may go to them either with no Design, or with a very vile one To which I might add the late Remark of a wise and pious Prelate, which is, *That Masquerades deprive Virtue and Religion of their last Refuge, Shame, which*, says he, *keeps Multitudes of Sinners within the Bounds of Decency, after they have broke thro' all the Ties of Principle and Conscience But this Invention sets them free from that also, being neither better nor worse, than an Opportunity to say and do there, what Virtue, Decency, and Good Manners, will not permit to be said or done in any other Place*

This wise and pious Prelate, in this very Passage, censures the Persons of either Sex, who frequent lewd and prophane Plays But he does not assert here, that there are no Plays but what are lewd and prophane And he affirms, that Masquerades are of more dangerous Consequence to Virtue and Good Manners, than ev'n Plays which are prophane

Thus *Sir*, I have endeavour'd to shew, that of three of the present reigning Diversions, one is cruel and barbarous, and not at all becoming either of a Christian or a civilized Nation, the Second effeminate, wanton, and sensual, and the Third, either very unmeaning, or else neither moral nor christian.

No Art of Man in the most happy Age of the most happy Nation, has been able to find out a publick Diversion that has been reasonable, noble, manly, and virtuous, but the Drama, when it is writ as it ought be And yet these wild Enthusiasts, who have shot their Bolts against the Stage, have said not a Word against the other three, which cannot be defended by the least Pretence that any of them can have to Goodness or moral Instruction

Sir, The following Treatise is not only a Defence of Dramatick Poetry, but of the Establish'd Government, in the Administration of which the Wisdom

of the King has given you an illustrious Share, and against which Mr. *Law*'s Pamphlet is obliquely designed, as were the Writings which his two Predecessors, *Collier* and *Bedford*, publish'd against the Stage. *Collier*, by his Action, and *Bedford*, by his other Writings, became profess'd and declar'd Enemies to the Government One of them absolved an impenitent Traytor, who died with Treason in his Mouth, and the other, upon publishing his Book upon Hereditary Right, was imprison'd for High Treason.

But, *Sir*, the following Treatise was likewise design'd in Defence of all the People of Quality of both Sexes in *England*, and of all the People in any Country throughout the Christian World, where they frequent any Theatres, all which numerous People he has very charitably given to the Devil to have and to hold for ever

Nor Engine nor Device Polemick,
Disease nor Doctor Epedemic,
E'er sent so vast a Colony
To the infernal World as he

But all that I have been able to do in the Defence of so good a Cause, is to shew, that I heartily wish well to it It belongs to you, *Sir*, and to those few who resemble you, who have Discernment and Taste, that qualify you to determine surely, and Honour and Justice enough to engage you to pronounce and judge impartially, to take the *British* Drama into your Protection and Patronage, in order to retrieve its former Lustre, and augment its Glory

By taking the *British* Theatre into your Protection and Patronage, you would protect and patronize every other Branch of the *British* Poetry. For as the *British* Theatre, as long as it was justly and judiciously managed among us, was the only publick Rewarder of Dramatick Poetry, so it has been the only chief Support and Encouragement of every other Species of that noble Art It has cherish'd and inflamed the Spirit of Poetry, and raised a noble Emulation among us, more than all our Kings and all our Ministers together From the very building of *London*, to the erecting the first Theatre in it, which Time contains about thirty Centuries, we had but two *British* Poets who deserve to be read But from the Establishment of our Theatres to the present Time, which contains scarce a Century and a half, we may boldly affirm, that more than ten times that Number of Poets have appear'd and flourish'd in *England*

And here, *Sir*, I beg Leave to observe the Advantage of Genius that *Great Britain* has over *France* with Relation to the Drama For our Neighbours the *French*, notwithstanding the vast Encouragement that was given by Cardinal *Richlieu*, and by *Lewis* the XIVth, at the Instigation of Monsieur *Colbert* his First Minister, never could with Justice boast of more than one Comick and two Tragick Poets, whereas more than ten of our Countrymen, have, without any publick Encouragement but what they derived from the Stage itself (and that, how inconsiderable!) signalized themselves in Comedy alone, within the Compass of those fifty Years that followed the Restoration.

I know, indeed, very well, *Sir*, that other Reasons may be assigned, besides the Want of a Theatre, why no more Poets flourished before Queen *Elizabeth*'s Time. But I am at the same Time convinced, that the Reason why we have had so many since, has been the Establishment of our Theatres. For the Dramatick Poets, the Case is plain, few would have given themselves the Trouble to write Dramatick Poems, if there had not been Theatres in which they might be acted. And some, who were by Nature qualified to succeed better in other Kinds of Poetry than the Dramatick, had, by Reason of the Lowness of their Fortunes, been uncapable of exerting their Genius's in those other Kinds, if they had not been first encouraged, and raised, and supported by the Stage. And 'tis very natural to conceive, that several others, who at the same time that they had large Revenues, were qualified both by Nature and Art to excel in the other Kinds, were rouzed and excited to try their Fortunes in them, by the animating Applauses which they saw that our Dramatick Poets received from their ravish'd Audiences The Sentiment of *Virgil* might, on such Occasions, very naturally present itself to their Minds.

> —— *Tentanda via est quâ me quoque possim*
> *Tollere humo, victorque virûm volitare per ora*

And now, *Sir*, since the chief Encouragement not only of Plays, but of every other Kind of the *British* Poetry, which is none of the meanest Branches of the *British* Learning, depends upon the Stage, and consequently the Honour of *Great Britain* in some measure depends upon it, I humbly conceive, that the flourishing Condition of our Theatre is a Matter of Importance and publick Concern, and not unworthy the Consideration of the greatest Men in the State

Since Dramatick Poetry was first introduced into *England*, it never was sunk so deplorably low as it is at present, and every other Branch of Poetry is declined proportionably, I mean as far as it has been managed by most of those who have listed themselves under *Apollo*'s Standard, and who engage for their Pay That little that has appeared that has been writ with more Spirit and more Grace than ordinary, has come, for the most Part, from Volunteers.

Sir, with Submission to your better Judgment, there is but one Way of reviving the expiring Drama, of restoring its original Innocence, and of augmenting its ancient Lustre, and that is by establishing two annual Prizes of two hundred Pound each, the one for Comedy, the other for Tragedy, to be given, besides the ordinary Profits of the Theatre, to him who performs best in each of them, which is to be decided by Judges appointed on purpose, and sworn to determine impartially, with this Proviso, that no Play shall be received, that shall be judged to be ever so little offensive to good Manners, and that every Play shall be rejected, whose Author can be proved to have taken the least Step towards the forming a Cabal, which Design I humbly conceive is in your Power to reduce to Practice, if you would vouchsafe to recommend it to the Government, or to a Number of Gentlemen who may be every way qualify'd to engage in so good a Cause

Several Causes may be assigned of the Decay of Dramatick Poetry, as the *Italian Opera*, which never was established in any Country, but it immediately debased the Poetry of that Nation The Strangers who have been introduced among us, by several great Events, as the *Revolution*, the *Union*, the *Hanover Succession*, who not understanding our Language, have been very instrumental in introducing Sound and Show, the new Gentry that has started up among us, some by the Fortune of War, and some by the Fortune of *Exchange-Alley*, who are fond of their old Entertainments of *Jack-Pudding*, but yet none of these has done half the Harm that has been done by Cabal For 'tis in Poetry as 'tis in Politicks, Things go quite wrong

When Merit pines, while Clamour is preferr'd,
And long Attachment waits among the Herd,
When no Distinction where Distinction's due,
Marks from the Many the superior Few

A Cabal to espouse a Coxcomb, may get him Money, but at the same Time it will procure him Infamy Writers who have Genius will leave the Stage with the utmost Indignation, and every Man who understands it will have it in Contempt

The Men who contradict the publick Voice,
And strive to dignify a worthless Choice,
Attempt a Task that on that Choice reflects,
And lend us Light to point out new Defects
One worthless Man, that gains what he pretends,
Disgusts a Thousand unpretending Friends

And therefore every Writer who pretends to succeed by Cabals, ought to be banished from every Theatre But to shew the Judgment or the Integrity of our Managers of the Stage, they have for several Years past rejected every Play that has not had a Cabal to support it

And now, *Sir*, tho' I am sensible that I have already detain'd you a great deal too long, for which I humbly and heartily beg your Pardon, yet, before I take Leave of you, I cannot help acquainting you, that this is the fourth Time that I have appear'd in Defence of the Stage, and in this fourth Defence I have no manner of Interest, but that it has been purely extorted from me by the Force of Truth, and by the Love of my Country In the former Three, I might appear to be maintaining my own Interests But I have, since the publishing them, been used with such extreme Ingratitude by the present Managers of the Playhouse, that I have this Ten Years been obliged, by the most barbarous Treatment, to take Leave of the Playhouse for ever.

I am, SIR,
Your most Obedient, and
most Humble Servant,
JOHN DENNIS.

The STAGE defended, &c.

To ———— *Esq,*

SIR,

WHEN you desire to know my Sentiments concerning Mr. *Law*'s late Pamphlet against the Stage, you make a Request, which 'tis not so easy for me to satisfy as you may perhaps imagine: For I really never was so much at a Loss to know what an Author meant. Sometimes I am inclined to think him in good earnest, and sometimes I believe, that there are Grounds to suspect, that he design'd this whole Pamphlet for nothing but a spiritual Banter, for there seems to me to be a Necessity of believing, either that a Clergyman, as Mr. *Law* is, should be profoundly ignorant of the sacred Writings; a Man of Letters, of the Nature of Dramatick Poems, and one who had liv'd long enough in the World to have some Experience, of the present State of Religion, and Virtue, and Vice, among us, or a Necessity of concluding, that while Mr *Law* is declaiming with so much furious Zeal against the Stage and Players, he is all that while acting a Part, and shewing himself a great Comedian.

When Mr. *Law* is putting Idolatry and frequenting the Playhouse upon an equal Foot, he seems to be playing a Part; for he cannot but know, that St *Paul* was of another Mind, who when he was at *Athens*, the very Source of Dramatick Poetry, said a great deal publickly against their Idolatry, but not one Word against their Stage When he was afterwards at *Corinth*, as little did he say against theirs For St *Paul*, who was educated in all the Learning of the *Grecians*, who had read all their Poets, who in the vith Chapter of the *Acts*, Ver. 28, quotes *Aratus*, and *Epimenides*, in the first Chapter of his Epistle to *Titus*, Ver. 10, could not but have read all their noble Dramatick Poems, and yet has been so far from speaking one Word against them, that he has made use of them for the Instruction and Conversion of Mankind And when afterwards he wrote his First Epistle to the *Corinthians*, he did not scruple, for their Instruction, to make use of an *Athenian* Play, for all the World knows, that *Evil Communications corrupt Good Manners*, 1 *Cor* xv. 33. is taken from an *Athenian* Dramatick Poet. Does Mr *Law* believe that that Epistle, and consequently that Verse, was dictated by the Holy Ghost or not? Can Mr. *Law* believe, that St *Paul* was guided by the Spirit of God to make Choice of that Verse for the Instruction and Conversion of the *Corinthians*? And can he believe at the same Time, that the Theatre, as he more than once declares it, is the Temple of the Devil? If any one should affirm, That St. *Paul* was guided by the Spirit of God, to take a Verse from the Temple of the Devil, would it not be such horrid Blasphemy as would make even the Blood of the most profligate of all Players to curdle within the Miscreant's Veins? But if St. *Paul* had in the least believed, that the *Athenian* Stage was the Sink of Sin and Corruption, as Mr *Law* says every Stage is, he would not have fail'd to reproach them with it, in order to check the spreading Evil. He who dares talk openly and boldly against the National Religion of a People, may

very well venture to condemn their Vices and evil Customs. But St. *Paul* not only says nothing at all against Dramatick Poetry, but makes use of it for the Conversion and Reformation of Mankind. Now I would fain know, if quoting a Dramatick Poet, without giving the least Caution against the Stage, be not a downright Approbation of Dramatick Poetry, and establishing the Stage by no lesser an Authority than that of the Spirit of God himself

If we look into the Old Testament, we shall find, that the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, they and their Reigns, were declared righteous or wicked, according as those Kings were Idolaters or not Idolaters, and that no Sin whatever was reckon'd so abominable as Idolatry *Solomon*, who had seven hundred Wives, had no less than three hundred Concubines, and yet when God threatened to rend Ten Tribes of his Subjects from him, it was only for his Idolatry, *because he had forsaken God, and had worshipped Ashtoreth the Goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the God of the Moabites, and Milcom the God of the Children of Ammon*, 1 Kings xi *For it came to pass, that when Solomon was old, his Wives turned away his Heart after other Gods, and his Heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the Heart of David his Father*, ibid Ver 4 Now *David* committed Adultery with *Bathsheba*, and murdered her Husband *Uriah*, yet these Sins that were of so flagrant a Nature that they brought a Plague upon *Israel*, were venial, compared to Idolatry They brought, indeed a Plague upon the People, but they deposed the King from no Part of his Subjects, as the Idolatry of *Solomon* did his Son *Rehoboam* In short, Idolatry is by so much more criminal than the Transgression of any other divine Commandment, as the Attempt to depose a King and to set up a Pretender, is a Crime of a higher Nature than the Breach of any other human Law

As it is hard to imagine, that Mr. *Law* should be ignorant of what has been said above, it gave me just Cause to suspect his Sincerity But when I came to the Passage which he quotes from Archbishop *Tillotson*, in the 38th Page of his Pamphlet, I found that he prevaricated so vilely in it, that the Hypocrisy became immediately manifest For he has omitted the former Part of the Passage, because it makes directly against him It is as follows

To speak against them (*viz* Plays) *in general, may be thought too severe, and that which the present Age cannot so well brook, and would not perhaps be so just and reasonable, because it is very possible they might be so framed, and governed by such Rules, as not only to be innocent and diverting, but instructive and useful, to put some Vices and Follies out of Countenance, which cannot perhaps be so decently reproved, nor so effectually exposed and corrected any other Way* All this, as I have said above, he has purposely omitted, because it makes point blank against him

For after he has told us, in this blessed Pamphlet, *That the Playhouse is the Temple of the Devil, a more delightful Habitation for him than ever any Temple that he had in the Heathen World, where Impurity and Filthiness, immodest Songs, prophane Rants, Lust, and Passions, entertain the Audience, a Place, the peculiar Pleasure of the Devil, where all they who go, yield to the*

Devil, go over to his Party, and become Members of his Congregation, where all the Laughter is not only vain and foolish, but that it is a Laughter among Devils, that all who are there, are upon prophane Ground, and hearing Musick in the very Porch of Hell After he has bestow'd all this fine Language upon it, and all these fragrant Flowers of Rhetorick, he assures us, that the Playhouse is all that he has said, not thro' any accidental Abuse, as any innocent or good Thing may be abused, but by its genuine Hellish Nature, which is directly contrary to what the forementioned illustrious Prelate has said. Mr *Law* says, that every Entertainment of the Stage is in its Nature unlawful, abominable, and infernal The Archbishop assures us, that the Entertainments of the Stage may be so managed, as not only to be innocent, but useful and instructive, nay, that they may even become necessary for the exposing some certain Follies, and the correcting some certain Vices

As Mr *Law* has shewn his Want of Sincerity in the foresaid Quotation, he gives us great Reasons to suspect it in his Invectives against the Drama For 'tis hard to conceive, that a Man of Letters should be so ignorant of the Nature of a legitimate Dramatick Poem, as those Invectives suppose him, for 'tis such only that we pretend to defend, and abhor the Productions of ignorant and impure Poetasters as much as he does 'Tis hard to conceive, that a Man who has read the Classicks, should not know that a legitimate Dramatick Poem, either of the Comick or Tragick Kind, is a Fable, and as much a Fable as any one of *Æsop*'s, agreeing in Genus, and differing only in Species *Terence* has told him in almost every one of his Prologues, that every Comedy is a Fable, and he begins his very first to *Andrea* with it

> *Poeta cum primum animum ad scribendum appulit,*
> *Id sibi negotii credidit solum dari,*
> *Populo ut placerent quas fecisset Fabulas*

And *Horace* tells us the same Thing concerning Tragedy, more than once or twice

> *Neve minor quanto, non sit productior actu*
> *Fabula* De Arte Poet

And we find in the same Treatise,

> *Interdum speciosa locis, moralaque recte*
> *Fabula*

And likewise again,

> *Nec Quodcunque volet poscat sibi Fabula credi*

Mr. *Law* cannot but know, that the Instruction by Fables and Parables, which mean the same Thing, was mightily in Use among the wise Ancients, and especially among the sacred Writers, that we have an Example of it, of about three thousand Years standing, in the Parable of *Jothan* And that *Jesus Christ*, who best knew the Nature of Men, made use of Fables or Parables as most proper at the same Time, both to please, and instruct, and per-

swade. For a Fable is a Discourse most aptly contrived to form the Manners of Men by Instructions disguised under the Allegory of an Action. And therefore he could not chuse but know, that every legitimate Dramatick Poem, either of the Comick or Tragick Kind, is not a mere Diversion, as he pretends, but a philosophical and moral Lecture, in which the Poet is Teacher, and the Spectators are his Disciples, as *Horace* insinuates in the three following Verses

Nec minimum meruere Decus vestigia Græca
Ausi deserere & celebrare Domestica Facta
Vel qui Prætextas, vel qui docuere togatas

And knowing all this, he could not but know that 'tis very hard, if not very extravagant, to put the frequenting moral Lectures upon the same Foot with Idolatry.

If Mr *Law* has read either *Aristotle* or any of his Interpreters, as 'tis hard to imagine that he should think himself qualified to write against the Stage if he had read none of them, he cannot but know, that as the Action of a Dramatick Fable is universal and allegorical, the Characters are so likewise. For as when *Æsop* introduces a Horse, or a Dog, or a Wolf, or a Lion, he does not pretend to shew us any singular Animal, but only to shew the Nature of that Creature, as far as the Occasion where it appears admits of, so when a Dramatick Poet sets before us his Characters, he does not pretend to entertain us with particular Persons, tho' he may give them particular Names, but proposes to lay before us general and allegorical Fantoms, and to make them talk and act as Persons compounded of such and such Qualities, would talk and act upon like Occasions, in order to give proper Instructions

Now as a Dramatick Fable is a Discourse invented to form the Manners by Instructions disguised under the Allegory of an Action, it follows, that in a Dramatick Fable for the proving the Moral, 'tis as necessary to introduce vicious as virtuous Characters, and to make them speak and act, as all Persons compounded of their Qualities would be obliged by Nature to speak and act upon the like Occasions, as *Æsop*, for the Sake of his Morals, does not only introduce innocent and peaceable Creatures, as Horses, and Sheep, and Cows, and Dogs, but likewise noxious and violent ones, as Lions and Bears, and Wolves, and Foxes But the Poet at the same time ought to take care that the Vices should be shewn after such a Manner, as to render them odious or ridiculous, and not agreeable or desirable, and that the Reader should reap no Pleasure from the Agreeableness of the Vices, but only from a just Imitation of Nature.

I make no Doubt, Sir, but that I have said enough to satisfie you or any of your Friends to whom you may happen to shew this Letter, that as every true Dramatick Poem is a Fable as much as any one of *Æsop*'s, it has in its Nature a direct Tendency to teach moral Virtue, and can therefore never be contrary to a Christian Temper and Spirit, which, where-ever it is, incites us to good Works, that is, to the Performance of moral Duties But there is every Jot as

much Difference between a true Dramatick Poem, and the Production of an ignorant obscene Poetaster, as there is between two religious Books, the *Bible* and the *Alcoran* Now will Mr. *Law* affirm, that because the *Alcoran* is full of egregious Falshoods, and of monstrous Fanatick Extravagancies, therefore we ought not to read the *Bible*? It belongs to none but to an Atheist, or some other unbelieving Sceptick, to make such a Conclusion

Sir, As 'tis hard to conceive that Mr. *Law* should be ignorant of what we have said above, both concerning the sacred Writings, and the Nature of a Dramatick Poem, and equally hard, if he is not ignorant, to believe him a Writer of Sincerity and Integrity, so it seems to be as hard to conceive, that a Man of his Years, and consequently of his Experience, should be utterly a Stranger to the present State of Religion, and Virtue and Vice, among us, or that, if he is not a Stranger to it, he should be capable of writing so malicious or so erroneous a Treatise as that which he has lately publish'd against the Stage.

Before I come to speak of the present State of Religion among us, I desire Leave to translate a Passage from *Dacier's* Preface to his excellent Comment on *Aristotle's Art of Poetry* If the Quotation appears to be of more than ordinary Length to you, I comfort my self with this Reflection, that you will attend to an Author of more than ordinary Learning and Judgment, and who can speak so much better in this Cause than myself

'Poetry, says that most judicious Critick, is an Art which was invented for 'the Instruction of Mankind, and an Art which is by Consequence useful 'Tis 'a Truth acknowledg'd by all the World, that every Art is in itself good, be- 'cause there is none whose End and Design is not so But as it is no less true, 'that Men are apt to abuse the very best Things, and to pervert the very best 'Designs, that which was at first invented as a wholsome Remedy, may after- 'wards become a very dangerous Poison I am obliged to declare, then, that 'in what I say of Tragedy, I speak not of corrupted Tragedy For 'tis not in 'Works that are deprav'd and vicious that we are to search for the Reason and 'the Design of Nature, but in those which are sound and intire, when I say 'this, I speak of ancient Tragedy, of that which is conformable to the Rules of '*Aristotle*, which I dare pronounce to be the most useful and most necessary 'of all Diversions whatever

'If it were in our Power to oblige all Men to follow the Precepts which the 'Gospel lays down, nothing could be more happy for Mankind In living con- 'formably to them, they would find true Repose, solid Pleasure, and a sure 'Remedy for all their Infirmities, and they might then look upon Tragedy as 'a useless Thing, and which would be infinitely below them. How could they 'look upon it in any other Light, since the Heathens themselves beheld it in 'the very same, as soon as they had embraced the Study of Philosophy? They 'confess, that if People could be always nourish'd with the solid Truths of 'Philosophy, the Philosophers had never had Recourse to Fables, in order to

'give them Instruction But as so much Corruption could not bear so much 'Wisdom, the Philosophers were obliged to look for a Remedy for the Disorder 'which they saw in Mens Pleasures, for which they invented Tragedy, and 'they offered it to the World, not as the most excellent Thing of which Men 'could make their Employment and their Study, but yet as a Means to correct 'those Excesses, in which they were wont to be plunged at their solemn Feasts, 'and to render those Diversions useful to them, which Custom and their Weak-'ness had render'd necessary, and their Corruption very dangerous

'What Men were formerly, they are To-day, and what they are To-day, they 'will be hereafter, they have the same Passions which they always had, and 'run with the same Eagerness after Pleasure. To undertake to reduce them 'in this Condition by the Severity of Precepts, is endeavouring to put a Bridle 'on a mad Horse in the greatest Rapidity of his Course In the mean time, 'there is no Middle, Men will fall into the most criminal Excesses, unless we 'find Pleasures for them which are wise and regular. 'Tis some Degree of 'Happiness, that a Remnant of Reason inclines them to love such Diversions 'as are consistent with Order, and such Amusements as are not incompatible 'with Truth And I am persuaded, that we are obliged in Charity to make 'our Advantage of this Inclination, that we may not give time to Debauchery 'entirely to quench that Spark of right Reason which still may be seen to 'glimmer in them. We prescribe to distemper'd Persons, and Tragedy is the 'only Remedy, from which, in their present Condition, they can reap any 'Advantage, for 'tis the only Diversion in which they can find the Profitable 'united with the Pleasant'

Thus far Monsieur *Dacier* And here, *Sir*, I beg Leave to observe, that, notwithstanding our Reformation, we have as few Persons here in *England* who have the true Spirit of Christianity in them, as there are in *France* But there is this Difference between them and us, In *France*, all own themselves Christians publickly, none of them dare renounce the Name, tho' few of them are the Thing But among us, How many open Dissenters are there from Christianity itself? How many Atheists? How many Deists? How many Free-thinkers of a Thousand Kinds? who all of them refuse to join in our sacred Rites, some of them, as the Atheists, believing them to be senseless and ridiculous, and others, as the Deists, esteeming them to be blasphemous and idolatrous Then what School of publick Virtue and of publick Spirit have we for too great a Part of our Youth, but our Theatres only?

'Tis very strange that Mr *Law* should be so ignorant of the present State of Religion among us, as not to foresee that the wild Enthusiasm, and the spiritual Fanatical Rant, which abounds so much in his late Pamphlet, would afford Matter of Scorn and Laughter to Infidels and Free-thinkers of all Sorts, and render our most sacred Religion still more contemptible among them.

When Mr. *Law* says, in the 16th Page of his Pamphlet, that *It cannot be doubted by any one, that the Playhouse is a Nursery of Vice and Debauchery,*

and that the Effect it has upon Peoples Manners is as visible as the Sun at Noon, he seems to know as little of the present State of Vice among us, as he pretends to do of Religion The present reigning Vices of the Town, are Drinking, Gaming, Cursing, Swearing, Prophaness, Corruption of all Sorts, as Bribing, Tricking, Oppression, Cheating, Whoring and execrable Sodomy. And Mr. *Law*, forsooth, has the Face to tell the World, that the Playhouse encourages all these, that it is the Sink of Corruption and Debauchery, and that that is not the State of it thro' any accidental Abuse, but that Corruption and Debauchery are the truly natural and genuine Effects of the Stage Entertainment, that is, of any Stage-Entertainment Now to shew the Folly and the Arrogance of these Assertions, let us consider these Vices one by one

First then, Does the Theatre encourage Drunkenness? No, it neither does nor can encourage it To shew it, is enough to render it odious or ridiculous. To shew a Man drunk, is to shew a Fool or a Madman, in whom the Creator's Image is for a Time intirely defaced, and who, while he continues in that State, stands in need of a Guardian Besides, nothing is more certain, than that brutal Vice rages most in the Scum and Off-scowring of the People, who neither have nor ever had the least Communication with the Playhouse. 'Tis true, Men of Thought may be sometimes drawn into it, but they naturally hate it, for Drunkenness is a mortal Enemy to Thought, and consequently Thought to that.

Does the Playhouse encourage Gaming? So far from that, that Gaming has increased ten-fold, since *Collier*'s Books against the Stage were published, and since when, whole Plays have been writ to shew it dangerous and destructive, to shew the unspeakable Harm it does to both Sexes, and particularly to the Women, *to shew that Gaming, by giving Men a Privilege of being familiar with, and sometimes rude to Women, removes that Awe which Nature has placed between the Sexes, as the strongest Bulwark of Chastity, that when a young Lady, even of the strictest, the most unblemish'd Honour, loses a Sum of Money, which she dares not own to her Relations, and which she cannot pay without them, and loses it to an agreeable young Fellow, who perhaps loves her, and has a secret Design upon her, she finds a Temptation that trys her utmost Virtue*

Does the Playhouse encourage Swearing and Cursing? Both Reason and Experience assure us that it does not They who walk the Streets in the West End of the Town may be sufficiently convinced, that it rages most in the Lees of the People, who never knew what a Playhouse was It infects even their Wives and their Children, as it very rarely does those of the better Sort As common Swearing is a foolish brutal Vice, that brings neither Pleasure nor Profit with it, and is the Result of want of Thought, it follows, that the foolish brutal Part of the People must be most infected with it. Of the Women that frequent the Playhouse, few are addicted to it but the common Strumpets, and of the Men, none but Bullies, Rakes, and giddy Coxcombs. If a Comick Poet draws any of these, in order to correct and amend them, he is obliged to shew them sometimes Swearing, or he leaves out one of their Characteristicks But he cannot fail of shewing that very Quality either odious or

ridiculous, when it appears in Persons who are themselves both the one and the other. And if he shews it either odious or ridiculous, that surely will invite none of the Audience to imitate it.

We equally deny, that the Playhouse encourages any other Sort of Prophaness. But as a Play is a Fable, that is, a Composition of Truth and Fiction (as we have observed above,) as the Action is feigned and the Moral true, as Characters are necessary for the carrying on the Action, and for proving the Moral, and vicious Characters as necessary, and perhaps sometimes more necessary, than are the good ones, as to shew vicious Characters, and to expose them, 'tis absolutely necessary to put vicious Sentiments into their Mouths, it follows, that the most criminal Sentiments, and the most violent Passions, are allowable in vicious and violent Characters, the most ungovern'd Fury, and the most outragious Blasphemy itself, not excepted, provided they are adapted to the Character and the Occasion, and the Character and the Occasion are necessary for the Moral. *Virgil* has every where shewn *Mezentius* a Contemner of the Gods, and a Blasphemer of them, yet we never heard that the most bigotted of his Cotemporaries ever accused *Virgil* upon that Account *Milton*, in the second Book of *Paradice lost*, makes the Devils, in their infernal Council, blaspheme in a most outragious Manner, and yet, as they speak agreeably to their Characters and the Occasion, no Man has ever been so weak or so unjust, as to accuse *Milton* for that Blasphemy, or to give all his Readers to the Devil for being entertained with it On the contrary, all Men of good Understanding, and good Taste, have been peculiarly charm'd with that very Book, as one of the most beautiful of that admirable Poem *Cowley* makes not only the Devil, but *Goliah* blaspheme,

> *Thus he blasphem'd aloud, The Hills around,*
> *Flatt'ring his Voice, restor'd the dreadful Sound*

and yet has been never blamed for it The Book of *Job* is canonical, and is firmly believed to have been writ by divine Inspiration. Tho' it is full of uncharitable Judgments, and is not free from Blasphemy, yet the Instructions which that divine Parable or Fable gives, proceed in a great measure from that very Blasphemy, and those uncharitable Judgments. But now, if a Poet is allow'd to put Blasphemy into the Mouth of one of his Characters, provided he takes care to punish him for it, he is certainly at Liberty to do the like by any inferior Prophaness

The Three Nonjuring Priests who have attack'd the Stage, have made such a Noise about nothing as Prophaness, it sometimes drops three or four Times in one Page from their tautologous Pens, and they have chiefly accused our Comedies for it· The Unreasonableness of which may appear from hence, that all our true Comedies are but Copies of the foolish or vicious Originals of the Age. Certainly never Man knew what a Comedy was better than did *Moliere*. Now when in the Critic of the *Ecole des Femmes*, he is endeavouring to prove, by the Mouth of *Dorante*, that Comedy is harder to write than Tragedy, he gives the following Reason for it *Lors que vous peignez des Heros, vous*

faites ce que vous voulez, ce sont des Portraits a plaisir, ou l'on ne cherche de ressemblance, et vous n'avez qu'a suivre les Traits d'une Imagination qui se donne l'essor, et qui souvent laisse le vrai pour attraper le Merveilleux. *Mais lors que vous peignez les Hommes, il faut peindre d'apres Nature, on veut que ces Portraits ressemblent, et vous n'avez rien fait si vous n'y faites reconnoitre les Gens de votre Siecle.* That is to say, When you draw Heroes, you are at your own Liberty, those are Pictures at the Painter's Pleasure, in which no Body looks for Likeness; and you have nothing to do but to indulge the Flight of a soaring Imagination. But when you paint Men, you must draw after Nature, the World expects that those Pictures should be like, and you have done nothing at all, unless you shew your Readers or your Spectators the People of the Age you live in.

Now with Regard to Prophaness, our Comedies are the faintest Copies in the World, and you may often hear more Prophaness in one Night's Conversation at a Tavern or an Eating-house, than you shall hear from the Stage in a Year For Atheists, Deists, Arians, and Socinians, are wont to say at their private Meetings, what no one dares to pronounce on the Stage. Now are not these Nonjuring Priests either very wise, or very conscientious Persons? Our Comedies are but Copies of the foolish and vicious Originals of the Age, and 'tis the Business of the Copies to expose, and satyrize, and ridicule those foolish and those vicious Originals Now these Nonjuring Priests having nothing to say against those foolish and those vicious Originals, which most certainly corrupt and debauch the Age, make it their Business to fall foul on the Copies, which chastise, and satyrize, and ridicule the Originals

What I have said of the Stage with Relation to Prophaness, is in Proportion true, with Regard to all other Vices Now since our Comedies are but Copies of the foolish and the vicious Originals of the Age in which we live, and Copies which do by no means come up to the Originals, I appeal to all the World, if it does not unanswerably follow from what I have said, that the Originals of the Age debauch the Stage, by which latter, the Age never possibly can be debauched The Stage was establish'd in *England* towards the Beginning of Queen *Elizabeth*'s Reign, whereas the Manners of the People continued generally sound till beyond the Middle of the last Century. And the Manners of the People continuing generally sound, the Stage remain'd generally chaste· But at the Restoration of *Charles* the Second, the Court returning from abroad, corrupted by foreign Luxury, quickly debauch'd the Town, and the Court and the Town jointly endeavour'd to debauch the Stage, because our Comick Poets were obliged to copy their lewd Originals, in order to expose and reform them.

As for Corruption of any Sort, whether it be Tricking, Oppressing, Bribing, Sharping, Cheating, the true Poet, who is perfectly free from all Avarice, is least of all addicted to it.

——— *Vatis Avarus*
Non temere est animus, versus amat, hoc studet unum
Detrimenta, fugas servorum, incendia ridet,
Non fraudem socio, puerove incogitat ullam
Pupillo, Horace Epist ad Augustum

Their usual Poverty is a signal Proof of this For as the Love of Money is the Source of all Corruption, he who despises Gold, is above all the Vices that attend it. And Poverty attended with great Parts, may very well pass for a pretty sure Sign of Honesty. A Dramatick Poet therefore being averse from all Corruption himself, if ever he describes any Kind of it, is sure to make it both odious and ridiculous

I come now to almost the only Charge against the Stage which seems to have any thing of real Weight in it, and that is, That it excites in Mens Minds the natural Love of Women. And here by this Charge may be meant two Things, the one is, That it excites in Men a Desire to the unlawful Enjoyment of Women, the other is, That it inclines them to that violent Passion of Love, which is sometimes between the two Sexes.

As to the first Part of the Charge, that it excites in Men a Desire to the unlawful Enjoyment of Women, if there are any Passages in our Plays that are chargeable with that Guilt, or that defile the Imaginations of an Audience with unchast and immodest Images, they are neither natural to the Drama nor necessary, but flagrant Abuses of it, and contrary to the very Design of the Art, and those Passages ought to be banish'd from the Stage for ever And yet I cannot help thinking, that if ever those Passages could be excusable, they would be so at this Juncture, when the execrable Sin of Sodomy is spread so wide, that the foresaid Passages might be of some Use to the reducing Mens Minds to the natural Desire of Women Let Fornication be ever so crying a Sin, yet Sodomy is a Crime of a thousand times a deeper Dye A Crime that forc'd down supernatural Fire from Heaven, to extinguish its infernal Flames, a Crime that would have obliged even righteous *Lot* to prostitute his two chast and virgin Daughters, in order to prevent it I cannot here omit observing one Thing, That this unnatural Sin has very much increased since *Collier*'s Books were publish'd against the Stage There were no less than four Persons condemned for it the last Sessions, and I am inform'd, that several more have been since apprehended for it The like of which was never heard of in *Great Britain* before.

As for the Passion of Love, by which the Hearts of Men and Women are sometimes mutually and violently inclined to each other, if the Passion is kept within the Bounds of Nature, if the Object and the Intention of it is lawful, or if 'tis punish'd when 'tis unlawful, I am of the Opinion, that it cannot have the least ill Consequence, 'tis certainly a Check upon wandring loose Desires it gives a very great and very harmless Pleasure, and has a direct Tendency to the keeping the two Sexes stedfast and firm to the natural Love of each other For not only the Affections of the Men have wildly wander'd from Nature, as is manifest to all the World, but not a few of the Women too have endeavour'd to make themselves the Center of their own Happiness St. *Paul* is pleas'd to reprove this unnatural Affection of the *Roman* Dames in the first Chapter of his Epistle to the *Romans* And Mr *Law* is desired to take Notice, that he lays those unnatural Desires not upon their going to Plays, but upon their Idolatry;

Verse 22, *Professing themselves to be wise, they became Fools.* Verse 23, *And changed the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four-footed Beasts, and creeping Things.* Verse 24, *Wherefore God also gave them up to Uncleanness, to dishonour their own Bodies between themselves.* Verse 25, *Who changed the Truth of God into a Lie, and worshipped and served the Creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen* Verse 26, *For this Cause God gave them up to vile Affections: For even their Women did change the natural Use into that which is against Nature.* Verse 27, *And likewise the Men, leaving the natural Use of the Women, burned in their own Lusts one toward another, Men with Men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that Recompence of their Errors which was meet.* And Mr *Law* may be pleased to observe, that the Apostle here gives us another signal Proof, that he does not put Idolatry and going to Plays upon an equal Foot And here, *Sir*, I desire Leave to make another Remark, and that is, That of all the Countries of the Christian World, that Country has been, is, and is like to be, the most infamous for this execrable Vice, in which Idolatry has set up its Head Quarters

Sir, You are very well acquainted with the exact Judgment of the late *French* Satyrist, who was an Honour to *France* That he was very far from being a Friend to the Corruption of the Stage, will appear from the following Passage of the fourth Canto of his *Art of Poetry*, where he is giving his Advice to the Poets who were his Cotemporaries

Que votre ame & vos mœurs peints dans tous vos ouvrages
N'offrent jamais à vous que de nobles Images
Je ne puis estimer ces dangereux Auteurs,
Qui de l'honneur en vers infames deserteurs,
Trahissant la vertu sur un papier coupable,
Aux yeux de leurs Lecteurs rendent le vice aimable

Tho' I know very well, that no one understands this Author better than you do, yet as this Letter is to pass thro' your Hand to the Press, I desire Leave to translate the Passage, for the Benefit of those who are not used to *French*

Let your Soul and your Manners, appearing in your Works to your Readers, never offer any but noble Ideas of you I can have no Esteem for those dangerous Authors, those infamous Deserters of Honour in their Verses, who being Traytors to Virtue in their guilty Lines, render Vice lovely to the Eyes of those who peruse them

And yet immediately after comes his Approbation of Love in Dramatick Poems

Je ne suis pas pourtant de ces tristes Esprits
Que bannissant l'Amour de tous chastes écrits,
D'un si riche ornement veulent priver la Scene
Traitent d'empoisonneurs & Rodrigue & Chimene
L'amour le moins honneste exprimé chastement,
N'excite point en nous de honteux mouvement
Didon a beau gemir & m'étaler ses charmes,
Je condamne sa faute, en partageant ses larmes

And yet, says he, *I am none of those splenetick Souls, who banishing Love from all chaste Composures, endeavour to deprive the Stage of so rich an Ornament. The most dishonourable Love, if 'tis chastly express'd, excites no shameful Motion in us In vain does* Dido *lament and groan, exposing all her Charms to me, I condemn her Conduct at the very Time that I partake of her Grief*

I now return to the Charge of Hypocrisy; for which there are very just Grounds of Suspicion from the Stile and Language of this Pamphlet. For is not this little Treatise, which is pretended to be writ thro' a Zeal for the Christian Religion, writ in downright Antichristian Language? Is this Pamphlet writ in the Language of Modesty, of Humility, of Meekness? Is it writ in the attractive Language of Charity? On the contrary, Does not Mr *Law* seem to have taken all his Degrees at a certain University between the Bridge and the Tower? And as the Disciples of our Saviour, from Dealers in Fish became the Apostles of their Master, this false Apostle seems to set up for Water Doctor, and from a Priest to become a Dealer in Fish For he has not only the Tropes, and the Figures, and all the Rhetorical Flowers, but the very Tautologies of those obstreperous Dealers in quiet and mute Animals. For the foresaid obstreperous Dealers, are not contented with calling Rogue, or Whore, or Bitch, or Villain, once, they will repeat it fifty Times, and their Fellow-Collegiate who disputes with them, will return it fifty-fold

I desire that you would give me leave to present you with some of Mr *Law*'s Rhetorical Flowers.

At the Bottom of the second Page of his Pamphlet, he tells us, That there is more to be said in Behalf of Popery than of going to Plays For that is plainly his Meaning, tho' he disguises it by the Terms that he uses And towards the Top of the third Page, he is no less positive, that God is less displeased with Popery than he is with going to Plays. It looks as if Mr *Law* would be very glad to exchange Plays for Popery

In all the rest of the second Page, he puts them upon an equal Foot, and assures us, that the Entertainment of the Stage is contrary to more Doctrines of Scripture than the Worship of Images

What, tho' we grant it, Intemperance in Eating, Drinking, and Venery, is contrary to more Doctrines of Scripture, than is either Murder, or High-Treason; and yet either Murder or High-Treason singly, is ten Times a greater Sin than all the forementioned Three together. Sometimes he is making Idolatry, that is, Popery, less criminal than going to Plays Sometimes he is for making them equal, and endeavouring to revive the old stoical Opinion, *Omnia peccata sunt æqualia*, All Sins are equal A Paradox that would tend to make Christianity as ridiculous, as it help'd to do *Pagan* Stoicism.

In the first Paragraph of the 4th Page. *You go to hear Plays you say — I tell you,* says Mr. *Law, you go to hear Ribaldry and Prophaness, that you entertain your Mind with extravagant Thoughts, wild Rant, blasphemous Speeches, wanton Amours, prophane Jests, and impure Passions* [Ay, now the Language of the College begins] And a little lower, *He who goes to a Play,*

diverts himself with the Lewdness, Impudence, Prophaness, and impure Discourses of the Stage. And a little lower, in the same Page, *This is plainly the Case of the Stage, it is an Entertainment that consists of lewd, impudent, prophane Discourses.* And Pag. 7, *It is an Entertainment made up of Lewdness, Prophaness, and all the extravagant Rant of disorder'd Passions.* At the Top of Page 8. he is endeavouring once more to make Popery less sinful than going to Plays; and by the same Piece of spiritual Sophistry, he confirms this religious Lie; because, forsooth, the Stage, with its *lewd prophane Discourses,* offends against more Doctrines of plain Scripture than Popery: Which is proving one gross Piece of Falshood, by another that is much greater.

About the Middle of the same Page, he brings an Argument against the Stage from the Iniquity of the Players, against whom he inveighs with his usual Sophistry and Uncharitableness Which is full as wise and as just, as it would be to bring an Argument against the Church, from the Vices of some spiritual Comedians *The Players are Men and Women,* says he, *equally bold, in all Instances of Prophaness, Passion, and Immodesty, whose Business,* Pag. 9, *is prophane, wicked, lewd, and immodest,* and a little lower in the same Page, *whose Employment is less Christian than that of Robbers For he must know very little of the Nature of Religion,* says Mr. *Law, who can look upon Lust, Prophaness, and disorder'd Passions, to be less contrary to Religion, than the taking Money from the right Owner* Which is directly contrary to common Sense and to common Utility.

Quels paria esse fere placuit peccata, laborant,
Cum ventum ad verum est sensus moresque repugnant
Atque ipsa utilitas justi prope mater & æqui Hor

Page 10, He speaks of *the Blasphemy, Prophaness, Lewdness, Immodesty, and wicked Rant of Plays* And a little lower in the same Page, he mentions *a Collection of all the wicked, prophane, blasphemous, lewd, impudent, detestable Things that are said in the Playhouse* And Page 11, he speaks of the Entertainment of the Stage, *as it consists of Love-Intrigues, blasphemous Passions, prophane Discourses, lewd Descriptions, filthy Jests, and all the most extravagant Rant of wanton profligate Persons of both Sexes, heating and inflaming one another with all the Wantonness of Address, the Immodesty of Motion, and the Lewdness of Thought, that Wit can invent.*

And here I desire Leave to say a Word, by the way, in Defence of Players, whose Profession he very wisely, humanely, and Christianly, makes as unlawful as that of Robbers Is he to be told at this Time of Day, that the Players say nothing of Themselves? They only speak what the Poet puts into the Mouths of his universal allegorical Fantoms, which Fantoms the Players represent. Can this poor Gentleman be so simple as to believe, that *Reynard, Bruin, Isgrim,* and *Grimalkin,* say really of themselves the Things that *Æsop* puts into their Mouths? The Players are only the Poet's Instruments, by which he carries on his Action, and proves his Moral. If any Musician sings a treasonable Song, and plays to it at the same time, he ought to suffer for his Crime, but would you indict the Fiddle or the Flute upon which the Tune is play'd?

What Turn Mr. *Law* design'd to serve, by being so profuse of so much fine Language he best can tell, tho' we perhaps may guess. But he could never possibly think of making Poets, or Players, or Spectators, good Christians, by railing at them for an Hour together, and treating them worse than the great Archangel dared to treat the Devil, *who durst not bring against him a railing Accusation, but only said, The Lord rebuke thee.* If he design'd to convert People by such a Proceeding, he might as well pretend to begin a Friendship with another by abusing him, and throwing Dirt at him

But to make some Amends for treating his Fellow-Creatures with so much Antichristian Language, he uses the Devil with a great deal of Respect and Civility For besides the gentle Terms in which he speaks of him, of his Honour, of his Glory, of his Joy, his Delight, his Pleasure, his peculiar Pleasure, as if Damnation were an honourable and a happy State, besides this, I say, he is pleased, out of his great Bounty, to settle upon him and his, to have and to hold for ever, the Freehold and Fee-Simple of all our Theatres. *One may, with the same Assurance, affirm,* says he, *that the Playhouse, not only when some prophane Play is on the Stage, but in its daily common Entertainments, is as certainly the House of the Devil, as the Church is the House of God,* Page 12 And a little lower in the same Page, *The Manner and Matter of Stage-Entertainments, is as undeniable a Proof, and as obvious to common Sense, that the House belongs to the Devil, and is the Place of his Honour, as the Matter and Manner of Church-Service prove that the Place is appropriated to God*

Now my Opinion is, That if the Devil should once become the Head-Landlord of our Theatres, he would immediately turn them into so many *Jacobite* Conventicles For those are properly his Houses, those are properly his Temples For the Sins which the Theatres are accused by Mr *Law* of encouraging, are not the Devil's Sins, but our own, the Sins of Men and Women The Devil neither drinks nor whores, nor games, nor rants, nor gormandizes But the Sins which are carried on in a *Jacobite* Conventicle, are the Devil's own Sins, his two great original Sins, Lying and Rebellion. There all those false Doctrines are carried on, of Hereditary Right, Divine Right, Indefeasible Right, Absolute Power, Uncontroulable Power, Passive Obedience, Unconditional Obedience, Doctrines invented on purpose to make and flatter Tyrants, who are the Devil's Viceroys *For as good Kings are God's Vicegerents, sure a Tyrant is Hell's Viceroy* The Place where the Pretender's Cause is carried on, is properly the Temple of the Devil, the original Pretender.

When Mr. *Law* affirms, That the Playhouse is the Sink of Corruption and Debauchery, Page 15, and that this is not the State of it, thro' any accidental Abuse, as any innocent or good Thing may be abused, but that Corruption and Debauchery are the truly natural and genuine Effects of the Stage Entertainments, is it possible that he can be so ignorant as he pretends to make himself? Can he be ignorant, that by affirming this, he contradicts what has been the common Sense of Mankind for two thousand Years, and that he contradicts

the Opinions and the Judgments of the greatest, and wisest, and most virtuous Men, of the greatest, and wisest, and most virtuous Nations, during that vast Space of Time? If Corruption and Debauchery were the natural and genuine Effects of Theatrical Entertainments; would they have been encouraged by the great Legislators, the most learned Philosophers, and the wisest Rulers of the freest States in the World?

No Body knows better than Mr *Law*, that of all publick Diversions, the Drama is the most reasonable, manly, noble, and instructive Diversion, the excelling in which, shews the Excellence and the Strength of Genius of that particular Nation where it appears, and by that Means advances its Reputation with other Nations, and augments its Power, and that therefore Dramatick Performances have been so cherished and esteemed by the wisest Rulers of the noblest Nations, that they have been maintain'd by the publick Treasure, and the Magistrate has not thought it at all below him, to have the Regulation and the immediate Inspection of it Which is an undeniable Proof, that they did not at all mistrust that it was natural to those Entertainments to corrupt and debauch their People

The Drama is in itself so excellent, and to excel in it requires so many great Qualities, that of all the Nations we hear of among the Ancients, but Two were capable of proper constant Theatrical Entertainments, and those Two were the wisest bravest, and most virtuous of all the Nations, so famous for their great Actions in War, and so illustrious for the Arts of Peace that to know what they were, is become a principal Part of the Learning of us Moderns, and 'tis accounted scandalous in a Gentleman to be ignorant of what they said, and wrote, and did, and yet to know what their Tragick and Comick Poets were, and what they wrote, is none of the meanest Branches of that very Learning

What Opinion the *Grecians* themselves had of their Drama, how far they believed their Tragick Poets able to inspire their Countrymen with the Love of their Country, with the Love of Liberty, of Virtue, and of true Glory, and with a magnanimous Contempt of Death for the publick Good, may be gathered from the unanimous Consent of *Greece*, and particularly from the Honours done by the *Athenians* to their Tragick Poets, who made them Governors of Provinces, Generals of their Armies, and Guardians of the publick Liberty. For when the *Athenians* settled a greater Fund for the supporting the Magnificence of their Tragick Representations, than for the Maintenance of their Fleets and Armies, we may justly conclude that it was their Opinion, that their Tragick Poets, by constantly setting before them the Calamities of Tyrants, defended them from far more dangerous Enemies than those which their Armies were sent to encounter, and that was from their own aspiring Citizens As no People were ever more jealous of their Liberties than the *Athenians*, none ever knew better that Corruption and Debauchery are inconsistent with Liberty, and therefore it never in the least enter'd into the Thoughts of that great People, that Corruption and Debauchery were the natural Effects of Dramatick Entertainments

Nor can it be objected with any manner of Justice, that it was the Fury of the *Athenian* Populace, running mad after their Pleasures, that made them so warmly espouse the Drama The greatest and the wisest Philosophers of that renown'd Republick declared most warmly and most loudly for it *Aristotle* writ an admirable System of Rules for the composing Dramatick Poems, with that Right Hand that has given us so many excellent Lessons of Morality. And *Socrates*, the wisest and the most virtuous of all the Philosophers, who made it the whole Business of his Life to instruct his Countrymen in moral Virtue, did not think it in the least below his Wisdom and his Virtue, to assist *Euripides* in the writing his Tragedies.

That the *Romans* did not yield to the *Grecians* in the Esteem which they had for Dramatick Entertainments, and the Belief that they were capable of contributing to the Glory and the Felicity of a mighty State, and to the Glory and Felicity of the Authors of them, we may gather from the Actions of their wisest Statesmen, their greatest Captains, and their severest Philosophers. Their greatest Captains and their wisest Statesmen not only encouraged Dramatick Poems, but vouchsafed to write them themselves *Scipio*, the wise, the virtuous *Scipio*, writ Comedy with that conquering Hand that won the Empire of the World at *Zama* *Augustus Cæsar*, as famous for the Arts of Peace as his Success in War, renown'd for the wholsome Laws he enacted, and for his reforming the Manners of the People, begun the Tragedy of *Ajax*, tho' he could not finish it, but found it easier to make himself Emperor of the World, than a great Dramatick Poet. *Cicero*, the Champion of the *Roman* Liberties, in twenty Places of his Philosophick Treatises, quotes the *Roman* Tragick Poets. And *Seneca*, who thro' the Opinion which *Agrippina* had of the Strictness and the Severity of his Virtue, was intrusted with the Education of a Prince, upon whose Conduct the Happiness of Mankind depended, *Seneca*, who, by so many admirable Lessons of moral Virtue, has obliged all the Lovers of Wit and Virtue for ever, did not think writing Tragedy an Employment at all below him.

Now, *Sir*, I appeal to you, whether it does not logically and necessarily follow, from what has been said, that either Mr *Law* must believe, that the Great Men among the ancient *Grecians* and *Romans*, their Captains, Statesmen, and Philosophers, wanted common Sense, or he cannot possibly believe, that Corruption and Debauchery are the natural Effects of Theatrical Entertainments, and consequently must be guilty of very vile Hypocrisy

There remains another strong Presumption of Hypocrisy against Mr *Law* For what is Mr *Law*? And what are his two Predecessors, *Collier* and *Bedford*, who attack'd the Stage before him? Why, *Jacobite* Nonjuring Parsons all three of them, who have disown'd our Establish'd Church, and disown'd our Government. How come they to take up this great Concern for our Salvation in a Matter about which all our Pastors, who have the immediate Care of our Souls, are silent? Have they more Capacity to see the enormous Crimes of Theatres, and the pretended fatal Consequences of them, than so many great and good Men, who have been the exalted Lights of the Church since the Restoration?

No, all the World knows, that there is not the least Pretence for it, nor the least Comparison. Have they more true Zeal and Concern for the Christian Religion? No, that, as we observed above, is inconsistent with their Manner of treating us. The Language of *Billingsgate* can never be the Language of Charity, nor consequently of Christianity Truth has not the impetuous stormy Air which Mr. *Law* assumes, but comes in the soft and still Voice, like the God who inspires it, and Truth detests and abominates the Equivocating and Prevaricating of Mr. *Collier* and Mr. *Bedford*

But now let us consider the Time that these People have chose to exert their pretended Zeal It has been always when something has been about to be done, which it was thought might prove favourable to the *Pretender*. Mr *Collier* publish'd his *Short View* when *France* declar'd for the *Chevalier*, upon the Death of *James* II and his *Dissuasive*, upon the great Storm, when the great Devastation which that Hurricane wrought, had amaz'd and astonish'd the Minds of Men, and made them obnoxious to melancholly and desponding Thoughts I formerly expos'd the egregious hypocritical Folly of making that Storm a Divine Judgment upon the Nation for the Enormities of our Theatres. Mr. *Law* has taken the Opportunity to attack the Stage, upon the great Preparations which he heard were making abroad, and which the *Jacobites* flatter'd themselves were design'd in their Favour As for Mr. *Bedford's Serious Remonstrance*, tho' I know nothing of the Time of publishing it, yet I dare to lay Odds it was either upon the Duke *D' Aumont's* being at *Somerset-House*, or upon the late Rebellion. Now all these Attacks upon the Stage have been Attacks upon the Government, and those three worthy Persons seem to me to have been at the Beck of some certain Superiors, and always ready at their Command to divert the People of *Great Britain* from their real Danger, by giving them Alarms in a wrong Place

FINIS.

REMARKS ON MR. POPE'S RAPE OF THE LOCK. IN SEVERAL LETTERS TO A FRIEND. WITH A PREFACE, OCCASION'D BY THE LATE TREATISE ON THE PROFUND, AND THE DUNCIAD

1714–1728, 1728

PREFACE

IT was towards the latter End of the Reign of Queen ANNE that I wrote Remarks upon the first hundred Lines of the late Translation of *Homer*, upon the *Windsor Forest*, upon the *Rape of the Lock*, and upon the infamous *Temple of Fame*, provok'd and urg'd to it by the Folly, the Pride, and the Petulancy of that little Gentleman *A P———E*, Qualities which at that Time made me foresee and foretell, that there was no Person whatever whom he apprehended to be above him, whether by Station, Power, or Merit, but he would come impudently one Day to fly in his Face, if timely Care were not taken to chastise and correct his soaring Insolence

It was in the Beginning of the Reign of the late KING that I order'd three of the fore-mention'd Treatises to be publish'd, *viz Remarks* on the *Translation of Homer*, on *Windsor Forest*, and on the *Temple of Fame*, which was done with a Design to hold a faithful Glass to this little Gentleman, and to cure him of his vain and his wretched Conceitedness, by giving him a View of his Ignorance, his Folly, and his natural Impotence, the undoubted Causes of so many Errors and so many Imperfections

But at the same Time that I order'd three of them to be publish'd, I took care to keep back the ensuing Treatise purposely *in Terrorem*, which had so good an Effect, that he endeavour'd for a time to counterfeit Humility and a sincere Repentance And about that Time I receiv'd a Letter from him, which I have still by me, in which he acknowledg'd his Offences past, and express'd an hypocritical Sorrow for them

But no sooner did he believe that Time had caus'd these Things to be forgot, than he relaps'd into ten times the Folly and the Madness that ever he had shewn before He not only attack'd several Persons of far greater Merit than himself, but, like a mad *Indian* that runs a muck, struck at every Thing that came in his Way, without Distinction of Friend or Foe, Acquaintance or Stranger, Merit or Unworthiness, Wisdom or Folly, Vice or Virtue, like a blind Beetle, that in its blundering Flight bruises itself against every Object it meets, and does not fail to knock itself down by the impotent Blows which it gives to others.

He has not only struck at very different Persons, without any manner of Distinction, but has thrown his rhetorical Flowers, of Fool, Dunce, Blockhead, Scoundrel, promiscuously at them all, as if he wisely thought, that he was

the only foul-mouth'd Fellow in *England*, or had so much of the Fool, Blockhead, Dunce, Scoundrel within him, that they have the same Effect on his Mind that Jaundice would have upon his Eyes, and make every Thing without him be to him in Appearance, what in Reality is within him

Nothing is more easy than to give foul Language, which a Fool is more capable of giving to a wise Man, than a wise Man to a Fool, because nothing incapacitates a Man so much for it as good Sense, good Nature, good Breeding, and common Discretion, and nothing qualifies a Man more for it, than his being a Clown, a Fool, a Barbarian, and a Brute The calling a Man Fool, Dunce, Blockhead, Scoundrel, if it does not find him so, it does by no means make him so But if it does not find him so, it gives him who calls him so, an unquestionable Title to those Terms himself As this is the Language of the Rabble of Mankind, the more any one brings himself to use it, the more he sets himself upon an infamous Level with the Scum and Off-scouring of Things

Before I take my leave of this Subject, I cannot help reminding this little Gentleman, *en passant*, that tho' his Adversaries were as many Fools, Blockheads Dunces as he is pleas'd, in Honour to them to call them, yet is he most unjust, and most ungrateful, to reflect upon any Persons for their Want of Capacity since 'tis to People who want Understanding that he owes most of his little Fortune and all his little Reputation For I will venture to affirm, that Mr *A P——E* has no Admirers among those who have Capacity to discern to distinguish, and judge, and I will venture to foretell, that Time will make this Affirmation good

Not but that I am oblig'd in Justice to own, that there are several Persons of very great Merit who subscrib'd to his Translation of *Homer*, but then they were Persons most of them who were induc'd to expect a very different Performance to what they found And some were importun'd and teaz'd into that Subscription, some were drawn in by their Complaisance to their Friends, and others sacrific'd their Judgment to their Interest

The calling a Man of the best Understanding Fool, Dunce, Blockhead, is the easiest Thing in the World (as we observ'd above) to him who is really all this himself But for such a one to prove what he says, is absolutely impossible Therefore in the Remarks abovemention'd upon the Translation of *Homer*, upon *Windsor-Forest*, upon the *Temple of Fame*, I have given none of these Appellations to the little facetious Gentleman at whom those Pieces were levelled, but then I have prov'd in them by convincing Reason and by undeniable Fact, that he has a greater Right to the Possession and Property of them than any other Person in *Great Britain* whatever I have shewn that he was equally a Stranger to the Character, the Language, and the Meaning of *Homer*, that nothing qualify'd him to enter the Lists against Sir *John Denham*, but Impudence and Stupidity, and that the *Temple of Fame*, will, as long as 'tis remember'd, be to *A. P——E* the *Temple of Infamy*

I propose to do the same Thing in the subsequent Remarks. I shall call him neither Fool nor Dunce nor Blockhead, but I shall prove that he is all these in a most egregious manner 'Tis justly observ'd by the Duke of

Rochfoucault, 'That a Man may be a very great Fool notwithstanding his '*Wit*; but that he never can be so if he has *Judgment*. For *Imagination* is 'common to Man with Beasts, but he enjoys *Reason* and *Judgment* in common 'with God and Angels.' The impartial Reader, who knows the *Rape of the Lock,* and who will read the following *Remarks,* will be able to determine whether *A. P——E* has shewn one Dram of Judgment, either in the Choice of this trifling *Subject,* or of his more senseless *Machinery,* or in the *Manners* and *Behaviour* of his fine Lady, who is so very rampant, and so very a Termagant, that a Lady in the Hundreds of *Drury* would be severely chastis'd, if she had the Impudence in some Company to imitate her in some of her Actions The impartial Reader is to determine whether the *Sentiments* are not often exceeding poor, and mean, and sometimes ridiculous, and whether the *Diction* is not often impure and ungrammatical

But if the Author has not shewn one Dram of Judgment in the Piece that has been so much applauded by Readers more light than the Subject, what shall we say of the insipid *Profund*? What shall we say of the fulsome *Dunciad*? Were they not writ in perfect Spight to good Sense, to Decency, to Justice, to Gratitude, to Friendship, to Modesty? And can such a Creature as this be deserving of the noble Name of a POET, the Name and the Function which he has so much blasphem'd? Nay, can he deserve even the Name of a Versifyer whose Ear is as injudicious and undistinguishing as the rest of his Head? The Commendation which *Tasso* so justly and so judiciously gives to *Lucretius,* is, *Nobilissimo Versificatore,* a *most noble Versifyer* For *Lucretius* knew all the Variety, the Force, and the Power of Numbers, so that his Harmony in some Parts of him has never been surpass'd, not even by *Virgil* himself. But *A. P——E* has none of these distinguishing Talents, nor Variety, nor Force, nor Power of Numbers, but an eternal Monotony His *Pegasus* is nothing but a batter'd *Kentish* Jade, that neither ambles, nor paces, nor trots, nor runs, but is always upon the *Canterbury*, and as he never mends, never slackens his Pace, but when he stumbles or falls So that having neither Judgment nor Numbers, he is neither Poet nor Versifyer, but only an eternal Rhimer, a little conceited incorrigible Creature, that like the Frog in the Fable, swells and is angry because he is not allow'd to be as great as the Ox

But if Judgment, Reason, and Numbers are wanting to his Rhimes, if we take a View of his prosaick Rhapsodies, 'tis there a thousand times worse Not only Judgment and Reason are wanting there, but Veracity, Integrity, Honour, and Faith are wanting *A P——E* sets up for a Knight of the Post, a frank Affidavit-Man of *Parnassus,* falsifies Matter of Fact at Pleasure, and invents the basest Calumnies, to expose Men of Sense to Fools In the Height of his Professions of Friendship for Mr *Addison,* he could not bear the Success of *Cato,* but prevails upon *B L* to engage me to write and publish Remarks upon that Tragedy Which after I had done, *A. P——E,* the better to conceal himself from Mr. *Addison* and his Friends, writes and publishes a scandalous Pamphlet, equally foolish and villainous, in which he pretends that I was in the Hands of a Quack who cures mad Men. So weak is the Capacity of this little Gentle-

man, that he did not know that he had done an odious Thing; an Action detested even by those whom he fondly design'd to oblige by it. For Mr. *Addison* was so far from approving of it, that he engag'd Sir *Richard Steele* to write to me, and to assure me that he knew nothing of that Pamphlet till he saw it in Print, that he was very sorry to see it, and that whenever he should think fit to answer my Remarks on his Tragedy, he would do it in a manner to which I should have no just Exception Thus Mr *Addison* acted like a Man of Honour, and like one who foresaw what he himself had to expect from a Wretch who was capable of so much Baseness What he foresaw and expected happen'd: *A. P——E* libell'd him in Manuscript while he liv'd, and in Print after he died.

'Tis a sure Sign that we live in a poor, undiscerning, degenerate World, when one who has writ and acted as this little Gentleman has done, has been able to delude it so long But as he got such Favours by ungenerous Arts, he has work'd himself out of it, by his Weakness and his Baseness, by which he has made, by a modest Computation, a *Hundred Thousand* Enemies, and rais'd Indignation and Disdain in the Breast of every generous and sensible Reader. He has not only attack'd such Numbers of People at one Time as no one before him ever did in any Nation or any Age, but has grosly abus'd several very ingenious Men, and some of them for no other Reason but because they had shewn an Understanding, and Discernment, and a Sagacity greatly superior to his own. Among whom I am oblig'd, in Justice, to name Mr *Theobald*, who by delivering *Shakespear* from the Injuries of Time, and of lazy, or ignorant and stupid Editors, has oblig'd all who are concern'd for the Reputation of so great a Genius, or for the Honour of *Great Britain*.

It was for no other Reason that he has libell'd Mr *Theobald*, Mr. *Phillips*, and several others, than that they have surpass'd him He has been so far from making that Distinction which he ought to have done, that his Malice has been levell'd most at those who have most Merit, which is a certain Proof, that this little envious Creature knows nothing of the Nature of Satire, which can never exist where the Censures are not just. In that case the Versifyer, instead of a Satirist, is a Lampooner, an infamous Libeller. None of the antient Satirists, neither *Horace*, nor *Persius*, nor *Juvenal*, ever attack'd Merit: And *Boileau* declares, 'That Merit is always precious to him, and that he has a 'greater Esteem for *Patru* in the midst of Indigence, than for one who has 'amass'd the greatest Treasure by base and unjustifiable Means.' He did not only say this, but shew'd, by a very generous Action, that it was his real Sentiment. *Patru* had a very noble Library, consisting of a great Number of Volumes, and all of them very well chosen. He was reduc'd by his Circumstances to part with this Library, in order to satisfy his Creditors *Boileau* hearing of this, came and paid down the full Price for it, and never remov'd a Volume, but gave *Patru* the Enjoyment of the whole during the Remainder of his Life

But the little Gentleman, who wrote the *Dunciad* and the *Profund*, does not only, with infinite Baseness, reproach Authors with Poverty, who have deserv'd a thousand times better both of their Country and the Commonwealth of Learning, to both which he is an open and a mortal Enemy, but he has

the Impudence to infer their Want of Merit from their Want of Fortune. At this rate, *Spencer*, the renowned Lord *Bacon*, *Butler*, and *Otway* were Dunces, and *A P——E*, and *Ned Howard*, and two or three rich and noble Lords, are Poets and great Wits At this rate *Horace* too was a Dunce, because he was not only poor, before *Augustus* and his first Minister cast a favourable Eye upon him, but his Poverty made him a Poet Such is the Account that he gives of himself in the second *Epistle* of *Book* II.

Quem dimisêre Philippi
Decisis humilem pennis, inopémque paterni
Et laris & fundi, paupertas impulit audax,
Ut versus facerem

If *Horace* was poor, *Virgil* was not rich, before the same magnanimous Prince, and his wise and discerning Minister, took him into their Protection Yet he was so far from contemning Poverty, that he rather had a Contempt for Riches Witness what he makes *Evander* say to *Æneas*, in the 8th *Æneid*, when he introduces him into the homely Palace where *Hercules* had lain before

Ut ventum ad sedes, hæc, inquit, limina victor
Alcides subiit, hæc illum regna cepit
Aude, hospes, contemnere opes, & te quoque dignum
Finge Deo, rebusque veni non asper egenis

And in his Praise of a Country-Life, at the latter End of the second *Georgic*, he seems to make Poverty the Foundation of the *Roman* Greatness

Agricola incurvo terram dimovit aratro,
Hinc anni labor, hinc patriam, parvosque nepotes
Sustinet, hinc armenta boum, meritosque juvencos

Now what follows a little after this?

Hanc olim veteres vitam coluere Sabini,
Hanc Remus & frater, sic fortis Etruria crevit,
Scilicet & rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma

Which his Friend *Horace* seems to have done before him, in the Ode to *Augustus*, Lib I

Regulum & Scauros, animæque magnæ
Prodigum Paullum, superante pœna,
Ducem & insigni referam Camœna,
Fabriciumque

Hunc & incomptis Curium capillis
Utilem bello tulit, & Camillum
Sæva paupertas, & avitus apto
Cum cure fundus

This I will venture to say, that there never was a great Poet in the World but he had a Contempt for Riches Of which Opinion likewise is *Horace*.

——— *Vatis avarus*
Non temere est animus, versus amat, hoc studet unum

And there never was a little Poetaster, but he lov'd them, valu'd himself upon the Possession of them, and did base Things to acquire and to augment them

Nothing can shew any one more weak or more base, than to prefer Fortune to Merit, or vainly and vilely to endeavour to extol Fortune and to decry Merit. God has given extraordinary Merit to few, but he has subjected all to the Vicissitudes of human Affairs, as well as to Diseases and Death The greatest and most powerful of Monarchs are not exempted from the Power of Fortune, that is, from the unchangeable and irresistible Decrees of Providence· Nay, the greater and more powerful any one is, the more deplorable Misfortunes is he subjected to And therefore the Calamities of the Great generally supply the fittest Subjects for so noble a Poem as Tragedy.

Considering the Vicissitude of human Affairs, Men of the greatest Fortune and Power ought not to value themselves upon either But for this little Gentleman to strut and be conceited upon his having a Hundred a Year, to pretend to look down upon those whom he never had Capacity to look up to, to call their good Sense and their Reasoning Railing, because neither of them are his Talent, to say he will answer what they urge against him when he is as much *in Debt* as they are, at the same time that he owes his little Substance to a *vile Translation* of a *poor* but *excellent* Poet, who if he was not *in Debt*, it was because no Body would trust him To do all this, entertains the Publick with the most ridiculous Farce in the World Notwithstanding this, as long as he writes so scandalously as he has lately done, in so degenerate an Age he will not be without Readers For all Fools are fond of Scandal, because all Fools are Levellers But for the same Reasons that he has their Approbation, he is contemn'd by Men of sound Understanding

And now I appeal to every impartial sensible Reader, who shall have read this, and the following Remarks, and who has formerly read those upon *Homer*, *Windsor-Forest*, and the *Temple of Fame*, if I have not prov'd, both by convincing Reason and by undeniable Fact, That *A P——E* has himself a just and indefeasible Right to all those noble Appellations and Titles, which he so foolishly, and so wrongfully to himself and Company, squanders away upon others

REMARKS ON THE Rape of the Lock.

LETTER I.

SIR, *May* 1 1714

I SHALL now, according to my Promise, send you some *Observations* upon the *Rape of the Lock*, which is one of the last Imitations of the little mimicking Bard, and one of the most impertinent, to so high a Degree impertinent, that I am afraid of being accus'd of writing a *Satire* upon *Nothing*, as my Lord *Rochester* wrote a *Panegyrick*.

The Faults of this ridiculous Poem begin at the Title-Page. I will not insist upon the fantastical Composition of the Word *Heroi-Comical*; but I desire Leave to dwell a little upon the Thing. What can this Author mean by creating in his Readers an Expectation of Pleasantry, when there is not so much as one Jest in his Book? Of all Blockheads he is the most emphatically Dull, who, to an insipid tedious Tale, prefixes this impertinent Prelude, *Now, Gentlemen, expect a very good Jest! Now, my Masters, prepare to laugh!* Instead of *Heroi-Comical*, it should have been *Heroi-Tragical*, since it seems there was a Necessity for a fantastical Word For there is a great deal of *Tragedy* in this Poem, but not one Jot of *Comedy* But at the same Time there is nothing so *Tragical* in it, as what the Author *designs* for *Comedy*. For whenever he aims at a *Jest*, 'tis such sad deplorable Stuff, that he never fails to move *Compassion* by it

But now, Sir, to pass from the *Title-Page* to the *Dedication*, he need not have been at the Trouble of acquainting his fair Patroness, that he publish'd what he calls his *Poem*, before he had thought of what he calls his *Machinery* For the Book would have told her that, without the Epistle For what he calls his *Machinery* has no Manner of Influence upon what he calls his *Poem*, not in the least promoting, or preventing, or retarding the Action of it, as we shall shew more plainly when we come to treat of the *Machines* He has taken his *Machines*, he tells us, from the *Rosycrucians*, and 'tis with them, he tells his fair Patroness, that he must bring her acquainted And how bring her acquainted? Why, he must tell her what the Count *de Gabalis* says of them, who has given, it seems, the best Account that he knows of them If he had not too much Pride, the natural necessary Consequence of his Capacity, to be instructed, (for my Lord *Roscomon* is certainly in the Right, when he tells us, that

> *Pride, of all others, the most dang'rous Fault,*
> *Proceeds from Want of Sense, or Want of Thought*)

I would direct him to a better Account of them, which is to be found in a Writer of our own, who is infinitely a better Judge both of Persons and Things, than the fantastick Count *de Gabalis* and That is the most ingenious and most judicious Author of *Hudibras*, who has given this short Account of the *Rosycrucians*, in his Comment upon two Lines which are to be found in the Character of *Ralpho*, the facetious Squire of *Hudibras*, *Canto* I *Part* I and which two I have chosen for the Motto to these *Letters*.

> *In* Rosycrucian *Lore as learned*
> *As he that* verè Adeptus *earned*

The short Comment upon which is this

The Fraternity of the Rosycrucians *is very like the Sect of the antient* Gnostici, *who called themselves so from the excellent Learning they pretended to, although they were really the most ridiculous Sots of all Mankind.*

And then upon the Words *Verè Adeptus*, says he,

Verè Adeptus *is one who has commenc'd in their Phanatick Extravagance.*

Thus, if we will believe *Butler*, who, as we said below, is an admirable Judge both of Books and of Mankind, this judicious Author of the *Rape* has taken what he calls his *Machinery*, from the *Phanatick Extravagance* of the most ridiculous of all modern Sots, as their Predecessors the *Gnostici* were the most contemptible ones of all the Antient, a Sect that is as becoming of this *merry little Gentleman*, as it was of the facetious Squire of *Hudibras* And now tell me in good Earnest, Sir, is not the *Fair Lady* infinitely oblig'd to him for her new Acquaintance? an Acquaintance very *unbecoming Her*, tho' very *becoming* of *Him*

Thus, Sir, have I done with the *Title-Page* and the *Epistle* I shall proceed to Morrow upon the Body of the Book In the mean time I will assure you for your Comfort, that you shall never have a Letter of above a Sheet of Paper at a Time upon this *impertinent Subject* I am, Sir

Your most Humble and
Faithful Servant,
JOHN DENNIS.

LETTER II

SIR, *May* 3 1714.

I HOPE mine of the first of this Month came to your Hands, which contain'd some Reflections upon the *Dedication* and *Title-Page* of the *Rape of the Lock*, which latter creates an Expectation of *Pleasantry* in us, when there is not so much as one *Jest* in the Book

Quanto rectius hic qui nil molitur ineptè?

How much more judiciously does *Boileau* appear in the *Title-Page* of his *Lutrin*? In a servile Emulation of which, *this* and several late *fantastick Poems* appear both to you and me to have been writ. *Boileau* calls his *Lutrin* an *Heroick Poem*, and he is so far from raising an *Expectation* of Laughter, either in the *Title*, or in the *Beginning of the Poem*, that he tells Monsieur *de Lamoignon*, to whom he addresses it, that 'tis a *grave Subject*, and must be read with a *grave Countenance*

Garde toy de rire en ce grave sujet
Lutrin, Chant I

Butler modestly calls his *Poem*, by the Name of his Hero, *Hudibras*, and without endeavouring to prepossess his Reader, leaves the *Poem* itself to work its natural Effect upon him.

But now, Sir, since I have said that the *Rape of the Lock* seems to be writ in Imitation of the *Lutrin*, (I mean so far in Imitation, that the Author had

a Mind to get Reputation by writing a great many Verses upon an *inconsiderable Subject*, as *Boileau* appears to have done before him,) I believe it will not be disagreeable to you, if I shew the Difference between the *Lutrin* and this *fantastick Poem*

The *Rape of the Lock* is a very *empty Trifle*, without any *Solidity* or *sensible Meaning*, whereas the *Lutrin* is only a *Trifle* in *Appearance*, but under that Appearance carries a very grave and very important Instruction For if that *Poem* were only what it appears to be, *Boileau* would run counter to the *fam'd Rule* which he has prescrib'd to others

Auteurs, prêtez l'oreille à mes instructions,
Voulez vous faire aimer vos riches fictions?
Qu'en sçavantes leçons votre muse fertile,
Partout joigne au plaisant le solide & l'utile?
Un lecteur sage fuit un vain amusement,
Et veut mettre à profit son divertissement

And which *Horace* has given before him

Centuriæ seniorum agitant expertia frugis
Celsa prætereunt austera poemata Ramnes
Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo

And the Rule which my Lord *Roscomon* has given for *Translations*, is certainly more strong for *Originals*

Take then a Subject proper to expound,
But moral, great, and worth a Poet's Voice,
For Men of Sense despise a trivial Choice,
And such Applause it must expect to meet,
As would some Painter busy'd in a Street
To copy Bulls, and Bears, and every Sign,
That calls the staring Sots to nasty Wine

Now since 'tis impossible that so judicious an Author as *Boileau* should run counter to his own, and to the Instructions of his Master *Horace*, the *Lutrin* at the Bottom cannot be an *empty Trifle* 'Tis indeed a noble and important satirical Poem, upon the Luxury, the Pride, the Divisions, and Animosities of the Popish Clergy 'Tis true indeed the *admirable Address* of the Poet has made it in Appearance a *Trifle*, for otherwise it would not have been suffer'd in a bigotted Popish Country. But yet *Boileau* in some Places seems to have given broad Hints at what was his real Meaning, as in the following Passage.

La Deesse en entrant, qui voit la nappe mise,
Admire un si bel ordre, & reconnoit l'eglise
Lutrin Chant I

And this other Passage is still more bold

Pour soûtenir tes droits, que le ciel autorise,
Abîme tout plutôt, c'est l'esprit de l'eglise
Lutrin, Chant I

As the *Rape of the Lock* is an *empty Trifle*, it can have no *Fable* nor any Moral, whereas the *Lutrin* has both *Fable* and *Moral* 'Tis true, indeed, the *Allegory* under which that *Moral* is conceal'd, is not so perspicuous as *Boileau* would have made it, if it had not been for the Apprehension of provoking the Clergy. But, on the other Side, 'tis not so obscure, but that a penetrating Reader may see through it The Moral is, *That when Christians, and especially the Clergy, run into great Heats about religious Trifles, their Animosity proceeds from the Want of that Religion which is the Pretence of their Quarrel.* The Fable is this, 'Two Persons being deserted by true Piety, are embroil'd 'about a religious Trifle, to the Perplexity and Confusion of them and theirs 'Upon the Return of Piety, they agree to set aside the Trifle about which they 'differ'd, and are reconcil'd, to the Quiet and Satisfaction both of themselves 'and their Partizans'

If you will be pleased to compare the Beginning of the Sixth *Canto* with the rest of the Poem, you will easily see that this Account which I have given of the *Lutrin* is not without Foundation But you know very well, Sir, that there is not the least Shadow of a Moral or Fable in the *Rape*

As nothing could be more ridiculous than the writing a full, an exact, and a regular Criticism upon so empty a Business as this trifling Poem, I will say but a Word or two concerning the *Incidents*, and so have done with what relates immediately to the *Design* The Intention of the Author in writing this Poem, as we find in the Title-Page, is to raise the Mirth of the Reader, and we find by the Effects which *Hudibras* and the *Lutrin* produce in us, that *Butler* and *Boileau* wrote with the same Intention Now you know very well, Sir, that in a Poem which is built upon an Action, Mirth is chiefly to be rais'd by the *Incidents* For Laughter in *Comedy* is chiefly to be excited, like Terror and Compassion in Tragedy, by Surprize, when Things spring from one another against our Expectation. Now whereas there are *several* ridiculous Incidents in the *Lutrin*, as, The Owl in the Pulpit frighting the nocturnal Champions, The Prelate's giving his Benediction to his Adversary, by way of Revenge and Insult, The Battle in the Bookseller's Shop, &c And whereas there are a thousand such in *Hudibras*, There is not so much as *one*, nor the *Shadow of one*, in the *Rape of the Lock* Unless the Author's Friends will object here, That his *perpetual Gravity*, after the *Promise* of his Title, makes the whole Poem one continued *Jest*

I am Your's, &c

LETTER III

SIR, *May* 8 1714.

I COME now to the *Characters* and the *Machines*. The Characters in the *Lutrin* are well mark'd. They are the true Resemblances of Men, of active Men, who pursue earnestly what they are about. But there is no such Thing as a Character in the *Rape of the Lock* *Belinda*, who appears most in it, is a Chimera, and not a Character She is represented by the Author perfectly

beautiful and ***well-bred, modest*** and ***virtuous.*** Let us now see how he sustains these Qualities in her, and then we shall discover what Taste he has of *Nature* and of *Decorum*

First then he represents her perfectly ***beautiful***·

> Sol *thro' white Curtains did his Beams display,*
> *And op'd those Eyes which brighter shone than they*

And thus in the next Page the Sylphs accost her

> *Fairest of Mortals, thou distinguish'd Care*
> *Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air*

And yet in the latter End of this very *Canto* he makes her owe the greater Part of her Beauty to her Toilette

> *Unnumber'd Treasures ope at once, and here*
> *The various Offerings of the World appear,*
> *From each she nicely culls with curious Toil,*
> *And decks the Goddess with the glitt'ring Spoil,*
> *This Casket* India's *glowing Gems unlocks,*
> *And all* Arabia *breathes from yonder Box*
> *Now awful Beauty puts on all its Arms,*
> *The Fair each Moment rises in her Charms,*
> *Repairs her Smiles, awakens every Grace,*
> *And calls forth all the Wonders of her Face,*
> *Sees by Degrees a purer Blush arise,*
> *And keener Lightnings quicken in her Eyes*

Nay, the very *favourite Lock,* which is made the Subject for so many Verses, is not shewn so desirable for its native Beauty, as for the constant Artifice employ'd about it. Witness what *Thalestris* says to *Belinda* just after she had lost it

> *Was it for this you took such constant Care*
> *The Bodkin, Comb, and Essence to prepare?*
> *For this your Locks in Paper Durance bound,*
> *For this with torturing Irons wreath'd around?*
> *For this with Fillets strain'd your tender Head,*
> *And bravely bore the double Loads of Lead?*

Such Artifice must deface the Lustre of Locks which were naturally lovely, and the Toilette must of Necessity detract from perfect Beauty The Toilette indeed may add to some who are call'd Beauties, or to some who would be thought such. A decay'd superannuated Beauty may receive Advantage from her Toilette, may *rise* in her Charms, and by the Help of *Spanish Red,* a *purer Blush may arise.* But her *counterfeit Charms* can please none who have a Taste of *Nature*, according to that of *Tibullus*

> *Heu serò revocatur amor, seròque juventa,*
> *Cum vetus infecit cana senecta caput*
> *Tum studium formæ est, coma tùm mutatur ut annos*
> *Dissimulet, viridis cortice tincta nucis*

But for her who has Youth and Beauty,

Illa placet quamvis, inculto venerit ore,
Nec nitidum tardâ compserit arte caput

Such a one wants neither *Flounce* nor *Furbelow*, nor *torturing Irons*, nor *Paper Durance* When God and Nature design a Face to please, the Fair-one, on whom they bestow it, can never add to Workmanship Divine. She may spoil it indeed by Industry, but can never improve it They, who made it, alone know the certain Ways of going to the Heart of Man, and alone can give it those resistless inimitable Graces which Industry does but spoil, and which Artifice does but hide

Horace was as fond of his Mistress's Hair as any modern Lover can be· Witness what he says to *Mæcenas* in the twelfth Ode of the second Book;

Num tu, quæ tenuit dives Achæmenes,
Aut pinguis Phrygiæ Mygdonias opes
Permutare velis crine Lycymniæ,
Plenas aut Arabum Domos?

And yet as he and the rest of the antient Poets had an admirable Taste of Nature, they had quite another Taste of Beauty than what this Author discovers, and believ'd that the brightest Ornament, either of the Hair or Face, was Simplicity and a becoming Negligence.

Cui flavam religas comam
Simplex munditus?

Says *Horace* to *Pyrrha*, Ode V Lib 1
And in the eleventh Ode of *Lib* 2

Quis Deorum scortum ejecit domo
Lyden? Eburna dic age cum lyrâ
Maturet, in comptum Lacenæ
More comam religata nodum

Terence, who every where so exactly imitates Nature, takes a quite different Course from this Author to shew a touching Beauty The Passage is in the first Act of his *Phormio*

Virgo pulchra' & quo magis diceres,
Nil adcrat adjumenti ad pulchritudinem
Capillus passus, nudus pes, ipsa horrida
Lacrymæ, vestitus turpis, ut in vis boni
In ipsa inesset formâ, hæc formam extinguerent

Here was no Care, neither of Hair, nor Face, nor Shape, and yet how much more charming does this *Terentian* Virgin appear, ev'n in Rags and Misery, than *Belinda* does at her Toilette? I mean to those who have a Taste of Nature. For she, who ev'n in this miserable Plight mov'd all Beholders with Pleasure, and *Antipho* with Love, what might she not justly be suppos'd to do, adorn'd with a cleanly Negligence and Simplicity? I say, *adorn'd* with

them, for it may truly be said of every accomplish'd Beauty, what *Tasso* says of one of his

Di natura, d' amor, del cielo amici,
Le negligenze sue sono artifici

And our Ladies who spend so much Time at their Toilettes would do well to consider, that, after all the Pains which they take in adorning themselves, they who are most charm'd with their Persons, endeavour to retrieve their natural Beauty in Imagination at least, by divesting them of their borrow'd Ornaments, and cloathing them in the Simplicity of the rural Habit, when in their Sonnets they transform them to Shepherdesses

But the Author has not only shewn *Belinda* an accomplish'd *Beauty*, he represents her likewise a fine, modest, *well-bred* Lady

Favours to none, to all she Smiles extends
Canto II

And a little below,

With graceful Ease and Sweetness, void of Pride

And yet in the very next *Canto* she appears an arrant Ramp and a Tomrigg,

The Nymph exulting fills with Shouts the Sky,
The Walls, the Woods, and long Canals reply

Must not this be the legitimate Offspring of *Stentor*, to make such a Noise as that? The Nymph was within Doors, and she must set up her Throat at a hellish Rate, to make the Woods (where, by the by, there are none) and the Canals reply to it Let us turn to the fifth *Canto*, and we shall see her there as loud with Anger, as she is now with Joy

Restore the Lock, *she cries, and all around*
Restore the Lock *the vaulted Roofs rebound,*
Not fierce Othello *in so loud a Strain*
Roar'd for the Handkerchief that caus'd his Pain

Well, but his Friends will object here, that this is an *Hyperbole*, and an Hyperbole is design'd to carry us beyond the Truth, only that it may make us enter more justly into it and that when *Virgil* says of *Camilla*,

Illa vel intactæ segetis per summa volaret
Gramina, nec teneras cursu læsisset aristas,
Vel mare per medium fluctu suspensa tumenti,
Ferret iter, celeres nec tingeret æquore plantas, ——

He means only that *Camilla* was exceeding swift of Foot Why, be it so But then by the same Rule, must not the Author of the *Rape* mean, that *Belinda shouted* and *roar'd* very loud, and that, in short, she made a *diabolick Din*? Now is *Shouting* and *Roaring* proper for a well-bred Lady? Are they not below the Modesty and the Decency even of those *sonorous* Nymphs of the Flood, who haunt the Banks of the vocal *Thames* between the *Bridge* and the *Tower*?

Let us look once more upon the last *Canto*, p 44. Is she not a terrible *Termagant* there, and the exact Resemblance of *Magnano*'s Lady in *Hudibras*?

> *See* fierce Belinda *on the Baron flies,*
> *With more than usual Lightning in her Eyes——*
> *Now meet thy Fate, th'* incens'd Virago *cry'd,*
> *And drew a deadly Bodkin from her Side*

But *Belinda* is not only shewn *beautiful* and *well-bred*, she is represented *virtuous* too

> *Favours to none, to all she Smiles extends*

And yet in the latter End of the fourth *Canto* she talks like an errant *Suburbian*

> *Oh, hadst thou, Cruel, been content to seize*
> *Hairs* less in Sight, *or* any *Hairs but these*

Thus, Sir, has this Author given his fine Lady *Beauty* and *good Breeding*, *Modesty* and *Virtue* in Words, but has in Reality and in Fact made her an *artificial dawbing Jilt*, a *Tomrig*, a *Virago*, and a *Lady of the Lake*.

There is no other Character in this Poem worth taking Notice of I should now come to the *Machines*, in which you might expect to be entertain'd with something more curious and more ridiculous But I have already detain'd you too long, and must defer it till the next Opportunity

I am, Sir,
Yours, &c.

LETTER IV

SIR, *May* 9 1714.

According to the Promise made in my last, I am now to treat of the *Machines*, in the doing which I shall lie under a great Disadvantage For before I come to those of the *Rape* it is necessary to say something of *Machines* in general, of the *Reason* of introducing them, of the *Method* us'd by the antient Poets in employing them, and of the *Practice* of the greatest and best of the Moderns 'Tis necessary to say something to all these, in order to shew the Absurdity of our Author's *Machines*, and his utter Ignorance of the Art he pretends to But to treat of all these in as ample a Manner as the Subject deserves, would require a Volume And on the other Side it would be extravagant to spend a great deal of Time to so insignificant an End But when I consider that I write to a Gentleman who is perfectly well vers'd in these Matters, and who consequently will comprehend a great deal by a little, I find to my Comfort that it will be easy to avoid both those Inconveniences, of saying a great deal, and of saying nothing

The Reasons, that first oblig'd those Poets which are call'd Heroic to introduce *Machines* into their *Poems*, were,

First, To make their *Fable* and their *Action* more instructive For, says *Bossu*, *Lorsque les poetes sont devenus philosophes moraux, ils n'ont pas cessé*

d'etre theologiens. Au contraire, la morale qu'ils traitent, les oblige indispensablement, de mêler la divinité dans leurs Ouvrages; parceque la conoissance, la crainte, & l'amour de Dieu, en un mot, la piete, & la religion sont les premiers, & les plus solides fondements, des autres vertus, & de tout la morale.

By introducing Machines into their Fables, the Epic Poets shew'd two Things, 1. That the great Revolutions in human Affairs are influenc'd by a particular Providence. 2 That the Deity himself promotes the Success of an Action form'd by Virtue, and conducted by Prudence. But,

Secondly, The Heroic Poets introduc'd *Machines* into their Fables in order to make those Fables more *delightful* For the employing *Machines* made the Actions of those Poems *wonderful*, now every Thing that is *wonderful* is of course *delightful* Let us see what one of the greatest Masters among the Moderns says to this

Qu'Ænee & ses vaisseaux par les ventes ecartez,
Soient aux bords Affricains d'un orage emportez,
Ce n'est qu'une aventure ordinaire & commune,
Qu'un coup peu surprenant, des traits de la fortune
Mais que Junon constante en son aversion,
Poursuive sur les flots les restes d'Ilion,
Qu'Eole en sa faveur les chassant d'Italie,
Ouvre aux vents mutinez les prisons d'Eolie,
Que Neptune en courroux, s'elevant sur la mer,
D'un mot calme les flots, mette la paix dans l'air,
Delivre les vaisseaux, des Syrtes les arrache,
C'est la ce qui surprend, frappe, saisit, attache,
Sans tous ces ornemens le vers tombe en langueur
La poesie est morte, ou rampe sans vigueur,
Le poete n'est plus, qu'un orateur timide
Qu'un froid historien d'un fable insipide

This says the most judicious M *Despreaux* in his *Art of Poetry*, and the four last Lines remind me here of what I have at large discours'd upon other Occasions, *viz* That as the Epic Poets by their *Machines* made the *Actions* of their Fables more *wonderful* and more *delightful*, as well as more *instructive*, they likewise made the *poetical Expression* more *wonderful* and more *delightful*, since 'tis from them that they chiefly derive that Greatness of Expression which renders their Works so Divine

I shall now come to the Practice of the antient Poets, and the Method which they made use of in introducing their *Machines*, in order to render their Poems more *instructive* and more *delightful*

1 They took their *Machines* from the Religion of their Country, upon which Account these *Machines* made the stronger Impression, and made their Fables, and the Actions of them, *probable* as well as *wonderful*, for nothing was more natural than for those antient Heathens to believe that the Powers which they ador'd were wont to intermeddle in human Affairs, and to promote the Success of those Designs which they favour'd, and nothing could be more natural for

them, than to believe that that Design must prosper which was espous'd by *Jupiter*. But this was not all; for the *Machines*, by making the Actions of their Poems *probable*, made them *wonderful* to Men of Sense, who never can admire any Thing in Humanity which *Reason* will not let them believe But,

2. The antient Poets made their *Machines* allegorical, as well as their human Persons.

3. They oppos'd them to one another.

4. They shew'd a just Subordination among them, and a just Proportion between their Functions While one was employ'd about the greatest and the sublimest Things, another was not busied about the most trifling and most contemptible.

5. They always made their *Machines* influence the Actions of their Poems, and some of those *Machines* endeavour'd to *advance* the Action of their respective Poem, and others of them endeavour'd to *retard* it.

6 They made them infinitely more powerful than the human Persons.

But, Secondly, The Practice of the greatest modern Heroic Poets is conformable to that of the antient

1. They take their *Machines* from the Religion of their Country, witness *Milton, Cowley, Tasso*

2 They make them Allegorical

3. They oppose them to one another

4 They shew a just Subordination among them, and a just Proportion between their Functions

The Author of the *Rape* has run counter to this Practice both of the Antients and Moderns He has not taken his *Machines* from the Religion of his Country, nor from any Religion nor from Morality His Machines contradict the Doctrines of the Christian Religion, contradict all sound Morality, there is no allegorical nor sensible Meaning in them, and for these Reasons they give no Instruction, make no Impression at all upon the Mind of a sensible Reader. Instead of making the Action wonderful and delightful, they render it extravagant, absurd and incredible They do not in the least influence that Action, they neither prevent the Danger of *Belinda*, nor promote it, nor retard it, unless, perhaps, it may be said, for one Moment, which is ridiculous And if here it be objected, that the Author design'd only to *entertain* and *amuse*, To that I answer. That for that very Reason he ought to have taken the utmost Care to make his Poem *probable*, according to the important Precept of *Horace*.

Ficta voluptatis causâ sint proxima veris

And that we may be satisfy'd that this Rule is founded in *Reason* and *Nature*, we find by constant Experience, that any thing that shocks *Probability* is most insufferable in Comedy.

There is no Opposition of the *Machines* to one another in this *Rape of the Lock*. *Umbriel* the *Gnome* is not introduc'd till the Action is over, and till *Ariel* and the Spirits under him, have quitted *Belinda*.

There is no just *Subordination* among these *Machines,* nor any just *Proportion* between their *Functions* *Ariel* summons them together, and talks to them as if he were their Emperor.

> *Ye* Sylphs *and* Sylphids, *to your Chief give ear,*
> Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, *and* Dæmons, *hear,*
> *Ye know the Spheres and various Tasks assign'd,*
> *By Laws eternal, to th' aerial Kind*
> *Some in the Fields of purest* Æther *play,*
> *And bask and whiten in the Blaze of Day*
> *Some guide the Course of wandring Orbs on high,*
> *Or roll the Planets thro' the boundless Sky* ——
> *Or brew fierce Tempests on the watry Main,*
> *Or o'er the Glebe distil the kindly Rain*
> *Others on Earth o'er human Race preside,*
> *Watch all their Ways, and all their Actions guide*
> *Of these the Chief the Care of Nations own,*
> *And guard with Arms Divine the* British *Throne*

Now, Sir, give me leave to ask you one Question Did you ever hear before that the Planets were roll'd by the aerial Kind? We have heard indeed of Angels and Intelligences who have perform'd these Functions But they are vast glorious Beings, of *Celestial* Kind, and *Machines* of another System Pray which of the *aerial* Kind have these *sublime* Employments? For nothing can be more ridiculous or more contemptible, than the Employments of those whom he harangues

> *To save the Powder from too rude a Gale,*
> *Nor let th' imprison'd Essences exhale*

There is a Difference almost infinite between these vile Functions and the former sublime ones, and therefore they can never belong to Beings of the same Species Which of the aerial Kinds are the Movers of Orbs on high, or the Guardians of Empires below, when he who calls himself their Chief, is only the Keeper of a vile *Iseland Cur,* and has not so much as the Intendance of the Lady's *Favourite Lock,* which is the Subject of the Poem? But that is entrusted to an inferior Spirit, contrary to all manner of Judgment and Decorum.

The *Machines* that appear in this Poem are infinitely less considerable than the *human Persons,* which is without Precedent. Nothing can be so contemptible as the *Persons,* or so foolish as the *Understandings* of these *Hobgoblins.* *Ariel's* Speech, for the first thirty Lines, is one continu'd Impertinence For, if what he says is true, he tells them nothing but what they knew as well as himself before And when he comes at length to the *Point,* he is full as impertinent as he was in his *Ramble* before, for after he has talk'd to them of *black Omens* and *dire Disasters* that threaten his Heroine, these Bugbears dwindle to the breaking a Piece of *China,* the staining a *Petticoat,* the losing a *Necklace,* a *Fan,* or a Bottle of *Sal Volatile.* But we shall consider this Passage further when we come to examine the *Sentiments,* and then we shall see, that

Sawney takes the Change here, and 'tis *He*, a little *Lump of Flesh*, that talks, instead of a little *Spirit*.

That which makes this Speech more ridiculous, is the Place where it is spoken, and that is upon the Sails and Cordage of *Belinda*'s Barge, which is certainly taken from the two Kings of *Brentford* descending in Clouds, and singing in the Style of our modern Spirits

> 1 King *O stay, for you need not as yet go astray,*
> *The Tide, like a Friend, has brought Ships in our Way,*
> *And on their high Ropes we will play*

But now, Sir, for the *Persons* of these Sylphs and Sylphids, you see what Ideas the Threats of *Ariel* give us of them, when he threatens them, that for their Neglect they shall

> *Be stopt in Vials, or transfix'd with Pins,*
> *Or plung'd in Lakes of bitter Washes lie,*
> *Or wedg'd whole Ares in a Bodkin's Eye*

Discord is describ'd by *Homer* with her Feet upon the Earth, and Head in the Skies Upon which *Longinus* cries out, That this is not so much the Measure of *Discord*, as of *Homer*'s *Capacity*, and *Elevation* of *Genius*. Ev'n so these *diminutive Beings* of the intellectual World, may be said to be the *Measure* of Mr. *Pope*'s *Capacity* and *Elevation* of Genius They are, indeed, Beings so *diminutive*, that they bear the same Proportion to the rest of the intellectual, that Eels in Vinegar do to the rest of the material World The latter are only to be seen thro' *Microscopes*, and the former only thro' the false Optics of a *Rosycrucian* Understanding

I shall mention but one or two more of the numerous Defects which are to be found in the *Machines* of this Poem, the one is, The Spirits, which he intends for *benign* ones, are *malignant*, and those, which he designs for *malignant*, are *beneficent* to Mankind The *Gnomes* he intends for *malignant*, and the *Sylphs* for *beneficent* Spirits Now the *Sylphs* in this Poem promote that *Female Vanity* which the *Gnomes* mortify And Vanity is not only a great Defect in Human Nature, but the Mother of a thousand Errors, and a thousand Crimes, and the Cause of most of the Misfortunes which are incident to Humanity.

The last Defect that I shall take notice of, is, That the *Machines* in this Poem are not taken from *one System*, but are *double*, nay *treble* or *quadruple* In the first *Canto* we hear of nothing but *Sylphs*, and *Gnomes*, and *Salamanders*, which are *Rosycrucian* Visions In the second we meet with *Fairies*, *Genii*, and *Dæmons*, Beings which are unknown to those Fanatick Sophisters In the fourth, *Spleen* and the *Phantoms* about, are deriv'd from the Powers of *Nature*, and are of a separate System And *Fate* and *Jove*, which we find in the fifth *Canto*, belong to the Heathen Religion

But now, Sir, in treating of these Matters, I have, before I perceiv'd it, transgress'd the Bounds which I prescrib'd to my self, which I desire that you would excuse.

I am, SIR,
Yours, &c.

LETTER V.

SIR,

I HAVE now shewn that there is no such Thing as a *Fable* or *Characters* in the Poem of the *Rape*, and that what he calls his *Machinery* is most extravagantly chosen I now come to the *Sentiments*, which are more absurd than the rest, and of such an odd Composition, that they are at one and the same Time both *trivial* and *extravagant*

The Absurdity of the *Sentiments* begins with the Book, and the Author stumbles at the Threshold.

What dire Offence from amorous Causes springs,
What mighty Quarrels rise from trivial Things,
I Sing —— This Verse to C———— Muse is due

Where in three Lines there are no less than two Errors in the *Sentiments*. For, in the first Place, tho' the Author has neither *Fable* nor *general Action*, yet he proposes to sing something *general*, rather than that *particular Action* which is the *Subject* of his Poem, and he begins as if he design'd to make the Reader expect a *Treatise* of Love-Quarrels, which Proceeding is just contrary to the Practice of *Homer*, and *Virgil*, and to the Dictates of *right Reason* *Homer* and *Virgil* had *accomplish'd Fables*, and their *Actions* at the Bottom were *universal* and *allegorical* Yet they each of them propos'd to sing these *Actions*, as they had *particularis'd* them by the Imposition of Names *Homer* begins thus

Muse, sing the baleful Fury of Achilles

And *Virgil* thus

Arma virumque cano, Trojæ qui primus ab oris
Italiam, fato profugus, Lavinaque venit
Littora ——

In the third Line he does not invoke the Muse to sing, but proposes to do it himself And tho' he names the Muse immediately afterwards, he does it, forsooth, to acquaint her, that 'tis not she, but *Belinda*, that is to inspire him

—— This Verse to C———— Muse is due,
This ev'n Belinda *may vouchsafe to view*
Slight is the Subject, but not so the Praise,
If she inspire, and He approve my Lays

So that he has desir'd no Assistance from the *Muse*, and none she has afforded him.

The *Muse* indeed could not possibly assist him in this Case. The *Muse* is a Machine like *Fate* and *Jove*, belonging originally to the *Ethnic* System, and transferr'd sometimes to the Christian Religion only allegorically, and the *Muse* cannot be suppos'd to bring him acquainted with *Rosycrucian* Spirits, which would destroy her own Divinity, either as Heathen or Christian, since they are Beings utterly unknown, either to the *Ethnic* System, or to the Christian Religion So that 'tis *Belinda*, and not the *Muse*, that is to inspire

him. He introduces *her* into the Acquaintance of the *Sylphs* and *Sylphids* in his Epistle, and she is to bring *him* acquainted with them in the Body of the Book. And now, Sir, is not this very *ingeniously*, and very *judiciously* contriv'd? He has desir'd no Assistance from the *Muse*, and, as I said before, none he has had from her. The whole Poem seems to have been infus'd by a *Coquette*, and not inspir'd by a *Muse*

I have already acquainted you, Sir, that I would not in the *Examen* of this Poem confine my self to an exact and regular Method For neither is the Subject worth the while, nor ought a Letter to a Friend to be writ with any Restraint. I shall therefore take the *Sentiments* of this Poem as they come in my way, without pretending to rank them under their respective Classes, excepting perhaps the *Puns*, which are numerous, and by which the Author frequently shocks not only the Dictates of *Good Sense*, and the Rules of *true Pleasantry*, but those of *Grammar* and *common English* But those we shall omit till we have done with the rest

There is in this first *Canto*, *pag.* 4 a very unlucky Imitation of a Passage in the sixth Book of *Virgil*

Quæ gratia currûm
Armorumque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes
Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos

Which the Author of the *Rape* has thus imitated

Think not, when Woman's transient Breath is fled,
That all her Vanities at once are dead,
Succeeding Vanities she still regards,
And tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the Cards
Her Joy in gilded Chariots when alive,
And Love of Ombre, after Death survive

Now there is this remarkable Difference between these two Passages, that what *Virgil* says of the Souls in the *Elysian* Fields, that they were pleas'd with the same Diversions after Death, of which they were fond in their Life-times, does by no means contradict any Doctrine of that Religion which the *Romans* deriv'd from the *Grecians*; but the Passage in the *Rape* shocks the fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Religion, and is therefore a most absurd Imitation.

I have already shewn, in speaking of the *Characters*, how injudicious all that Passage is, in the 8th and 9th Pages, which relates to the Toilette And as I do not pretend to shew all his Errors, but only some few which are very gross ones, I shall now pass to the second *Canto*, in which *Canto*, pag 11 there is a Remark that cannot but be the Effect of very *wise* and very *deep* Observation

With hairy Springes we the Birds betray,
Slight Lines of Hair surprize the finny Prey,
Fair Tresses Man's imperial Race insnare,
And Beauty draws us with a single Hair

That is to say, *Birds* are caught by the *Heels*, and *Fish* by the *Jaws*, with *Horse-Hair*; and *Men* are hamper'd by the *Souls* with *Woman's Hair* Tell

me truly, Sir, is not this the Effect of very *wise* and very *deep* Observation? I have been so taken with these four Verses, that I could not forbear making the four following in Imitation of them

With jingling Bells Night-Fowlers Birds betray,
With these Night-Anglers catch the finny Prey
Small Poets hamper Fools by jingling Rhimes,
And Nonsense draws them by its senseless Chimes

In this second *Canto, pag* 12 we have another Imitation of *Virgil,* and one ten times more unhappy than the former in the first *Canto.* The Passage of *Virgil* is in the second Book of the *Æneis*

Dolus, an virtus, quis in hoste requirat?

That is to say, If a Captain obtains a Victory, few enquire whether he ow'd it to Stratagem or open Force

The Imitation is included in the following Lines

Th' adventurous Baron the bright Lock admir'd,
He saw, he wish'd, and to the Prize aspir'd,
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the Way
By Force to ravish, or by Fraud betray
For when Success a Lover's Toil attends,
Few ask, if Fraud or Force attain'd his Ends

Now the Mischief of it is, that if a Lover obtains his Ends by *Force,* the whole Country makes a very severe Enquiry into it, by their Representative, a *petty Jury,* and if he happens to be convicted of it in that Case poor Culprit passes his Time but scurvily

In the Letter, which I lately sent you concerning the *Characters,* I mention'd several of the *Sentiments* which are to be found in *Ariel*'s Speech But I know not how I omitted that which follows

To fifty chosen Sylphs of special Note
We trust, th important Charge, the Petticoat
Oft have we known that sevenfold Fence to fail,
Though stiff with Hoops, and arm'd with Ribs of Whale

Where, Sir, 'tis easy to observe, that as 'tis *Belinda*'s Petticoat of which he commits the important Charge to the Sylphs, 'tis the Petticoat of the same *Belinda,* according to all *English* Meaning, and all true grammatical Construction, that he has known so often to fail in spight of the Hoops of Whalebone And now I leave you to judge if there was not Reason for telling Mrs *Arabella,* in the Epistle, that Madam *Belinda* was not like her.

There seems indeed to be a *terrible Shock* made upon the same Petticoat, in the Beginning of the fifth *Canto, pag.* 42

All side in Parties, and begin th' Attack,
Fans clap, Silks rattle, and tough Whale-bones crack

By *tough Whalebones* he cannot mean those of the *Fans,* for they are *limber* enough. Besides, *Fans* were mention'd in the Beginning of this last Verse.

The *tough Whale-bones* then, at the latter End of it, are those of the *Petticoat*, and could not possibly be heard to *crack*, unless a *violent Attack* had been made upon it.

At the Bottom of *Pag.* 15. *Canto* III there is a very notable Thought:

Coffee, which makes the Politician wise,
And see through all Things with his half-shut Eyes,
Sent up in Vapours to the Baron's Brain
New Stratagems the radiant Lock to gain

Now what was this *new Stratagem*, or these *new Stratagems*? Why, the Baron comes *behind Belinda* as she was drinking her Coffee, and, snap, off goes the Lock. Now if this was the *new Stratagem*, what in the Name of *Impertinence* could be the *old one*?

But the *profoundest* and *wisest* Reflections of all, are at the End of this third *Canto*

What Time would spare, from Steel receives its Date,
And Monuments, like Men, submit to Fate
Steel did the Labour of the Gods destroy,
And strike to Dust th' imperial Tow'rs of Troy
Steel could the Works of mortal Pride confound,
And hew triumphal Arches to the Ground
What Wonder then, fair Nymph, thy Hair should feel
The conquering Force of unresisting Steel?

Why, who the Devil, besides this Bard, ever made a Wonder of it? What! before *Troy* Town, and triumphal Arches were built, was the cutting off a Lock of Hair a *miraculous* Thing? But we may very properly apply what he says of Steel, and the cutting off a Lock of Hair to *Fire*, and the burning of a *Faggot*

What Time would spare, from Fire *receives its Date,*
And lofty Piles, like Men, submit to Fate,
Fire *did the Work of Demi Gods consume,*
And laid in Dust th' imperial Tow'rs of Rome
Fire *could the Works of mortal Pride confound,*
And level this proud City with the Ground
To Fire *a Victim sacred* Paul's *could fall,*
And the regal Turrets of Whitehall
What Wonder, one poor Faggot *should expire*
By the resistless Force of conquering Fire?

But, Sir, I have once more unawares transgress'd the Bounds prescrib'd to my self, and am,

Yours, &c

LETTER VI

SIR,

THE Complaint which you make of my long Silence, and the Interruption of this *weighty* Affair, seems to be a Return to that Compliment which I design'd to make you, by discontinuing my Observations upon these arrant *Bawbles*. It was in Complaisance to you that I began to make them, and it

was out of Respect to your Judgment that I left them off. They began to run into Length, and I thought I might as reasonably entertain you with voluminous Remarks upon *Mites* in *Cheese*, or upon *Eels* in *Vinegar*, as with tedious Observations on Mr. *Pope*'s Poems

But since 'tis your Desire that I should make an end of what I have begun, I am resolv'd to comply with it, as far as my Indisposition, and my Affairs, and the Satiety which I have contracted in saying so much already, will permit me For the Difficulty here does not lie in *making Remarks*, but in *Reading*. The Faults are so gross and so numerous, that there is no more Pleasure in finding them, than there is in hunting in a Hare-Warren

I am now come to the *Sentiments*, which are to be found in the fourth and fifth *Cantos* of this notable Poem I shall only take notice of a very few, by which you and your Friends may judge of the whole.

The first Thing I shall take notice of, is the impertinent Journey of *Umbriel* the *Gnome*, who

> *Down to the central Earth, his proper Scene,*
> *Repairs to search the gloomy Cave of Spleen*
> Pag 3

Now to what Purpose does this fantastick Being take this Journey? Why, to give *Belinda* the Spleen In order to which, *Spleen* equips him with a *Bottle* and a *Bag*, as a Country Dame does her *Plough-Jobber*, to equip him for his Day's Work.

> *A wondrous Bag with both her Hands she binds,*
> *Like that where once* Ulysses *held the Winds,*
> *There she collects the Force of female Lungs,*
> *Sighs, Sobs, and Passions, and the War of Tongues*
> *A Vial next she fills with fainting Fears,*
> *Soft Sorrows, melting Griefs, and flowing Tears*

Now what could be more impertinent than this Journey of *Umbriel*, or more vain and useless than this Gift of *Spleen*, whether we look upon the *Bag* or the *Bottle*?

Umbriel descends to the *central Earth* to give *Belinda* the *Spleen*. Now 'tis plain, that before his Descent he leaves her *mad*, and upon his Return, finds her in a *Fit of the Mother*

That before his Journey he leaves her *mad*, is I think pretty plain, from *pag.* 28.

> *Then flash'd the livid Lightning from her Eyes,*
> *And* Screams *of* Horror *rend th'* affrighted *Skies*
> *Not* louder Shrieks *by Dames to Heaven are cast* ——

That upon his Return he finds her in a *Fit of the Mother*, is manifest from *p.* 35

> *Sunk in* Thalestris' *Arms the Nymph he found,*
> *Her Eyes dejected, and her Hair unbound*

How absurd was it then for this *Ignis Fatuus* to take a Journey down to the *central Earth*, for no other Purpose than to give her the *Spleen*, whom he left

and found in the Height of it? And why does this impertinent Devil, who *sees* this, give himself the Trouble which he takes in the following Lines·

> *Full o'er their Heads the swelling Bag he rent,*
> *And all the Furies issu'd at the Vent,*
> Belinda *burns with more than mortal Ire* Ibid

Now, pray, what were the *Furies* enclos'd in this Bag? Why, we were told what they were a little higher, *viz.* the *Force* of *female Lungs*, and *Bedlam Passions*, and the *War* of *Tongues*. Now could *Belinda* have more of those than she had before the *Gnome* took his Journey?

> *Then flash'd the livid Lightning from her Eyes,*
> *And Screams of Horror rend th' affrighted Skies*

And as for the *Bottle*, that seems like *Trincalo's*, rather to *comfort* her, than to *ferment* her more For let us but consider the Condition in which *Umbriel* found her upon his Return,

> *Sunk in* Thalestris' *Arms the Nymph he found,*
> *Her Eyes dejected, and her Hair unbound*

That is to say, she was *stark mad*

Now let us compare this Condition with that in which she appears after she has a *Dram* of the *Bottle*

> *But* Umbriel, *hateful Gnome, forbears not so,*
> *He breaks the Vial whence the Sorrows flow*

Now, pray, what is the Consequence? Why, *Belinda* of a sudden comes to herself, holds up her Head, and is calm enough to make Reflections

The next Thing I shall take notice of, is the *Equipage* of *Spleen*, and this Author's giving her *two Handmaids*, the one of which ought rather to be her *Mother* than her *Maid*, and the other can have nothing at all to do with her.

> *Two Handmaids wait the Throne, alike in Place,*
> *But diff'ring far in Figure and in Face*
> *Here stood* Ill-Nature, *like an antient Maid* ——

Here the Author, with a great deal of Judgment makes a *Universal* subordinate to a *Particular*. *Ill-Nature* may with some Colour be said to be the *Mother* of *Spleen*, but she can never be call'd her *Maid*, without shocking common Sense. The *Nature* of a Man must be *coeval* to the *Man*, and must far *precede* any Thing that the World calls *Spleen* in him. But let us take a View of her other Handmaid, *pag.* 32.

> *There* Affectation *with a sickly Mien,*
> *Shews in her Cheeks the Roses of eighteen*

Now *Affectation* can never have any Thing to do with *Spleen*. *Spleen* is the *Mother* of *Passion*, which is *Nature*; *Affectation* is the *Child* of *Tranquillity*, and for the most part is nothing but *counterfeit Passion*. Now he, who has

violent Passions of his *own*, is hardly at leisure to counterfeit those which are *foreign* to him; and therefore it has been often seen, that when too much *Felicity* has made a Fop *affected*, *Spleen* and *Adversity* have brought him back to *Nature*

I will not take notice of the various Errors in the Description of what he calls the *Palace of Spleen*. I shall content myself with the Mention of one of them, which may not improperly be call'd the *impossible Transformation*

Unnumber'd Throngs on ev'ry Side are seen
Of Bodies chang'd to various Forms by Spleen,
Here living Tea-pots stand, one Arm held out,
One bent, the Handle this, and that the Spout
A Pipkin there, like Homer's *Tripod walks,*
Here sighs a Jar, and there a Goose-pie talks
Men prove with Child, as pow'rful Fancy works,
And Maids, turn'd Bottles, call aloud for Corks

Now, Sir, I appeal to you and your Friends, if ever there was such execrable Stuff, such lamentable, such deplorable Pleasantry! What says *Horace*?

Scribendi rectè sapere est & principium & fons

Good Sense is the sole Foundation of good Writing And, according to him, *Boileau*,

Quelque sujet qu'on traite, ou plaisant, ou sublime,
Que toujours le bon sens s'accorde avec la rime

Good Sense is the only Foundation both of Pleasantry and Sublimity But that which is out of *Truth*, is certainly out of *Nature* and *Good Sense* Now was ever any Thing more out of *Truth* than the foregoing Description? Instead of giving *Spleen* a Power to bring *melancholy Delusions* upon Mortals, and to cheat them with *false Appearances*, this Author gives her the Power really to *transform Bodies*, and makes *Umbriel* the *Gnome*, who, as a Spirit, is suppos'd to see Things as they are, *actually* and *really* to behold that *extravagant Transformation* But so much for the Sentiments of the fourth *Canto*

As the fifth is very short, and very insipid, and as your humble Servant is very much tir'd, I shall make but two Observations upon it

In the Beginning of it there is a *rampant Scuffle*, which I suppose our Author took from the *Rankness* of a *Buttock-Ball*, so little is it becoming of Persons of Condition.

All side in Parties, and begin th' Attack,
Fans clap, Silks rustle, and tough Whale-bones crack,
Heroes and Heroines Shouts confus'dly rise,
And bass and treble Voices strike the Skies
No common Weapons in their Hands are found,
Like Gods they fight, nor dread a mortal Wound

The latter Part is something odd in the Mouth of the Translator of *Homer*, who ought to know, that both *Mars* and *Venus* had been wounded by *Diomedes* But if no *common Weapons* are found in the Hands of these Combatants, pray

what Weapons are they which make the *Silks to rustle,* and the *Whale-bones to crack*? But let us consider what follows

So when bold Homer *makes the Gods engage,*
And heavenly Breasts with human Passions rage,
'Gainst Pallas, Mars, Latona, Hermes *arms,*
And all Olympus *rings with loud Alarms*
Jove's Thunder roars, Heav'n trembles all around,
Blue Neptune *storms, the bellowing Deeps resound,*
Earth shakes her nodding Tow'rs, the Ground gives way,
And the pale Ghosts start at the Flash of Day

Now, Sir, who says that this Passage is not very justly applied to a *Catterwauling*? But the latter Part of it is not taken from *Homer,* but from his most impertinent Imitator Monsieur *De la Motte,* and neither the one nor the other Trifler seem to have known any thing in this Passage, of the Solemnity, and the dreadful Majesty of *Homer*

In the Beginning of the next Page the following Lines are full of miserable Pleasantry

While thro' the Press enrag'd Thalestris *flies,*
And scatters Death around from both her Eyes,
A Beau and Witling perish'd in the Throng,
One died in Metaphor, and one in Song
O cruel Nymph! a living Death I bear,
Cry'd Dapperwit, *and sunk beneath his Chair*
A mournful Glance, Sir Fopling *upwards cast,*
Those Eyes are made so killing! —— *was his last*

So that here we have a *real Combat* and a *metaphorical dying* Now is not that, Sir, very ludicrous? What, did he fight, or make Love, as Professors read, or as Popes fulminate, *ex Cathedrâ*? I cannot imagine how he could do that, unless he had got *Belinda* or *Thalestris* upon his Lap

Thus, Sir, have I gone thro' several of the *Sentiments* upon the *Rape,* which are either *trifling,* or *false* But there are a great many Lines, which have *no Sentiment* at all in them, that is, no *reasonable Meaning* Such are the *Puns* which are every where spread throughout it *Puns* bear the same Proportion to *Thought,* that *Bubbles* hold to *Bodies,* and may justly be compared to those gaudy Bladders which Children make with Soap, which, tho' they please their weak Capacities with a momentary Glittering, yet are but just beheld, and vanish into Air. Of this Nature is that Pun in the *5th Canto, p.* 44

See fierce Belinda *on the Baron flies,*
With more than usual Lightning in her Eyes,
Nor fears the Chief th' unequal Fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his Foe to die

That is to say, *He wish'd for nothing more than to fight with her, because he desired nothing more than to lie with her* Now what sensible Meaning can this have, unless he takes her for a *Russian,* who is to grow passionately fond of

him by the extraordinary Gallantry of a lusty Bastinado? Such likewise is that *Quibble* in the following Page:

> *Boast not my Fall, (he cry'd) Insulting Foe,*
> *Thou by some others shalt be laid as low*

Now we heard nothing before of the Baron's lying low. All that we heard is, that by a dextrous Toss of this *modest Virgin*, his Nostrils were fill'd with Snuff So that he seems here to say the same thing to her, that *Nykin* says to *Cocky* in the *Old Batchelor, I have it in my Head, but you will have it in another Place* What follows seems to be very extraordinary·

> *Nor think to die dejects my lofty Mind,*
> *All that I dread is leaving you behind*
> *Rather than so, ah! let me still survive,*
> *And burn in* Cupid's *Flames, but burn alive*

Now, Sir, who ever heard of a dead Man that burnt in *Cupid*'s Flames?

Of the same Nature are those numerous Banters in Rhyme, which are to be found throughout this Poem, which are so uniform, and so much of a piece, that one would swear the Author were giving a Receipt for dry Joking For by placing something important in the Beginning of a Period, and making something very trifling follow it, he seems to take pains to bring *something* into a Conjunction Copulative with *nothing*, in order to beget *nothing* Of this there are divers Instances in *Ariel*'s Speech in the *2d Canto*,

> *This Day black Omens threat the brightest Fair*
> *That e'er deserv'd the watchfull'st Spirit's Care,*
> *Some dire Disaster, or by Force or Sleight,*
> *But what, or where, the Fates have wrapt in Night*
> *Whether the Nymph shall break* Diana's *Law,*
> *Or some frail* China *Jar receive a Flaw,*
> *Or stain her Honour, or her new Brocade,*
> *Forget her Pray'rs, or miss a Masquerade,*
> *Or lose her Heart, or Necklace at a Ball,*
> *Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that* Shock *must fall*

Which, by the way, I suppose is design'd as a bitter Bob for the *Predestinarians* Raillery apart, we pretend not to deny, that the very minutest Events are foredoom'd by eternal Prescience, but that Heaven should give notice of the Death of a vile Dog, by what he calls black Omens, is a great deal too strong Heaven could do no more for *Cæsar* himself, the very Top of the human Creation, and the Foremost Man of the Universe.

But now, Sir, give me leave to ask you one Question· Is *Ariel* in Jest or in Earnest, in haranguing the Spirits at this rate? Is he in Earnest? Why then even *Robin Goodfellow* himself is not a more senseless insignificant Hobgoblin Is he in Jest? Why then all this is a very grand Impertinence, since it does not so much as aim at any thing· For how can the Spirits be any ways influenced by these dry Jokes of their Leader?

Of the same Stamp and the same Contrivance are these Lines in the Beginning of the 3*d Canto*:

Here Britain's *Statesmen oft the Fall foredoom*
Of foreign Tyrants, and of Nymphs at home;
Here Thou, great Anna, *whom three Realms obey,*
Dost sometimes Council take, and sometimes Tea, ——
One speaks the Glory of the British *Queen,*
And one describes a charming Indian *Screen*

As I said above, Sir, is not here a Receipt for dry Joking? and can any thing be more easy than to be a Wit at this rate?

But so much for the *Sentiments* in this *Rape of the Lock*, I should now come to the *Expression* But I have already transgress'd the Bounds I prescribed to myself, and 'tis Time to take Pity of myself and you. I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER VII

SIR,

THO' I am heartily tired with what I have already sent you, and am really ashamed of having pass'd a Week in thinking on such an empty jingling Trifle as the *Rape of the Lock*, a wretched Rhapsody, writ for the Amusement of Boys, and Men like Boys, and tho' I am both very much indisposed at present, and very busy, yet since I have received your Commands to send you some Remarks upon the *Expressions* in that Bawble, in order to compleat the Conversion of Mrs *S*————, I will, in Obedience to those Commands, do myself a little more Violence, and will do it in as short a Time, and as small a Compass as I can; for I will confine myself to the first twelve Lines, that by the numerous Faults which will be seen in them, any one to whom you may happen to shew this Letter, may be able to judge of the rest.

This Rhapsody begins with Absurdity,

What dire Offence from amorous Causes springs,
What mighty Contests rise from trivial things,
I sing —— *This Verse to* C———— *Muse is due,*
This ev'n Belinda *may vouchsafe to view*
Slight is the Subject, but not so the Praise,
If she inspire and he approve my Lays

The two first of these Lines, and the Beginning of the third, are out of all Grammatical Construction For here the Verb Active *sing* has no Accusative Case depending on it, as the Nominative Case is without a Verb in the Beginning of the Prologue to *Cato*, which Prologue was writ by the same little whimsical Gentleman.

The Word *Muse* is a mere Expletive, and can have nothing to do here, since 'tis *Belinda* only that is to inspire him

There are no less than six Faults in the six Lines which he calls his Invocation

Say, what strange Motive, Goddess, cou'd compel
A well-bred Lord t' assault a gentle Belle?
O say, what stranger Cause, yet unexplor'd,
Cou'd make a gentle Belle reject a Lord
And dwells such Rage in softest Bosoms then?
And dwells such daring Souls in little Men?

Now all this, if it were not for the Rhyme, would appear, even to Fools, as well as to Men of Sense, the poorest and most contemptible Stuff that ever laid the gentle Reader asleep I would fain know what the Word *Goddess* in the first Line relates to, the Muse, or *Belinda* *Goddess*, by the usual Signification of the Word, relates to *Muse*, but according to Grammar and Construction, it relates to *Belinda*, because she was mention'd last, and she is the inspiring Person The Word *compel* in the first Line likewise is a Botch for the Sake of the Rhyme, the Word that should naturally have been used was either *induce* or *provoke* The Word *compel* supposes the Baron to be a Beast, and not a free Agent Now, Sir, what a pretty Sense these two first Lines make

Say, what strange Motive, Goddess, cou'd compel
A well-bred Lord t' assault a gentle Belle?

That is, what could *force* a *well-bred* Man to be damnably rude, and to shew himself an errant Clown and a Brute? As for the Terms *gentle Belle*, they are too affected, too weak, and too low, and by no means come up to what is said to *Belinda* in the very next Page by *Ariel* the Sylph

Fairest of Mortals, thou distinguish'd Care
Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air

For *Belle* and *Beau*, as we have made them, as it were, *English* Substantives, do not signify so much as Beautiful, tho' as they are *French* Adjectives they have that Signification No Man when he calls another *Beau*, means, that that other is handsome, but only that he takes a great deal of Foppish Care about his Dress, and gives himself a great many fantastick Airs, in order to please superficial People, and render himself ridiculous to Men of Sense. *Belle* has much the same Signification, and according to the present Use and Acceptation of the Word, no more signifies a beautiful Woman than *Coquette* does, but only one that takes a great deal of fruitless Pains to make herself more agreeable than God and Nature have made her. But let us go on to the next Couplet

Oh say, what stranger Cause, yet unexplor'd,
Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?

The Cause was, because she did not like him, a strange Cause indeed, and which required a great deal of Sagacity to find it out But to what Purpose is the Word *reject*? *Belinda* granted him every thing that he ask'd of her. He desired to wait upon her to *Hampton-Court*, and she granted it. He desired her to

make one at *Ombre*, and she complied with that Request likewise. If she granted no more, it was because he ask'd no more: For, if we may believe herself, by what she says at the Beginning of the *fourth Canto*, she would have refused him nothing unless it was her *favourite Lock*

Oh hadst thou, cruel, been content to seize
Hairs less in Sight, or any Hairs but these

For she, who seems inclin'd to sacrifice her Modesty to her Vanity, would, in all likelihood, have sacrificed it to her Pleasure. In short, the Baron is so far from making Love in this Rhapsody, that he plainly shews, by the rude Affront which he puts upon *Belinda*, that he expected no particular Favour from her. And indeed this Party of Pleasure at *Hampton-Court* seems to me to look more like Catterwauling, than the Behaviour of Persons who went thither with any amorous Design But let us proceed to the next Couplet

And dwells such Rage in softest Bosoms then?

Yes, most certainly does it, and if this little Gentleman had not had a Head more soft than *Belinda*'s Bosom he could never have been capable of asking so simple a Question The softer Sex are much more subject to violent Passions than Men *Virgil* shewed a Softness in *Dido*, which this little Gentleman is utterly incapable of comprehending, a Softness which obliged a Sovereign Queen, whose Understanding was equal to her Supreme Power, or to her Greatness of Mind to grant the last Favour to the *Trojan* Hero, and yet that Softness was immediately succeeded by a Rage, to whose Force, and whose noble Enthusiasm, this little Creature, who is as diminutive an Author as he is an Animal, is as utterly incapable of raising himself, as an earthly Vapour is of ascending to Heaven But tho' nothing is more plain than that *Rage* may dwell in *softest Bosoms*, yet had it no more to do here than *reject*, and indeed had the less to do here because of *reject* For cannot a Lady deny a Gentleman who makes a civil Request to her, but she must fall immediately into as raving a Fit, as she could have done, if he had extorted the Favour from her? *Reject* shews *Contempt* rather than *Rage* It shews that she did not esteem the Baron enough to be at all angry with him. But let us come to the second Line of the Couplet

And dwells such daring Souls in little Men?

Yes certainly, *daring Souls* dwell often in *little Men*, and for that very Reason, because they are *little Men* Did he never hear of what *Statius* says of little *Tydeus*.

——— *totosque infusa per artus*
Major in exiguo regnabat corpore virtus

I myself know a little Monster, who, I dare venture to prophesy, will one Day shew as *daring* a Soul as a mad *Indian* who runs a muck. But what Occasion is there for *daring Souls* here? The Baron shews a good deal of *Brutality*, and

a good deal of *Perfidy*, but no *Daring*. He shew'd a great deal of *Courage* indeed, in coming treacherously behind a Lady and cutting off her favourite Lock!

But all this Piece, is, like *Windsor Forest*, or the *Temple of Fame*, below Criticism, and therefore I take my Leave of you. It would be unreasonable to expect that you should read Remarks with Pleasure which I write with Pain; Remarks which may be made by the most ordinary Reader, without any Penetration or any Sagacity. Besides, I have given a sufficient Sample to enable Mrs. *S*———— to judge of the rest. For as a Lion is known by his Claws, an Ass is known by his Ears.

I am, &c

REMARKS UPON SEVERAL PASSAGES IN THE PRELIMINARIES TO THE DUNCIAD . . . AND UPON SEVERAL PASSAGES IN POPE'S PREFACE TO HIS TRANSLATION OF HOMER'S ILIAD

1729

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Design of this Pamphlet is to shew, First,

That King *Tibbald* is justly depos'd from being King of Dunces, and Prince *Alexander* advanced to the Throne by Right Hereditary and Right of Merit

That King *Tibbald* is incapacitated to hold an Empire of that unbounded Extent, by some unfortunate Qualities as Learning, Judgment, Sagacity, and that Modesty which always attends Merit

That Prince *Alexander* is highly Qualify'd for that supream Office, by an Impudence which always accompanies Stupidity, and an Ignorance as gross as the old *Egyptian* Darkness

That his Ignorance is shewn particularly by attacking several Persons of a Hundred times greater Merit than himself, and who had given him no Provocation, but by surpassing him And if Persons must be Dunces who vastly surpass him, what must he be who is so vastly surpass'd? Surely of the Number of the Fools of Nature.

That his Ignorance in other Matters must be very wonderful, since it appears, that he is utterly ignorant of an Art, which he has profess'd all his Life-time, and that is of Poetry and particularly Epick Poetry.

That this gross Ignorance will appear by his Practice in the Beastly *Dunciad*,

And by his Speculations in the Preface to his Translation of the *Iliad*,

And by his never having writ any thing that had either any moral Meaning, or any just Design, which has been often shewn

That as he is ignorant of the Art of Poetry, and particularly of Epick Poetry, he is profoundly ignorant of *Homer*, and *Virgil*, and *Boileau*, to which latter he very impudently compares himself, and more impudently prefers himself

That there are Ten important Differences, which distinguish *Boileau* from him

Secondly, That as Prince *Alexander* is qualify'd to be Sovereign Prince of Dunces, he is highly qualify'd to be King of Kn————, there being no other Difference between the greatest of Fools and the greatest of Kn————, than there is between High Probability and Matter of Fact, Reason and good Sense being, next to Religion, the greatest Restraints upon Mankind, and the purest Sources of Probity, Integrity, and Sincerity

That he is qualify'd for this important Office, is shewn,

By his unparallel'd Impudence For as Modesty, which is itself a moral Virtue, always accompanies the other Virtues, great Impudence always attends great Kn————ry; as villainous Calumnies, audacious Lyes, accusing innocent Persons of the Accuser's Crimes, on purpose to make Men of Sense look little to Fools, and shallow Knaves.

Divers of these Calumnies, and these infamous Falshoods, are discover'd and expos'd in this Pamphlet, by several Original Letters, either attesting undeniable Facts, or confounding impudent Calumnies

REMARKS Upon Mr. *POPE*'s *DUNCIAD.*

To Mr. LEWIS THEOBALD.

SIR,

I HAVE lately read over the Two Letters which were writ by you, and published in the *Daily Journals,* and return you my hearty Thanks for the Pleasure which I receiv'd from them I observed in those Letters an extraordinary Piece of Gratitude in you, in resigning that Throne to *P.* to which he himself had advanced you, with Ten times more Goodness on his Side than Desert on yours And it was no small Satisfaction to me, to find that you were govern'd so entirely by Justice, as to part with an Empire of so unbounded an Extent, to one who had Right Divine to it, who had by Nature an Hereditary Indefeasible Right to succeed *Tom D'Urfey* and *Settle* One certain Sign of his being even born to be no less than absolute Monarch of all the Dunces over the whole Face of the Earth, was his conferring that Title on you, who have unfortunate Qualities that are so incompatible with it, as Modesty, Humanity, Discernment, Penetration, Sagacity, together with an uncommon Knowledge of Letters, and Skill in the learned Languages· These are Talents which utterly unqualify you to govern a Generation of Mortals, who are not influenced by any of them, and who have not the least Notion of some of them Whereas *P.* has one Qualification alone, which gives him an indisputable Right to wear the Imperial Crown of the Dunces, and that is, that soaring matchless Impudence, begot by Pride on Stupidity, which strikes so strongly on the outward Senses, by which Dunces are entirely govern'd Whereas Genius, and Wit, and Learning, and Truth, and Sense, and Decorum, speak forcibly only to the understanding Few, and have Power over them alone That high and undaunted Assurance qualified him to set up for an Editor, in spite of Learning, or Art, or Nature, as you have so clearly shewn, and that qualified him to set up for a Versifier, without Numbers, and for a Critick, without Taste or Judgment, as I formerly shew'd so clearly That soaring and matchless Impudence also gave him plenary Power, to throw out his Titles to the Right and the Left, without any Discernment or Distinction So that Persons whom God and Nature have plac'd immense Degrees above him, are dubb'd, by him, Fools, Blockheads, Dunces, and Scoundrels, according to his Sovereign Pleasure, which puts me in mind of a little Gentleman, who was in the Court of one of

our Kings, a Wit, just such a Wit as Mr *P.* is in the Reign of King *G.* II This motley Gentleman was wont to salute every one whom he met in the Morning, with *Good-morrow, Brother Fool,* whether it was Bishop or Archbishop, or President of the Council, or Secretary of State, which often caus'd his lower Parts rudely to suffer for the Licentiousness of the Parts above them. And I wish Mr. *P* had been so happy as to take Warning by that Example:

Fœlix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum

It was long before I had the Happiness to be acquainted with you, who were then very young, that I publish'd Remarks upon the Translation of the *Iliad* of *Homer* by *P*, upon his *Windsor Forest,* writ in Envy of Sir *John Denham's* Poem upon *Cooper's Hill*, upon the infamous *Temple of Fame,* writ in Envy of *Chaucer's* Poem upon the same Subject, and upon the Ode on *Cæcilia's* Day, writ in Envy of Mr *Dryden's* Feast of *Alexander*, an Ode in which *P.* very wisely pretends to shew the Power of Musick, by the Story of *Orpheus*, that is, by an Allegory For *Horace,* who may be allow'd to be a pretty good Judge of this Matter, tells us, that the whole Story of *Orpheus* is nothing but an Allegory

Sylvestres homines sacer interpresque Deorum
Cædibus, & victu fœdo deterruit Orpheus,
Dictus ob hoc lenire tigres rapidosque leones

And my Lord Chancellor *Bacon,* in his Treatise of the Wisdom of the Antients, is of the same Opinion

As I have lately perused all the 'foresaid Remarks, and some of them after a very long Distance of Time from the first writing and publishing them, so that the warm and partial Conceit of an Author had been a long time extinguish'd As I have not only done this, but consulted likewise my sincerest and most judicious Friends, both they and I have found, that the Remarks which I submitted to their Censure, were reasonable, just, and solid, and consequently that the Pieces on which they were writ, were infinitely below the Master-pieces, in Envy of which they were published by their scandalous Author

Now, as *P* apparently wrote the 'foresaid Pieces, in Envy to the Reputation of their celebrated Authors, neither you nor I can have any Reason to doubt, but that if those Authors had been his Contemporaries, if Time and Death, and impartial Posterity had not given a Sanction to their Writings, he would have put all of them into the Number of his Dunces For either he must have resolved to be a Foil to them, which his monstrous and impudent Vanity will not let us suppose, or he must have believed that he could surpass them, and consequently we must conclude, that instead of You, he would have placed *Dryden,* or *Denham,* or *Waller,* if they had been now alive, upon the Imperial Throne of his Dunces.

As in making these Remarks, I have endeavour'd to shew him an Author without Judgment, or without any thing of that good Sense, which, if we will believe *Horace,* is the only Source of good Writing in Poetry

Scribendi recte sapere est & principium & fons,

Nay, without any Degree of reasonable Meaning I shall, in sending you Remarks upon some of the prosaick Parts of the Edition of his late Rhapsody in *Quarto*, [for the Rhimes by their own Vileness are secur'd from Criticism,] endeavour to lay before you, not only his utter Ignorance of the poetical Art, but his Malice, his Impudence, his Falshood, and his want of Honour.

But now, Sir, to come to the Preliminaries before his Rhapsody, both that before the Volume in Twelves, and that before the other in *Quarto*. Oh, the Truth, the Wisdom, the Modesty, the Humility that there is to be found in both! As he formerly writ Rhimes in his own Commendation, and publish'd Mr *Wycherley's* Name to them, he has now been dabbling after the same Manner in Prose He has before each of these Volumes writ his own fulsome Panegyricks And each of these fulsome Panegyricks is pretended to be writ by others, forsooth, without the least Knowledge or Privacy of this modest Author. Now, Sir, either he imagines, that he can make the impartial World believe this, or he does not. If he does not imagine that he can impose this upon the sensible and impartial World, to what End or Purpose is this noble Fiction? Was it to convince his sensible Readers, that he can out-equivocate, and out-prevaricate the pontifical Scaramouchi, from whom he had his Education and Instruction? or was it contriv'd to make some Addition to the Hundred thousand Fools, who, he says, already admire him? But if he does imagine that he can impose this Falshood upon the sensible and impartial World, can there be a more certain Sign that he has made you an Usurper, and plac'd you upon a Throne to which he himself has an indefeasible Right? Was there ever such an empty, such an impudent Scribler? Did ever any fanatical *Ægyptian* of old offer more Incense to one of Pug's Ancestors, than Pug has offer'd to himself, who is at once the Votary and the Priest, and a little mimicking, mischievous, ludicrous God upon the Altar?

That he was the Author of both these Preliminaries, is not only a Truth that is in itself apparent, and that carries its own Evidence with it, but 'tis known to half the Town, that he carried or sent both these Panegyricks to the Press himself That the latter was printed by one *Wr————t*, who was formerly Operator to Alderman *B————*, and who lives in a Place call'd *Peter's Hill*, between *Doctors-Commons* and the *Thames*, a Place in which this Poetaster exceedingly delights, because he has in the Neighbourhood of it, like his Brother Proctor *John Littlewit, Addle-Hill* for his *Parnassus*, and *Puddle-Dock* for his *Hippocrene*, by drinking large Draughts of which latter, he was inspir'd with that cleanly, that noble, that gallant Invention of *Fleet-Ditch*, an Invention so fit to entertain and charm the most delicate Persons of both Sexes. Does not half the Town know, that honest *J W.* was the only Dunce that was persecuted and plagu'd by this Impression? that Twenty times the Rhapsodist alter'd every thing that he gave the Printer? and that Twenty times, *W.* in Rage and in Fury, threaten'd to turn the *Rhapsody* back upon the Rhapsodist's Hands?

Give me Leave, Sir, to say something apart to each of these two Preliminaries, both to that in Twelves, and to that in *Quarto*. I shall begin with the

former, which is superscrib'd, *The Publisher to the Reader.* The first extraordinary Paragraph in it, has two general Assertions, which, generally taken, are false, and which the Author, to shew his Logical Head, is for proving true by a particular Instance, and, to shew his great Modesty, takes that Instance from himself. The first general Assertion is, *That, when any Scandal is vented against a Man of the highest Distinction and Character, either in the State or in Literature, the Publick in general afford it a quiet Reception, and the larger Part accept it as favourably, as if it were some Kindness done to themselves.* This is the first general Assertion. Now, Sir, for the particular Instance intended to prove the Truth of it, *I will only observe one Fact,* says *P, that every Week for these Two Months past, the Town has been persecuted with Pamphlets, Advertisements, Letters, and weekly Essays, not only against my Wit and Writings, who am a Man of the highest Distinction and Character in Literature, but against my Person and Character And that of all those Men who have received Pleasure from my Writings, which by a modest Computation* [Oh! the charming Beauties of that attractive Virtue, Modesty!] *may be about a Hundred thousand in these Kingdoms of* England *and* Ireland, *not to mention* Jersey *and* Guernsey, [*which you know,* says *P, are not in* England, *because they are in* Hampshire,] *or the* Orcades, [*which I mention without naming* Scotland, *sweetly to insinuate, that there is no such thing as Taste of Literature in any Part of* North-Britain, *unless in that which is next to* Greenland,] *or the new World, or Foreigners who have translated me into their Languages, not a Man among them has stood up to say one Word in my Defence*

Thus, Sir, have I laid before you the first general Assertion, and the particular Instance intended to prove the Truth of it. But now, Sir, as I observ'd before, *P*'s undistinguishing Noddle has not found out, that his first general Assertion, generally taken, is false, for if by a Man of the highest Distinction and Character, he means one who has highly deserv'd either of his Country or of the Common-wealth of Learning, [But then he must not in anywise mean himself, who has deserved nothing of the latter, and very ill of the former] I may justly affirm, that any Scandal or Calumny published against such a one, must be utterly shocking to any Man of good Sense, or Candour, or Integrity, or Humanity, though perhaps it may be pleasing enough to *P*'s Hundred thousand Admirers For People of their Capacities are always Levellers, and when they find it impossible for them to raise themselves to an Equality with Merit, they politickly lay hold of any Opportunity to bring Merit down to their Level.

Thus have I shewn that this first general Assertion is not prov'd by the particular Instance, not only because no general Conclusion can be drawn from Particulars, but because the Person mention'd in the general Assertion is immensely distant from the Creature mention'd in the particular Instance, as distinct as East from West, or as Earth from Heaven. For if *P* has the Misfortune to fancy himself *a Person of the highest Distinction and Character*

in Literature, as he plainly infers that he does, his Pericranium is certainly as much out of Order, and he as much wants to be trepann'd, as if he had declar'd himself *Grand Signior,* Emperor of *China,* or the *Great Mogul*

But now to come to the second general Assertion, which is a blessed one, and is as follows *If a known Scoundrel or Blockhead chance to be but touch'd upon, a whole Legion is up in Arms, and it becomes the common Cause of all Scribblers, Printers, and Booksellers whatsoever* Now the particular Instance or Fact gives the Lye to this general Assertion For a certain known Scoundrel, and horrible Blockhead, has lately not only been touch'd upon, but dwelt upon, and has been pelted as much and as plentifully as if his Ears had been nail'd to the Pillory, and yet not one of all his Hundred thousand Admirers, whether in *Jersey* or *Guernsey,* or the *Orcades,* or in the new World, not any Man has stood up to say one Word in his Defence

I hope this will convince his Patrons and his Admirers, who have purchas'd Scurrility and Nonsense at so dear a Rate, that nothing is more easy than to give foul Language, but that 'tis Ten times more excusable in Me than it is in Him, first, because *last prior,* I only retort the Language he gave, secondly, because in the Remarks which I formerly made upon the several Things he has publish'd, I have given such Reasons, why this Language is his Due, as have convinc'd every sensible impartial Reader, that there is not in any of those Trifles the least Degree of that Solidity, that Morality, and that good Sense, which are the Principles and Fountain of all good Writing in Poetry I shall pursue the same Method in the Animadversions, which from time to time I shall send you upon the brutal *Dunciad,* and before I have done with this first Preliminary, I shall take one Occasion from it, to convince the Reader, that this bouncing Bully of *Parnassus,* is nothing but a false Brave, a mere bragging pretending Empirick, and utterly ignorant of the first Rudiments of an Art which he has more than Twenty Years professed, and in which he has nothing but Impudence and Ignorance, and Falshood to support him

In order to shew this, let us see the Account that *P* himself gives of his *Dunciad It is stil'd,* says he, *Heroick, as being doubly so, not only with respect to its Nature, which according to the best Rules of the Antients, and strictest Ideas of the Moderns, is critically such, but also with regard to the heroical Disposition, and high Courage of the Writer, who dar'd to stir up such a formidable, irritable, and implacable Race of Mortals*

Thus *P.* all at once makes himself the Hero of his wonderful Rhapsody, and stiles his Folly, his Impudence, his Insolence, and his want of Capacity to discern and to distinguish, high Courage, for want of which Capacity, he must be told, that a Bully is of all Mortals, the most Foolish, the most Impudent, and the most Insolent, but at the same time Cowardly And here, Sir, give me leave to observe what the scandalous Chronicle reports, That as soon as the Rhapsody was publish'd, *P.* never dar'd to appear without a tall *Irishman* attending him, who is so inseparable from him, that one would swear that he owes his Wit as well as his Courage to him

But there is now a Necessity for going back a little *The* Dunciad, says *P*, *is stiled Heroick with respect to its Nature, which, according to the best Rules of the Antients, and strictest Ideas of the Moderns, is critically such.* Here then let us see what the Proposition of every Epick Poem, whether Serious and Real, or Mock and Ridiculous, ought to be, and then whether *P*'s Proposition is agreeable to it.

The Proposition of an Epick Poem, says Bossu, *is that first Part of the Poem, in which the Author proposes briefly, and in general, what he designs to say in the Body of his Work, in which there are two Things to be considered, the one is what the Poet proposes, and the other is the Manner of his proposing it*

The Proposition, continues he, *ought to contain the Matter of the Poem only, that is to say, the Action of it, and the Persons who execute that Action, whether those Persons are Divine or Human We find all that in the* Iliad, *in the* Odysses, *and in the* Æneid

The Action that Homer *proposes to sing in the* Iliad, *is the Revenge that* Achilles *takes for the Affront that is offered him, that of the* Odysses *is the Return of* Ulysses *to* Ithaca, *and that of the* Æneid, *is the Empire of* Troy *transferr'd by* Æneas *to* Italy

We ought not to suffer ourselves to be surprized by the Expression of Homer *in the Beginning of his* Iliad, *where he says that he sings the pernicious Wrath of* Achilles, *nor believe that he proposes that Wrath as the Subject of his Poem At that rate he could not relate an Action to his Reader, but a Passion, We ought not to stop there, since he himself has not stopp'd there He tells us, that he sings the Wrath which caus'd the* Greeks *to suffer such mighty Losses, and was the Death of so many Heroes He proposes then an Action, and not a simple Passion for the Matter of his Poem, and that Action is, as we said before, the Revenge that* Achilles *takes for the Affront that is offered him*

Thus in the other two Poems, they propose at first a Man, but the Propositions stop not there, they add, that Ulysses *suffered very much in his Endeavour to return into his Country, or that the Design of* Æneas's *Voyage was to establish himself in* Italy *Both the one and the other, then, of the two Poets proposes to sing an Action*

But so much for serious and real Epick or Heroick Poems Let us now come to the Mock and the Comick ones, and we shall find, that this Poem, by changing its Nature, does not change its Manner *Boileau,* who was one of the greatest of the *French* Poets, and one of the most judicious of their Criticks, calls his *Lutrin, Poeme Heroique,* an Heroical or Epick Poem, and yet in the Proposition to this Poem, which was designed purely for Pleasantry, he proposes to sing an Action, as appears by the Proposition itself.

Je Chante les combats, et ce Prelat terrible,
Qui par ses longs Travaux et sa Force invincible,
Dans un illustre Eglise exercant son grand cœur
Fit placer a la fin un Lutrin dans le Chœur

C'est en vain que le Chantre appuié d'un vain Titre,
Deux fois l'en fit oter par les mains du Chapitre,
Ce Prelat sur le Banc de son Rival altier
Deux fois le rapportant l'en couvrit tout entier

Which in *English* Prose is thus,

I sing the Combats, and that terrible Prelate, who, by his long Labours, and his invincible Courage, causing his great Soul to be seen by his Actions, in an illustrious Church, caused at length a stately Pulpit to be erected in the Choir In vain did the Chanter, supported by an empty Title, twice cause it to be taken down by the Hands of the Chapter, and twice did the Prelate, causing it to be carried back again, fix it before the Seat of his proud Rival, and covering him, and hiding him from the Congregation, mortify him severely

Thus *Boileau,* in the Proposition to a mock Epick, or Heroick Poem, proposes to sing an Action, and accordingly entertains the Reader with it

And though *Butler* in his Proposition to *Hudibras,* does not pretend to sing one regular Action [for very little of the Rules of *Aristotle* was known then in *England*] yet still he proposes to sing Action, or Actions, as will appear by the Proposition itself

When Civil Fury first grew high,
And Men fell out they knew not why,
When hard Words, Jealousies, and Fears,
Set Folks together by the Ears,
And made them fight like mad or drunk,
For Dame Religion, as for Punk,
Whose Honesty they all durst swear for,
Tho' not a Man of them knew wherefore
When Gospel Trumpeter, surrounded
By long-Ear'd Rout, to Battle sounded,
And Pulpit Drum Ecclesiastick,
Was beat with Fist, instead of a Stick,
Then did Sir Knight abandon Dwelling,
And out he rode a Colonelling

So that the excellent Author of *Hudibras,* who had so admirable a Talent for Pleasantry, proposes chiefly to entertain his Reader with the Actions of his Hero.

Now let us take a short View of *P*————'s Proposition to his *Dunciad*, and after that you will easily judge *how far 'tis Heroick with respect to its Nature, and how far it is critically such, according to the best Rules of the Antients, and strictest Ideas of the Moderns*

Books, and the Man, I sing, the first who brings
The Smithfield *Muses to the Ears of Kings*

Let us divest it of its Jingle, since Rhyme is of no use to the Nonsense of such Prose as this, but to render it more ridiculous, and more unintelligible.

I sing Books, and I sing the Man, the first Man, who carries the Muses of Smithfield *to the Ear of Kings.*

Thus *P.* sings Books, and not an Action; and the Author who pretends in an Epick Poem to sing Books instead of singing an Action, is only qualified to sing Ballads And as Nature has begun to qualify him for that melodious Vocation, by giving him that Face, that Shape, and that Stature; so if Fortune would but finish what Nature has begun, he would be a Nonpareillo in that Employment. As he has for several Months last past, been bringing down a wooden Tempest upon his Carcass, if one Eye and one Leg should suffer severely by the Storm, which may very well happen, do not you think, Sir, that his rare Figure would proclaim him the Prince of Ballad Singers, as, by justly deposing you, he has made himself the King of Dunces?

P. is so far from singing an Action, that there is no such Thing as Action in his whimsical Rhapsody, unless what proceeds from Dulness, that is, from Privation, a very pretty Principle of Action, and very worthy of *P*'s Invention! The Thing is divided into Three Books. In the First, instead of Action there is Description and Declamation In the Third, instead of Action we have nothing but a feverish Dream The Second is made up of Nastiness, Obscenity, and Absurdity, and is so far from being Part of an Action, that it runs counter to the Design of the whole Thing, if there could be any Design in it, for Vigour of Action can never proceed from Dulness, though it may from Madness. The Hero of the Piece does nothing at all, and never speaks but once, unless it be half a Line in the Third Book In the First Book, indeed, he offers to burn his Works, but is hinder'd by the Goddess Now those Works are either Good or Bad, if they are Good, they render him incapable of being King of the Dunces, if they are Bad, the Offer to burn them shews his Judgment, and Judgment must be always contrary to Dulness, otherwise *P* would be the brightest Creature that ever God made

Whether an Epick Poem, is grave or mock Epick, the Action must have Probability in all its Parts Both antient and modern Criticks agree in this

Ficta voluptatis causâ sint proxima veris,

says *Horace*, *Let every Thing that is invented to give the Reader Pleasure, be attended with Probability* Nay, *Boileau* makes Probability more necessary than Truth itself, as several of the Antients and Moderns have likewise done.

Jamais au spectateur n'offrez rien d'incroyable,
Le vrai peut quelque fois n'etre pas vraisemblable
Une merveille absurde est pour moy sans appas,
L'esprit n'est point emu de ce qu'il ne croit pas

Never offer any thing that is incredible either to the Reader or the Spectator Truth sometimes may not have Probability That which is absurd, at the same Time that 'tis wonderful, has no Charms for me The Soul is never mov'd with that which it does not believe

And the Reason that he gives for this is very solid, *viz.* Truth may sometimes have the Appearance of a Lye, but Probability has always the Appearance of Truth. And this mock Probability, *Butler* in his *Hudibras*, and *Boileau* in his

Lutrin, have preserved inviolably But what Probability is there in *P*'s Rhapsody? What Probability in the Games which take up a third Part of the Piece? Is it not monstrous to imagine any Thing like that in the Master Street of a populous City, a Street eternally crowded with Carriages, Carts, Coaches, Chairs, and Men passing in the greatest Hurry about Private and Publick Affairs? What Probability in that noble Invention of *Fleet Ditch*, which, besides its Extravagancy, and its Stupidity, shews the nasty Soul of the Author?

Immodest Words admit of no Defence,
For want of Decency, is want of Sense

For all that is said there, must be excessively shocking to all Men of common Sense, as shewing want of Respect to the Reader, as much as to the Authors mentioned there Every Man of good Breeding, as well as good Sense must be mov'd with Indignation,

At bawling Infamy, with Language base
Dryden

P talks of *Taylor* the Water-Poet, but *Taylor* is only call'd so from his Profession *P* is properly the Water-Poet, who has Water-Language which he seems to have lived so many Years at *Chiswick* and *Twickenham*, on purpose to learn it from his Daily transitory Masters, the Scullers

I am sorry I have dwelt so long upon this whimsical Trifle, call'd, *The Publisher to the Reader*, which could have been writ by neither *Christian*, nor *Turk*, nor *Jew*, nor any one but an Anti-Christian Catholick, educated in Jesuitical Maxims, and Religious Frauds I appeal to any Man of common Sense, if this whimsical Fraud could have been printed so many times in *Duodecimo*, as the Author pretends it has been, and inserted at last in the Appendix to the Edition in Quarto, if it had been writ by any one but *P* himself This appears to me to be utterly impossible And the Truth appears so plainly, and strikes the Reader so strongly through that paltry Artifice, that if *P* believes that he conceals himself by it, he shews himself a thousand times more weak, and exposes himself infinitely more than by any thing that he can say in Rhyme, for there are several Persons who believe, that any Sort of Fiction is allowable in Rhyme, but all the World expects, that when a Man writes Prose, he should speak Truth and Reason.

As we have shewn that *P* knows nothing of the Art of Poetry in general, we now come to shew, that he knows as little of *Homer* in particular, whether we consider the Qualities and Character of that celebrated *Grecian*, or the Nature of his Writings, and, in short, as little of the Characters of other Poets, whether ancient or modern And the impartial Reader will then determine whether the Author who has all these Defects, is qualified to set up for a Translator of *Homer*, or for a knowing, a just, and a judicious Critick.

What *P.* is pleas'd to call his Preface, is neither a just Dissertation, nor a modest Encomium, but an extravagant hyperbolical Panegyrick on *Homer*; a Heap of dogmatical, elaborate, illiterate Pedantry· By which he has equally

labour'd to shew the Excellence of *Homer*, and to expose and detect his own Unworthiness. For there is not in the Translation the least Shadow of those great Qualities which either are, or are pretended to be, in *Homer*. And yet *P* at the same Time that he is extolling him to the Skies, gives infallible Signs that he does not know him, and blindly says more infamous Things of him, than either *Terrasson*, *Le Motte*, or *Perrault*

When the Prefacer tells us, in his very first Paragraph, that *Homer* is universally allow'd to have had the greatest Invention of any Writer whatever, he is so far from telling us, at the same Time, what Invention is, that he plainly discovers that he knows nothing of it. For he seems to take it for a peculiar Faculty of the Mind, distinct from Memory, Imagination, and Judgment, whereas it is the Effect and Result of the confederate Powers and Operation of all the three We have a fair Image of these Operations in Hawking: For Memory may be justly compar'd to the Dog that beats the Field, or the Wood, and that starts the Game, Imagination to the Falcon that *clips it upon its Pinions after it, and Judgment to the Falconer, who directs the Flight, and who governs the whole But *P* as has been said, takes it for a distinct Faculty, he opposes it to Judgment in this very Paragraph, and in the last Paragraph of the third Page, [*Edit* 2.] he calls it the strong and the ruling Faculty

P tells us, in the first Page of this wonderful Preface, that whatever Praises may be given to Works of Judgment, there is not a single Beauty in them, but is owing to the Invention But he ought to have known that this is reciprocal, and that in Works of Invention there is not a single Beauty but is owing to the Judgment, and that is the Reason that none have had great Beauties, but who have had great Judgment, as *Homer*, and *Virgil*, and some few others of the ancient *Grecian* and *Roman* Poets, and some very few of the *English*, *French*, and *Italian*

In the Beginning of the second Page of the Preface, [Edition the 2d] *P* is pleas'd to tell us, *That the Reason why most Criticks are inclin'd to prefer a judicious and methodical Genius to a great and fruitful one, is, because they find it easier to pursue their Observations through a uniform and bounded Walk of Art, than to comprehend the vast and various Extent of Nature* Fine Words without any Meaning! As if any one could comprehend the vast and various Extent of Nature, but the great Author of Nature. If this Prefacer had not been superlatively ignorant, he would have known, that the most judicious and methodical Genius's have been the greatest and the most fruitful ones, the most admirable, and the most sublime The Epick Poems of *Homer* and *Virgil*, are infallible Proofs of this

Our Author's Work is a wild Paradise, [says *P.* towards the Top of his 2d Page,] *where, if we cannot see all the Beauties so distinctly as in an order'd Garden, it is only because the Number of them is infinitely greater 'Tis like a copious Nursery which contains the Seeds and first Productions of every Kind, out of which, those who follow'd him have but selected some particular Plants,*

* A Term in *Falconry*

each according to his particular Fancy, to cultivate and beautify If some Things are too luxuriant, 'tis owing to the Richness of the Soil, and if others are not arriv'd to Perfection or Maturity, it is only because they are over-run and oppress'd by those of a stronger Nature

Now I appeal to you, Sir, if this is not a Paragraph which shews an Ignorance as gross and profound as *Ægyptian* Darkness An Ignorance which may be felt, tho' it cannot be understood. No *Indian,* no *Negro,* no *Hottentot,* knows less of *Homer,* than *P.* But what you and I will be pleas'd with, is this, that as the Author of this Paragraph has affronted, abus'd, and slander'd several young Ladies, which alone is sufficient to shew him of a Race different from the human, for even the vilest of Dogs will never abuse a Female of his own Species, so Providence has justly ordain'd that a Lady should revenge the Quarrel of her Sex, and ridicule, and expose, and baffle the Author of the said monstrous Paragraph I speak of Madam *Dacier*

What! *says she,* is *Homer's* Poem then, according to Mr *Pope,* an indigested Heap of Beauties, without Order or Symmetry, a Piece of Ground upon which nothing but Seeds, and nothing perfect or accomplish'd, is to be found, a Production loaded with many superfluous and unprofitable Things, which ought to be retrench'd, and which oppress or disfigure those which ought to be preserv'd?

The most inveterate Enemies to *Homer, says that judicious Lady,* never said any thing more injurious, or more unjust, against that Poet

Mr *P* will pardon me, *says she,* if I oppose the three Comparisons in this erroneous Preface, which seem to me to be very false, and utterly contrary to what the greatest ancient and modern Criticks have thought

To the Point, then, *she continues,* The *Iliad* is so far from being a wild Paradise, that it is the most regular Garden, and laid out with more Symmetry than ever any Garden was Monsieur *Le Notre* *, who was the greatest Man of the World in his Art, never observ'd in his Garden a more perfect, or more admirable Symmetry, than *Homer* has observ'd in his Poems Every thing that is in them, is not only in the Place in which it ought justly to be, but every thing is formed on Purpose for the Place it possesses He presents you at first with that which ought first to be seen, he places in the Middle what ought to be only there, and what would be improper either at the Beginning or End, and he places Things at a greater Distance, which ought to be so dispos'd, in order to create a greater and a more agreeable Surprize, and to make use of a Comparison drawn from Painting. He disposes that in the greatest Light, which cannot be too visible, and sinks and hides in the Obscurity of the Shadows, what does not require to be expos'd so fully to Sight So that we may say, that *Homer* was the Painter who best knew how to employ the Lights and the Shadows. And it was this beauteous and admirable Order, which *Horace* admir'd in his Poems, and upon which he founded his Rules for the perfecting the Art of Poetry.

* Gardener to *Lewis* XIV He laid out the Gardens of *Versailles* and *Marly*

The second Comparison, (*she continues*) is as unjust. How could Mr. *P.* affirm that one can discover only Seeds, and the immature Productions of every Kind, in the *Iliad*? when every Beauty in that Poem is so perfect a Beauty, that the following Ages could find nothing to add to any Kind of his Excellencies? And the Ancients have always propos'd *Homer* as the most perfect Model, in every Kind of Poetry

The third Comparison (*she still continues*) is every Jot as unjust, and is compos'd of the Errors of the two former. *Homer* had undoubtedly an incomparable Fertility of Invention, but yet a Fertility which is always restrain'd by a just and sincere Judgment, which made him reject every superfluous Thing which his boundless Imagination could offer to him, in order to retain only what was useful or necessary Judgment guided the Head of this admirable Gardiner, and was the Pruning-Hook he made use of in cutting off every useless Branch from its Trunk He has done what *Horace* speaks of in his *Epods*,

Inutilesque falce ramos amputans
Feliciores inserit

Mr *P*, *she continues*, had in an extraordinary manner oblig'd us, if he had directed us to the superfluous Branches that ought to be cut off from this Tree: If he had instructed us in the Symmetry, which ought to be given to that wild Garden, to render it more regular, if he had given us an Idea of that Perfection which he says is wanting to those several Beauties, of which *Homer*, he pretends, has only given us a Sketch It would be happy for the present Age, and glorious to *England*, to have produced so perfect a Critick

Thus far Madam *Dacier* has defended *Homer*, she next proceeds to defend herself against the senseless Cavil which he has brought against her, which she has done with all the Modesty, the Justness, and the Address which are peculiar to that judicious Lady You have seen that Defence in the Original I have nothing to do but to observe here, that the Wretch against whom she writes, has been always infamous for his Ingratitude to that Part of the Fair Sex, to whom he has had most Obligations

I shall now proceed to send you some Remarks of my own upon this Preface.

'Tis in the second Page of it likewise that this Prefacer informs us, *That 'tis to the Strength of this amazing Invention, that we are to attribute that unequal'd Fire and Rapture, which is so forcible in* Homer, *&c.* But, by *P*'s Leave, *Homer* owes his Invention to his Fire, and not his Fire to his Invention The more warm any one is by Nature, the more inventive is that Person, if the Organs be rightly dispos'd

But *P* goes on, *What he*, that is, *Homer, writes*, [that is, every thing that he writes] *is of the most animated Nature imaginable.* At the Bottom of this very Page he contradicts this For, says he, *'tis remarkable that his Fancy, which is every where vigorous, is not discover'd immediately at the Beginning of his Poem, in its fullest Splendour* But let us return to what he says previous to this Contradiction of himself *If a Council be call'd*, says *P*, *or a Battle fought, you*

are not coldly inform'd of what is said or done, as from a third Person, the Reader is hurried out of himself, by the Force of the Poet's Imagination, and turns in one Place to a Hearer, in another to a Spectator. To shew the Absurdity of this, we shall first consider it with Regard to Councils, and afterwards with Regard to Battels If every thing that is said in Council is of the most animated Nature imaginable, the Characters of those who speak, either cannot be maintain'd, or cannot be diversify'd. And as for Battels, the Reader is as much a Spectator of those of *Virgil*, as he is of those of *Homer* The Muse who presides over Epick Poetry equally relates both. And if she relates the Destruction of *Troy* by the Mouth of *Æneas*, that was not a Battle but a Massacre. And the Necessity of the Action requir'd that Way of relating it, it being impossible to set otherwise before the Eyes of *Dido*, a thing that was past and done in a different Part of the World

This little Gentleman says, towards the Top of the third Page of the smaller Edition, *That exact Disposition, just Thought, correct Elocution, polish'd Numbers, may have been found in a thousand, but this poetical Fire, this* Vivida Vis Animi *in a very few*

If he had studied Twenty Years to be in the Wrong, he could not have blunder'd more confoundedly The very Reverse of what he asserts is the Truth. Exact Disposition, just Thought, correct Elocution, polish'd Numbers have been found in *Homer* and *Virgil* alone, of all that have writ in the Epick Way, but the poetical Fire, the *Vivida Vis Animi* may have been seen in a Thousand But let me see how the little Gentleman goes on *Even in Works where all these are imperfect or neglected, this even over-powers Criticism, and makes us admire while we disapprove* Admirably said, little *Bays*, i' faith, thou second great Apostle of Nonsense, which thou art sent by thy evil Genius to preach to all thy Hundred thousand Admirers! But, *faveamus Linguis*, let me see how he goes on, full of the 'forementioned God, whose missionary Priest he has the Honour to be *Nay, where this* [Fire] *appears, tho' attended with Absurdities, it brightens all the Rubbish about it, 'till we see nothing but its own Splendor.* Now, did *Bays* the first ever say any thing so full of admirable Judgment as this? Can we sufficiently admire a Fire that brightens all the Rubbish about it, 'till the Rubbish disappears, and is hid by its own Brightness? But in the Name of Nonsense, let him go on *This Fire is discern'd in* Virgil, *but discern'd as through a Glass, reflected from* Homer, *more shining than fierce, but every where equal and constant* What Devil possess'd him, when he wrote such Stuff as this? The dullest Devil, and the most egregious Dunce in all the Profund of Hell What does he mean by, this Fire is discern'd in *Virgil*, but discern'd as *through* a Glass, instead of as *from* a Glass? What does he mean by, reflected from *Homer*? How is the Fire in the Fourth, the Sixth, the Tenth *Eclogue* reflected from *Homer*? or the Fire of those noble Passages in the *Georgicks*, the Death of *Cæsar*, the Praise of *Italy*, or a Country Life, or the Plague among the dumb Creation, or the Story of *Orpheus*? How comes this trifling Poetaster, without the least Sagacity or Penetration, to make those Distinctions and those Discoveries, which the greatest and the most judi-

cious Criticks could never make? How much Reason have we here to cry out with my Lord *Roscommon*,

How many Ages since has Virgil *writ?*
How few are they who understand him yet?
Approach his Altars with Religious Fear,
No vulgar Deity inhabits there
Heav'n shakes not more at Jove's imperial Nod
Than Poets should before their Mantuan *God*
Hail, mighty Maro! *may that sacred Name*
Kindle my Breast with thy Cœlestial Flame

My Lord *Roscommon* speaks not of *Virgil* as of a Poet whose Fire was discern'd as thro' a Glass, because my Lord *Roscommon*, felt the Fire of that admirable Poet What does this *Twickenham* Poetaster mean, when he speaks of the Fire of *Virgil*, as more shining than fierce, and as of a Fire every where equal and constant? The Fire of a great and judicious Poet is caus'd by his Ideas, and therefore can never be equal and constant, because the Ideas cannot possibly be always equal What? Is the Fire of *Virgil* every where equal to that Divine Passage of the *Cumæan* Sybil, in the Sixth *Æneid*?

Ventum erat ad limen, cum virgo, Poscere fata
Tempus, ait Deus, ecce, Deus Cui talia fatu
Ante fores, subito non vultus, non color unus,
Non compta mansere comæ sed pectus anhelum,
Et rabie fera corda tument, majorque videri,
Nec mortale sonans afflata est numine quando
Jam propiore Dei

Which my Lord *Roscommon* has thus finely imitated, in his admirable Essay on Translated Verse

Have you been led thro' the Cumæan *Cave,*
And heard th' impatient Maid divinely rave?
I hear her now, I see her rowling Eyes,
And panting, Lo! the God, the God, she cries,
With Words not hers, and more than human Sound,
She makes th' obedient Ghosts peep trembling thro' the Ground

But now let us come to *Milton*, in whom, if we will believe this little Gentleman, *the poetical Fire glows like a Furnace, kept up to an uncommon Fierceness by the Force of Art* Now, I dare engage that there are not Two Persons in the World who understand what the little Gentleman says there, and I do really believe that there is not one. What? is the Transcendency of *Milton*'s Genius, which has been admir'd by all the capable World, reduced to Art? Pray, how is the Fire of *Homer* and *Virgil* kept up? for they seem to me to have vastly more of the poetical Art than *Milton* Indeed *Milton* had more Felicity than they, which threw him upon the Subject of *Paradise Lost*, a Subject which often furnish'd him with the greatest Ideas, which supply'd him with the greatest Spirit. But to shew that it was rather Felicity than Art or Skill, that determin'd him to that Choice, he was by no means so happy in the Choice of

Paradise Regain'd, a Subject that could supply him neither with the Ideas nor with the Spirit. For Pride and Ambition, Rage and Revenge, and Fury, furnish'd quite another sort of Spirit, than Patience, Resignation, Humility, Meekness, Long-suffering, and the rest of those quiet divine Virtues that adorn the Christian Scheme. Besides, *Milton's* Fire is so very far from being kept always up by Art, that for near a sixth Part of the Poem it's set down for want of Art. For this Poem is so order'd, that the Subject of the Eleventh and Twelfth Books could by no means supply him with the great Ideas, nor consequently with the great Spirit, which the First, Second, and Sixth had done before, and several Parts of the other Books likewise.

It would require a Volume to expose all the numerous Errors and Blunders which are to be met with in his Preface. At the Bottom of his Third Page he tells us, *That* Homer *open'd a new and boundless Walk for his Imagination, and created a World for himself in the Invention of Fable That which* Aristotle *calls the Soul of Poetry, was first breath'd in it by* Homer And here that Learned and Judicious Lady finds Two Faults in that Assertion First, she condemns the Fustian in it, because it raises no clear and distinct Idea in her Mind, and secondly, she censures the Falsehood in it. *There is not,* says she, *the least Shadow of Truth in asserting, that* Homer *invented the Fable It was invented long before his Time, and he found the Use of it wholly establish'd, as I have shewn in my Preface to the* Odysses.

I shall now leave Madam *Dacier* for a Moment, in order to return to her again immediately.

The fourth and the fifth Pages of the 'forementioned Edition, are taken up with a most impertinent Division of Fable, into the Probable, the Allegorical, and the Marvellous, which Division I suppose he had from some Popish Pedant, and perhaps, from the sacred Scaramouchi his Preceptor Now, in the first Place, he makes the Allegorical a distinct Species of Fable, whereas there cannot possibly be any Fable, that is, any Action founded upon a Moral, but what is allegorical In the second Place, in the Epick Fable [which is of the same Nature with the *Æsopian* Fables, and is distinguish'd only by its Length] that is, in the Epick Action founded upon its Moral, these Three Qualities, of Allegorical, Probable, Admirable are united What Reason then can this Author have to make these Three so many distinct Species of Fable, instead of making them Three distinguish'd Qualities of the Epick Fable, of which alone 'tis his Business to treat here? The Fable of an Epick Poem, is very justly defin'd, a Discourse invented by Art, to form the Manners by the Allegory of an Action, related in an agreeable, a profitable, and a wonderful Manner.

In treating of the marvellous Fable [for a Pedant naturally affects obsolete Words,] he speaks of the Machines of *Homer,* concerning which he is pleas'd to tell us, *That whatever Cause there might be to blame them in a philosophical or a religious View, they are so perfect in the poetical, that Mankind have been ever since contented to follow them, none have been able to enlarge the Sphere of Poetry beyond the Limits which he has set. Every Attempt of this Nature*

has prov'd unsuccessful, and after all the various Changes of Times and Religions, his Gods continue to this Day, the Gods of Poetry

What a monstrous Mixture of Ignorance and Impudence is here? In the Compass of Eight Lines there are no less than Four gross Errors. The first is this, *That Mankind have been contented to follow,* or [to speak *English*] *to make use of* Homer's *Machines ever since* Homer's *Time*, whereas all the World knows, that *Tasso, Milton, Cowley,* and several more have made use of very different ones. The second Error is this *None have been able to enlarge the Sphere of Poetry beyond the Limits which he has set* I neither understand this, nor can I meet with any one who does understand it What does *P.* mean by that Cant and that Fustian, *enlarging the Sphere of Poetry,* and *setting Limits to the Sphere of Poetry*? Now, downright Nonsense is certainly the greatest of all Errors and Blunders In other Errors *Pegasus* only trips or stumbles, but in Nonsense, the Beast falls flat down, and flounders in the Mud

Now follows the Third Error *Every Attempt,* says *P, of this Nature has prov'd unsuccessful* That is, every Attempt to make use of other Machines than what *Homer* has made use of Now, but two of the ancient Poets, who have writ in the Epick Way, have succeeded with the heathen Machines, and those are *Homer* and *Virgil,* and as many of the Moderns have succeeded without those Machines, and those are *Tasso* and *Milton,* whose Machines are almost entirely taken from the Christian Scheme And their Success is a Proof from Fact of the Fourth Error, and is an incontestable one, that the Gods of *Homer* do not continue to this Day to be the Gods of Poetry. 'Tis impossible that any one at this Time could write an Epick Poem with heathen Machines successfully There would be great Folly in attempting it, because the Use of such Machines would be destructive not only of Truth, but of all Probability. As for *Homer* and *Virgil,* when they writ, they had Probability on their Side. And it would be high Injustice to condemn them for not foreseeing what 'tis impossible they could foresee, the universal Change of Religion

There is another egregious Blunder of *P*'s, in the Eighth Page of the smaller Edition, which Madam *Dacier* has with just Severity censur'd *Every thing in the* Iliad, says *P, has Manners, as* Aristotle, says he, *expresses it, that is, every thing is acted or spoken. Nothing,* says Madam *Dacier, can be more contrary to the Doctrine of that Philosopher He never said that any thing has Manners, because it is either acted or spoken On the contrary he tells us,* that there are Discourses without Manners, and that, in his Time, there were several Dramatick Pieces without Manners, and that yet there were in those Pieces both Action and Discourse, a certain Sign, *says he,* that Manners are neither Action nor Discourse, since Action and Discourse may be without Manners. *What then are Manners,* says she, *according to that Philosopher?* Manners then, *says* Aristotle, are the Things that discover the Inclination of him who speaks, and the Choice that he is bent and determin'd to make on Occasions in which it would not be easy to see what he will follow, and what he will avoid

I come now to the second Preliminary, that I propos'd to take Notice of, which is call'd, *A Letter to the Publisher,* and sign'd *W. C* but was undoubtedly

writ by *P.* himself. For it is so full of Folly, Falshood, and Impudence, and the Flattery to *P.* is so fulsome and so nauseous, that there is not a Man in *England* who is Fool enough to offer that Incense to *P.* but himself. And that he himself is very capable of it, we shall give an undeniable Proof anon.

As for *Will Cleland,* I know not whether there is such a worthy Person in the World or not But if there is, he will be certainly oblig'd to me for taking the Fool's Cap from his own Head, and clapping it upon the Pate of *P,* who is most worthy of it I have neither Time nor Inclination to go thro' all the Paragraphs, but I shall repeat Two or Three of them, which will be sufficient to shew the vile and filthy Falshood of the rest.

The first of them is in the Middle of the Sixth Page, of the Edition in *Quarto,* and begins with these Words *I percew'd that most of these Authors had been* [doubtless very wisely] *the first Aggressors* Both you and I, Sir have the Honour to know several of them, of whom we know this to be false But give me leave to acquaint you with what has pass'd between that little envious mischievous Creature and myself At his first coming to Town, he was very importunate with the late Mr *Henry Cromwell* to introduce him to me The Recommendation of Mr *Cromwell* engaged me to be about thrice in Company with him, after which I went into the Country, and neither saw him nor thought of him, 'till I found myself most insolently attack'd by him, in his very superficial Essay upon Criticism, which was the Effect of his impotent Envy and Malice, by which he endeavour'd to destroy the Reputation of a Man who had publish'd Pieces of Criticism and to set up his own I was mov'd with Indignation to that Degree, at so much Baseness, that I immediately writ Remarks upon that Essay, in order to expose the Weakness and the Absurdity of it, which Remarks were publish'd, as soon as they could be printed I afterwards writ and publish'd Remarks upon Part of his Translation of *Homer,* upon his *Windsor Forest,* and his infamous *Temple of Fame* When I had done this, I thought I had Reason to be satisfied with the Revenge I had taken As these several Remarks had made great Impressions upon the Minds of Persons of undoubted Sense, and so esteem'd by the Publick, *P* began to repent of the Affront he had offer'd me, and the Injury he had attempted to do me And to give some Proofs of his Repentance, he subscrib'd to the Two Volumes of Select Works, almost in spite of my Friend Mr *Henry Cromwell,* in whose Hands he found the Proposals He likewise subscrib'd afterwards to the Two Volumes of Letters, which engag'd me to strike out several very just and severe Reflections against him, which were scatter'd up and down in those Letters In Acknowledgment of which, he sent me the following Letter, together with the second Payment

To Mr JOHN DENNIS

SIR,

I Call'd to receive the Two Books of your Letters from Mr *Congreve,* and have left with him the little Money I am in your Debt I look upon myself to be much more so, for the Omissions you have been pleas'd to make in those Letters in my Favour,

and sincerely join with you in the Desire, that not the least Traces may remain of that Difference between us which indeed I am sorry for You may therefore believe me, without either Ceremony or Falseness,

May 3, 1721

SIR,
Your most Obedient,
Humble Servant,
A POPE

And now, Sir, perhaps you may be of Opinion that I had Reason to be satisfied, and to regard Mr *P.* as a Friend. I indeed from that Hour ceas'd to be his Enemy, but could not put an entire Confidence in him, as often as I reflected on a Piece of monstrous Perfidy, which he had been guilty of seven Years before, of which I shall give you as short an Account as I can. The great Success of Mr *Addison*'s *Cato* fermented his Envy, and provok'd his Malice exceedingly To discharge some Part of his Spleen, he goes to Mr. *Lintot* the Bookseller, and persuades him to engage me to write some Remarks upon Mr. *Addison*'s Play He prevail'd upon the Bookseller, and the Bookseller upon me I need not acquaint you that I wrote and publish'd such Remarks But his Gratitude for my complying with his Request, may, perhaps, be a Piece of News, that will not a little surprize you He writes a very scurrilous and impertinent Pamphlet, in which he acquaints his Reader, that I was in the Hands of Dr *Norris*, a Curer of mad People, at his House in *Hatton-Garden*, tho' at the same Time I appear'd publickly every Day both in the Park and in the Town The Manuscript of this Pamphlet he offer'd to shew to Mr *Addison* before it was printed, who had too much Honour, and too much good Sense to approve of so black a Proceeding He was so far from approving of it, that he immediately engag'd Sir *Richard Steele* to write the following Letter to *Lintot*

Mr *Lintot*, *August* 4, 1713

MR *Addison* desir'd me to tell you, that he wholly disapproves the Manner of Treating Mr *Dennis* in a little Pamphlet, by way of Dr *Norris*'s Account When he thinks fit to take Notice of Mr *Dennis*'s Objections to his Writings, he will do it in a Way Mr *Dennis* shall have no just Reason to complain of But when the Papers abovementioned, were offer'd to be communicated to him, he said he could not, either in Honour or Conscience, be privy to such a Treatment, and was sorry to hear of it I am,

SIR,
Your very Humble Servant,
RICHARD STEELE

This Letter was sent by Sir *Richard Steele* to Mr *Lintot*, and by the latter transmitted to me As soon as I had perus'd it, I thought it concern'd me to preserve the Original with the utmost Care, which I shall not fail to communicate to you, the very first Time I wait on you.

Thus, Sir, have I given you the Reasons why upon the receiving Mr. *P*'s Letter, I could not resolve to be his Friend, nor to hold any Correspondence with one of his perfidious Nature, tho' from that Time I ceas'd to be his

Enemy, till he gave me a fresh Provocation, by publishing his chimerical *Profund* and his filthy *Dunciad*, and so became a second Time the Aggressor, and as he has been twice so to me, he has been so to several others, in Spight of the Assertion of *sagacious Will Cleland*, alias *Matt Scribbler*, alias *Alexander P.* For all Persons of Honour and Integrity like his, love exceedingly to go by an *alias*

Having said so much of the Falseness of his Assertions with Regard to my self, I beg Leave to mention some more of them, before I come to the two Paragraphs, that in the 13th and that in the 14th Page of *The Letter to the Publisher* He is pleas'd to say somewhere in his 4*to* Edition, that the Character which Mr *Jacob* gives of me in his *Lives of the* English *Poets*, is my own In Contradiction to which, I here send you a Letter which I lately receiv'd from that Gentleman, by the Perusal of which, you will be pleas'd to see, how apt flagitious and abandon'd Men are to throw their own Crimes in the Faces of innocent Persons Before you begin it, I solemnly declare, before God, that I neither solicited it, or expected it, before he acquainted me that he had writ it

To Mr Dennis

Thursday April 24, 1729

SIR,

IN Mr *Alexander Pope's* new Edition of his *Dunciad, with Notes and Additions*, I find he has done me the Honour to make me your great Friend and Second, in many Places of that extraordinary Piece, an Honour I could not expect But as he has therein charg'd me with Facts of which I am innocent, on account of my *Lives of the Poets*, and violently attack'd the Reputations of several ingenious Gentlemen, endeavouring to render me the Author of his Scandal, I am to clear up these Matters, which are of some Importance, by a just Vindication of my self and others, and a thorough Detection of this great Slanderer

I shall begin with an Enquiry into *Pope's* Calumny against you He, in his *Dunciad*, Book the 2d, would persuade the Publick that your self had a Hand in the small Encomium on your Character inserted in the 1st Volume of my *Lives of the* English *Poets*, where I say in general, *That you are a Person of sound Learning, Master of a great deal of Penetration and Judgment, and perfectly regular in all your Performances*, with a few particular Observations, on the *Justness* of the Design, *Conduct*, and Moral of your *Plays* The least, give me Leave to tell you, that could be said in your Behalf, by any impartial Writer, who had any Knowledge of you or your Works But this scanty Praise of you, is thought a great deal too much, by the selfish Mr *Pope*, wherefore he at length insinuates, that you are the Author of it, which is a malicious and scandalous Insinuation, without the least Foundation of Truth, for I do solemnly declare [without any previous Sollicitation whatsoever] that you knew nothing at all thereof, till the Book was printed, and publish'd by the Bookseller

Now to demonstrate how far the invidious Charge, which he endeavours to fix upon you, and other Poets, belongs to himself only, I shall here relate the true secret History concerning himself In *The Lives of the Poets*, Vol II p 145, 146, 151, &c the Sentences following are by his Authority *This excellent Poet,* [Alexander Pope] *whose Fame exceeds not his Merit, was born, &c There is great Ease, Strength, Wit, and Judgment, in his Compositions, all his Pieces are universally applauded, and the great* Sheffield *asserted his Work His private Character is the best, being summ'd up in a good Companion, and a firm Friend Mr* Pope *has Fire and Spirit equal to that great Undertaking, his Translation of* Homer *And he is excellent in Prose as well as Verse*, &c That these high Praises and Commendations of himself were by him particularly approv'd of, in a

printed Proof of his Life and Character, which I transmitted to him for his Correction, I am ready to make Oath of, if requir'd, and by his Alterations and Additions therein, he entirely made the Compliment his own, which now I understand he, in his abundant Modesty, judges too little, tho' his great Superiors, in any Accounts of them, would have been very well contented with less

I did every Thing in my Power, by Mr *Pope*, who was generally thought to be a rising Genius, to honour and oblige him, much more than by Mr *Prior*, and Mr *Congreve*, whose Favour and Friendship I happily procur'd, and which continued till their Deaths But *Pope* is not a *Prior*, nor a *Congreve*, and I may venture to say, never will be For as he is evidently deficient of their poetical Talents and Abilities, so he is a perfect Stranger to their Gratitude, Honour, and great Humanity, the most shining Parts of these excellent Mens Characters

The Reward of my good Offices by *Pope*, has been the greatest Abuse he could invent It seems the envious little Gentleman is angry with me for presuming to say any thing in Favour of others Here's the Center and Fountain of his Malice Truly he can bear no Character in Competition with his own, especially since the above-mention'd Poets have been dead, in whose Life-times he dared not to publish his Impudence and Nonsense Tho' now he fancies himself *Lord over all*, and, like *King Bambridge*, late Warden of the *Fleet* Prison, he endeavour'd to exercise the most tyrannick Government within his imaginary Jurisdiction He has done all in the Compass of his Malice, to defame, injure, and beat down every one he knew, except his Friend and Confederate the ingenious *John Gay*, on Pretence of my accusing of whom, for telling the Truth of that extraordinary Gentleman, I have the great and disproportion'd Share of his violent Invectives which run thro' his *Dunciad*

By *Pope's Shakespear* lately printed, and some of his Translations, one might imagine he intended to claim the sole Prerogative of Blundering to himself His Blunders in most of his Performances, are very manifest! And therefore he calls others Blunderers, and Fools, in so polite a Manner, as not to be parallell'd or imitated The Lines upon me in his stupid Poem, are very harmless, tho' very maliciously aim'd, for as to my being a Blunderbuss of Law, this cannot go for any thing, even with the weakest of his Readers and Admirers, because they, with others, will, I think, be oblig'd to own, that the great Poet *Alexander Pope*, is no Judge of Law, nor can he make it appear that what he hath said of me, was ever esteem'd any Part of my Character So that on this just Reasoning I am clear of his Satire, (which ought to subsist on some Grounds of Truth) altho' not of his Abuse

I do not pretend to say how long Mr *Pope* was writing of his *Dunciad*, but his great Malice against me, has been ten Years hatching and laying up, so as not to be brought to Light till the *Beggars Opera*, by Mr *Gay* and Company, was acted in the Theatre, which low and licentious dramatical Piece, design'd for the Encouragement of Gentlemen on the Highway, and their female Associates, in *Drury-Lane*, by its extraordinary Novelty, happening to strike the giddy Humour of the Town, has introduc'd a new Species of the vilest Farce, and turn'd the Heads of both *Pope* and *Gay* (who clubb'd their Wit in that Performance) since which, their Pride is become intolerable to all Men of common Sense But these great poetical Champions in the Cause of *Newgate*, will be justly pourtrained in a Supplement to my Account of them in *The Lives of the Poets*

When I writ and publish'd my *Historical Register* in my *Lives of the* English *Poets*, which is so long ago as 1719, I endeavour'd to act the candid Part by every Author I could get easy Intelligence of, and whatever mean Opinion Mr *Pope* may have at any Time have conceiv'd of me, he had once some Regard for my poor Judgment, otherwise he would not have enter'd into any Correspondence with me by Letter, or subscrib'd two Guinea's for one small Book in *Octavo*, to

SIR,

Your Humble Servant,

GILES JACOB

I need not observe to you, Sir, that there are three Things remarkable in this Letter. The first, which I hinted at in the Introduction to it, is, that there are Persons in the World who are impudent and unjust to that Degree, as to throw their own Crimes in the Faces of innocent Persons. The second, which I likewise hinted at above, is, that Mr *P.* is prov'd by Facts attested by a Person of great Sincerity, to be his own Trumpeter. The third is, that Mr *P* has a very great Soul, a Soul exalted as much above Gratitude, as above Justice or Modesty The Gentleman who wrote this Letter, in Complaisance to Mr. *P,* gives him a Character which they both very well knew that he was far from deserving Mr *P,* by Way of Acknowledgment for this Favour, acquaints the World, the very first Opportunity, that Mr. *Jacob* is a Blunderbuss of Law, of which *P* does not understand one Syllable, as appears both by his Actions, and by his Writings, which are all of them as contrary to Law, as they are to Reason and Equity If *P* had call'd him a Blunderer in Criticism, Men of Sense would have been apt to have believ'd him, before they had perus'd Mr. *Jacob's* Letter

As Mr. *P.* has been pleas'd in several Places of his wonderful *Rhapsody,* to declare that I wrote such and such Things in Concert with the late Mr *Gildon,* I here solemnly declare, upon the Word and Honour of a Gentleman, that I never wrote so much as one Line, that was afterwards printed, in Concert with any one Man whatsoever I here send you the Copies of two Letters, which I receiv'd formerly from Mr. *Gildon,* by which it will plainly appear to one of your Discernment, that we are not Writers in Concert with each other

Mr GILDON *to Mr* DENNIS

Dear SIR, *Aug* 11, 1721

I This Minute receiv'd your Letter, which has given me an infinite Satisfaction For the Height of my Ambition was to please Men of the best Judgment And finding that I have entertain'd my Master agreeably, I have the Extent of the Reward of my Labour I am sorry I have not pleas'd you in what I have said of Mr *Wycherley,* because I am sensible that by not pleasing you, I am so far in the wrong, and am so far prepossess'd against my self, that before-hand I plead guilty to your Charge I should be extreamly glad to hear you in my little Room, which will very much oblige,

SIR,

Your most Humble Servant

The second Letter is as follows

To Mr DENNIS

SIR, *Jan* 10, 1721-22

MY Amanuensis, Mr *Lloyd,* having been very ill, I had not the Opportunity of hearing your excellent Pamphlet till this Day I am infinitely satisfy'd and pleas'd with it, and hope that you will meet with that Encouragement and Reward, which your admirable Performance most evidently deserves What I have more to say to you upon that Head, I shall keep till I have the Happiness of your Conversation, who am,

SIR,

Your Oblig'd Humble Servant,

CHARLES GILDON

Now, Sir, is it not plain that any one who sends such Compliments to another, has not been us'd to write in Partnership with him to whom he sends them?

I come now to the two Paragraphs in the 13th and the 14th Pages of *Will Cleland*'s Letter to the Publisher, which, as we observ'd above, was certainly writ by *P* himself, who, like a very modest Gentleman, not only compares himself to *Boileau*, but likewise prefers himself to that great and artful Poet He might as well have compar'd himself, and preferr'd himself, to *Alexander the Great*, because he is call'd *Sawny*. But there are the following *trifling* Differences between that great *Frenchman*, and our little *English* Bard.

I *Boileau* has as much or more of the Principles of good Writing in Poetry, than any *French* Poet whatever. The Principles of good Writing according to *Horace*, are good Sense, Judgment, and Moral Philosophy

P has less of these good Qualities than any *English* Poet whatever, there being no such Thing as Judgment or good Sense to be found in his trifling Productions

II *Boileau* has a great deal of Art, as well as Genius, *P* has neither Art nor Genius Art is always the Effect of Judgment, and there never was a great Genius for Poetry, without great Judgment

III The Censures of *Boileau* are always just, and therefore his are just and legitimate Satires The Censures of *P* are unjust to the very Height of Impudence, and therefore *P*'s Invectives are malicious and infamous Libels

IV *Boileau* praises as many of the *French* Poets as he satirizes, and not only those who died before he wrote, as *Marot, St Gelais, Malherbe, Racan, Regnier*, but likewise his Contemporaries, as *Corneille, Racine, Moliere, La Fontaine, Segrais, Beaserade*, and likewise the principal Writers of Prose that liv'd in his Time, as the great Monsieur *Pascall, Ablancourt, Patru*, and *La Bruyere* But *Pope* never commended any of his Contemporaries, unless two or three contemptible Wretches in his own Cabal, but like an *Indian* that runs a Muck, endeavours to assassinate both Friend and Foe, 'till he meets with the *Indian*'s Fate

V. *Boileau* speaks always of himself, with Humility, Modesty, and Discretion *Pope* speaks of himself with the utmost Pride and Folly, and arrogant Impudence

VI. *Boileau* has generously commended an Author that was very poor, as *Patru*, who was a fine, though unfortunate Genius Nay, he not only generously commended that Author, so far celebrated for the Delicacy of his Writings, but acted by him more generously than he spoke And when he was reduced by the Cruelty of his Creditors, to part with his choice Library, which he had been so long in collecting, *Boileau* most honourably laid down the Price of it, and gave *Patru* the Enjoyment of it, for the rest of his Life But neither the Action nor the Commendation is in *Pope*'s little and sordid Soul, or his envious, malicious and insolent Nature

VII. *Boileau* has Numbers, *Pope* has none. The *Pegasus* of *Boileau* has all its Paces: The *Pegasus* of *Pope*, like a *Kentish* Post Horse, is always upon the *Canterbury*, as has been observ'd formerly

VIII. *Boileau* allows those whom he satirizes to have their Merit, and their good Qualities, and had more of the Gentleman as well as the fine Writer in him, than to call them either Dunces, or Blockheads, or Fools. Such Language becomes none but the Boors and Clowns of *Parnassus*, and therefore neither *Quinaut*, nor *St. Amant*, nor *Brebeuf*, nor *Scudery*, nor *Chapelain* had any such from him, nor any other Writer whom he has attack'd in his Satires

The following Passage in one of his Prefaces is a convincing Proof of this

'I shall content myself with putting the Reader in Mind of one thing, which 'tis convenient he should know, which is, that, by attacking in my Satires, the 'Defects of many of the Writers of the Age in which we live, I never pretended 'by doing that, to deprive these Writers of the Merit and the good Qualities 'which they may otherwise have I never pretended, I say, that *Chapelain*, tho' 'a wretched Poet enough, did not formerly write, I know not by what means, 'an Ode that was not contemptible, and that there was neither Wit nor Agree-'ableness in the Works of Monsieur *Quinaut*, tho' very far remov'd from the 'Perfection of *Virgil* I am oblig'd to add concerning the latter, that at the 'Time in which I wrote against him we were both very young, and that he 'afterwards publish'd several Works, which got him just Reputation I am 'likewise ready to own, that there is Genius in the Writings of *St Amant*, of '*Brebeuf*, of *Scudery*, and of several others, whom I have criticiz'd, and who, as 'well as myself, richly deserve to be criticiz'd In a Word, with the same Sin-'cerity with which I have rallied them for their Defects, I am willing to allow 'whatever they may have that is excellent And thus, I hope, I have done them 'Justice, and have convinc'd the Reader, that it was not a Spirit of Envy or 'Calumny that caus'd me to write against them'

IX *Boileau* has not made scandalous Reflections upon the Lives of innocent Persons, as *P* has done, which the ingenious and sagacious Author of *Pope Alexander's Supremacy* has very justly observ'd.

X *Boileau* was plac'd, by his great Qualities, highly above those whom he satiriz'd, whereas *P* is many Degrees below several of those whom he has libell'd, below *Philips* as a Writer of Pastorals, below You as a Critick, an Editor, a modern Dramatick Poet, or a Translator of ancient Poetry For if your Translation of *Æschylus* is equal to the *Specimen* which I have seen of it, of which I make no doubt, it may make him blush for his Translation of *Homer* And if neither of you have had a Subscription adequate to your Merits, 'tis because in this wise and judicious Age, the Age of *Opera's*, of *Beggars Opera's*, of *Dunciads*, and *Hurlothrumbo's*, 'tis not in the Nature of Things at present, and consequently an Impossibility, that any Author can have a generous Subscription to a Work that highly deserves it.

FINIS.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

I. *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose* (1693)

A. From the Epistle Dedicatory, addressed to Charles Sackville Earl of Dorset

[Dennis expresses his obligations to Dorset, whom he has never met, for the pleasure which his lordship's "admirable Writings" have given him, and for the favor which his lordship has shown to the best writers of the age Dennis maintains "That in your Lordship's time *England* had more good Poets, than it could boast from the Conquest to You before By animating and exciting the very best of which, you will for ever oblige all those who are to receive Delight and Instruction from them" Dorset, unlike Maecenas and Richelieu, has not only fostered the muses but has defended the liberties of his countrymen]

Thus, My Lord, have I been guilty of a fault which is common to all the most supportable Dedications For I have hitherto told the Publick nothing concerning you, but what I learnt from the Publick before There is no Man but knows that of all the Nobility your Lordship has been always the most true and most candid Friend to the Muses Whilst others are imploy'd in finding their faults, it is your prerogative to pardon them, and approve their Beauties This is what is known to every one But every one does not know that to find faults requires but common Sense, but to discern rare Beauties, requires a rare Genius Thus if your Lordship will pardon so poetical a Similitude, when one of the glories of the fairer Sex, one who was fram'd and design'd by Providence to bless some Man who is greatly good, and give an earnest of Heaven below to him, when such a one is at any time seen amongst us, the vulgar Spectators, those Criticks in Beauty, are busie in censuring some Mole or some Blemish, or some inconsiderable Irregularity, which Nature industriously perhaps contriv'd with intention to set off her great Masterpiece But when a Man who has a Soul that in creating was form'd to be mov'd by Beauty, that is, a beautiful Soul, when he contemplates her, he gazes, admires, and loves in a Moment, then follow transporting impatient wishes to return that happiness he receives from the lovely Object Your Lordship could never be the Muses best Friend, if you were not the Man who understood them best If you had not heighth of Genius, and largeness of Soul to comprehend all their Excellencies If you did not sensibly feel their elevation of thought with all its warmth, its force and its delicacy, which you could never fully discern, if you did not throughly understand their Tongues, if you had not skill to judge of its finest Grace, its Vigour, its Purity, its judicious Boldness, its comprehensive Energy, and all its glorious attractive ornaments Your Lordship could never be compleatly skill'd in those ornaments, if you had not a piercing and a delicate Eye, an Eye that can readily judge betwixt tawdry Trimming and proper, that can discern betwixt gay and curious Colours, and can distinguish vain gawdy Pageantry, from pompous richness and true Magnificence You could never converse with the Muses so freely as to understand them fully, if you did not perfectly speak that language of the Gods, in all its Sweetness, all its Abundance, in all the power of its various Numbers, and in all its harmonious Majesty No, My Lord, you could never be pleas'd to a height with the Writings of others, if in writing, your self you had not felt those happy Enthusiasms, those violent Emotions, those supernatural transports which exalt a mortal above mortality, give delight and admiration to all the World, but shake and ravish a Poet's Soul with insupportable pleasure Your Lordship's Genius shines but to a few, to none but those happy few, who have some particles in their breasts of the same eternal Fire For inspiration alone can capacitate a Mortal to behold Celestial Beauties The Vulgar discern it as they do a fix'd Star, they see that it is,

they see that it shines but the Rays that it casts at that infinite distance, can but just reach their benighted Souls thro the horrid gloom that surrounds them, and it is with pleasing wonder that they hear the Sons of Art proclaiming its prodigious Grandeur, its amazing Glory

B. Letter describing his crossing the Alps, dated from Turin, Oct 25, 1688

I Have here sent you a Journal of my Journey from *Lyons* hither, in which you will find that account of the *Alpes*, which you so earnestly desired of me, before I came out of *England* I have taken no notice of the Towns in *Savoy*, nor so much as the Rock of *Montmelian*, but have confin'd my self to a Subject which you seem'd to affect so much

On the nineteenth of *October*, we set out from *Lyons*, and came that night to Verpellier, thro a fair Plain, which was sometimes Arable, and sometimes Pasture, and bounded with Rows of Hills at that just distance, as gave tho not a large, an agreeable Prospect

Octob 20 We came by Noon thro the same Plain, which grew to be sometimes a Marsh, to a Bourg, call'd *Tour Du Pin* From thence, after Dinner, we continued our way, thro whole Groves of Walnut and Chestnut Trees to *Pont Beauvoisin*, being the Bridge that separates *France* and *Savoy*

Octob 21 We entred into *Savoy* in the Morning, and past over Mount *Aiguebellette* The ascent was the more easie, because it wound about the Mountain But as soon as we had conquer'd one half of it, the unusual heighth in which we found our selves, the impending Rock that hung over us, the dreadful Depth of the Precipice, and the Torrent that roar'd at the bottom, gave us such a view as was altogether new and amazing On the other side of that Torrent, was a Mountain that equall'd ours, about the distance of thirty Yards from us Its craggy Clifts, which we half discern'd, thro the misty gloom of the Clouds that surrounded them, sometimes gave us a horrid Prospect And sometimes its face appear'd Smooth and Beautiful as the most even and fruitful Vallies So different from themselves were the different parts of it In the very same place Nature was seen Severe and Wanton In the mean time we walk'd upon the very brink, in a litteral sense, of Destruction, one Stumble, and both Life and Carcass had been at once destroy'd The sense of all this produc'd different motions in me, *viz* a delightful Horrour, a terrible Joy, and at the same time, that I was infinitely pleas'd, I trembled

From thence we went thro a pleasant Valley bounded with Mountains, whose high but yet verdant Tops seem'd at once to forbid and invite Men After we had march'd for a League thro the Plain, we arriv'd at the place which they call *La Cave*, where the late Duke of *Savoy* in the Year Seventy, struck out a Passage thro a rocky Mountain that had always before been impassible Performing that by the force of Gun-powder, which Thunder-bolts or Earthquakes could scarce have effected This Passage is a quarter of an English Mile, made with incredible labour, and the expence of four Millions of Livers At the Entrance into it is the following pompous Inscription

> *Carolus Emanuel Secundus, Subaudux Dux, Pedemontani princeps, Cypri Rex, publicâ felicitate partâ, singulorum commodis intentus, breviorem, securioremque hanc viam regnam, a naturâ occlusam, Romanis intentatam, cæteris desperatam, eversis Scopulorum repagulis, æquatâ Montium inæqualate, quæ cervicibus impendebant præcipitia pedibus substernens, eternis populorum Commercis patefecit*

At *Chambery* we din'd, the Capital Town of *Savoy* In our way from thence to *Montmelian*, Nature seem'd quite to have chang'd her Face There craggy Rocks look'd horrid to the Eye, and Hills appear'd on every side of so stupendous an heighth, that the Company was divided at a distance, whether they should believe them to be sunny Clouds, or the Snowy tops of Mountains Here appear'd a Hill with its top quite hid in black Clouds, and beyond that Hill, & above those Clouds some higher Mountain show'd its hoary Head With this strange entertainment by the way, we came that Night to *Montmelian*

On the 22 we set forward in the morning The Mountains appear'd to grow still more Lofty. We din'd that day at *Aiguebelle*. In the Afternoon we proceeded on our way, sometimes thro the Plain, and sometimes on the side of the *Alps*, with which we were hemm'd in on all sides We then began that day to have the additional diversion, of a Torrent that ran sometimes with fury beneath us, and of the noise of the Cascades, or the down fall of Waters, which sometimes came tumbling a main from the Precipices We lay that night at *La Chambre*

On the 23 The morning was very cold, which made us have dismal apprehensions of Mount *Cenis*, since we felt its influence so severely at so great a distance We arriv'd by Noon at St *Michel* In the Afternoon we continued our Journey mostly upon the sides of the Mountains, which were sometimes all cover'd with Pines, and sometimes cultivated, ev'n in places where one would swear the thing were impossible, for they were only not perpendicular We lay that Night at *Modane*

Oct 24 *Modane* is within a dozen Miles of Mount *Cenis*, and therefore the next morning we felt the Cold more severely We went to Dinner at *Laneburgh*, situate at the foot of Mount *Cenis*

As soon as we had din'd we sent our Horses about, and getting up upon Mules began to ascend the Mountain I could not forbear looking back now and then to contemplate the Town and the Vale beneath me When I was arriv'd within a hundred Yards of the Top, I could still discern *Laneburgh* at the Bottom, distant Three tedious Miles from me What an amazing distance? Think what an impression a place must make upon you, which you should see as far under you as 'tis from your House to *Hampstead* And here I wish I had force to do right to this renown'd Passage of the *Alpes* 'Tis an easie thing to describe *Rome* or *Naples* to you, because you have seen something your self that holds at least some resemblance with them, but impossible to set a Mountain before your eyes, that is inaccessible almost to the sight, and wearies the very Eye to Climb it For when I tell you that we were arriv'd within a hundred yards of the Top I mean only the Plain, thro which we afterwards pass'd, but there is another vast Mountain still upon that If these Hills were first made with the World, as has been a long time thought, and Nature design'd them only as a Mound to inclose her Garden *Italy* Then we may well say of her what some affirm of great Wits, that her careless, irregular and boldest Strokes are most admirable For the *Alpes* are works which she seems to have design'd, and executed too in Fury Yet she moves us less, where she studies to please us more I am delighted, 'tis true at the prospect of Hills and Valleys, of flowry Meads, and murmuring Streams, yet it is a delight that is consistent with Reason, a delight that creates or improves Meditation But transporting Pleasures follow'd the sight of the *Alpes*, and what unusual transports think you were those, that were mingled with horrours, and sometimes almost with despair? But if these Mountains were not a Creation, but form'd by universal Destruction, when the Arch with a mighty flaw dissolv'd and fell into the vast Abyss (which surely is the best opinion) then are these Ruines of the old World the greatest wonders of the New For they are not only vast, but horrid, hideous, ghastly Ruins After we had gallop'd a League over the Plain, and came at last to descend, to descend thro the very Bowels as it were of the Mountain, for we seem'd to be enclos'd on all sides What an astonishing Prospect was there? Ruins upon Ruins in monstrous Heaps, and Heaven and Earth confounded The uncouth Rocks that were above us, Rocks that were void of all form, but what they had receiv'd from Ruine, the frightful view of the Precipices, and the foaming Waters that threw themselves headlong down them, made all such a Consort up for the Eye, as that sort of Musick does for the Ear, in which Horrour can be joyn'd with Harmony I am afraid you will think that I have said too much Yet if you had but seen what I have done, you would surely think that I have said too little However Hyperboles might easily here be forgiven The *Alpes* appear to be Nature's extravagancies, and who should blush to be guilty of Extravagancies, in words that make mention of her's? But 'tis time to proceed We descended in Chairs, the descent was four English Miles We past thro

Novalese, situate at the Foot of Mount *Cenis* on the side of *Italy*, and lay that Night at *Suse* We din'd the next day at *Villane*, and thro a pleasant Valley came that Night to this place

I am, &c

II. *Letters upon Several Occasions* (1696)

A The advertisement "To the Reader"

I Once resolved to have a long *Preface* before this little *Book*, but the Impression has been so long retarded by the Fault of those who had the care of it, that I have now neither Time nor Humour to execute what I intended I shall therefore only give a Compendious Account of what I proposed to have treated of more at large I designed in the first place to have said something of the Nature and of the end of a Letter, and thought to have prov'd that the Intention of it was to supply Conversation, and not to imitate it, for that nothing but the Dialogue was capable of doing that, from whence I had drawn this Conclusion, that the Style of a Letter was neither to come quite up to that of Conversation, nor yet to keep at too great a distance from it After that, I determined to shew that all Conversation is not familiar, that it may be Ceremonious, that it may be Grave, nay, that it may be Sublime, or that Tragedy must be allow'd to be out of Nature That if the Sublime were easy and unconstrain'd, it might be as consistent with the Epistolary Style, as it was with the Didactique, that *Voiture* had admirably joyn'd it with one of them, and *Longinus* with both After this, I resolv'd to have said something of those who had most succeeded in Letters amongst the Ancients and Moderns, and to have treated of their Excellencies and their Defects To have spoken more particularly of *Cicero* and *Pliny* amongst the Ancients, and amongst the Moderns of *Balzac* and *Voiture*, to have shewn that *Cicero* is too simple, and too dry, and that *Pliny* is too affected, and too refined, that one of them has too much of Art in him, and that both of them have too little of Nature That the Elevation of *Balzac* was frequently forced and his Sublime affected, that his Thoughts were often above his Subject, and his Expression almost always above his Thoughts, and that whatsoever his Subjects were, his Style was seldom alter'd, that *Voiture* was easie and unconstrain'd, and natural when he was most exalted, that he seldom endeavoured to be witty at the expence of right Reason But that as his Thoughts were for the most part true and just, his Expression was often defective, and that his Style was too little diversifyed That for my own part, as I came infinitely short of the extraordinary Qualities of these great Men, I thought my self obliged to endeavour the rather to avoid their Faults, and that consequently I had taken all the care that I could, not to think out of Nature and good Sense, and neither to force nor neglect my Expression, and that I had always taken care to suit my Style to my Subject, whether it was Familiar or Sublime, or Didactique, and that I had more or less varied it in every Letter All this and more I designed to have said at large, which I have only hinted now in a hurry I have nothing to add but to desire the *Reader* to excuse my bad Performance, upon the account of my good Endeavour, and for striving to do well in a manner of Writing, which is at all times useful, and at this Time necessary, a manner in which the *English* would surpass both the Ancients and Moderns, if they would but cultivate it, for the very same Reasons that they have surpassed them in Comedy But methinks, I have a Title to the *Readers* Favour, for I have more than made amends for the defects of my own Letters, by entertaining him with those of my Friends

B From a letter directed "*To Mr* Wycherly *at* Cleve *near* Shrewsbury" Dated from London, Jan 19, 1693/4

While I venture to write these Lines to you, I take it to be my Interest not to consider you as I hitherto always have done, and as for the future I always shall *viz* as Mr

Wycherly, as the greatest Comick Wit that ever *England* bred, as a Man sent purposely into the World, to Charm the Ears of the Wittiest Men, and to Ravish the Hearts of the most Beautiful Women

C. From a letter to Wycherley, dated Oct 30, [1695].

Upon Reflection I have found out the following Reasons, why Block-heads are thought to be fittest for Business, and why they really succeed in it

First, As their Brains are a great deal colder, than those are of Men of Wit, they must have but very strait Imaginations, and very barren Inventions, from whence it follows that they have but few thoughts, and that a few Objects fill their Capacities

Secondly, It is reasonable enough to believe, that since they are uncapable of many Thoughts, those few which they have, are determin'd by their Necessities, their Appetites, and their Desires, to what they call their Fortunes and their Establishments

Thirdly, It is not very hard to conceive, that since a Block-head has but a few Thoughts, and perhaps but one all his Life-time, which is his Interest, he should have it more perfect, and better digested, than Men of Wit have the same thought, who perhaps have a thousand every hour

Fourthly, It is easie to comprehend that since such a one has but a few thoughts, or perhaps but one, which by often revolving in his Mind, he has digested, and brought to Perfection, he should readily pass from Thought to Action For he must grow weary of thinking so often of one and the same thing, and since the Nature of the Soul requires Agitation, as soon as his little Speculation ceases, he must of necessity act to divert himself

Fifthly, It will be certainly found, that as a little Thought often makes a Man active in Business, so a little Judgment often makes him Diligent, for he may well be eager in the Pursuit of those things, on which seduced by Passion and Vulgar Opinion, he sets an exorbitant Value, and concerning whose Natures and Incertainty he is not very capable of making solid Reflections For thô Prudence may oblige a Man to secure a Competency, yet never was any one by right Reason induced to seek Superfluities

Sixthly, Penury of thought supposes Littleness of Soul, which is often requisite for the Succeeding in Business For a Block-head is Sordid enough to descend to Trick and Artifice, which in Business are often necessary to procure Success, unless they are more than supplied, by a Prudence deriv'd from a Consummate Experience, or from a great Capacity

Thus have I endeavour'd to give the reason, why a Fool succeeds better in Business than a Man of Wit, who has a Multitude of thoughts, and which fly at the Noblest Objects, and who finds that there is something so pleasing, and so noble, in thinking rightly, and more especially in the sublime Speculations of exalted Reason, that he finds it intollerably irksome to descend to Action, and abhors the very thought of being diligent in things, for which he has an extream Contempt

[By a Man of Wit, I mean] a Man like you, Sir, or our most Ingenious Friend, in whom Fancy and Judgment are like a well-match'd Pair, the first like an extraordinary Wife, that appears always Beautiful, and always Charming, yet is at all times Decent, and at all times Chast, the Second like a Prudent and well-bred Husband, whose very Sway shews his Complaisance, and whose very Indulgence shews his Authority

D From a letter directed "*To Mr* Wycherly *at* Will's *Coffee-house in* Covent-Garden" [*1695?*]

[After acknowledging the receipt of Wycherley's "Panegyrick upon Puns," Dennis proceeds to denounce the pun as a form of wit] Nay, it is a more Damnable sign of Stupidity in an Englishman, to make Wit of a Quibble, than it was in the Ægyptians, to make a God of their Garlick But to return from whence I digressed, I have never appear'd so much a Stoick, but that I have been as much for Diversion as any of you

But then am I for the Diversion of Reasonable Men and of Gentlemen If there be any Diversion in Quibbling, it is a Diversion of which a Fool and a Porter is as capable as is the best of you And therefore *Ben Johnson*, who writ every thing with Judgment, and who knew the Scum of the People, whenever he brings in a Porter or Tankard-Bearer, is sure to introduce him Quibbling But if Punning be a Diversion, it is a very strange one There is as much difference between the silly Satisfaction which we have from a Quibble, and the ravishing Pleasure which we receive from a Beautiful Thought, as there is betwixt a Faint Salute and Fruition

E. From a letter to Dryden, dated March 3, 1693 [1693/4].

'Tis indeed impossible, that I should refuse to Love a Man, who has so often given me all the pleasure that the most Insatiable Mind can desire, when at any time I have been Dejected by Disapointments, or Tormented by cruel Passions, the recourse to your Verses has Calm'd my Soul, or rais'd it to Transports which made it contemn Tranquillity But thô you have so often given me all the pleasure I was able to bear, I have reason to complain of you on this account, that you have confin'd my Delight to a narrower compass *Suckling*, *Cowley* and *Denham*, who formerly Ravish'd me in ev'ry part of them, now appear tastless to me in most, and *Waller* himself, with all his Gallantry, and all that Admirable Art of his turns, appears three quarters Prose to me Thus 'tis plain that your Muse has done me an injury, but she has made me amends for it For she is like those Extraordinary Women, who, besides the Regularity of their Charming Features, besides their engaging Wit, have Secret, Unaccountable, Enchanting Graces, which thô they have been long and often Enjoy'd, make them always new and always desirable

F Letter to Congreve. [1695]

I Have now read over the *Fox*, in which thô I admire the strength of *Ben Johnson's* Judgment, yet I did not find it so accurate as I expected For first the very thing upon which the whole Plot turns, and that is the Discovery which *Mosca* makes to *Bonario*, seems to me, to be very unreasonable For I can see no Reason, why he should make that Discovery which introduces *Bonario* into his Masters House For the Reason which the Poet makes *Mosca* give in the Ninth Scene of the third Act, appears to be a very Absurd one Secondly, *Corbaccio* the Father of *Bonario* is expos'd for his Deafness, a Personal defect, which is contrary to the end of Comedy, Instruction For Personal Defects cannot be amended, and the exposing such, can never Divert any but half-witted Men It cannot fail to bring a thinking Man to reflect upon the Misery of Human Nature, and into what he may fall himself without any fault of his own Thirdly, the play has two Characters, which have nothing to do with the design of it, which are to be look'd upon as Excrescencies Lastly, the Character of *Volpone* is Inconsistent with it self *Volpone* is like *Catiline, alieni appetens, sui profusus*, but that is only a double in his Nature, and not an Inconsistence The Inconsistence of the Character appears in this, that *Volpone* in the fifth Act behaves himself like a Giddy Coxcombe, in the Conduct of that very Affair which he manag'd so Craftily in the first four In which the Poet offends first against that Fam'd rule which *Horace* gives for the Characters

Servetur ad imum,
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet

And Secondly, against Nature, upon which, all the rules are grounded For so strange an Alteration, in so little a time, is not in Nature, unless it happens by the Accident of some violent passion, which is not the case here *Volpone* on the sudden behaves himself without common Discretion, in the Conduct of that very Affair which he had manag'd with so much Dexterity, for the space of three Years together For why does he disguise

himself? or why does he repose the last Confidence in *Mosca*? Why does he cause it to be given out that he's Dead? Why, only to Plague his Bubbles To Plague them, for what? Why, only for having been his Bubbles So that here is the greatest alteration in the World, in the space of twenty-four hours, without any apparent cause. The design of *Volpone* is to Cheat, he has carried on a Cheat for three years together, with Cunning and with Success And yet he on a sudden in cold blood does a thing, which he cannot but know must Endanger the ruining all

G. Letter to Congreve [1695]

I will not augment the Trouble which I give you by making an Apology for not giving it you sooner Thô I am heartily sorry that I kept such a trifle as the inclos'd, and a trifle writ Extempore, long enough to make you expect a labour'd Letter But because in the Inclos'd, I have spoken particularly of *Ben Johnson's* Fox, I desire to say three or four words of some of his Plays more generally The Plots of the Fox, the silent Woman, the Alchimist, are all of them very Artful But the Intrigues of the Fox, and the Alchimist, seem to me to be more dexterously perplexed, than to be happily disentangled But the Gordian knot in the Silent Woman is untyed with so much Felicity, that that alone, may Suffice to show *Ben Johnson* no ordinary Heroe. But, then perhaps, the Silent Woman may want the very Foundation of a good Comedy, which the other two cannot be said to want For it seems to me, to be without a Moral Upon which Absurdity, *Ben Johnson* was driven by the Singularity of *Moroses* Character, which is too extravagant for Instruction, and fit, in my opinion, only for Farce For this seems to me, to Constitute the most Essential Difference, betwixt Farce and Comedy, that the Follies which are expos'd in Farce are Singular, and those are particular, which are expos'd in Comedy These last are those, with which some part of an Audience may be suppos'd Infected, and to which all may be suppos'd Obnoxious But the first are so very odd, that by Reason of their Monstrous Extravagance, they cannot be thought to concern an Audience, and cannot be supposed to instruct them For the rest of the Characters in these Plays, they are for the most part true, and Most of the Humorous Characters Master-pieces For *Ben Johnson's* Fools, seem to shew his Wit a great deal more then his Men of Sense I Admire his Fops, and but barely Esteem his Gentlemen *Ben* seems to draw Deformity more to the Life than Beauty He is often so eager to pursue Folly, that he forgets to take Wit along with him For the Dialogue, it seems to want very often that Spirit, that Grace, and that Noble Railery, which are to be found in more Modern Plays, and which are Vertues that ought to be Inseparable from a finish'd Comedy But there seems to be one thing more wanting than all the rest, and that is Passion, I mean that fine and that delicate Passion, by which the Soul shows its Politeness, ev'n in the midst of its trouble Now to touch a Passion is the surest way to Delight For nothing agitates like it Agitation is the Health and Joy of the Soul, of which it is so entirely fond, that even then, when we imagine we seek Repose, we only seek Agitation You know what a Famous Modern Critick has said of Comedy

> *Il faut que ses acteurs badinent noblement,*
> *Que son Noeud bien formé se denoue aisement,*
> *Que l'action Marchant ou la raison la guide,*
> *Ne se perde Jamais dans une Scene vuide,*
> *Que son Stile humble et doux se releve a propos,*
> *Que ses discours par tout fertiles en bons mots,*
> *Soient pleins de passions finement maniées,*
> *Et les Scenes toujours l'une a l'autre liées*

I leave you to make the Aplication to *Johnson*—Whatever I have said my self of his Comedies, I submit to your better Judgment For you who, after Mr *Wycherly*, are incomparably the best Writer of it living, ought to be allowed to be the best Judge, too

H From a letter directed "*To Mr* Congreve *at* Tunbridge." [1695]

This Coxcomb [who has just asked Dennis what the Spleen is] naturally puts me in mind of the Stage, where they have lately acted some new Plays, but had there been more of them, I would not scruple to affirm, that the Stage is at present a Desart and a barren place, as some part of *Africa* is said to be, though it abounds in Monsters And yet those prodigious Things have met with Success For a Fool is naturally fond of a Monster, because he is incapable of knowing a Man

I. From a letter directed "*To* Walter Moyle, *Esq*, *at* Bake *in* Cornwall." Dated from London, Oct 26, 1695

[Dennis begins by observing that Moyle's idleness and his own ill humour have hitherto prevented their corresponding] But an accident has lately happened, which obliges me to provoke you For there has just been a Play Acted, called *The Mock-Marriage*, the Author of which, whose name I have forgot, asserts Dogmatically in his Preface, that he who writes by rule shall only have his Labour for his Pains I know not what this Author can mean by this For, whom does he pretend to perswade by this fine assertion? Not Mr *Moyle*, and me at least We know indeed very well, that a Man may write regularly, and yet fail of pleasing, and that a Poet may please in a play that is not regular But this is Eternally true, that he who writes regularly *ceteris paribus*, must always please more, than he who transgresses the rules Nothing can please in a Play but Nature, no not in a Play which is written against the Rules, and the more there is of Nature in any Play, the more that Play must Delight Now the Rules are nothing but an observation of Nature For Nature is Rule and Order it self There is not one of the Rules, but what might be us'd to evince this But I shall be contented with showing some instances of it, even in the Mechanical Rules of the Unities And first for that of place, it is certain that it is in Nature impossible, for a Man who is in the Square in *Covent-Garden*, to see the things, that at the same time are transacted at *Westminster* And then for that of Time, a Reasonable Man may delude himself so far, as to fancy that he sits for the space of twelve hours, without removing, Eating or Sleeping, but he must be a Devil that can Fancy he does it for a Week What I have said may evince a necessity of observing the Unities of Time and of Place, if a Poet would thorowly write up to Nature And then the Unity of Action follows of course For that two Actions that are Entire, and Independent, should happen in the same short space of time, in the same little compass of Place, begin together go on together, and end together, without Obstructing or Confounding one another, this indeed may be done upon the Stage, but in Nature it is highly improbable Well then, since the Rules are nothing but Nature it self, and nothing but Nature can please, and since the more that any Play has of Nature, the more that Play must Delight, it follows, that a Play which is regularly Written, *ceteris Paribus*, must please more than a Play which is written against the Rules, which is a Demonstration Rule may be said to be to a Play, what Symmetry of parts is known to be to a Face The Features may be Regular, and yet a Great or a Delicate air may be wanting And there may be a Commanding or Engaging air, in a Face whose Features are not Regular But this all the World must allow of, that there can never be seen any Soveraign Beauty, where air and Regularity of Features are not United Thus is Reason against this Author, but the mischief is, that experience is against him too For all your Dramatick Poets must confess, that the Plays which they have writ with most Regularity, have been they which have pleased most I must trouble you with another Dramatical Criticism, but not till the next opportunity

III. *A Plot, and No Plot* (1697)

A. From the Prologue, spoken by Joe Haines

This Play, they say then, in a little space
Of time was writ, and a damn'd scurvy place
The time Six weeks, the place I have forgot
Dammee, this Brandy makes a man a sot
Were but the Author here, perhaps he'd tell you,
'Twas in some Coffee-house in *Exchange-alley*
A place of late to Epick Muse well known,
Perhaps that 'twas compos'd in's Coach he'd own,
But that alas poor Devil he has none
Then secondly, to please both Wise and Fools
Here, they say, Whimsey's reconcil'd to Rules
But what wise Woman in the month of May
Does not prefer the gallant, strong, and gay,
Who ruffles her in wilds, and th' open face of day,
Before the precise Cuckold who confines delight,
To lawful Sheets, and the dull decent night?

IV. *Amintas. A Pastoral,* by John Oldmixon (1698)

A. "The Prologue *Written by Mr* Dennis"

This Play's no *English* product, but with toil,
Imported from a richer nobler Soil
Then judge not rashly what, in better times,
Great *Tasso's* Genius writ to warmer climes
They who like Nature, may suppose it good,
Tho Nature but by few is understood,
She never is but by reflection seen,
And few are bold enough to look within
As when a thoughtful man forsakes the Town,
And to some Country Solitude goes down,
With more than common pleasure he beholds
The Woods, the Lawns, the Valleys, and the Folds,
Natures bright Beauties every where he meets,
His Soul, which long had been confin'd in streets,
With Rapture now her kindred objects greets
These rural Scenes like pleasure may impart
To those who value Nature more than Art,
And who have Souls to taste the Language of the Heart

V. *Rinaldo and Armida* (1699)

A. From the Prologue

Armida's Picture we from *Tasso* Drew,
And yet it may Resembling seem to few,
For here you see no soft bewitching Dame,
Using Incentives to the Amorous Game,
And with affected, Meretricious Arts,
Secretly Sliding into Hero's Hearts

That was an Errour in the *Italian* Muse,
If the great *Tasso* we're allow'd t' accuse,
And to Descend to such enervate Strains,
The Tragick Muse with Majesty disdains
The great *Torquato's* Heroine shall appear,
But Proud, Fierce, Stormy, terribly severe,
Such as the *Italian* has *Armida* shown,
When by the Worlds disorder, she'd revenge her own
To change *Rinaldo's* manners, we had ground,
Who in the *Italian* is unequal found
At first he Burns with fierce ambition's fire,
Anon he Dotes like any feeble Squire,
The meer Reverse of all that's noble in Desire
Then in a Moment leaves the Lovesick Dame,
And only Burns and only Bleeds for everlasting Fame
In a Just Play such Heroes nere have part,
For all that offends Nature, offends Art

VI. Letter to Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, dated July 3, [1699]. B. M. Add MSS 712

S^r^

Perhaps you may wonder at my Presumption in writing to you, when I have soe long appeard backward in waiting on you But Sr I desire you to believe one who has always professd himself a friend to Truth, when He tells you that He has had reasons which have kept him away, which have noe manner of Relation to you, & with which to trouble you would be therefore impertinent I entreat you likewise to believe that tho I have not lately paid my Respects to you yet I have with passion desird to doe it, & that to be displeasd with me for not attending upon you is to be angry with me for being unfortunate I believe Sr I have said enough to inclme you to excuse my writing to you, I wish it could Prevail on you to pardon the assurance that I show in Requesting a favour of you But I rely on the opinion which I have of your goodnesse, & I am inclind to think that boldnesse pardonable which proceeds from my esteem But it is High time Sr to make you acquainted with what I Desire of you I need not tell you that since the Revolution there is noe one writer (myself excepted) who has shewn his affection to the government but who has partaken of the Kings munificence Yet tho I wanted it more than most of them I remaind contented or patient at least, because I deservd it lesse And I had still been Patient if all the Demonstrations which I have givn of my Loyalty had been only neglected, but to find them Persecuted by the very persons who ought rather to reward them is very hard You may believe Sr that after all the esteem that I had shewn for the Kings person, & government, I could not but be a little Surprisd to find by the publick news papers, that my enemies made use of the Kings Authority very much contrary to his Intention to persecute one who never had a thought of offending him, for a seditious & Dangerous person & a Libeller of the Government Sr My Lord Chancellour has very generously acquainted the King with the businesse, & the King has been Pleasd to order his Atturney to stop the proceedings of the Law However Sr this businesse has & will putt me to expences which I am not in a condition to bear And tho I could not expect to be usd soe favourably as others for the proofs which I had givn of my affection to the government, yet I could not on the other Side reasonably expect to Pay any mulct for them As my Lord Chancellour has by his generous equity corrected the severity of the Law, Soe Sr it lyes in your powr to enable me to Support the expences of it & the expences of my continuance & attendance in Town upon it You were pleasd to tell me upon the alteration of the Coin

that it was Reasonable that I should have something out of the exchecquer as others had had before me, but that it was too much embroild to admitt of it then I hope Sr that what was reasonable then is not unreasonable now As it could never be done by you more easily, Soe it could never come to me more Seasonably Nor is only my interest at stake, but my Reputation For I leave it to you Sr to Judge what confusion it must bring to my enemies to consider that at the same time that they have endeavourd to brand me for a seditious & a Dangerous Person, the government has been pleasd to Reward my Loyalty And I am fully persuaded that the best answer that I can make to the Inditement is to Deserve the Recompence

I am
Sr
Your most Humble &
Most obedient Servant
John Dennis

VII. *Iphigenia* (1700)

A From the Preface

[His aim, says Dennis in the first paragraph, is to inflame the minds of his audience with the love of friendship and—since he who loves his friends has sufficient greatness of mind to love his country—with the love of their country.]

The subject that I chose in order to my design has been handled by several, yet the Fable or Plot is intirely my own I consider, that the Writing of good Verses may make a man a good Versifyer, but 'tis the forming a Fable alone, that can make a Poet I therefore handled it with all the Care, and with all the Art which I was capable of bestowing on it, I chiefly took care to form it as regularly as possibly I could, that is, as Reasonably, as Decently, as Greatly and as Virtuously, and to make it more agreeable, I endeavoured to reconcile Variety to Regularity For Irregularity in the Drama, like Irregularity in Life, is downright extravagance, and extravagance both upon the Stage, and in the World is always either Vice or Folly, and is often both

At the same time I am far from thinking that any observation of the Rules can make amends for want of Genius, I have the lesson of my Master too constantly in my mind, to be guilty of such a mistake

Ego nec Studium sine divite vena,
Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium alterius sic
Altere poscit opem res & conjurat amice

Here we see it is the opinion of *Horace* that the Rules signifie nothing without Genius, but here we see it is his opinion too that Genius signifies nothing without the Rules *Milton* as to this latter point was exactly of *Horace's* mind *Milton*, who is perhaps the greatest Genius that has appear'd in the world for these seventeen hundred years, declares that Genius without the Rules is despicable In the little Treatise of Education which he has writ to Mr *Hartlib*, he tells him that he would have his young Students learn something of Poetry "I mean not (says he) the prosody of a Verse, but that "sublime art which in *Aristotle's* Poeticks, in *Horace*, &c teaches what the laws are of "a true Epick Poem, what of a Dramatick, what of a Lyrick, what Decorum is, which is "the grand Master-piece to observe This would make them soon perceive what "despicable Creatures our common Rhymers and Play-Writers are, and shew them what "Religious, what Glorious and Magnificent use might be made of Poetry, both in "Divine and in Humane things

That the present Tragedy is more Regular than most of our Tragedies are, I have some grounds to believe Whether there is in it what is requir'd on the account of Genius, must be determin'd by the knowing Impartial Reader, that is, whether the Passions

are touch'd, whether the Expressions are worthy of the Passions, and whether there reigns throughout it that majestick Sadness which makes the pleasure of Tragedy

For I declare here solemnly that it was never my intention to satisfie those who expect to be entertain'd with what they call fine things, I know a great deal better what the nature of my Art and the simplicity of the Drama demands, than to leave what the necessity of the action requires, whose vehement motion alone can inflame an audience, and hunt for Impertinent Common-place Wit As often as I write I shall endeavour to adapt my Sentiments to my Characters and to my Incidents, and make my Expressions fit for my Sentiments, and abandon all fine reflections to be written by half Wits, and approv'd of by half Criticks But to return to the Rules from which I digress'd, I had not said so much of them, but that I find it is the daily practice of our Empiricks in Poetry to turn our two Theatres into downright Mountebanks Stages, to treat *Aristotle* and *Horace* with as contemptuous arrogance, as our Medicinal Quacks do *Galen* and the great *Hippocrates*, and to endeavour to make the Rules, that is, Nature and Right Reason, as ridiculous and contemptible as the Rules have made their Writings

[Dennis mentions the great success which the story of Iphigenia had met with on the Athenian, Roman, and French stages, and relates Aristotle's favorable comments on the Iphigenia in Tauris] These considerations gave me encouragement to try how it would do upon our *English* Theatre And from the first representations I expected all the success that I could reasonably desire I never in my life at any Play took notice of a more strict attention, or a more profound silence And there was something like what happen'd at the Representation of *Pacuvius* his Tragedy For upon *Orestes* discovering his passion to *Iphigenia* in the fourth Act, there ran a general murmur through the Pit, which is what I had never seen before But after three or four representations, several people, who during that time had wholly abandon'd themselves to the Impression which Nature had made on them, began to study how to be discontented by Art, and repented heartily at having been pleas'd with what *Athens* and *Rome* and *Paris* had been pleas'd before But if they answer, that they were displeas'd at my defects, and not at those beauties which so justly pleas'd the Ancients, and which please the Moderns, to that I reply, that by universal confession they were more touch'd by the fourth and fifth Acts than they were by the second Now the fourth and fifth Acts are entirely my own, and the second is almost entirely *Euripides* Yet this very Act made little impression on them after the first representations Is it that they were resolv'd all at once to set up for being more Refin'd than the *French*, more Discerning than the *Romans*, and more Delicate than the *Athenians*! I desire them to consider what approbations they have here of late given, and what approbations they have been forc'd to retract, and then they may answer the question.

[There are two objections to his play, says Dennis the first "objection is universal, and therefore must be solid", the second, that "Orestes upon discovering Iphigenia to be his Sister shews too much joy for a Lover," Dennis attempts to answer He concludes by saying that he proposes to owe his success to reason rather than to chance, and that he aims "to please the most judicious and the best of men, and so to please for ever"]

B From the Prologue, spoken by Verbruggen as the Genius of England.

Hither in Pomp the Tragick Muse I've led,
Who had twenty rolling Moons been from you fled,
Forlorn, forsaken, the Celestial Maid
In Solitudes disconsolately stray'd
Wild as a *Bacchanal* I saw her rove,
This buskin'd Child of Memory and *Jove*
Her once victorious Eye now look'd Despair,
With miserable Cries she rent the Air,
Beat her immortal Breasts, and tore her golden Hair

Am I by all forsaken then! said she,
Oh is my *Britain* faln to that Degree,
As for effeminate Arts t' abandon me?
I left the enslav'd *Italian* with Disdain,
And servile *Gallia*, and dejected *Spain*
Grew proud to be confin'd to *Britain's* Shore,
Where Godlike Liberty had fix'd before,
Where Liberty thrives most, I most can soar
Once more I thought t' inspire *Athenian* Flights,
And once more tow'r to *Sophoclean* Heights
But, Oh! she cry'd I feel a ruder Care,
And I have chang'd Ambition for Despair
Here Song and Dance, and every Trifle reigns
And leaves no room for my exalted Strains
Those Arts now rule that soften'd foreign Braves,
And sunk the *Southern* Nations into Slaves
This said the Muse, my *Britons*, against you
Oh Supreme *Jove*! And is th' Indictment true?
It is, so wanton are your Stages grown,
That my degenerate Sons I have not known,
Or what is worse, ye Gods, have blush'd to own
Oh what would my magnanimous *Henry* say,
Or *Edward's* Soul returning to the Day,
To see a Bearded more than Female Throng
Dissolv'd and dying by an Eunuch's Song?
To give you wholesome true severe Delight,
With me the Tragick Muse returns to-night
To your soft Neighbours Sound and Show resign,
But listen you to her great Voice and mine

VIII *The Comical Gallant* (1702)

A The Prologue

Whate're the Title on our Bills may say,
The merry Wives of *Shakespear* is the Play,
But then a different intreague we have got,
And what makes a new Play but a new Plot?
As in the mixture of the Humane frame,
'Tis not the Flesh, 'tis the Soul makes the Man
So of Dramatick Poems we may say,
'Tis not the Lines 'tis the Plot makes the Play
The Soul of every Poem's the design,
And words but serve to make that move and shine,
But *Shakespear's* Play in fourteen days was writ
And in that space to make all just and fit,
Was an attempt surpassing human Wit
Yet our great *Shakespear's* matchless Muse was such,
None e'er in so small time perform'd so much
The Comick Muse herself inspir'd his vein,
And with herself brought all her sprightly Train
When first he took his Pen the charming Maid
Laughing aloud, descended to his aid,
And all her secret Beauties she display'd

His master touches, so exact, so true,
We thought it Sacriledge to change for new,
Except a very few which ne'er could joyn,
In the same just and uniform design
His haste some errors caus'd, and some neglect,
Which we with care have labour'd to correct,
Then since to please we have try'd our little Art,
We hope you'll pardon ours for *Shakespear's* part

IX *Liberty Asserted* (1704)

A. From the Epistle Dedicatory, addressed to Anthony Henley

I shall look upon your Approbation as a glorious Earnest of Fame, for Truth will be sure at last to prevail, and that which we call Taste in Writing, is nothing but a fine Discernment of Truth But as Truth must be always one, and always the same to all who have Eyes to discern it, he who pleases one of a true Taste at first, is sure of pleasing all the World at last

X. *Gibraltar* (1705)

A From the Prologue

Our Author has instructed me to say,
He your Indulgence has deserv'd to Day,
His Muse that lately Sung a loftier strain,
That Sung your glorious Acts on *Blenheim's* Plain,
Now stoops to Trifle, and to laugh in *Spain*
The following Trifle he presumes is writ,
With some Design, some Humour, and some Wit
All three should in the Comick Muse Combine
But Humour of the three should brightest shine
'Twas that which plum'd Capricious *Moliere's* Pen,
And that, and Plot, distinguished artful *Ben*
On those, and on your goodness he relies,
And draws from Dance and Musick small Supplies,
For justly to esteem you he appears,
Who on your Brains depends, and not your Ears,
As all th' efforts of *France* were forc'd to yeild
To *English* Fire, and thought at *Blenheim's* Field,
The Hour will one Day come that shall advance
The *British* Muse o'er Foreign Song and Dance

XI Letter to Henry D'Avenant, dated from London, March 20, 1706.

[This letter is printed in vol I, p 520]

XII. From a letter "*To* Richard Norton of Southwick, *Esq; sent to him by Mr.* Booth." Dated from London, Aug. 10, 1708.

[Dennis declares that he has waited on Booth this summer, with four acts of *Appius* completed He congratulates Norton on his good taste in supporting the drama by inviting the players to perform at Southwick] While most of the People of great

Quality, and of great Estates, entertain their Neighbours and their Acquaintance either with unprofitable empty Amusements, or with pernicious Diversions, which drown their Understandings and debase their Souls, you please them with the noble Delights of Reason, such as, rightly made use of, will enlarge their Understandings, direct their Wills, and exalt their Minds Good God! How must they blush who spend great Estates, or at least the Incomes of them, in turning Men into Beasts, while you with all the Oeconomy of Conduct have the Satisfaction of improving Beasts into Men! As all Men who are capable of thinking right, approve the Judgment of your Choice, so we who are passionate Friends to the Stage think it our Duty to return you Thanks for the timing it For at the very time that several Persons, of the greatest Quality and the greatest Interest, have been endeavouring to banish the Drama from this Town and Island, and to introduce instead of it an effeminate Musick to emasculate the Minds of Men, to metamorphose the *British* Nation, and with Songs like those of the Syrens to change our very Kinds, you have generously made Choice of that very Time, to appear the great Encourager of the Dramatick Muses, and to afford them a Refuge, and a Retreat so charming, that while they are at *Southwick* they may not regret *Parnassus*

XIII *Appius and Virginia* (1709)

A From the Prologue

Our Author's Friends appear concern'd to-day
For the Success of this rough manly Play,
While *Britain* seems to all that's soft inclin'd,
What Welcome here can our rude *Romans* find?
Who love without one word of whining Cant,
And rage without the buskin'd Bully's Rant,
Whose Fire to Judgment rarely gives offence,
But is maintain'd by Nature and by Sense
Rome warm'd by nervous Scenes, for Empire fought,
Such *Cæsar* saw with Joy, with Joy such *Cæsar* wrought
And Tragedy, with bare Appearance writ
Of *Roman* Spirit, and of *Roman* Wit,
Requires an Audience with them both inspir'd,
And to the like immortal Actions fir'd
True, it requires all this, and therefore here
W' indulge our fondest Hopes, and banish Fear
Why should not you *Rome's* manly Joys pursue,
When all that Fire that could the World subdue,
Yes, all the *Roman* Spirit lives in you?

XIV. *An Essay upon Publick Spirit* (1711)

A Excerpt concerning the opera

But of all the Fashions that have been introduc'd among us from abroad, none shews so deplorable a want of publick Spirit as the *Italian* Opera, and the extravagant Encouragement that upon the account of that, is at the Expence of all that is good and great among us given to worthless Fools, who can pretend to no Merit but Sound I had once an Intention of inserting a long Discourse of it here, but I have omitted the greater part of it, out of fear of offending some Persons, for whom I have conceiv'd a more than ordinary Esteem, and who are truly estimable They have indeed such good and such great Qualities, and which shine so truly bright, that they want not the

Foil of this senseless Encouragement to set them off to the World How much is it to be lamented, that the Pressure of their Affairs, their Itch of Novelty, and their Pride of shewing their Power at too precious an Expence, diverts them from considering the Harm which they do both to themselves and the Publick, and from reflecting on that specious Pretence which they give to their Enemies to call in question their very Wisdom, that Wisdom which even their Enemies allow to be so conspicuous in the rest of their Actions? The Prosperity of the Bad, say they, and the Sufferings of the Good, have made Millions doubt of Providence, when they who by their Quality, their Rank, or their Fortunes, influence and support the Pleasures of the Town, when these discourage Merit, and encourage Fools, may we not believe, say they, that they are rather govern'd by Fancy and by Humour than by Reason? Must we not admire, say they, the Profoundness of these Gentlemens Politicks, when we see them forsaking their most serious Affairs for a wanton and a sensual Trifle, so unworthy of their Gravity, their Rank, and their Dignity, that 'tis not worthy of Men? Manly Pleasures are rational Pleasures, mere sensual Pleasures are common to Beasts with Men The Pleasure that effeminate Musick gives, is a mere sensual Pleasure, which he who gives or he who receives in a supreme degree, must be alike unmann'd A musical Voice is natural only to some Species of Birds, but always accidental to Men, for which reason a Cock-Nightingal sings better than *Nicolini*, nay or than *Syphace* himself could, without being taught, or without being gelt for the matter, and there is a better Opera in a *Kentish* Grove in the Month of *April*, than ever there was at *Rome*, at *Naples*, or at *Venice* Do not the Politicks of these Gentlemen, say they, turn Mr *Bays*'s Politicks out of Ridicule? For is not the Conduct of the two Kings of *Brentford*, become as it were a Precedent to some of our modern Politicians? With what Countenance can they hereafter laugh, when they hear the Brother Monarchs say as they descend from the Cloud,

1 K *Come now to serious Counsel we'll advance*
2 K *I do agree, but first let's have a Dance*

For can any one, say they, give a tolerable Reason, why a Dance is not as proper a Preparation for Counsel as a Song? But Mr *Bays's* Politicians only proceeded from Dance to Counsel, and there was an End of the Matter, our modern Politicians advance from Song to serious Counsel, and from serious Counsel, before 'tis half ended, to Song again, and so have made it their Business of late Years to refine upon Mr *Bays's* Politicks

Where, say their Enemies, is the Love which these Gentlemen bear to their Country, that Love which has been so much boasted of? And when here we urge in their behalf the important Services which they have done for it, to this their Enemies reply, that they own indeed that they have done their Country important Services, but that therefore they truly love their Country, is not a good Conclusion A Man, say they, may do another very signal Service, and may do it heartily, not because he loves that other Man, but because 'tis his Interest to serve him heartily, for, say they, there are these following remarkable Differences between true Friendship and a Commerce of Interest

[Here follows an exposition of the six characteristics of a true friend]

But now, say they, let us consider the Management of these Gentlemen, who have introduc'd the Opera among us, and who have encourag'd it at this extravagant Rate The introducing of other foreign Customs among us, proceeded as it were from a Combination of all sorts of People, but a few have introduc'd the Opera, in Despite and Contempt of the rest If these Gentlemen love their Country, why do they sacrifice its Interest and Reputation for a Song? Why do they sacrifice these noble Arts, which may bring Profit and Renown to it, to inglorious ones, which threaten it with Danger and Infamy? What Article has Musick in the *Grecian* and *Roman* Greatness? What has it in our own? When they have answer'd themselves, let them give themselves so much Trouble as to look into *Bayle's Historical Dictionary*, which is now spread thro-

out *Europe* Let them see there how much of the *British* Greatness is owing to these noble Arts, which they have banish'd for so wanton a Trifle, that 'tis hardly fit for a Woman's Toy

Since the Opera in so short a time has made the old *British* Wit a Jest, what Security have we, that in twenty Years more it will not make the old *British* Courage a Jest likewise? It has already had that Effect in *Italy*, and perhaps in *France* too in some degree And nothing is more plain, than that Effeminacy is much more compatible with Wit, than it is with Courage Now is not the Opera, say they, an effeminate Trifle? Has it not, where-ever it comes, emasculated the Minds of Men, and corrupted their Manners? Has it not made good the Accusations of *Plato* and *Cicero*? Why then, if these Gentlemen love their Country, do they encourage that which corrupts their Countrymen, and makes them degenerate from themselves so much? If they are so fond of the *Italian* Musick, why do they not take it from the *Hay-Market* to their Houses, and hug it like their secret Sins there? Why do they abuse the Queen's Authority, to enervate and debauch her People, and to discourage her Subjects, so contrary to her Majesty's Royal Intention, and the express Words of her Licence? Where, say they, is the Gratitude and Justice of preferring Foreigners to *Britons*, and in a time of a deplorable War, their Enemies to their Countrymen? Is there not an implicite Contract between all the People of every Nation, to espouse one another's Interest against all Foreigners whatsoever? But would not any one swear, to observe the Conduct of these Persons that they were protected by *Italians* in their Liberty, their Property, and their Religion against *Britons*? For why else should they prefer *Italian* Sound to *British* Sense, *Italian* Nonsense to *British* Reason, the Blockheads of *Italy* to their own Countrymen, who have Wit, and the Luxury, and Effeminacy of the most profligate Portion of the Globe to the *British* Virtue? Why do those exotick worthless Wretches fare deliciously every day, and sleep in Purple at Night, while our own Proficients in more generous Arts, of Arts which alone can worthily celebrate *the Glories of our Country, and the Triumphs of the Queen's victorious Reign*, are suffer'd to be reduc'd to the basest Want? A Play, say they, is the Imitation of human Life, in order to its Improvement, and yet that is an Art which is about to be lost among us But what is an Opera? 'Tis so foolish a thing, that 'tis impossible to give a serious Description of it 'Tis the Imitation, or rather the Burlesque of Catterwawling, where Love and Battel are wag'd together with a perpetual Squawling And yet this is the thing that is so much encourag'd O noble Encouragement! What, say they, can they answer to this, but that they are pleas'd with the Opera, and that they are resolv'd to sacrifice all things to their own Pleasure even the Honour and Interest of their Country? Now can any thing in the World shew a more deplorable want of Publick Spirit than this? Tho there was little of it in the Nation before yet many People shew'd so much Esteem for it, at least to pretend to it But these Persons by such a Declaration manifestly boast of the want of it, they boldly confess, that they are not concern'd for the Interest and Honour of their Country, and so prevail upon all those, who can be influenc'd by their Example, to throw off any Concern for it

I am sorry that these Gentlemen should have given their Enemies the specious Pretexts to make Objections like these I can only say in defence of some of them what is know to all *Europe*, that not only the Services which they have done the Common Cause have been most conspicuous, and most illustrious, but that they appear'd so early in the Defence of their Country, and at a time when they had nothing but Ruin to expect from their Zeal, that it was undeniably their Love to their Country, and not their Interest, which engag'd them in the Defence of it This I can say in the behalf of three or four Espousers of the Opera, and I could wish the few deserving rest would apologize for themselves

But for the numerous Herd of its Encouragers, who have not the least Pretence to Merit, I would not have them think that any part of the preceding Discourse is address'd to them They are Persons whom 'tis very easy to contemn, but very hard

to satisfy, and least of all with Reason. 'Tis their Interest that the reigning Diversion of the Town should be that, of which they are often better qualify'd to judge, than they are who have Understanding They are not only pleas'd with the Opera forsooth, they value themselves upon it, as their Brother Sir *Martin* did upon his Man's Voice and Musick If they were the only Persons concern'd, I believe no one would give himself a moment's Trouble to put them out of Conceit with themselves, and with their darling Bawble A Rattle of one sort or other is as necessary to keep Fools in Order, as it is Children And therefore let them e'en go on to be us'd as they have been, that is, like so many *Bartlemew Cockes's*, to have the Eunuchs tickle their Ears with a Straw, while they pick their Pockets

The Ladies, with humblest Submission, seem to mistake their Interest a little in encouraging Opera's, for the more the Men are enervated and emasculated by the Softness of the *Italian* Musick, the less will they care for them, and the more for one another There are some certain Pleasures which are mortal Enemies to their Pleasures, that past the *Alps* about the same time with the Opera, and if our Subscriptions go on, at the frantick rate that they have done, I make no doubt but we shall come to see one Beau take another for Better for Worse, as once an imperial harmonious Blockhead did *Sporus*

If any one thinks I have been too severe, let him only consider what *Shakespear* would have said, if he had been now alive He had not the thousandth part of the Provocation that we have, and yet he could not forbear crying out, as it were with a prophetick Spirit,

> ——————— *Then there are found*
> *Lascivious Metres, to whose venom Sound*
> *The open Ears of Youth do always listen,*
> *Report of Fashions in proud* Italy,
> *Whose Manners still our tardy apish Nation*
> *Limps after in base Imitation*

And thus we have gone thro this Draught of the publick Manners, which is very far from being writ with Malice, or being design'd a Libel upon the *British* Nation He who wrote it, loves his Country too well for that, and if he believes the Manners of our *Britons* corrupt, he believes those of some *Southern* Nations to be still more degenerate But they have already lost their Liberty by their Corruption, ours is yet entire, and in no danger at present, and it is possible for us, if we will mend our Manners, to transmit it to our latest Posterity

B Excerpt concerning satire

As this is a general Satire, and cannot be the Effect either of Passion or Malice, a general Benefit must be the chief Design of it The Good which it carries with it, is equally intended to all, even those who happen to be hit by it, are design'd to be oblig'd among the rest, and suffer only by Accident

And 'tis for this very Reason that a general Satire is preferable to what is particular, not only because the Design is more generous, of obliging all, and offending none, but because there is a greater probability of its attaining the End to which it directs its Aim, which is the Reformation of the Reader For the Pleasure which we find that the Generality of Mankind takes in particular Satire, is a certain Sign that the Publick reaps little Benefit from it, for few are willing to apply those Faults to themselves, for which they see any particular Person expos'd to Contempt and Infamy Men will more willingly acknowledge Faults, in the committing which they are join'd with Company sufficient to keep them in countenance

Yet are particular Satires, if they are just Satires, preferable by much to Lampoons or Libels That only can be call'd a just Satire, whose Censures are always true, but that

which endeavours to decry true Merit, out of Malice, or Passion, or Interest, is in spite of popular Applause a Lampoon, and an infamous Libel

Yet several Lampoons, both in Verse and in Prose, are writ with Wit and Art, and these are much better than those thousand *extempore* ones, which are hourly utter'd by Club and Coffee-house Gentlemen, *Petty Merchants of small Conceits*, as my late Lord *Halifax* calls them, *who*, says he, *are always aiming at Wit, and generally make false fire*

Tho perhaps no one is more truly pleas'd by the Charms of a beautiful Imagination than my self, yet I have always been of opinion, that there is no one Quality of a human Mind, that makes a Man a more impertinent extravagant Blockhead, than that which they call Wit, when 'tis not corrected by good Sense, and restrain'd by Judgment; as a Dose of Mercury uncorrected and unfix'd naturally causes Driveling And that which they call Wit in Conversation, without good Sense, and without Judgment, is generally without Good-Nature likewise, and vents itself in Slander

XV. From a letter "*To the* Examiner *Upon his wise Paper of the Tenth of* January, 171⅘." [1712.]

[Dennis denies that he is the author of the pamphlet, *The Englishman's Thanks to the Duke of Marlborough*, which the *Examiner* had sneeringly attributed to him He goes on to lavish his vituperation upon the author of the *Examiner*, of whose identity he has a pretty clear idea]

By thy Impudence, thy Ignorance, thy sophistical arguing, thy pedantick declamatory Style, and thy brutal *Billingsgate* Language thou canst be none but some illiterate Pedant, who has liv'd twenty Years in an University, by thy being a turbulent hot-brain'd Incendiary, a hot-brain'd Incendiary with a cool Heart, one may easily guess at the University which gave thee thy Education By thy wonderful Charity, thou canst be nothing but a scandalous Priest, hateful to God and detestable to Men, and agreeable to none but Devils, who makest it thy Business to foment Divisions between Communities and private Persons in spight of that Charity which is the fundamental Doctrine of that Religion which thou pretendst to teach How amazing a Reflection is it, that, in spight of that Divine Doctrine, the Christian World should be the only part of the Globe embroil'd in endless Divisions From whence can this proceed, but from Priests like thee, who are the Pests of Society and the Bane of Religion But 'tis not enough to say thou art a Priest, 'tis time to point out what Priest thou art Thou art a Priest then who mad'st thy first Appearance in the World like a dry Joker in Controversy, a spiritual Buffoon, an Ecclesiastical *Jack Pudding*, by publishing a Piece of waggish Divinity, which was writ with a Design to banter all Christianity, yes, thou nobly began'st, as *Judas Iscariot* ended, began'st by crucifying thy God afresh, and selling him to *John Nutt* for ten Pound and a Crown, and so under-selling half in half thy execrable Predecessor Hadst thou but had half his common Sense, thou hadst had his Remorse and consequently his Destiny, instead of which thou fell'st from selling and betraying thy God to selling and betraying thy old Friends So that hadst thou liv'd in the time of *Judas*, thou wouldst infinitely have surpass'd him in Villany, thou wouldst have betray'd both Christ and all his Apostles, nay, wouldst have undermin'd, and undersold, and betray'd even *Judas* the Betrayer himself

When thou wert come piping hot from betraying both Friends and God, thou wert often heard to cry most impudently, but most truly, out, that the Church was in Danger Any one may swear, when it has such Priests, that 'tis not in Danger, but upon the very brink of Ruine, and that if it were not supported by God himself, it would immediately tumble

Yet 'tis hard to be angry with such a Miscreant, when I reflect, that he who has us'd me so, has us'd his God worse For thou hast denyed his very Being, which is to degrade him below the meanest of his own Creatures, not only below Fools and Ideots,

but even below Vermin, Insects, Mites, and all the Creatures of the material invisible World, even below the *Examiner* For Nothing must always be less than Something, let Something be never so little

XVI. Letter "To *The Master of the* REVELS. *Writ upon the first acting of a Play call'd,* the Successful Pyrate." [1712]

SIR,

I Have so much Concern for your Reputation, that I think it my Duty to acquaint you, that you have been very severely censur'd for licensing the last Play Never, say they, was the Stage prostituted to so vile a degree before It has more than once been accus'd of promoting Vice, but was never tax'd till now with encouraging Villany And is the Man, say they, who is set over it to restrain it from encouraging Vice, is he become instrumental in its promoting Villany? and such Villany, such a Complication of contemptible Folly, and of dreadful abominable Wickedness, as was never beheld upon any Stage before Good God! say they, was any thing wanting to the Extravagance of this degenerate Age, but the making a Tarpawlin and a Swabber, and a living Tarpawlin and a Swabber, the Hero of a Tragedy? who, at the same time that he is strutting in Buskins here, is lolling at *Madagascar* with some drunken sun-burnt Whore over a Can of Flip The greatest Rogue and the most detestable Villain that ever the Sun or Moon beheld, banish'd not only from his own but from all Countries, declar'd the Pest of all Human Society, and pursued to Death as a devoted Creature, odious and noxious to Mankind, the Stage of whose Tragedy, if he is caught in *England,* will undoubtedly be at *Wapping* Men of common Sense are in Amazement, and lifting up their Hands and their Eyes, exclaim, what could this judicious Author mean, by introducing upon the Stage a Hero of *Execution-Dock,* unless that a Character might be shewn which should be thought adequate to the Player, and that the Heroe of a Tragedy might at length be produced which might be acted to the very Life And this Rogue is christen'd forsooth *the Successful Pyrate* But sure, say they, this pious Christian had most Pagan Godfathers For is not this Name, say they, a Name of notable Instruction and of nice Morality? Does it not speak plainly to the following Purpose? Men, Brethren, and Children, if any of you have a mind to push on your Fortunes, or supply your Luxuries by such vigorous Methods, as Fools call wicked and violent, begin to be Rogues and prosper We will encourage you to go on, and to dispel the idle and vain Fears of Providence and Divine Vengeance, by shewing a greater Rogue than any of you can pretend to be and shewing him prosperous and successful And we here declare upon our Honours, that if any of you Gentlemen of the Galleries have a mind to turn Robbers upon the high Seas, to plunder our Ships and to fill our Jayls with our Merchants, and our Hospitals with their Wives and Children, we here declare, that if he succeeds, rather than that fortunate Rogue should not be celebrated, we will not only act him, but write him our selves according to the best of our damnable Talents This, say the Persons mention'd above is the blessed Moral of this Play, which must needs be wonderfully agreeable to a civiliz'd and a trading People As I said at first, I thought it my Duty to acquaint you with this

I am,
SIR,
Your, &c

XVII. Letter "To his Grace the *Duke* of BUCKINGHAM" Dated from Whitehall, June 19, 1713.

My LORD,

NOT being able to wait on your Grace by reason of an intolerable Head-ach, I humbly desire that you would order the Letter which you have done me the Honour to write for me, to be delivered to the Bearer

I humbly desire your Grace to believe, that if you had given me no Caution, I had by no means done any thing, which might cause me to forfeit your good Opinion of me So far were my Thoughts from that, that I never yet resolv'd to publish those Remarks 'Tis very likely, that after your Grace, and my Lord *Hallifax*, and Two or Three more have perus'd them, I may send them to the Author, and content my self, with letting him know my Power

But, my Lord, as I would not be thought to do a Barbarous thing, I desire your Grace to believe, that I had powerful Motives to engage me to write these Remarks I was attack'd in the ————, in the very second or third, and in several others Since your Grace is of opinion that the Author of the Tragedy did not write those particular Papers, I am very willing to believe it But he was in Partnership with those who did He went share in the Profits, and more than share in the Reputation And Mr ———— durst not have provok'd me, without his Approbation, or at least his Consent My Lord, with submission to your Grace's Judgment, I am apt to believe, that what Mr ———— did in this Case was the Action of Mr ———— If a Man who is in Partnership wrongs me in Trade, all the Partners are involv'd in the Guilt, unless they disclaim it, and signify their Abhorrence of it to the Person injur'd The Law of *England* allows of no Accessaries in Murder, all who are concern'd in it are Principals And Reason, upon which the Law of *England* is founded, says, that the Case is the same in the assassinating a Man's Reputation My Lord, I appeal to your Grace, if the attacking me in the ————, was not only an Assassination, but one of the blackest sort It was done in the dark, no Provocation in the least given, no Name to the Paper, and no Author known, when at the very same Time they openly profest Friendship to me I may add to this, that it was done at a time when they basely took advantage of the great Misfortunes I lay under My Lord, I appeal to your Grace, if mine is not a more generous Proceeding I do not attack, but retort, I proceed frankly and openly, and I who am in Adversity, engage one who is in high Prosperity

Yet, after all, my Lord, the Satyr of this Criticism (for Reason is the severest Satyr in the World, when it is terribly against a Man) does not fall most heavily upon the Author of the Tragedy, it falls most severely upon this partial and tastless Town The writing a foolish Play is a Piece of Ridicule that we have long been us'd to But the gaining a general violent Applause to a foolish Play, is something new to us, 'tis the reviving a Farce that had been acted but once before since King *Charles* the Second's Time

My Lord, I am afraid of tiring your Grace's Patience by too long a Letter, or I would proceed to the other Motives, which prevailed upon me to write these Remarks But I hope to have the Honour of acquainting you with them another time

I am,
My Lord,
Your Grace's, &c

XVIII. Letter "To *Mr* Jac. Ton. Sen. *On the Conspiracy against the Reputation of Mr* Dryden." Dated June 4, 1715.

SIR,

WHEN I had the good Fortune to meet you in the City, it was with Concern that I heard from you of the Attempt to lessen the Reputation of Mr *Dryden*, and 'tis with Indignation that I have since learnt that that Attempt has chiefly been carried on by small Poets, who ungratefully strive to eclipse the Glory of a great Man, from whom alone they derive their own faint Lustre But that Eclipse will be as Momentary as that of the Sun was lately The Reputation of Mr *Dryden* will soon break out again in its full Splendor, and theirs will disappear It was upon hearing of this Attempt that

I reflected with some Amazement, that I should have got the Reputation of an ill-natur'd Man, by exposing the Absurdities of living Authors; and Authors for the most part of great Mediocrity, tho' I have always done it openly and fairly, and upon just and personal Provocations, and that these should basely arraign the Reputation of a great Man deceas'd, who now can make no Answer for himself, and upon whom they fawn'd while living, and should yet escape uncensur'd But when I heard that that Attempt was in favour of little Pope, that diminutive of Parnassus and of humanity, 'tis impossible to express to what a height my Indignation and Disdain were rais'd Good God! was there ever any Nation in which (I will not say a false Taste, for we never had a true one, but in which) a wrong Sense and a fatal Delusion so generally prevail'd! For have not too many of us lately appear'd to contemn every thing that is great and glorious, and to praise and exalt every thing that is base and infamous? Have not too many of us shewn to all the World, by a manifest execrable Choice, that they prefer Weakness to Power, Folly to Wisdom, Poverty to Wealth, Fury and Madness to Moderation, Infamy to Glory, Submission to Victory, Slavery to Liberty, Idolatry to Religion, the Duke of *O[rmond]* to the D of *M[arlborough]* the empty Pretender to the Royal *George* our only rightful King, and the little Mr Pope to the illustrious Mr *Dryden*? If I appear a little too warm, I hope you will excuse my Affection for the Memory, and my Zeal for the Reputation of my departed Friend, whom I infinitely esteem'd when living for the Solidity of his Thought, for the Spring, the Warmth, and the beautiful Turn of it, for the Power, and Variety, and Fulness of his Harmony, for the Purity, the Perspicuity, the Energy of his Expression, and (whenever the following great Qualities are requir'd) for the Pomp and Solemnity and Majesty of his Style But Pope is the very reverse of all this he scarce ever thought once solidly, but is an empty eternall babbler and as his thoughts almost always are false or trifling, his expression is too often obscure, ambiguous, and uncleanly He has indeed a smooth verse and a rhyming jingle, but he has noe power or variety of harmony, but always the same dull cadence, and a continuall bagpipe drone Mr Dryden's expressions are always worthy of his thoughts but Pope never speaks nor thinks at all, or, which is all one, his language is frequently as barbarous, as his thoughts are false

This I have ventured to say, in spight of popular errour But popular errour can be of noe significancy either to you or me, who have seen Mr Settle in higher reputation than Mr Pope is at present And they who live thirty years hence, will find Mr Pope in the same classe in which Mr Settle is now, unlesse the former makes strange improvements Good sense is the sole foundation of good writing, and noe authour who wants solidity, can ever long endure This I have ventur'd to say in spight of popular errour, and this is in my power, when ever I please, to prove to all the world

You may now see, Sir, by this Letter, how little most Men know one another, who converse daily together How many were there in Mr *Dryden's* Life-time, who endeavour'd to make him believe, that I should be the foremost, if I surviv'd him, of all his Acquaintance to arraign his Memory, whereas I am he of all his Acquaintance, who, tho' I flatter'd him least while living, having been contented to do him Justice both behind his Back and before his Enemies Face, am now the foremost to assert his Merit, and to vindicate his Glory

If Mr *Dryden* has Faults, (as where is the Mortal who has none?) I by searching for them perhaps could find them But whatever the mistaken World may think, I am always willing to be pleas'd, nay, am always greedy of Pleasure as any *Epicurean* living, and whenever I am naturally touch'd, I give my self up to the first Impression, and never look for Faults But whenever a cried-up Author, upon the first reading him, does not make a pleasing Impression on me, I am apt to seek for the Reason of it, that I may know if the Fault is in him or in me Wherever Genius runs thro' a Work, I forgive its Faults, and wherever that is wanting no Beauties can touch me Being

struck by Mr *Dryden's* Genius, I have no Eyes for his Errors, and I have no Eyes for his Enemies Beauties, because I am not struck by their Genius

I am, Sir,
Your most humble
and faithful servant,
J Dennis

XIX. From a letter "To Tho. Sergeant, *Esq;* Upon the Prospect from Leith-Hill in *Surrey*" Dated from Hampstead, Aug. 27, 1717

The Sight of a Mountain is to me more agreeable than that of the most pompous Edifice, and Meadows and natural winding Streams, please me before the most beautiful Gardens, and the most costly Canals So much does Art appear to me to be surpass'd by Nature, and the Works of Men by the Works of God But here I desire you to believe, that I speak of the Mechanick Works of Men For as to the Productions of Human Mind, the more Art some of them have as particularly some sorts of Poetry, the more lovely they are, and more estimable, because, the more they have in them of true Art, the more they have of Nature, whereas, in the Mechanick Works of Men, the contrary of this is seen, for the more consummate an Art appears in them, the more they recede from plain and simple Nature

Who ever talk'd of *Cooper's Hill*, till Sir *John Denham* made it Illustrious? How long did *Milton* remain in Obscurity, while twenty paltry Authors, little and vile if compared to him, were talk'd of and admir'd? But here in *England* nineteen in twenty like by other Peoples Opinions, and not by their own

XX Letter "*To Mr* ***." Dated Oct 1, 1717.

SIR,

AS I came Home in the Coach on *Friday* Night, I ruminated upon the Passage in Mr *Waller's* Verses to my Lord *Roscommon*, and found indeed that the Words are not strictly reconcileable to Purity of *English* and *Grammar*, but then there are several Passages in *Virgil* and *Horace*, which are as little in the compass of a regular Construction, for Example, that in the Eclogues,

Et certamen erat Corydon cum Thyrside magnum

And that Passage in the fifth of the *Æneis*, where *Nisus* says to *Æneas*

——— *Quæ munera Niso*
Digna dabis? primam meruit qui laudis coronam,
Ni me, quæ Salium, Fortuna inimica, tulisset

Where *meruit* is certainly for *meruissem*, and so *Virgil* makes bold not only with the Mood but the Tense For my Part, I am for preserving the Purity of Language even in the boldest Flights of Poetry, but then I am apt to be indulgent to the Faults of great Masters, not only because they are few, but in Consideration of the Pleasure which they have otherwise given me He would be but an ill-natur'd Man, who after having had the Pleasure of enjoying a fine Woman, should fall to finding Fault with her Moles, or some other Blemishes, which perhaps after all, are only so many Shadows to set off her ravishing Beauties

I was not a little surpriz'd at the Question, whether Mr *Waller's* Verses to *Amoret* mov'd me What if they dont? Is there not the *pulchrum* as well as the *dulce* in Poetry? But *Horace*, perhaps, you'll say, is for having them both in the same Poem

Non satis est pulchra esse Poemata, dulcia sunto,
Et quocunque volunt animum Auditoris agunto

But then he is certainly speaking of Tragedy, otherwise he must damn most of his own Odes For ev'n of those which are writ to Women, there is but one which has a great deal of Tenderness, and yet most of the rest are undoubtedly very fine After all, the *pulchrum* in Poetry moves as certainly as the *dulce*, but then the first moves the Enthusiastick Passions, as the latter does the vulgar ones Yet to come at last close to the Question, the Verses to *Amoret* move even the vulgar Passions in me, as they ought to do It being impossible to take a Survey in them of Mr *Waller's* Good-nature, and his Gratitude, without pitying and loving him

I am
Your most obedient Servant,
John Dennis

XXI Letter "To *Sir* Richard Blackmore, *On Two Verses in* Virgil." Dated Feb. 6, 1717/8

SIR,

I Desir'd in my last that you wou'd be Arbitrator in a Dispute, which I lately had with Mr *Rowe* concerning some Verses of *Virgil* The Passage is in the 3d Eclogue

Malo me Galatea petit lasciva puella,
Et fugit ad salices, & se cupit antè videri

Now, Sir, Mr *Rowe* affirm'd that the Nymph in acting and the Shepherd in relating, meant nothing but Boys and Girls Play My Opinion is, that such an Interpretation renders the Passage wholly flat and insipid, and fit to please none but Children, that the Nymph by throwing the Apple, and then running away to the Willows, but at the same time taking care that the Shepherd should see her before she got to them, design'd Mans and Womans Play Now, Sir, you are left to judge which of the Explications is most worthy of *Virgil*, and which comes nearest up to that *Molle* and that *Facetum* which at that time of Day compos'd the Character of *Virgil*, if we will take the Opinion of a very judicious Critick, and that was his Friend *Horace*,

Molle atque Facetum
Virgilio annuerunt gaudentes Rure Camœnæ

For where is the *Molle* and the *Facetum* in these Verses, if the Nymph and the Shepherd, like Boys and Girls, were only at hide and seek? I could as soon believe that when *Silenus* in the Sixth Eclogue says, speaking of *Ægle*, *Huic aliud mercedis erit*, he only intended to present her with a Pair of Gloves I know indeed very well, that *Ruæus* interprets *Lasciva* by *Jocosa Puella* But it ought to be consider'd, that *Ruæus* was a Priest and that the Dauphin was young, and that it was the Business and Duty of the Jesuit to conceal from his young Pupil the Lubricity of the Poet's meaning Nor is *Lasciva* us'd upon this occasion, tho' 'tis taken in the common Sense, so very different from *Jocosa Puella*, if we consider that *Homer*, whenever he has occasion to mention *Venus*, calls her the Laughter-loving Goddess Besides, my Antagonist does not seem enough to consider either the Nature of Women in general, or of the *Italian* Women in particular, or of the Season when this was suppos'd to happen, which was High Spring, (which is the Season of High Desire) as *Palæmon* gives us to understand a little before this Passage in three Verses, the two last of which are beautiful as their Subject

Dicite, quandoquidem in molli consedimus herbâ
Et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos
Nunc frondent Sylvæ, nunc formosissimus annus

Now when we consider all these Things, can we believe that *Virgil*, who was so judicious, so wise, and who follow'd Nature so closely, meant nothing but *Hide and Seek* by his *se cupit antè videri* That which makes this one of the beautifullest Passages of all the

Eclogues, is, that there is a very wanton Meaning express'd in very modest Words, and consequently occasion given to the Reader to shew his Discernment by piercing the Veil which the Poet has thrown over the Nudity, which puts me in mind of a fine Passage of *Montaigne Essay Lib* 3 *Ch* 5

> *The Verses of these two Poets* (meaning *Lucretius* and *Virgil*) *treating with so much Discretion and so much Reservedness of Lasciviousness, as they treat of it, do, as it were, discover more of it, and shew it in a better and nearer Light Our Ladies cover their Breasts with a Veil, as our Priests do their sacred Things, and Painters shadow their finest Draughts in order to give them Lustre They say, likewise, that the Rays of the Sun and the Strokes of the Mind are more forcible by Reflection than when they come directly It was a wise Answer of the* Ægyptian *to him who ask'd him,* What doest thou carry concealed there under thy Cloak? I carry it conceal'd thus under my Cloak, because thou shouldst not know what it is *But there are certain other things that are concealed only on purpose to be shewn* Ovid *is a great deal more bold, but therefore a great deal weaker than the other two And when he says plainly*
>
> Et nudam pressi corpus adusque meum
>
> *Methinks he makes an errant Capon of me, by his barefaced Lewdness He who says all satisfies and disgusts us, whereas he who expresses himself with Reserve and Caution, draws us in to imagine more, even than he could have express'd There is, as it were, Treachery in this kind of Modesty, since it slyly opens so inviting a Path to a wanton Imagination*

Thus far *Montaigne* When he speaks of the Modesty of *Lucretius*, he means, I suppose, that Modesty which he shews in his Invocation, where indeed in very modest Terms he treats of a very wanton Subject

I could say more upon this Subject, but I am afraid that I have already tired you as well as my self

I am, &c

XXII Letter "To *Mr.* George Sewel, *On the Preface to a Comedy call'd the* Masquerade" Dated from Hampstead, March 10, 1718/9.

SIR,

I Have lately read over the Preface to a certain comical Rhapsody, with an odd mixture of Laughter and Indignation, upon which I shall here send you some Remarks that were made in a cursory manner He pretends to turn your own Canon upon you, but he has done it to so fine a purpose that it has recoil'd with violence upon himself, and quite demolish'd the paltry Works he has rais'd For what confounded Sot will read any thing of an Author who is capable of writing such a Preface? Mr *Dryden* tells us in his Preface to the *Medal*, that upon his writing *Absalom* and *Achitophel*, he met with just such Adversaries What Reflections he makes upon that notable way of proceeding, you will find in the foresaid Preface But to return to that of our Author

He has very little Inclination, he says to write Prefaces, because, I suppose, 'tis not so easie to steal Prefaces as Plays However, as difficult as 'tis, he has brought it about He has boldly seiz'd upon yours and boasts of it as Plunder instead of Theft

He neither commends nor defends the Play, which would be to waste his Breath in commending *Shirly* and *Taverner* But he spends his borrow'd Preface in commending the Actors, who vouchsaf'd to be the Receivers and Venders of his stolen Goods His *Masquerade*, he says, owes all his Success to them And here the Panegyrick which others bestow upon some one substantial Patron, he is for retailing among a Company of Actors, which he distributes among them at so surprising a rate, that not a Mortal

of them can pretend to any Share of it For first, the Success of this Play is owing to the just Performance of the Players in general, then 'tis particularly owing to the Grace, which, with her usual Excellence, Mrs *Oldfield* gave to her Part Indeed no one who has had the Happiness to know Mrs *Oldfield*, can in the least doubt of her being qualified whenever she pleases to give extraordinary Pleasure by her Parts But now to shew that Fools as well as Children are for Boys Play, this Person the very next Moment resumes the Commendation which he so very generously granted to the Company in general, and so very justly to Mrs *Oldfield* in particular, and to shew his old Inclination to Arbitrary Power pretends to make a fresh Grant of it for the sole use of Master *Robert Wilks The Success of this Comedy*, says he, *is owing entirely to Master* Robert Well! I have read many a gross, fulsome, flattering Fool, but I never read any one before, who was Fool enough to own, that he flatter'd grossly and fulsomly For when he tells Mr *Robert Wilks*, that the Success of the Play is entirely due to him, and in the same Breath tells the whole Company 'tis due to them, and in the same Breath tells Mrs *Oldfield* that 'tis very particularly due to her, what does he do but laugh in Master *Robert's* Face, and tell him, that he takes him for the errantest Baby that ever was bit at Bob-cherry But now to shew that this Fellow is more Fool than Knave, and that he does not flatter on this Occasion so much as he thinks he does, and owns that he does, I will venture to bring him off a little, nay I will venture to shew, that when he says the Success of the Play is entirely due to Mr *Robert Wilks*, he does not flatter at all For I have heard a grave Bird sing, that if it had not been for him alone, the *Masquerade* had never been acted, the rest of the Managers having the last Contempt for it Some of the Players told a Gentleman of my Acquaintance, that the Cause of this Author's being Master *Robert's* Favourite, is, because he does carry himself like a true Poet to him, tho' not to the rest of the World For in order to please Master *Robert* and entirely to gain his Affections, he does not fail from time to time to entertain him with certain quaint Inventions, with certain ingenious Fictions, while Master *Robert*, like other Auditors and Spectators, being willing to be deceiv'd in order to be perfectly pleas'd, supposes all this to be true They added, that Master *Robert* was so exceedingly delighted with Entertainments of this nature, that the other Managers paid for his Pleasure of this kind very dearly, it standing them in, at least, five hundred Pounds a Year I shall tell you things when I see you which are not fit to be writ

I am,
Your, &c

XXIII. Letter "To *Mr.* * * * *In which are some Passages of the* Life *of Mr.* John Crown, *Author of Sir* Courtly Nice." Dated June 23, 1719

Sir,

I Shall now, in compliance with the repeated Requests you have made to me, say something concerning the Education of Mr John Crown, and the most remarkable Passages of his Life Mr Crown was bred under his Father, an Independant Minister, in that part of *Northern America*, which is called *Nova Scotia*. But the Vivacity of his Genius made him soon grow impatient of that sullen and gloomy Education, and soon oblig'd him to get loose from it, and seek his Fortune in *England* But it was his Fate, at his first Arrival here, to happen on an Employment more formal, if possible, than his *American* Education His Necessity, upon his first Arrival here, oblig'd him to become a Gentleman-Usher to an old Independant Lady. But he soon grew as weary of that precise Office, as he had been before of the Discipline of *Nova Scotia* One would think that these were but indifferent Preparatives to the commencing polite Author But neither these nor his Poverty, which was great, could oppress his aspiring Spirit, aspiring to Reputation and Distinction, rather than to Fortune and Power His Writings

soon made him known to the Court and Town Yet it was neither to the Favour of the Court, nor of *Wilmot* Lord *Rochester*, one of the shining Ornaments of it, that he was indebted for the Nomination which the King made of him for the writing the Mask of *Calypso*, but to the Malice of that noble Lord, who design'd by that Preference to mortify Mr *Dryden* Upon the breaking out of the two Parties, after the Discovery of the Popish Plot, the Favour that he was in at Court, the Gayety of his Youth, and his being unacquainted with true political Principles, engaged him to embrace the Party of the Tories About that time he writ *The City Politicks*, on purpose to Satyrize and expose the Whigs, a Comedy so agreeable, that it deserv'd to be writ in a much better Cause But after he had writ it, he met with very great Difficulties in the getting it acted *Bennet* Lord *Arlington*, who was then Lord Chamberlain of the King's Household, and who had secretly espous'd the Whigs, who were at that time powerful in Parliament, in order to support himself against the Favour and Power of the Lord Treasurer *Danby*, who was his declared Enemy, us'd all his Authority to suppress it One while it was prohibited on the account of its being Dangerous, another while it was laid aside on the pretence of its being Flat and Insipid, till Mr *Crown* at last was forc'd to have Recourse to the King himself, and to engage him to give his absolute Command to the Lord Chamberlain for the acting of it, which Command the King was pleas'd to give in his own Person For that Monarch lov'd a Comedy above all Things, (excepting one Thing) and had no mean Opinion of Mr *Crown*'s Qualifications to succeed in it While he was thus in Favour with the King and the Court, I have more than once heard him say, that tho' he had a sincere Affection for the King, he had yet a mortal Aversion to the Court The Promise of a Sum of Money made him sometimes appear there to solicit the Payment of it But as soon as he had got it, he vanish'd, and continued a long time absent from it, of which, he told me, the Dutchess of *Portsmouth* took once Occasion to complain to the King, whose way of answering that Complaint, puts me in mind of a passage in *Boileau*'s Epistle to *Lamoignon*

Hier de vous on parla chez le Roy,
Et d'attentat Horrible on traita la Satire,
Et le Roy que dit il? Le Roy se prit a rire

It was at the very latter End of King *Charles*'s Reign, that Mr *Crown* being tyr'd with the Fatigue of Writing, and shock'd by the Uncertainty of Theatrical Success, and desirous to shelter himself from the Resentments of those numerous Enemies which he had made by his *City Politicks*, made his Application immediately to the King himself, and desir'd his Majesty to establish him in some Office, that might be a Security to him for Life The King had the Goodness to assure him, he should have an Office, but added that he would first see another Comedy Mr *Crown* endeavouring to excuse himself, by telling the King, that he plotted slowly and awkwardly, the King replyed, that he would help him to a Plot, and so put into his Hands the *Spanish* Comedy called *Non pued Esser* Mr *Crown* was oblig'd immediately to go to work upon it, but, after he had writ three Acts of it, found to his Surprise, that the *Spanish* Play had some time before been translated, and acted, and damn'd, under the Title of *Tarugo's Wiles, or the Coffee-house* Yet, supported by the King's Command, he went boldly on and finish'd it, and here see the Influence of a Royal Encouragement

Mr *Crown*, who had once before oblig'd the Commonwealth of Learning with a very agreeable Comedy in his *City Politicks*, yet in Sir *Courtly Nice* went far beyond it, and infinitely surpassed himself For tho' there is something in the part of *Crack* which borders upon Farce, the *Spanish* Author alone must answer for that For Mr *Crown* could not omit the Part of *Crack*, that is of *Tarugo*, and the *Spanish* Farce depending upon it, without a downright Affront to the King, who had given him that Play for his Ground-work But all that is of *English* Growth in Sir *Courtly Nice* is admirable, for tho' we find in it neither the fine Designing of *Ben Johnson*, nor the general and masculine Satyr of *Wycherly*, nor that Grace, that Delicacy, nor that Courtly Air which

make the Charms of *Etherege*, yet is the Dialogue so lively and so spirited, and so attractively diversified and adapted to the several Characters, four of those Characters are so entirely new, yet so general and so important, are drawn so truly and so graphically, and oppos'd to each other, *Surly* to Sir *Courtly* and *Hothead* to *Testimony*, with such a strong and entire Opposition, those Extremes of Behaviour, the one of which is the Grievance, and the other the Plague of Society and Conversation, excessive Ceremony on one side, and on the other side Rudeness and Brutality, are so finely expos'd in *Surly* and Sir *Courtly*, and those Divisions and Animosities in the two great Parties of *England*, which have so long disturb'd the publick Quiet, and undermined the publick Interest, are so happily represented and ridicul'd in *Testimony* and *Hothead*, that tho' I have more than twenty times read over this charming Comedy, yet I have always read it, not only with Delight but Rapture And 'tis my Opinion, that the greatest Comick Poet that ever liv'd in any Age, might have been proud to have been the Author of it

The Play was now just ready to appear to the World, and as every one that had seen it rehears'd was highly pleas'd with it, every one who had heard of it was big with the Expectation of it, and Mr *Crown* was delighted with the flattering Hope of being made happy for the rest of his Life, by the Performance of the King's Promise, when, upon the very last Day of the Rehearsal, he met *Cave Underhill* coming from the Play-House as he himself was going towards it Upon which the Poet reprimanding the Player for neglecting so considerable a Part as he had in the Comedy, and neglecting it on a Day of so much Consequence, as the very last Day of Rehearsal Oh Lord, Sir, says *Underhill*, we are all undone Wherefore, says Mr *Crown*, is the Play-House on Fire? The whole Nation, replys the Player, will quickly be so, for the King is dead At the hearing which dismal Words, the Author was little better, for he who but the Moment before was ravish'd with the Thought of the Pleasure, which he was about to give to his King, and of the Favours which he was afterwards to receive from him, this Moment found, to his unspeakable Sorrow that his Royal Patron was gone for ever, and with him all his Hopes The King indeed reviv'd from his Apoplectick Fit, but three Days after dyed, and Mr *Crown* by his Death was replung'd in the deepest Melancholy

Thus, Sir, have I given you a short Account of the Education of Mr *John Crown*, and of the most remarkable Circumstances of his Life, to the Death of King *Charles* the Second I shall, as soon as I have Opportunity, continue this Relation from the Death of King *Charles* to the Death of Mr *Crown*

I am, SIR,
Your &c

XXIV. *The Invader of His Country* (1720)

A. The "Advertisement"

THE Epilogue which follows was writ by Mr *Cibber*, and spoke by Mrs *Oldfield* I never could get a sight of it before it was spoke, and when it was spoke, I heard it at such a distance from Mrs *Oldfield*, that I heard it very imperfectly When I came to read it, I found it to be a wretched Medley of Impudence and Nonsense As I saw he had made exceeding bold with me, so I found, that like a very honest Gentleman, he had betray'd the Trust repos'd in him, and endeavour'd to give the Audience an ill Impression of the Play At the latter end of the Epilogue, there is an appearance of Loyalty, which sav'd the whole from the Fate which had otherwise attended it But 'tis as easy for Mr *Cibber* at this time of Day to make a Bounce with his Loyalty, as 'tis for a Bully at Sea, who had lain hid in the Hold all the time of the Fight, to come up and swagger upon the Deck after the Danger is over I would fain hear of some Proof that he gave of his Zeal for the Protestant Succession, before the King's Accession to the Crown, or some Proof which he has given since by any Action which

was not to get him Money, and bring the Court to his Play I am perfectly satisfied that any Author who brings a Play to *Drury-Lane*, must, if 'tis a good one, be sacrificed to the Jealousie of this fine Writer, unless he has either a powerful Cabal, or unless he will flatter Mr *Robert Wilks*, and make him believe that he is an excellent Tragedian; which would be as Ridiculous and as absurd, as it would be to Compliment a Fellow in a Fair upon his walking on the High Rope, who is only a Tumbler, or as it would be to compliment Mr *Cibber* upon his Masterpieces in Tragedies, *Perolla*, and the *Heroick Daughter*, which are as full of Nonsense and False *English* even as this Epilogue, and are full of stiff, awkward, affected Stuff, and Lines that make as hideous a Noise, as if they were compos'd in an Itinerant Wheel-Barrow

To end as I began with the Epilogue, if any Reader can tell me the meaning of some Lines in it, *erit mihi magnus Apollo*

B From the Prologue

The Tragedy we represent to Day
Is but a Grafting upon *Shakespear*'s Play,
In whose Original we may descry,
Where Master-strokes in wild Confusion lye,
Here brought to as much Order as we can
Reduce those Beauties upon *Shakespear*'s Plan,
And from his Plan we dar'd not to depart,
Least Nature should be lost in Quest of Art
And Art had been attain'd with too much Cost,
Had *Shakespear*'s Beauties in the Search been lost
As *Philomel*, whom Heav'n and *Phœbus* teach,
Has Notes which Birds, that Man instructs, ne'er reach
' So *Shakespear*, Fancy's sweetest Child,
" Warbles his Native Wood-Notes wild
While ev'ry Note takes the rapt Heroe's Heart,
And ev ry Note's victorious over Art
Then what is ours, to Night, excuse for *Shakespear*'s Part

XXV Letter "To Henry Cromwell, *Esq, Of an Expression in* Shakespear*; and of the Comedy of the* Nonjuror." Dated June 14, 1720

SIR,

I Wrote to you this Morning for your more deliberate Opinion concerning the Passage of *Phœdrus* I now send this to you to consult you about an Expression in the *Othello* of *Shakespear*, which not long ago occasioned a great Dispute at ——— Coffee-House, between the Wits there and the Manager of the Play-House who acts the Part of *Othello* The Wits asked the Player how he lik'd this Expression in his own Part, *Excellent Wretch!* to which the latter answer'd, that he lik'd it so ill, that he always left it out Upon which they immediately extoll'd it to the Skies, and look'd upon the Player with great Contempt Tho' that Tragedian has no more Judgment in Tragedy than an Ass has in Musick, I am apt to believe that he was this once in the right I know indeed very well, that *miser* and *misellus* were sometimes among the *Romans* Terms of Tenderness I find that *miser* is in that Sense in the Eunuch of *Terence*, Act the third, Scene the last, where *Chærea* gives *Antipho* an Account of his enjoying *Pamphila*

Ch *Edicit, ne vir quisquam ad eam adeat, et mihi ne abscedam, imperat,*
In interiore parte at maneam solus cum solâ Adnuo,
Terram intuens modeste An *Miser!*

Which Madam *Dacier* has translated *pauvre Garçon!* But are there not two sorts of Tenderness, a Comick and a Tragick Tenderness? Now tho' *miser* was sometimes us'd by the *Romans*, to express both the one and the other Tenderness, yet, in my Opinion, it can never be translated into *English* by the Word *Wretch* in any but the Comick way; *Wretch* in a serious Sense being always, if I am not mistaken, a Term of Reproach or Contempt And consequently the Terms *Excellent Wretch*, being inconsistent and contradictory, make the meaning absurd, and the Expression Nonsense This is my Opinion at present, but I know not how long it will be so, because I have not as yet heard yours

But that is not the only Point in which I desire it I am told lately by one of my Acquaintance, that I have been too severe upon the Understanding of another of the Managers, and that is of *Cibber* And the Reason that was given me was, that *Cibber* writ *the Fool in Fashion*, which, says my Friend, you have often said is a good Comedy To which I answer, that 'tis true, I have often said 'tis a good Comedy, but I had always much ado to believe that *Cibber* writ it, and that since I have seen the *Nonjuror* and the *Heroick Daughter* I do not believe it at all For which I shall give my Reasons, and afterwards desire to know from you how convincing they appear to you

When *the Fool in Fashion* was first acted, *Cibber* was hardly twenty Years of Age Now could he at the Age of twenty write a Comedy with a just Design, distinguished Characters, and a proper Dialogue, who now at forty treats us with *Hiberman* Sense and *Hiberman English*? Could he, when he was an arrant Boy, draw a good Comedy, from his own raw uncultivated Head, who is now at forty able to do nothing but what is poor and mean, when he is supported by two such Masters as *Moliere* and *Corneille*?

I have often observ'd to you, that there is not in his *Heroick Daughter* one Spark of the Force and noble Spirit of *Corneille* As for *Moliere*, I am satisfied that he knows nothing of him, but that he built his *Nonjuror* upon some spiritless dull Translation of him When I heard that a Play with that Title was to be acted, I wish'd it as much Success as *Cibber* did, upon account of the Cause in which it was writ But I refus'd to see it acted, because knowing *Moliere's* Play to be a Master-piece, I was afraid I should be ask'd some Questions by my Friends which I should not care to answer I heard an advantagious Character of it, from some with whom I conversed, and what I heard I imparted to others, but as coming from my Friends and not from my self After the Play was printed, I wou'd not read it till it had been publish'd a Month, during which time I was ask'd a hundred Questions about it When I saw that the Curiosity of the World was pretty well over, I sent for the Play and read it Upon the reading it, I was soon confirm'd in some of my former Thoughts, that Persons of a very good Understanding might be impos'd upon at a Representation by the Liveliness and Grace of Action, and that the Excellence of the Actor often makes amends for the Imperfections of the Author I soon found that there was little in the *English* Comedy of the Beauties of *Moliere* For *Moliere's* Characters in his *Tartuffe* are Master-pieces, mark'd, distinguish'd, glowing, bold, touch'd with a fine yet a daring Hand, all of them stamp'd with a double Stamp, the one from Art and the other from Nature No Phantoms but real Persons, such as Nature produces in all Ages, and Custom fashions in ours His Dialogue too is lively, natural, graceful, easie, strong, adapted to the Occasion, adapted to the Characters In short, 'tis by this Comedy and by the *Misanthrope* that *Moliere* perhaps has born away the Prize of Comedy from all Persons in all Ages, except *Ben Johnson* alone But the Characters of the *English* Comedy are most of them daub'd and bungled, and the Dialogue nothing but meer Fribble Now is it barely possible that this bungling Imitator can be the Author of *the Fool in Fashion*? Is it barely possible that he should have known Mankind and the Stage, and the *English* Tongue when he was an errant Boy, who is grossly ignorant of them all at forty? But *Cibber's* Name is prefix'd to *the Fool in Fashion* They know nothing of Mr *Cibber*, who in the least wonder at that He who, now he is turn'd of Forty, sets his Name, without any manner of Scruple or Ceremony, to what all the World knows

was writ by *Fletcher* and *Dryden*, could not his Vanity, when he was a Boy, prevail upon him to own what an unknown tho' a very ingenious Gentleman writ? Thus have I given you my Reasons, why I cannot believe that *the Fool in Fashion* was writ by Mr. *Cibber*. But I desire to know, as I told you above, how convincing these Reasons appear to you.

I am,
SIR,
Your, &c

XXVI. Letter "To the Honourable *Major* PACK. *Containing some remarkable Passages of Mr.* WYCHERLEY'S *Life.*" Dated Sept. 1, 1720.

SIR,

I Have lately had the Satisfaction to read over your Memoirs of Mr *Wycherley*, which I had last Week from Mr *C*————–, and found the Relation very entertaining and the Reflections just and pathetick If I give you Hints of some particular Passages which seem either to have slipt from your Memory, or to have escaped your Knowledge, I flatter my self that you will receive them kindly, since they are only sent with Intention to give you an Opportunity, whenever you have a mind to retouch your Memoirs, to make them more compleat, tho' they cannot be more agreeable

And now, Sir, to enter upon the Subject, without any more Ceremony I never could learn, either from Mr *Wycherley* himself, or from Mr *Dryden*, or Sir *Harry Sheer*, or Mr *Walkeden*, or from any of those who had been longest acquainted with Mr *Wycherley*, that he had ever resided at either of our Universities About the Age of Fifteen he was sent for Education to the Western Parts of *France*, either to *Saintonge* or the *Angoumois* His Abode there was either upon the Banks of the *Charante*, or very little remov'd from it And he had there the Happiness to be in the Neighbourhood of one of the most accomplish'd Ladies of the Court of *France*, *Madame de Montausier*, whom *Voiture* has made famous by several very ingenious Letters, the most of which were writ to her when she was a Maid, and call'd *Madamoiselle de Rambouillet* I have heard Mr *W*————– say, that he was often admitted to the Conversation of that Lady, who us'd to call him the Little *Hugenot*, and that young as he was, he was equally pleas'd with the Beauty of her Mind, and with the Graces of her Person

Upon the writing his first Play, which was *St James's Park*, he became acquainted with several of the most celebrated Wits both of the Court and Town The writing of that Play was likewise the Occasion of his becoming acquainted with one of King *Charles's* Mistresses after a very particular manner As Mr *Wycherley* was going thro' *Pall-mall* towards St *James's* in his Chariot, he met the foresaid Lady in hers, who, thrusting half her Body out of the Chariot, cry'd out aloud to him, *You*, Wycherley, *you are a Son of a Whore*, at the same time laughing aloud and heartily Perhaps, Sir, if you never heard of this Passage before, you may be surpris'd at so strange a Greeting from one of the most beautiful and best bred Ladies in the World Mr *Wycherley* was certainly very much surpris'd at it, yet not so much but he soon apprehended it was spoke with Allusion to the latter End of a Song in the forementioned Play

When Parents are Slaves
Their Brats cannot be any other,
Great Wits and great Braves
Have always a Punk to their Mother

As, during Mr *Wycherley's* Surprise, the Chariots drove different ways, they were soon at a considerable Distance from each other, when Mr *Wycherley* recovering from his Surprise, ordered his Coachman to drive back, and to overtake the Lady As soon as

he got over-against her, he said to her, *Madam, you have been pleased to bestow a Title on me which generally belongs to the Fortunate Will your Ladyship be at the Play to Night? Well,* she reply'd, *what if I am there? Why then I will be there to wait on your Ladyship, tho' I disappoint a very fine Woman who has made me an Assignation So,* said she, *you are sure to disappoint a Woman who has favour'd you for one who has not Yes,* he reply'd, *if she who has not favour'd me is the finer Woman of the two But he who will be constant to your Ladyship, till he can find a finer Woman, is sure to die your Captive* The Lady blush'd, and bade her Coachman drive away As she was then in all her Bloom, and the most celebrated Beauty that was then in *England,* or perhaps that has been in *England* since, she was touch'd with the Gallantry of that Compliment In short, she was that Night in the first Row of the King's Box in *Drury Lane,* and Mr *Wycherley* in the Pit under her, where he entertained her during the whole Play And this, Sir, was the beginning of a Correspondence between these two Persons, which afterwards made a great Noise in the Town

But now, Sir, I shall proceed to remind you of something more extraordinary, and that is, that the Correspondence between Mr *Wycherley* and the foresaid Lady was the Occasion of bringing Mr *Wycherley* into favour with *George* Duke of *Buckingham,* who was passionately in Love with that Lady, who was ill treated by her, and who believed Mr *Wycherley* his happy Rival After the Duke had long solliciteđ her without obtaining any thing, whether the Relation between them shock'd her for she was his Cousin-Germain, or whether she apprehended that an Intrigue with a Person of his Rank and Character, a Person upon whom the Eyes of all Men were fix'd must of Necessity in a little time come to the King's Ears, whatever was the Cause she refus'd to admit of his Visits so long, that at last Indignation, Rage and Disdain took Place of his Love, and he resolv'd to ruin her When he had taken this Resolution, he had her so narrowly watch'd by his Spies, that he soon came to the Knowledge of those whom he had reason to believe his Rivals And after he knew them, he never fail'd to name them aloud, in order to expose the Lady, to all those who frequented him, and among others he us'd to name Mr *Wycherley* As soon as it came to the Knowledge of the latter, who had all his Expectations from the Court, he apprehended the Consequence of such a Report, if it should reach the King He applied himself therefore to *Wilmot* Lord *Rochester* and to Sir *Charles Sedley,* and entreated them to remonstrate to the Duke of *Buckingham* the Mischief which he was about to do to one who had not the Honour to be known to him, and who had never offended him Upon their opening the Matter to the Duke, he cry'd out immediately, *that he did not blame* Wycherley, *he only accus'd his Cousin Ay, but,* they reply'd, *by rendring him suspected of such an Intrigue, you are about to ruine him, that is, your Grace is about to ruine a Man with whose Conversation you would be pleas'd above all things* Upon this Occasion they said so much of the shining Qualities of Mr *Wycherley* and of the Charms of his Conversation, that the Duke, who was as much in love with Wit, as he was with his Kinswoman, was impatient till he was brought to sup with him, which was in two or three Nights After Supper Mr *Wycherley,* who was then in the Height of his Vigor both of Body and Mind, thought himself oblig'd to exert himself, and the Duke was charm'd to that degree, that he cry'd out in a Transport, *By G———— my Cousin is in the right of it,* and from that very Moment made a Friend of a Man whom he believ'd his happy Rival

The Duke of *Buckingham* gave him solid sensible Proofs of his Esteem and Affection For as he was at the same time Master of the Horse to King *Charles,* and Colonel of a Regiment, as Master of the Horse he made him one of his Equeries, and as Colonel of a Regiment he made him Captain Lieutenant of his own Company, resigning to him at the same time his own Pay as Captain, and all other Advantages that could be justly made of the Company I remember that about that time I, who was come up from the University to see my Friends in Town, happen'd to be one Night at the Fountain Tavern in the *Strand,* with the late Dr *Duke, David Loggen* the Painter, and Mr

Wilson, of whom *Otway* has made honourable Mention in *Tonson's* first Miscellany, and that after Supper we drank Mr *Wycherley's* Health by the Name of Captain *Wycherley*

He was not long after this in such high Favour with the King, that that Monarch gave him a Proof of his Esteem and Affection, which never any Sovereign Prince before had given to an Author who was only a private Gentleman Mr. *Wycherley* happen'd to fall sick of a Feaver at his Lodgings in *Bow-street, Covent Garden*, during which Sickness the King did him the Honour to visit him, when finding his Feaver indeed abated, but his Body extremely weaken'd, and his Spirits miserably shatter'd, he commanded him, as soon as he was able to take a Journey, to go to the South of *France*, believing that nothing would contribute more to the restoring his former Vigour, than the gentle salutiferous Air of *Montpelier* during the Winter Season At the same time the King was pleas'd to assure him, *that as soon as he was capable of taking that Journey, he would order five hundred Pounds to be paid him to defray the Expence of it*

Mr *Wycherley* accordingly went into *France* in the beginning of the Winter of 1678, if I am not mistaken, and returned into *England* in the latter end of the Spring of 1679, entirely restor'd to his former Vigor both of Body and Mind The King receiv'd him with the utmost Marks of Favour, and shortly after his Arrival told him that he had a Son, who he was resolv'd should be educated like the Son of a King, and that he could make Choice of no Man so proper to be his Governor as Mr *Wycherley*, that for that Service he should have fifteen hundred Pounds a Year paid him, for the Payment of which he should have a Assignment upon three several Offices, whose Names I have forgot, to which the King added, *that when the Time came that his Office was to cease, he would take care to make such a Provision for him as should set him above the Malice of the World and Fortune*

And now, Sir, is it not matter of Wonder, that one of Mr *Wycherley's* extraordinary Merit, who was esteem'd by all the most deserving Persons of the Court of King *Charles* the Second, and in high Favour with the King himself, should in a little time, after he had received these gracious Offers which seem to have made and to have fix'd his Fortune, be thrown into Prison for bare seven hundred Pounds, and be suffer'd to languish there during the last four Years of that Monarch's Reign, forsaken by all his Friends at Court and quite abandon'd by the King? 'Tis no easie matter, Sir, to find a more extraordinary Instance of the Vicissitude of Human Affairs, and if the Cause of so strange an Alteration is unknown to you, I dare promise my self that you are very desirous to hear it

It was immediately after Mr *Wycherley* had received these gracious Offers from the King, that the Water-drinking Season coming on he went down to *Tunbridge* to take either the Benefit of the Waters or the Diversions of the Place, when walking one Day upon the Wells Walk with his Friend Mr *Fairbeard* of *Grey's-Inn*, just as he came up to the Bookseller's, my Lady *Drogheda*, a young Widow, rich, noble, and beautiful, came to the Bookseller and enquir'd for *the Plain Dealer Madam*, says Mr *Fairbeard, since you are for the* Plain Dealer, *there he is for you*, pushing Mr *Wycherley* towards her *Yes*, says Mr *Wycherley, this Lady can bear plain Dealing, for she appears to be so accomplish'd, that what would be Compliment said to others, spoke to her would be plain Dealing No, truly, Sir*, said the Lady, *I am not without my Faults any more than the rest of my Sex, and yet notwithstanding all my Faults, I love plain Dealing, and never am more fond of it than when it tells me of my Faults Then, Madam*, said Mr *Fairbeard, you and the* Plain Dealer *seem design'd by Heaven for each other* In short, Mr *Wycherley* walk'd with her upon the Walks waited upon her home, visited her daily at her Lodgings, while she staid at *Tunbridge*, and after she went to *London*, at her Lodgings in *Hatton Garden*, where in a little time he got her Consent to marry her, which he did, by his Father's Command, without acquainting the King, for it was reasonably suppos'd, that the Lady having a great Independant Estate, and noble and powerful Relations, the acquainting the King with the intended Marriage might be

the likeliest way to prevent it As soon as the News of it came to Court it was look'd upon as an Affront to the King, and a Contempt of his Majesty's Offers And Mr *Wycherley's* Conduct after his Marriage made this be resented more heinously For seldom or never coming near the Court, he was thought downright ungrateful But the true Cause of his Absence was not known, and the Court was at that time too much alarm'd, and in too much Disquiet to enquire into it In short, Sir, the Lady was jealous of him to Distraction, jealous to that degree, that she could not endure that he should be one Moment out of her Sight Their Lodgings were in *Bow-street, Covent-Garden*, over-against the *Cock*, whither if he at any time went with his Friends, he was oblig'd to leave the Windows open, that the Lady might see there was no Woman in Company, or she would be immediately in a downright raving Condition Whether this outragious Jealousy proceeded from the excess of her Passion, for she lov'd her Husband with the same Violence with which she had done her Lover, or from the great Things which she had heard reported of his manly Prowess, which were not answer'd by her Experience, or from them both together, Mr *Wycherley* thought that he was oblig'd to humour it, and that he could not be too indulgent to a Lady who had bestow'd both her Person and her Fortune on him This, Sir, was the Cause that brought Mr *Wycherley* all at once into the utmost Disgrace with the Court, whose Favour and Affection but just before he possessed in the highest Degree And these, Sir, are the Particulars of Mr *Wycherley's* Life, which seem either to have slipt from your Memory, or to have escaped your Knowledge

I am, &c

XXVII. Letter "To *Mr.* Bradley," on Criticism Dated March 20, 1720/21.

SIR,

SINCE among the rest of the Obligations which I have to you, you have been so generous as to defend me from that Accusation of Ill-nature, which has been brought against me by some who are so far from knowing me, that perhaps they never saw me, I am animated by so friendly a Proceeding to send you my Thoughts upon this subject, as they have from time to time come into my Mind, as well as I am able to recollect them, in that ill State of Health under which I labour at present

As this Accusation is brought against me by those who are utter Strangers to me, it must proceed from the Books which I have publish'd, and particularly from the Books of Criticism But if in my Criticism I am in the right, my very being so must be a sufficient Apology against that Accusation For he who accuses a Man of Ill-nature for writing a just Criticism, knows not what is meant by either of the Terms, either by Ill-nature or Criticism By Ill-nature must be meant something that is contrary to the true Nature of Man, as by Good-nature must be understood something that is agreeable to it, or the one can be no Term of Reproach, nor the other of Commendation But the true Nature of Man must consist in Reason, which distinguishes him from all other Creatures, and therefore no Discourse or Action that is reasonable can possibly denominate him ill-natur'd

But as the true Nature of Man is reasonable, it is likewise social, and Man is therefore the most social of Creatures, because he is the most reasonable Now a just Criticism is perfectly agreeable to the Nature of Man consider'd as 'tis social For what does the good Critic design? he designs to detect and disgrace Errour, to disclose and honour Truth, he designs the Advancement of a noble Art, and by it the Interest and Glory of his Native Country, which depend in no small measure upon the flourishing of Arts

If he has the greatest Goodness of Nature, who has the largest share of social Virtue, if he has the largest share of social Virtue, who labours most for the Happiness of the Society in which he lives, and of all his Fellow-Creatures in general, if the Happiness of ones Native Country, and of Humankind in general, depend more, under God, upon the

Maintenance of Liberty, than upon any other thing whatsoever; who can justly pretend (not only of the Writers of the present Age, but of the *English* Writers in general) to a greater Goodness of Nature than my self, who have made it the constant Business of my Life to defend and maintain Liberty? Who has taken more delight in praising her Benefactor, or in branding and defaming her avowed and mortal Enemies? In short, Sir, Liberty has been the continual Theme of my Pen, and the constant Employment of my Life And have I taken all this Pains for my self? No I wanted not common Sense to discern that the *British* Liberties would be of longer continuance than my Life But the growing Corruptions of my Countrymen gave me too just grounds to apprehend that Liberty in *Great Britain* would not last many Centuries I therefore resolv'd to cast in my Mite towards the rendring it perpetual in this Island And yet I knew very well and foresaw, that by this very Endeavour to serve them, I should draw upon me the Hatred of a great part of my Countrymen, and by consequence a thousand different Slanders They have given me distempers of Body, and defects of Mind, of which I have not the least Knowledge, and the Opinion of my Ill-nature has proceeded as much from my Endeavours to maintain and prolong Liberty, and by consequence to perpetuate Happiness to them and to their Posterity, as from my detecting and exposing successful Poetasters For which if I am sorry for my self, I am more sorry for my Country, for a People so dispos'd can be free no longer than their Rulers are willing they should be so I am in so faint and languishing a Condition, that I can proceed no further, tho' I have many things to say But I will certainly resume this Subject, if I ever retrieve my Vigour

I am, &c.

XXVIII "Advertisement *to the* Reader," prefixed to the 1721 edition of *The Person of Quality's Answer to Collier's Dissuasive*

THE following Letter was writ by me about sixteen Years ago But that the Reader may enter into it with the greater Ease, and be the better entertain'd with it, it will be convenient to lay before him the Occasion upon which it was writ It was towards the end of the last Century that Mr *Collier* publish'd a Book call'd, *A short View of the Prophaness and Immorality of the* English *Stage*, in which Book, tho' there were several Things true in particular, yet the Author was manifestly so unfair an Adversary in general, that the latter End of the Book very grossly contradicted the beginning of it, and endeavour'd to decry even a Regulated Stage, which the Author at the beginning of the Book had acknowledg'd useful About four or five Years after that, as near as I can remember, Mr *Collier* took occasion from the great Storm, which happen'd about that Time, to renew his Attack upon the Stage, in a little Pamphlet call'd, *A Dissuasive from the Play-House, written by way of Letter to a Person of Quality* Which Pamphlet, upon the Fast Day that was order'd to be kept by publick Authority immediately after that Tempest, was given to People *gratis* as they came out of the Churches The Design of it was to make the great Storm a Judgment upon the Nation for the Enormities of our Theatres The Hypocrisie was here so flagrant and so absurd and extravagant, that it rais'd either the Indignation or Mirth of all discerning Men of Integrity At the same time it had a wonderful Influence upon the Weak and the Hypocrites, and there was a great Outcry against the Stage, so great a one, that there was a warm Report about the Town, that it had been twice debated in Council, whether the Theatres should be shut up or continued Then it was that I could bear no longer, but as I had before defended a regulated Stage against the Author's Attack in his *Short View*, I was resolved to expose the Hypocrisie, the Extravagance and the Sophistry of his *Dissuasive* This Resolution produced the following Letter, which I call'd the *Person of Quality's Answer to Mr* Collier's *Letter*, and which was intended to consist of a Mixture of

Reason and Raillery, and which was most agreeably receiv'd by some of the best Judges who were then in *England*, and particularly by the late Duke of *Buckingham*, the late Earl of *Halifax*, and the present Lord *Lansdown* As this Letter has been so long out of Print, that it is as scarce as any Manuscript of which there is but one Copy, I thought it might be as new and as entertaining to most of its Readers as if it had been never publish'd There remains one thing more with which I must acquaint the Reader, and that is, that I, who have all my Life-time abhorr'd Hypocrisie, and scorn'd to pass for any thing which I am not, tho' in the Title Page I call the Letter *the Person of Quality's Answer*, have yet taken care in the Body of the Letter to acquaint the Reader, that I am only a private Gentleman But I make no doubt but that I am a much more considerable Person than he to whom Mr *Collier's* Letter was writ, who perhaps was no Body

XXIX Preface to the *Original Letters* (1721)

I Here present the Reader with a Volume of Letters writ upon very different Occasions, at very different Times They are far from being all of them equal, but I hope their Variety will make amends for their Inequality I make no doubt but that upon perusal of the Critical part of them, the old Accusation will be brought against me, and there will be a fresh Outcry among Thoughtless People, that I am an Ill-natur'd Man 'Tis very odd that I should have that Character only from Persons who never knew me, and who never were once in my Company But there are People in the World who imagine that Criticism must be the Effect of Ill-nature These Persons know not what is meant by either of the Terms, either Criticism or Ill-nature, otherwise they would be convinced that a good Criticism is the best-natur'd thing in the World For by Goodness of Nature must be meant something that comes up to the true Nature of Man, else it would be a Term of Reproach instead of Commendation But the true Nature of Man is a Reasonable and a Social Nature And a good Criticism, is both Reasonable and Social It detects Error, illustrates Truth, advances Art, and consequently has a direct Tendency to the Advancement of the national Honour If this last is true of good Criticism in general, it must be most true of a just Criticism upon the Tragedy of *Cato* That Tragedy met with Success which never any other did It was acted for a Month together It has been translated into *French*, and into *Italian*, which never happen'd to any of our Dramatick Poems before And 'tis plain to all the Judges of Poetry, that it has a Thousand shameful Faults, and very few natural Beauties What must the Knowers in *France* and *Italy* say, upon reading these Translations? Must they not Discourse after this Manner? The *English* Nation boast much of their Poetry, they extol to the Skies, their *Shakespear*, their *Ben Johnson*, their *Milton* But yet they applaud nothing so loudly as this Tragedy of *Cato* They have got it translated both into *French* and *Italian*, and have sent it to us as a Master-Piece to Insult us Else why has this Tragedy only been translated? And yet this Tragedy, at the same time that it has a Thousand Faults, and most of them very gross ones, has very few Beauties, and those which it has are perhaps not of *British* Growth, but are deriv'd from *Lucan* and *Seneca* What then must we think of those other Poets, their *Shakespear*, their *Ben Johnson*, their *Milton*, whom they formerly so much extol'd, but not half so much as *Cato*? Must we not conclude, that these Islanders are very indifferent Poets, and more indifferent Judges?

I appeal to the reasonable and impartial Reader, if this must not be the Sense of all the knowing *French* and *Italians* who have seen these Translations Let the reasonable and impartial Reader judge then, if a just Criticism upon *Cato* was not absolutely necessary, both for the Advantage of Dramatick Poetry, to which the undeserv'd Success of this Tragedy has done infinite Harm, and for the Vindication of the National Honour, let the Reader judge, if it was not necessary, that a Man who owns that he admires the noble Genius of *Shakespear*, admires the unparallell'd Sublimity of the

Paradise Lost of *Milton*, that he is infinitely pleas'd with the Master-Pieces of *Ben Johnson*, and exceedingly delighted with several of our other Comick Poets, should give his Reasons to all the World why he has no Esteem for *Cato*?

If what I have said is not sufficient to appease the Fury of a Headlong Cabal; but they will still cry out that the Critical Letters in this Volume upon the Tragedy of *Cato*, are the Effects of Ill-nature, I must beg leave to exclaim in my turn, that those Persons, let them be who they will, shew a deplorable want of publick Spirit, who can prefer the Reputation of one Man, and a Reputation which he does not deserve to possess, before the Advantage of a noble Art, and the Honour of their Country

But perhaps 'tis not the Author of *Cato* that these Persons are so much concern'd for, 'tis themselves 'Tis themselves and their own Satisfaction, which they prefer to the Prosperity of the Commonwealth of Learning, and to the Good and Honour of their Country There are in the World very vain Persons, who are resolv'd to maintain the good Opinion which they have of themselves, at the Expence of every thing, and utterly detest the Man who shall dare to disturb them in the Possession of it, by shewing them that they have pass'd a very foolish Judgment

If any are disgusted that these Observations are publish'd after the Death of the Author of that Tragedy, I can assure them, that they were writ in two long Letters to a Friend immediately after the REMARKS which were printed By what Artifice those two Letters were got out of my Hands, by what Fortune I recovered the Substance of them, and how it came to take the form which it now has, I shall not here declare, not the first, thro' regard to the Memory of the Dead, nor the two latter, thro' Respect to the precious Time of the Living

Before I take my leave of this Subject I think my self oblig'd to do Justice to the Memory of Mr ADDISON, who was certainly a Learned and very Ingenious Man And several of the *Tatlers* and *Spectators* which were writ by him deserv'd the Applause which they met with

I hope that what I have said will suffice to satisfy every reasonable Impartial Reader, who is a true Lover of His Country For the rest, I have long since learnt to esteem their Censures according to their just Value

XXX. Preface to *The Faith and Duties of Christians* (*1727* ?)

I Have all my Life-time been averse to the Translating any Thing of Length, whether it was Verse or Prose *Grecian* or *Roman*, Antient or Modern, because I have always believ'd, that no Man could ever acquire by Translation a great and a lasting Reputation *La Traduction*, says *Boileau*, *n'a jamais mené personne a l'Immortalité* Never any Man got by Translation an immortal Reputation If, in spite of the foresaid Aversion, I have prevail'd upon myself to translate the following Treatise, *De Fide & Officiis Christianorum*, there have been two Things that have principally induc'd me to it One of them was the Request of a Gentleman, with whom I have had the Honour to be acquainted almost fifty Years, and who is Executor to the Author, the late Reverend Master of the *Charter-House* Another Motive was, that the Translation of this Book might at this Time of Day do some Good to my Countrymen, a Thing which I have all my Life-time aim'd at in all my Writings Of all the Treatises which were writ by the most Ingenious Author, this is certainly the most useful Some of the other Pieces shew great Learning, and great Capacity, yet many of the Positions laid down in them are rather curious and conjectural, than solid and certain, and can be of little Advantage or Entertainment to vulgar Readers, that is, to the Generality of Mankind But the Treatise which is now publish'd may be of Advantage to all, and to Readers of every Kind both delightful and instructive The sixth Chapter, which gives an Account of the Christian Morality, is altogether noble, and, in my Opinion, it will be impossible to account for so perfect a System of Morals, taught by Fishermen, instructed by a Person who passed for a Carpenter's Son, without allowing them to be divinely

inspir'd If there are any Defects in the original Treatise, as where shall we find one that has not some, the judicious and impartial Reader will consider that this is a posthumous Work, and consequently has not had the last correcting Hand of the Author to it But the Beauties of the Original, the Spirit, the Elegance, the Force, and the Grace, and the profound good Sense that are almost every where to be found in it, will make ample Amends for its Defects, if it has any As for my own Part, I have done every Thing that lay in my Power to give this Translation the Spirit, and Felicity, and Freeness of an Original, because Elegance, Grace, and Harmony, depend upon the other three, without which neither Original nor Copy can be of any Value

XXXI. Letter to the *Daily Journal*, May 11, 1728.

SIR,

I Desire that you would give the following Discourse a Place in your Paper, as soon as you can with Convenience, which will oblige,

Your Humble Servant,
A B

AS *Longinus* in treating of *Sublimity* is himself often *sublime*, so *Alexander P*—has writ of the *Profund* with the utmost *Profundity*, and is himself a perpetual Example of that Absurdity and that Stupidity for which he gives vain and impertinent Rules His *Example* alone makes all *Rules* superfluous He who can but come to copy his *Jargon*, and his *No-meaning*, will be sure to sink to the lowest Bottom of Profundity He will be what *A P* is in his Treatise of the *Profund*, that is, what a Viper is in Winter, cold and creeping, and stupid, and venemous

The Stupidity of the vilest Scribbler was never so notorious, as *A P*'s in the 6th Chapter of his Treatise, where he makes use of the initial Letters of Authors Christian and Surnames, and in one place, of the initial Letter of the Christian Name, and the initial and final Letter of the Surname, and all this so very impertinently, that one and the same Author is compared to very different Creatures, whose Natures, and Forms, and Qualities, are, in some of these Creatures, contradictory to those of others *C G* in the 26th Page is called a *Flying-Fish*, and in the 27th a *Porpoise* In the 26th Page *L T* is a *Swallow*, and in the 28th an *Eel* In the 27th Page *L W—D* is a *Didapper*, and in the 28th an *Eel*, as the Cloud in *Hamlet* is sometimes like a *Weazel*, and sometimes like a *Whale* But neither the initial nor the final Letters of these Authors Names, nor their Persons, nor their Actions, ever gave any such Ideas to any Mortal, unless to this little whimsical Creature But now let us see if we cannot turn this very Method with a little more Success upon *Alexander P* For let us only do by him, what he has done by *L W—D*, in his 27th Page, that is, take the initial Letter of his Christian Name, and the initial and final Letters of his Surname, *viz A P—E*, and they give you the same Idea of an *Ape*, that his Face, and his Shape, and his Stature do, and his Nature ludicrously mischievous

As he has been constantly meditating Mischief, he has, like his *African* and *Asiatick* Relations the Jackanapes's and Quidnunchi's, been always mimicking every Body and every Thing But in his mimical Essays he always *sinks* as far below those whom he endeavours to counterfeit, as the Actions of a Monkey fall short of those of a Man

In his Rhapsody of *Windsor Forest*, which was impudently writ in Emulation of the *Cooper's-Hill* of Sir *John Denham*, one of the most beautiful and most artful Poems that we have in *English Rhime*, *A P—E sinks* as far below Sir *John Denham*, as the Bottom of *Windsor Forest* is below the Summit of *Cooper's-Hill*

In the *Ode* which the same *Pantomimical* Creature wrote upon St *Cæcilia's* Day, an Ode which was vainly and foolishly writ in Emulation of Mr *Dryden's Feast of Alexander*, he has not the least Shadow of any of Mr *Dryden's* great Qualities, neither of

his Art, his Variety, his Passion, his Enthusiasm, or his Harmony The very Numbers in Mr *Dryden's* incomparable Ode, are themselves incomparable, and are always adapted and adjusted by that great Poet to his Passion and his Enthusiasm

Tho' I have not for several Years read *Chaucer's Temple of Fame,* yet I am well enough acquainted with his Character, to know that he has too much Genius, and too much good Sense to have committed many Absurdities, whereas the *Temple of Fame,* writ by the *Pantomimical A P—E,* is one long Chain of Blunders and Boggisms, and one continued Absurdity

All the World knows how very much he falls short of *Ambrose Philips* in *Pastorals,* but in the *Drama,* he is *below* even *Tom Durfey* The *Marriage-Hater match'd,* and the *Boarding-School,* tho' but indifferent Performances, are yet ten times better Dramatical Pieces than the whimsical *What d'ye call it*

And yet this little turbulent Creature has endeavoured to decry and calumniate every Author who has excelled him, and shone a superior Region to him, moved partly by his natural Envy and Malice, (the Deformity of his *Mind* answering to that of his *Body*) and partly by that Ignorance and Stupidity which make a Dog howl at the Moon

Yet notwithstanding his Ignorance and his Stupidity, this *Animalculum* of an Author, is, forsooth! at this very Juncture, writing the *Progress of Dulness* Yes! the Author of *Windsor Forest,* of the *Temple of Fame,* of the *What d'ye call it,* nay, the Author even of the *Profund,* is writing the *Progress of Dulness*! A most vain and impertinent Enterprize! For they who have read his several Pieces which we mentioned above, have read the *Progress of Dulness,* a Progress that began in *Windsor Forest,* and ended in the *Profund,* as the short Progress of the *Devil's Hogs* ended in the *Depth of the Sea*

EXPLANATORY AND TEXTUAL NOTES

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear

This essay, written in February, 1711, as a series of letters, was published in November, advertised in the *Spectator*, no 215 (Tuesday, Nov 6, 1711), to be published on the Thursday following It was reprinted in the *Original Letters* of 1721, and again in recent years by Professor Nichol Smith in his *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare* The first edition, dated 1712 on the title-page, contained in addition to this essay a group of four letters addressed to the *Spectator* 1) a letter on poetical justice, which I reprint (II, 18-22), 2) a letter on criticism and plagiarism, here reprinted (II, 23-28), 3) a letter dated March 7, 1711, and 4) a letter dated Oct 23, 1711 The third epistle is of trivial, personal interest unconcerned with criticism, and is therefore omitted from the text of this edition

Although Dennis had been collecting his thoughts on Shakespeare as early as 1693 (cf I, 434-435), he might not have put them in form for publication if a special occasion had not arisen In the first place, the appearance of Rowe's six-volume edition in 1709, followed by the seventh volume, edited by Charles Gildon, in 1710, aroused critical interest in Shakespeare and stirred up old controversies, as that concerning his art and learning In the second place, Dennis had finished an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, probably late in 1710 or in January, 1711, and just as in the *Large Account of Taste* he had felt impelled to offer a justification for his "improving" the *Merry Wives*, so now he felt it necessary to explain his reasons for altering *Coriolanus*

Why the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear*, written in February of 1711, was not published until November, is not perfectly clear There is a strong probability that Dennis was thoroughly distracted during this interval by financial difficulties and by personal quarrels, which may have delayed publication By January, 1711, he was in financial trouble, in which he was forced to incur an obligation to Steele (cf letter of Oct 23, quoted below) Through the spring of 1711 he hovered on the verge of insolvency and lawsuits (cf I, 526-527) A few months later affairs came to a head, and he went through the formal proceedings of bankruptcy He was examined by a bankruptcy commission on Aug 1, 8, and 27 (cf *London Gazette*, issues of July 26-28 and Aug 11-14) In the *London Gazette*, issue of Aug 28-30, 1711, appeared the following official notice

> Whereas the acting Commissioners in a Commission of Bankrupt, awarded against John Dennis, of Wapping in the County of Middlesex, Scrivener, have certified to the Right Hon Sir Simon Harcourt, Knt Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of Great Britain, that he hath in all things conform'd himself to the Directions of the late Acts of Parliament made concerning Bank[r]upts This is to give Notice, that his Certificate will be allow'd and confirm'd, unless Cause be shewn to the contrary, on or before the 21st of September next

On August 29, 1711, Granville was taking steps to secure assistance for Dennis (cf I, 506), and by Oct 23 the most pressing of his financial difficulties seem to have been settled (cf the letter of Oct 23, quoted below)

In addition to his financial troubles Dennis was sometime before March 7, 1711, involved in a furious quarrel with Steele Fancying himself attacked in several numbers of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, and supposing Steele to be the author of these attacks, he wrote a series of sharp, and sometimes bitter, replies to the "Spectator," of which

he selected four to be published with the essay on Shakespeare The fourth letter, which explains some of the circumstances of the quarrel, runs as follows

> *Mr Spectator,*
> I Have a short Case of Conscience to put to you, to You who have establish'd your self in the Office of *Ductor Dubitantium* general About *January* last I happen'd to have an Obligation to a certain Author, an Obligation that reposed a Trust in me which I have since discharg'd Being pleas'd with the Frankness of this Author's doing this, I resolv'd upon reading his celebrated Penny-Folio's, I mean upon reading them in order For till then, I had read but here and there one, and none at all of the first two Months The first thing that I observ'd in them was, that I was endeavour'd to be expos'd and calumniated clandestinely and perfidiously by one who at the same time caress'd me where-e'er he saw me, and call'd himself my Friend, and all this only to serve a poor pitiful Turn, which was to establish the Opera at the Expence of Dramatick Poetry, I say of Dramatick Poetry, Mr *Spectator,* if it had not been for which, that Author had long since been in the Dust The *Quere* is, whether the foresaid Obligation ought to debar me of the Right of vindicating the Truth and my self It was not long after this, Mr *Spectator,* that the abovesaid Author repented him so far of the Obligation he had laid on me, that he insulted and affronted me several times most barbarously by a Wretch so despicable and so impotent that it would have been Cowardice to have beat him, a Wretch whose Character will come enclos'd to you in the same Cover with this, and not content with that, endeavour'd once more to expose me in his Quotidian Folio's The second *Quere* is, Mr *Spectator,* whether I am not free, now I am got quit of the Obligation which was laid upon me, tho' it had been far greater than it was, to shew my just Resentment, which I am about to do by publishing three or four modest Letters which I have pick'd and cull'd from the numerous company of those which are more bitter, and which I resolve to suppress in order to shew that I have a Soul that is capable of remembring Obligations, as well as of revenging Injuries[ ] I impatiently expect your Decision in this matter! in the mean time it seems to me that common Sense obliges me to believe, that no Man can have an Obligation strong enough laid on him to make him pass by a Box on the Ear, or the being expos'd in Print, without returning each of th' Affronts in kind I am
>
> *Your,* &c
>
> *Oct* 23 1711

The impotent "Wretch" referred to in this letter was, in all probability, Pope, who insulted Dennis in his *Essay on Criticism,* published about the middle of May, 1711, and (if Mr Ault is correct in his contentions) in the *Critical Specimen,* apparently published soon after Dennis's *Reflections* (cf *Prose Works of Pope,* ed Norman Ault, I [Oxford, 1936], xv) Thus Dennis, involved in bitter controversies with Steele and Pope, as well as being driven to insolvency and bankruptcy, might well have delayed the publication of his essay on Shakespeare until part of his woes were alleviated

Saintsbury remarks that Dennis in the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* is not far removed in spirit from Rymer "in the drivelling arbitrariness of his criticism" (*History of English Criticism* [N Y, n d], p 167) The observation displays a lack of historical perspective It is true that this essay is in large measure devoted to detecting Shakespeare's faults, but nearly all critics of the age of Dryden and Dennis were aware that Shakespeare sometimes nodded, and they saw no inconsistency in dwelling upon his blunders one moment and glorifying him in the next The valid objection to Dennis's essay is not that it criticizes by observing faults, but that the "faults" observed are either trivial or, as in the case of the violation of poetic justice, perceptible only to a vision restricted by certain unfortunate prejudices of its age If Dennis objected to an indiscriminate admiration for Shakespeare, so did Dr Johnson (Preface to Shakespeare, in *Works,* ed Murphy [1824], x, 161-162), whose remarks on

Shakespeare's faults are much more comprehensive and damaging than those of Dennis (cf *ibid*, x, 138-142) If Dennis seems arbitrary on certain points, at least his arbitrariness did not prevent him from paying a tribute to the great Elizabethan that falls little short of Dryden's in warmth, discrimination, and eloquence (cf II, 4) There is much to be said for the taste of a critic like Dennis "who loves and admires [Shakespeare's] Charms and makes them one of his chief Delights, who sees him and reads him over and over and still remains unsatiated " (II, 17) On the subject of Shakespeare's learning Dennis's observations are probably the ablest that were written up to the time of his death

Page 1 4-5 *one who has had the Honour to be known to you so many Years* In 1702 Dennis had dedicated the *Comical Gallant* to Granville How long before that the acquaintanceship had been formed, I have been unable to discover

Page 1 24-27 *You have taken such Care of my Interest* etc Granville took care of Dennis's interest by securing a promise from Harley, the Lord Treasurer in 1711, that Dennis "should be made easy" (cf note on I, 322 44) By May, 1711, Dennis was in serious financial difficulties (cf note on I 396 35-38), any assistance from the Lord Treasurer, therefore, would have been most seasonable The noble present which Granville himself gave Dennis at this point is probably the same gift to which the critic referred in his letter to Steele dated Sept 4, 1719 (cf II, 173)

Page 2 5 *the* Jew of Venice Granville's comedy was published early in 1701, announced in the *London Gazette*, issue of Jan 19-23 (cf Alfred Jackson, "Play Notices from the Burney Newspapers, 1700-1703," in *PMLA*, xlvii [1933], 823) It was probably acted at about this time, and, according to advertisements, was being performed late in 1702 and early in 1703 (*ibid*), though Professor Nicoll records no performances before 1706 (cf *History of Early Eighteenth Century Drama* [Cambridge, 1925], p 333)

Page 2 15-16 *The* Athenian *Legislator* Solon etc Solon in his earliest efforts cultivated light and amorous poetry, then turned to didactic verse, he composed an epic, which has not survived, and apparently a metrical version of his laws (cf *Dict of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, ed Wm Smith [1873], III, 858 and 862)

Page 2 35-36 *as* Sallust *afterwards express'd it*, etc Sallust, The War with Jugurtha, x, 6 (in *Sallust*, with Eng translation by J C Rolfe [Loeb Classical Library, London and New York, 1920], p 148)

Page 2 36-37 *from whose noblest Poem you formerly gave us a Tragedy* Granville's *Heroick Love*, based upon the Iliad, was advertised in the *London Gazette*, issue of Feb 17-21, 1698, shortly after the first performance This play, according to Downes (*Roscius Anglicanus*, ed Montague Summers [London, The Fortune Press, n d], p 44), was a good tragedy, extraordinarily well written, and appealed to both court and city The praise of Downes, of course, as well as that of Dennis, is excessive, yet Professor Nicoll finds it an excellent example of its type (*History of Restoration Drama* [Cambridge, 1923], p 147)

Page 3 1-3 *In* Rome, *the greatest Captain* etc It was a commonly accepted tradition that Scipio had collaborated with Terence (cf *Essays of Dryden*, ed Ker, I, 145)

Page 4 6 *I Here send you the Tragedy of* Coriolanus This "improvement" of Shakespeare later entitled *The Invader of His Country*, was not produced and printed until late in 1719 The failure of *Appius and Virginia* in 1709, together with Dennis's withdrawal from active participation in the social life of the town (cf I, 519), may have prevented the *Invader* from being produced sooner The tragedy was probably written in 1710, after the production of *Appius* Dennis's biographer finds (Paul, p 43) the first reference to the *Invader* in Pope's *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris*, 1713 (cf *Prose Works of Pope*, ed N Ault, I [1936], 167) I have found no earlier reference to it than this passage, written on Feb 1, 1711

Dennis had discussed Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* with Dryden, who professed admiration for it (cf II, 164) Dennis's interest in the character of Coriolanus was expressed as early as 1701 (cf I, 203)

Page 4 17-18 *his Faults were owing to his Education, and to the Age that he liv'd in* Cf also II, 168 29-30 Dennis's contemporaries were wont to lay the blame for Shakespeare's faults—especially what they regarded as his quibbles, puns, jingles, solecisms, and fustian—upon the ignorance and uncouthness of his age, assuming either that he shared the general lack of refinement, or that he was obliged to cater to the tastes of his audiences (cf Dryden, "Defence of the Epilogue" [1672, in Ker, I, 165], Echard, *Plautus's Comedies* [1694], Sig b *verso*, Gildon, "Some Reflections on Mr Rymer's Short View of Tragedy," in *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays* [1694], pp 88-89, Rowe, in D N Smith, p 13, Theobald, *ibid*, p 73) Pope remarked that Shakespeare's faults were due to the ignorance of his age and to the fact that he was an actor, actors of his time being barred from polite society (in D N Smith, pp 49-51) Only a few years later the trend toward Bardolatry was so far advanced that Hanmer expressed the belief that the ribaldry, poor witticisms, and conceits in Shakespeare's plays were not the work of the Bard but had been inserted by actors (*ibid*, pp 93-94)

The tendency to explain certain features in the writings of poets, a tendency shown particularly in the criticism of Shakespeare and Dryden, by reference to conditions prevalent in their times marked a definite step in the development of a genuine historical viewpoint

Page 4 19-20 *His Imaginations were often as just, as they were bold and strong* In Shakespeare writers of the Restoration and early eighteenth century commonly found imagination or fancy Often it was not clear what they meant by the terms When, for example, Gildon wrote (*Works of Shakespear*, VII [1710], VIII), "For it is evident, that by the Force of his own Judgment, or the Strength of his Imagination he has follow'd the *Rules* of Art, in all those Particulars in which he pleases", by "Imagination" he seems to have meant the power of attaining dramatic effectiveness in a scene or a characterization Still less clear is the remark of Sewell (Preface to the *Works of Shakespear* [10 vols, 1728], X, VII), "His Imagination is a perpetual Fountain of Delight, and all drawn from the same Source even his Wildnesses are the Wildnesses of *Nature*" The suggestion that his imagination or fancy was a wild, unconfined power was frequently made (cf Prologue to Otway's *History and Fall of Caius Marius* [1680]) By some writers it was associated with the ability to depict scenes and characters belonging to the realms of the strange or supernatural Shadwell wrote (Preface to the *Lancashire Witches* [1682]) "For the Magical part, I had no hopes of equalling *Shakespear* in fancy, who created his witchcraft for the most part out of his own imagination (in which faculty no man ever excell'd him) " Rowe asserted (*Works of Shakespear* [1709], I, XXIII) that the greatness of Shakespeare's genius is nowhere so apparent as when "he gives his Imagination an entire Loose, and raises his Fancy to a flight above Mankind and the Limits of the visible World" Here imagination is a power that goes beyond the regions to which sense is bound The ability of Shakespeare to create with artistic propriety what could never exist in nature was recognized by Dryden in his praise of Caliban (cf Ker, I, 219), and similarly by Addison (cf *Spectator*, no 279) In this we find a definite recognition of the power of creative imagination (cp note on I, 266 10-13). To Theobald Shakespeare's imagination was a force which by its powerful blaze could melt discordant and unrelated elements and mould them into an artistic whole (cf D N Smith, p 76) Dennis's comments on Shakespeare's imagination are disappointingly vague, he seems not to have recognized explicitly its greatness and its creative power as he did in the case of Milton

Page 4 25-27 *He has for the most part more fairly distinguish'd them* etc Cf also II, 168 Shakespeare's genius in distinguishing characters was recognized by virtually all Augustan critics Cf Dryden (in Ker, I, 219), Nahum Tate, Preface to the *Loyal General* (1680), anon, "Essay on Dramatick Poetry," in Scudéry's *Amaryllis to Tityrus* (London, 1681), pp 66-67, Rowe (in D N Smith, pp 16-17), Gildon, *Works of Shakespear*, VII (1710), V and li, Gildon, *Laws of Poetry* (1721), p 233, and Pope, Preface to Shakespear (in Elwin-Courthope, X, 535) Samuel Johnson followed the es-

tablished path when he remarked that "perhaps no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from each other" than did Shakespeare (Preface to Shakespeare, in *Works of Johnson* [12 vols, 1824], x, 130) Shakespeare's power of differentiating characters was considered the more remarkable in view of the amazing copiousness of his invention Dryden admired the art which had produced Caliban, a creature that was not in nature, and had endowed him with a distinct personality (Ker, I, 219)—compare Addison's remarks on the same subject in *Spectator*, no 279

The recognition of Shakespeare's power of differentiating characters is in itself of no great significance in the history of literary criticism Aristotle, as he was then interpreted, demanded that the manners of dramatic characters should be "good" (i e, well marked, or sharply distinguished) And Ben Jonson, who differentiated persons by types and by external appearances and mannerisms, was commonly conceded to possess a genius for distinguishing characters Far more notable is the tendency, only partly realized in this period, to see in Shakespeare the dramatist who best understood human nature Tate probably expressed the general feeling when he wrote (Preface to *The Loyal General* [1680]) " no man was better studied in Men and Things, the most useful Knowledge for a *Dramatick* Writer He was a most diligent Spie upon Nature, trac'd her through her darkest Recesses, pictur'd her in her just Proportion and Colours " By this extraordinary insight into human nature and the passions, critics began to feel, Shakespeare was enabled to represent men and women in all their complexity, in all their seeming contradictoriness, in their growth and decay, thus he distinguished one individual from another From 1709 to 1733 we find Steele, Hughes, Theobald, and Warburton subjecting the characters to subtle psychological analysis, regarding them as creatures whose motives and emotions were as natural and understandable as those of living beings (cf note on II, 7 25-28) Here, rather than in the second half of the eighteenth century, do we see the real beginnings of the romantic criticism of Shakespeare's characters

Page 4 28-30 *they often touch us more without their due Preparations* etc This idea is elaborated by Pope in the fifth paragraph of his Preface to Shakespeare The remark is important, and Dennis seems not to have realized its full significance In effect it recognizes that the drama of characterization, in which Shakespeare admittedly excelled, might attain the end of tragedy—that is, arousing the emotions of pity and terror—more successfully than other plays which perfectly fulfill the Aristotelian requirements as to design and incidents In other words, there are two types of tragedy, and Shakespeare's type, depending on fine characterization in scenes which are sufficient to arouse the passions, has by pragmatic tests proved its worth

Page 4 31 *His Master-Passion was Terror* In comparing Shakespeare and Fletcher, Dryden had remarked that Shakespeare excelled in the more manly passions, that he was more successful in evoking terror, whereas Fletcher was more successful in evoking compassion (Ker, I, 212 and 227) In 1709 Rowe commented that among dramatists Shakespeare was supreme in the power of raising terror (D N Smith, p 19) Henry Felton said of Shakespeare (*Dissertation on Reading the Classics* [4th ed, 1730], pp 226-227) "He maketh the Blood run cold or warm, and is so admirable a Master of the Passions, that he raises your Courage, your Pity, and your Fear, at his Pleasure, but he delighteth most in Terror" This insistence upon Shakespeare's mastery of terror is of special note, coming as it does at a time when that passion was being accorded a most important rôle in the sublime (cf note on I 355 42—357 9, also note on I, 264. 6-21)

Page 4 38-40 *His Expression is in many Places good and pure* etc Cf also II, 168 Augustan critics recognized many flaws in Shakespeare's style (cf note on II, 4 17-18) Dryden had criticized his "expression" very severely, for its flatness, insipidity, play on words, bombast, solecisms, coarseness, lack of grammar, obscurity and affectation due to excessive use of figures of speech, and unintelligibility (Ker, I, 80, 165, 203, and 224),

yet he conceded that much of his language remained pure (*ibid*, p 201) and that he was always great when the occasion demanded greatness (*ibid*, p 80) Something more of praise—and yet with qualification—is found in the anonymous "Essay on Dramatick Poetry" (printed with a translation of Scudéry's *Amaryllis to Tityrus* [1681], pp 66-67) " I can never enough admire his Stile (considering the time he writ in and the great alteration that has been in the Refineing of our Language since) for he has expressed himself so very well in't, that 'tis generally approv'd of still " Edward Phillips saw the poetic energy of Shakespeare shining through "all his unfiled expressions" (Preface to *Theatrum Poetarum*, in Spingarn, II, 271) Pope, inclined to be a purist, was disturbed by the lack of ease and gentility in Shakespeare's style (in D N Smith, pp 49-51) But other critics saw more virtues in it Said Felton (*Dissertation on Reading the Classics* [4th ed, 1730], p 226) "Nothing can be greater, and more lively than his Thoughts, nothing nobler, and more forcible, than his Expression The Fire of his Fancy breaketh out into his Words, and sets his Reader on a Flame " It was perhaps fashionable among men of taste to admire the Bard's style, for Rowe, addressing the Duke of Somerset, said (*Works of Shakespear* [1709], I, sig A2) "I have sometimes had the Honour to hear Your Grace express the particular Pleasure you have taken in that Greatness of Thought, those natural Images those Passions finely touch'd, and that beautiful Expression which is every where to be met with in *Shakespear*" Rowe himself confessed (*ibid*, p xxxv) "His Sentiments and Images of Things are Great and Natural, and his Expression (tho' perhaps in some Instances a little Irregular) just, and rais'd in Proportion to his Subject and Occasion" Such was the respect for Shakespeare's sentiments and expression that Gildon warned the adapters of his plays that they should never meddle with his works except to mend the fable and conduct (*Works of Shakespear*, VII [1710], p 261, cf also VII, xxxiii)

Page 4 40—5 2 *He seems to have been the very Original* etc As Professor D Nichol Smith has observed, Dryden and Bysshe both credited Shakespeare with the invention of blank verse (cf Dryden, in Ker, I, 6, Bysshe, *Art of English Poetry* [4th ed 1710], p 35) Dennis appears less positive, he asserts only that Shakespeare *seems* to have originated that sort of blank verse adapted to tragedy, with the metre diversified by feminine endings Dr Johnson, in his Preface to Shakespeare, quotes this passage by Dennis and corrects the error of fact (cf *Works of Johnson*, ed Murphy [12 vols, 1824], X, 160)

Page 5 1-2 *Such Verse we make* etc This sentence, as D Nichol Smith points out, is intended to illustrate the idea which it conveys, it could be written as two lines in blank verse, the second with a feminine ending

Page 5 7-10 *Witness* Menenius etc Dennis is making a strict application of the doctrine of decorum On this passage Dr Johnson remarked in his Preface to Shakespeare (*Works of Johnson* [12 vols, 1824], X, 131) "Dennis is offended, that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon But Shakespeare always makes nature predominate over accident, and, if he preserves the essential character is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men"

Page 5 32-33 *For 'tis impossible that by a bare Historical Play* etc Because the chronicle plays did not fit into any recognized *genre*, the Augustan critics were inclined to regard them with small favor Lack of a single action, said Dryden (Ker, I, 208), condemns all of Shakespeare's historical plays, which are not tragedies but merely the representations of chronicles Shakespeare's historical plays, said Gildon (*Works of Shakespear*, VII [1710], p 337), cannot be called tragedies, because they contain no tragic imitation, they are merely draughts in dialogue of the lives of princes Cf also Dr Johnson's Preface to Shakespeare, in *Works*, ed Murphy (1824), X, 142-143

Page 6 11—7 24 *The Good must never fail to prosper*, etc Cf also II, 162-164 and 286 Dennis had displayed an interest in the problem of poetic justice in Shakespeare as early as 1701 (cf I, 200) For his general comments on poetic justice, cf II, 18-22

Rymer in his *Short View of Tragedy* had objected to Shakespeare's violation of poetic justice, specifically in *Othello* (cf Spingarn, II, 220-221, 252-255) Against Rymer's objections Gildon and other critics rose to the defence of the play (cf note on II, 7 13) There are few plays of Shakespeare, said Gildon, which lack a just moral (*Miscellaneous Letters and Essays* [1694], p 92) By this he meant that most of Shakespeare's tragedies, by showing us the horrible effects of ungoverned passions, teach us to control and moderate our emotions Another phase of the controversy was begun by Collier's anti-stage pamphlets In his *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* Collier, a zealous proponent of the doctrine of poetic justice, after objecting to "immodest" speeches in *Hamlet* (5th ed, 1730, pp 6-7), went on to praise the character of Falstaff because it was made to conform with the "Laws of Justice" (*ibid*, p 100) James Drake, understanding that the moral value of *Hamlet* had been aspersed, attempted to show that poetic justice was carefully observed in the play (*Antient and Modern Stages Survey'd* [1699], pp 204-205), not content with that, he proceeded to assert that the tragedies of Shakespeare in general are more moral and more instructive than the best tragedies of antiquity (*ibid*, p 206) Addison in his well-known attack upon poetic justice (*Spectator*, no 40) condemned Tate's alteration of *K Lear* but admitted that many of Shakespeare's tragedies which were based upon "the other plan"—i e, the happy ending—were noble and good It will be remembered that Dr Johnson himself regretted Shakespeare's failure to observe poetic justic (cf Preface to Shakespeare, in *Works*, ed Murphy [1824], x, 138)

Many of Shakespeare's admirers felt that he had done enough in making us admire his good characters and, perhaps, dislike his evil characters Thus Robert Gould wrote ("Satyr against the Play-House," in *Poems* [1689], p 176)

> But if in what's *sublime* you take delight,
> Lay *Shakespear, Ben* and *Fletcher* in your sight
> Where Human Actions are with Life exprest,
> *Vertue* extoll'd and *Vice* as much deprest

In general, critics of the old school, who emphasized plot as the one vital element in tragedy, were inclined to object to Shakespeare on the grounds that he violated poetic justice, whereas the mass of Shakespeare's admirers, together with the critics who were primarily interested in the poet's characters and his mastery of the passions, were likely to be unconcerned about the presence or absence of poetic justice in his plays

Page 7 13 Desdemona in Othello In the *Short View of Tragedy* Rymer had protested against the murder of Desdemona, remarking that it was calculated to make us suspect the justice and power of Providence (in Spingarn, II, 252) Rymer's petulant remarks about *Othello* started a long controversy In 1694 Gildon replied, justifying the incidents in the play because they are "admirable" and natural, because they "are the natural Consequences of our ungovern'd Passions, which by a prospect of such Tragicall effects of their being indulg'd, may be the better regulated and govern'd by us" (*Miscellaneous Letters and Essays*, p 107) Later he evidently changed his mind If he was the author of *Love's Victim* he had decided by 1701 that, although Othello himself was well drawn Desdemona was a failure (Preface, sig [a3]) In 1710 he observed that the faults found by Rymer were all too visible (*Works of Shakespear*, VII [1710], 410) Later he objected to the character of Iago as being too shocking and out of nature (*Post-Man Robb'd of His Mail* [1719], pp 244-245) Such feeling about the play was by no means universally shared, however In his criticism of Shakespeare, Richard Steele almost completely overlooked the rules of Aristotle and the emphasis on plot or fable He found a high order of dramatic art in the characterization of Othello and Iago (*Tatler*, no 167, for May 4, 1710) And a few years later he caused a character, with whom he was apparently in sympathy, to say (*Town Talk*, no 2, for Dec 23, 1715) "You know, Madam, I who am a professed admirer of Shakespear and of his plays, think Othello the nearest a perfect piece " John Hughes thought that probability and

the economy of the fable were neglected, but he found in the play many "inimitable strokes of art," many strong and masterly touches of nature (*Guardian*, no 37, for April 23, 1713) With Hughes's criticism of *Othello* compare that of Theobald (*Works of Shakespeare* [1733], VII, 447-448) Addison thought that *Othello* was an admirable tragedy, one of the best of its type (*Spectator*, no 40) Robert Gould greatly admired *Othello* (cf "Satyr against the Play-House," in *Poems* [1689], pp 176-177) Cf also Sir Charles Sedley, Prologue to Henry Higden's *The Wary Widow* (1693)

Page 7 13 Cordelia, Kent, *and King* Lear It will be recollected that Tate's version of *Lear* (1681), which held the boards for over a century, spared Cordelia Shakespeare's ending was too much for Gildon, who commented that Lear and Cordelia ought by no means to have died (*Works of Shakespear*, VII [1710], 406) Addison in *Spectator*, no 40 (April 16, 1711), issued two months after Dennis's remark was written but seven months before it was published, approved strongly of Shakespeare's *Lear*, asserting that in the new version, altered "according to the chimerical notion of poetical justice," it had lost half its beauty But over half a century later Dr Johnson deprecated the *Spectator*'s criticism, spoke a word in favor of poetic justice, and admitted that even then he could scarcely endure to read of Cordelia's death (General observation on *King Lear*, in *Works of Johnson* [12 vols, 1824], X, 211)

Page 7 25-28 *for want of the Poetical Art*, Shakespear *lay under very great Disadvantages* Etc Cf also the Prologue to Dennis's *Invader of His Country*, in Appendix Shakespeare's lack of art, according to Dennis, caused him to sin against the doctrine of the equality of manners and against the doctrine of decorum, and it caused him sometimes to overlook or neglect opportunities of achieving one of the two main ends of tragedy, the moving of pity (II, 5) But the fault growing out of Shakespeare's lack of art to which Dennis gives most prominence is a weakness in the construction of the fable when Shakespeare followed history, his plots lacked the compactness and organization necessary to produce the strongest emotional effects (II, 5-6), he failed to observe poetic justice (II, 6-7), and he failed to observe the unities of time and place, and the *liaison des scenes* (II, 168) When Dennis says that Shakespeare lacked art, he means not that Shakespeare did not consciously employ dramatic devices for preconceived dramatic effects, but that he had no knowledge of the Rules laid down by Aristotle, Horace, and their interpreters, particularly the Rules concerning decorum and the fable, Dennis used the word "art" in its strictest contemporary sense, as a system of rules (cf II, 283) It is scarcely necessary to observe that Dennis recognized Shakespeare's great ability in characterization, his talent for touching the passions, the beauty of his "sentiments," the elevation and grace and boldness of his style, and the harmony of his verse (cf II, 4 and 168) When he remarked that Shakespeare was very justly celebrated "for his moving the Passions powerfully by the meer force of Nature" (II, 168), he meant that the poet strongly aroused the tragic emotions of pity and terror by powerful individual scenes, by brilliant characterizations based on his penetrating study and knowledge of human beings, and by the greatness of his expression, rather than by the shrewd devising and conduct of the fable, which, according to the Rules of Aristotle and his interpreters, was the proper way of moving the passions

Many writers of the age of Dennis seemed to imply that Shakespeare had little or no art Dryden, describing Shakespeare as the poet of Nature (cf Ker, I, 80), bemoaned the inadequacy of his plots (*ibid*, p 165), the incorrectness of his style and language (*ibid*, p 169), and his extreme carelessness (*ibid*, p 172) Edward Phillips observed that as he lacked learning he wrote often without the "polishments of art" (*Theatrum Poetarum* [1675], p 194) Flecknoe contrasted Jonson and Shakespeare by noting that the former represented art and the latter stood for Nature ("Short Discourse of the English Stage" [printed with *Love's Kingdom*, 1664]), and James Drake believed that Shakespeare fell far short of Jonson's art (*Antient and Modern Stages Survey'd* [1699], p 201) Gildon, whose position was somewhat similar to Dennis's, asserted that Shake-

speare and Ariosto had exuberant imaginations but no art (*Laws of Poetry* [1721], p 23), "A judicious Reader of our Author," said Gildon (*Works of Shakespear*, VII [1710], VIII), "will easily discover those Defects, that his Beauties wou'd make him wish had been corrected by a Knowledge of the whole *Art* of the *Drama*"

Yet there was scarcely one writer of the age who would have refused to allow that Shakespeare had art, as we understand the term today His style, as we have seen, was commonly admired (cf note on II, 4 38-40), and critics were well aware of his great powers of characterization (cf note on II, 4 25-27) Dryden himself paid tribute (Prologue to *The Tempest*, 1670) to

> *Shakespear*, who (taught by none) did first impart
> To *Fletcher* Wit, to labouring *Johnson* Art

Dryden's praise of Shakespeare's powers of characterization, and his ability to move the passions powerfully by just and natural degrees, and his skill in managing scenes in which the emotions are violently stirred (cf Ker, I, 205, 212, 217, 219-220, and 224), becomes of great significance when we remember his comment (*ibid*, p 220), "To describe these [passions] naturally, and to move them artfully, is one of the greatest commendations which can be given to a poet " And he adds immediately below that though the poet must be born with this ability it will be useless unless he judiciously studies the nature of the passions, the means of moving them, and the proper occasions for moving them Clearly Dryden credited Shakespeare with a high degree of conscious art Rowe recognized Shakespeare's power of raising terror, and his judgment in doing so In comparing the *Orestes* of Sophocles with *Hamlet* he found the scene in which Hamlet confronts his mother superior to that in which Orestes sheds his mother's blood, "'tis with wonderful Art and Justness of Judgment," said Rowe (*Works of Shakespear* [1709], I, XXXIII), "that the Poet restrains [Hamlet] from doing Violence to his Mother" Gildon one of the sternest of Shakespeare's critics, admitted his fine artistry in individual scenes, characters, and speeches "The Scene betwixt Isabella and Angelo is very fine, and the not bringing the yielding of Isabella to Angelo on the Stage, is Artfully manag'd " (*Works of Shakespear*, VII [1710], 293), "The Scene betwixt Shylock and Tubal is artfully manag'd " (*ibid*, p 322), "The Speech of Pucelle to the Duke of Burgundy is very fine and Artful " (*ibid*, p 351) Such comments are everywhere interspersed in Gildon's "Remarks" And the sadly underestimated Theobald not only granted Shakespeare conscious art but asserted that he had so much artistry as to conceal his art (cf D N Smith, p 73)

But the appreciation of Shakespeare's artistry did not stop at this point Aristotelian critics were accustomed to demand in successful plays characters that were sharply differentiated but static, characters whose traits were fixed at the outset and carefully maintained to the end of the drama Gradually they began to perceive that Shakespeare's characters were unusual in that they changed, they developed in accordance with certain laws of human nature and for reasons to be found in definite incidents of the plays in which they occurred A trivial incident, they came to see, might produce consequences in character far out of proportion to the magnitude of the cause Slight things—a sudden breaking off in speech, or a shift to prosaic utterance—might indicate subtle psychological changes in the characters involved Having perceived Shakespeare's delicate control of his medium, critics found it profitable to subject his characters to a subtle psychological analysis Thus we find a series of articles or notes by Steele in the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, by John Hughes in the *Spectator* and *Guardian*, and by Theobald and Warburton in Theobald's edition of Shakespeare, in which the behavior of some of the characters is minutely examined and their reactions are carefully interpreted, on the implicit assumption that the characters are of a complexity that demands explanation and that they are so nearly like living people that they can be studied and understood with the same certainty with which we expect to understand our intimate friends Thus

arose perhaps the greatest tribute to Shakespeare's art, as well as the romantic approach to the criticism of his characters

In the two paragraphs immediately preceding I have followed the conclusions (which agree with mine) of an excellent paper by Gretchen Graf (Mrs Charles Pahl) on "The Criticism of Shakespeare's Art, from Dryden to Theobald," a paper submitted to a seminar at U C L A in the spring of 1939

Page 7 29-32 Naturâ fieret etc Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 408-411

Page 8 20-32 *Upon the Encouragement I have receiv'd from you, I shall proceed to shew* etc With this sensible distinction between a mere acquaintance and a familiar acquaintance Dennis commences his discussion of the learning of Shakespeare, arriving at the conclusion that Shakespeare knew relatively little Greek and Latin, and that his apparent knowledge of classic literature and history was derived from translations This view is, of course, in the main correct It was not established by definite proof, however, until Richard Farmer's *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare* appeared in 1767, although Dr Johnson's Preface to Shakespeare (1765) indicates that he had a fairly accurate idea of Shakespeare's sources, and therefore of the extent of his learning (cf *Works* [1824], x, 152-156)

The quarrel over Shakespeare's learning raged throughout the Restoration period and far into the eighteenth century, though up until the time of Rowe's edition the contestants expressed themselves in somewhat vague generalities In the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* Dryden caused Neander to describe Shakespeare as the poet of nature, to read which he had no need of books (Ker, I, 79-80) Elsewhere Dryden remarked that Shakespeare and Fletcher lacked the meticulousness and learning which Jonson displayed (Ker, I 169) The question as to how much Shakespeare knew of the ancients Dryden shrewdly left unsolved Most of the comments of his contemporaries were similarly misty By "Comparing [Jonson] with *Shakespear*," said Flecknoe, "you shall see the difference betwixt Nature and Art" ("Short Discourse of the English Stage" [printed with *Love's Kingdom*, 1664]) Edward Phillips wrote (*Theatrum Poetarum* [1675], p 194) " where the polishments of Art are most wanting [in Shakespeare], as probably his Learning was not extraordinary, he pleaseth with a certain wild and native Elegance " Nahum Tate observed (Preface to the *Loyal General* [1680]) "I confess I cou'd never yet get a true account of his Learning, and am apt to think it more than Common Report allows him I am sure he never touches on a Roman Story, but the Persons, the Passages, the Manners, the Circumstances, all are Roman And what Relishes yet of a more exact Knowledge, you do not only see a Roman in his Heroe, but the particular Genius of the Man, without the least mistake of his Character, given him by their best Historians" In his *Satyr against the Play-House* (in *Poems* [1689], p 177) Robert Gould praised Shakespeare thus

> *Homer* was blind, yet cou'd all Nature see,
> *Thou* wer't unlearned, yet knew as much as *He!*

In the Prologue to Henry Higden's *The Wary Widow* (1693) Sir Charles Sedley offered his admiration to

> Shakespear whose fruitfull Genius, happy Wit
> Was fram'd and finisht at a lucky hit
> The Pride of Nature, and the shame of Schools,
> Born to Create, and not to Learn from Rules

Dr James Drake excused the faults of Shakespeare on the grounds that he lacked art and learning (*Antient and Modern Stages Survey'd* [1699], pp 201-202) Up until 1700, then, most writers agreed in a vague way with Dryden, that Shakespeare was the poet of nature and that he lacked the learning of Jonson

In his prefatory essay, "Some Account of the Life of Mr William Shakespear," Rowe gives a clear and definite opinion on the question Shakespeare knew French

(*Works of Shakespear*, ed Rowe [1709], I, IV), but very little, if any, Latin or Greek, he surely did not know the ancient poets, for he was forced to withdraw from school at an early age, and the fact that nowhere in his works does he imitate the fine images of the ancient poets proves that he was unable to read and study them with pleasure (*ibid*, p III), Rowe confessed that he was unable to account for the resemblance between the *Comedy of Errors* and Plautus's *Menaechmi* (cf note on II, 12 42—14 26) A year after Rowe's edition appeared, Charles Gildon wrote (*Works of Shakespear*, VII [1710], VI) "Tho' all these Beauties were owing chiefly to a natural Strength of Genius in [Shakespeare], yet I can never give up his Acquaintance with the Ancients so entirely, as Mr *Rowe* has done, because, I think there are many Arguments to prove, that he knew at least, some of the *Latin* Poets, particularly *Ovid* but that he had read *Plautus* himself, is plain from his *Comedy of Errors*, which is taken visibly from the *Menœchmi* of that Poet The Characters he has in his Plays drawn of the *Romans*, is a Proof, that he was acquainted with their Historians " Addison included Shakespeare among those geniuses "who by the mere strength of natural parts, and without any assistance of art or learning," have produced great works (*Spectator*, no 160, Sept 3, 1711) Though Pope tried to dodge the question of whether Shakespeare was thoroughly familiar with the learned languages, he insisted that Shakespeare was learned, that he was well read in the ancient historians, that he was conversant with Plutarch, Ovid, and Plautus, that he was acquainted with the modern Italian novelists, and that he had more art and more Latin than he was generally credited with (Preface to Shakespeare in *Works*, ed Elwin-Courthope x, 539-543) Dr George Sewell, after praising Shakespeare as the poet of nature, continued (Preface to *Works of Shakespear* [10 vols, 1728], x, VIII) "And yet I cannot place his Learning so low as others have done, there being evident Marks thro' all his Writings of his Knowledge in the *Latin* Language, and the *Roman* History The Translation of *Ovid's* two Epistles, *Paris* to *Helen*, and her Answer, gives a sufficient Proof of his Acquaintance with that Poet" Dennis's remarks on Shakespeare's learning, though following Rowe in the main, were distinctly the ablest and most nearly correct of any written in his age

Also connected with the question of Shakespeare's learning were the controversies over his offenses against chronology (cf note on II, 8 39—9 2) and over his mastery of the dramatic art (cf note on II, 7 25—28)

Page 8 39—9 2 *How comes he to have been guilty* etc Pope noted the anachronism of Hector speaking of Aristotle, and attributed it and similar faults to "the many blunders and illiteracies of the first publishers of his works" (Preface to Shakespear, in Elwin-Courthope, x, 542-43) Theobald believed that Shakespeare offended against chronology not because of ignorance but because he was driven by the powerful blaze of his imagination into a kind of poetic license (cf D N Smith, p 76) Such an anachronism as Hector's mention of Aristotle, said Dr Johnson sensibly, dissenting from Pope's conjecture, did not indicate that Shakespeare lacked learning but merely showed that his age was not bothered by such details, for Sidney himself had confused the materials of pastoral and feudal times in his *Arcadia* (Preface to Shakespeare in *Works* [1824], x, 139)

Hector speaks of Aristotle in *Troilus and Cressida*, II, II, 166 In the same play, II, III, 258, Ulysses mentions Milo Menenius refers to Alexander in *Coriolanus*, V, IV

Page 9 11 *there was none of* Livy Dennis is wrong As Professor Nichol Smith points out, a translation of Livy by Holland was published in 1600

Page 9 11—10 14 *If* Shakespear *was familiarly conversant* etc In spite of this generally unfavorable opinion of Shakespeare's Roman characters Dennis seems to have had a great admiration for *Coriolanus* (cf II, 164) Dryden confessed to being awed at hearing Shakespeare's "Godlike *Romans*" (Prologue to *Aureng-Zebe*), and to feeling that in *Coriolanus* there was something "truly great and truly *Roman*" (cf Dennis, II, 164), moreover, he approved strongly of the quarrel scene between Brutus and Cassius (cf

Ker, I, 205) Tate, who liked Antony and Brutus in particular, thought that Shakespeare's Romans were not only great characters but thoroughly Roman as well (cf. note on II, 8 20-32) In the Dedication to *Mithradates* (1685) Lee admitted that he imitated "the thoughts of [Shakespeare], for Majesty and true *Roman* greatness . " In language suggestive of Dryden's, Robert Gould paid tribute to the excellence of the quarrel scene between Brutus and Cassius ("Satyr against the Play-House," in *Poems* [1689], pp 176-177) Gildon thought that Shakespeare's Roman characters were so accurately drawn as to prove his acquaintance with the Roman historians (*Works of Shakespear*, VII [1710], VI), and Pope felt that in *Caesar* and *Coriolanus* Shakespeare had captured both the spirit and the manners of Romans (Preface to Shakespear, in Elwin-Courthope, X, 540) Dennis was one of a very small minority when he raised objections Yet, compare Dr Johnson's observations (quoted in note on II, 5 7-10)

Page 9 28-30 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 248-250

Page 10 9-14 *that* Cæsar *should be but a Fourth-rate Actor* etc For a distinctly able expression of the other attitude toward Shakespeare's Caesar, cf *Tatler*, no 53, for August 11, 1709 In this paper Steele attempts to show how brilliantly Shakespeare has prepared us for the impression of Caesar's greatness from the first scene in which he is introduced

Page 10 36—12 2 *that the* Romans *had lost their* Agrarian, etc Dennis develops at some length this justification of the historical Caesar's conduct, in his pamphlet, *Julius Cæsar Acquitted* (1722)

Page 12 29-30 *that great Man, who alter'd the* Julius Cæsar Probably John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire Though not published until 1722, Buckinghamshire's alteration of Shakespeare's *Caesar* was known to exist in manuscript (cf Giles Jacob, *Historical Account* [1720], Dedication, p IV)

Page 12 42—14 26 *For there is, say they*, etc Rowe assumed that the *Comedy of Errors* was taken from Plautus's *Menaechmi*, but he added (*Works of Shakespear* [1709], I, XV) "How that happen'd, I cannot easily Divine, since, as I hinted before I do not take him to have been Master of *Latin* enough to read it in the Original, and I know of no Translation of *Plautus* so Old as his Time" Gildon asserted positively (*Works of Shakespear*, VII [1710], VI) " that he had read *Plautus* himself, is plain from his *Comedy of Errors*, which is taken visibly from the *Menæchmi* of that Poet " Pope followed Gildon (though with a note of hesitancy), remarking that Shakespeare "appears also to have been conversant in Plautus, from whom he has taken the plot of one of his plays" (Preface to Shakespear, in Elwin-Courthope, X, 540) Dennis, as Professor Nichol Smith has pointed out, was right in his guess the translation of the *Menaechmi* by "W W" was published in 1595, having previously circulated in manuscript When Dr Johnson wrote the Preface to Shakespeare (1765) he affirmed what Dennis could only guess (*Works*, ed Murphy [1824]), X, 155) "The 'Comedy of Errors' is confessedly taken from the *Menæchmi* of Plautus, from the only play of Plautus which was then in English"

Page 13 11-14 *which Mr* Dryden *tells us* etc Cf Ker, I, 243 The fair author was Aphra Behn

Page 13 16-17 *Hudibras*, I, I (ed A R Waller [Cambridge, 1905], p 20) Dennis alters the first line of the quotation

Page 13 26 *a Version of two Epistles of* Ovid As Professor Nichol Smith observes, these two epistles, though actually the work of Thomas Heywood, were until the time of Farmer generally assigned to Shakespeare

Page 13 33-35 Horace, Ars Poetica, 120-122

Page 13 41-42. *Tho'* Shakespear *succeeded very well in Comedy*, etc Most of Dennis's contemporaries agreed that Shakespeare's tragedies were superior to his comedies and that Shakespeare's genius was primarily adapted to tragedy The excellency of Shakespeare, said Dryden, lay in the stronger and more manly passions (cf Ker, I, 227-228),

in imitating the conversation, wit, and repartee of gentlemen, he was surpassed by Beaumont and Fletcher (*ibid*, p 81), Shakespeare showed his finest wit in *Mercutio*, but Dryden was not overly impressed by it (*ibid*, p 174) The anonymous author of the "Essay on Dramatick Poetry" printed with the translation of Scudéry's *Amaryllis to Tityrus* (London, 1681) says "I have had a particular kindness always for most of *Shakespear*'s Tragedies, and for many of his Comedies " (p 66) Robert Gould expressed a great admiration for *Hamlet, Othello, Timon, Lear*, and the Roman tragedies, but among the comedies he mentioned only the *Tempest* ("Satyr against the Play-House," in *Poems* [1689], pp 176-177) The anonymous author of the *Comparison between the Two Stages* (1702, p 57) asserted that Shakespeare was sublime in tragedy, and natural in comedy, the standards of the day exalted sublimity above naturalness Gildon felt that none of Shakespeare's plays could be allowed to be a true comedy except the *Merry Wives* (*Post-Man Robb'd of His Mail* [1719], pp 112-113) Felton remarked (*Dissertation on Reading the Classics* [4th ed, 1730], pp 226-227) that of all the passions Shakespeare "delighteth most in Terror," the passion most essential to tragedy Rowe confessed (*Works of Shakespear* [1709], I, xvii), "'Tis not very easie to determine which way of Writing he was most Excellent in", but he was certain that no dramatist had ever succeeded better than Shakespeare in raising terror in the minds of his audiences (*ibid*, p xxxiii) Rymer was one of the few who felt that Shakespeare's talent was chiefly adapted to comedy (*Short View of Tragedy* [1693], p 156)

Apart from the fact that the general taste of Dennis's contemporaries was averse to some of Shakespeare's comedies, especially the more romantic ones, there are several reasons why critics inclined toward the tragedies In the first place, since tragedy was recognized as one of the three *genres* of "the greater poetry" and comedy was not, critics desiring to assert the greatness of their national literature naturally turned to Shakespeare's tragedies In the second place, the great emphasis upon sublimity in Dennis's age directed critical attention to the sterner passions of tragedy Moreover, the age was not yet equipped to appreciate fully the magic of Shakespeare's lighter vein, and it professed scorn for the quips, puns, and unpolished conversation which it found in the comic scenes

As the eighteenth century wore on, critics realized more and more the brilliance and grace of Shakespeare's wit and fancy, and the comedies grew in favor In Pope's opinion he was master no less of the ridiculous than of the great in human nature (Preface to Shakespear, in Elwin-Courthope, x, 535-536) To Hanmer he seemed to have attained a high degree of perfection in both comedy and tragedy (cf D N Smith, p 95) Dr Johnson remarked (Preface to Shakespeare, in *Works*, ed Murphy [1824], x, 136) "In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comick, but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct" Malone in his copy of Dennis's *Genius and Writings of Shakespear* (now in the Dyce Collection at South Kensington) noted at the bottom of the page his strong dissent to Dennis's remark that Shakespeare's "chief Delight was Tragedy", he wrote "I think very differently His chief delight seems to have been *Comedy*"

Page 14 1-4 *And tho' by these Translations* etc Dennis was convinced that a translation could never compare with a great original His opinion of the work of translating appears clearly in the Preface to his translation of Burnet's *Faith and Duties of Christians* (1727?) "I Have all my Life-time been averse to the Translating any Thing of Length, whether it was Verse or Prose, *Grecian* or *Roman*, Antient or Modern, because I have always believ'd, that no Man could ever acquire by Translation a great and a lasting Reputation" A copy, he said in another place (cf II, 178), lacks the free spirit and easy grace of an original The best of the Roman poets, he said (cf I, 243), "copied particular *Grecian* Authors, as *Horace* did *Pindar*, and consequently, fell short of them in the Freeness and Flame of their Spirit, as Copies must necessarily do of

Originals" He glorified Milton partly because the great puritan poet had dared to be original (cf I, 333-334), just as he condemned Pope for what he called servile imitation (cf II, 104) In the *Remarks upon Pope's Homer* (1717) he insisted that the language of Homer could not be properly translated into English The beauties of a good plot and artful construction, he thought (cf II 14), could be caught by a translation, but not the charming coloring of the original That this was a fatal defect in translations, Dennis had no doubt, for he believed that the imaginative element in literature was largely dependent upon the expression or style (cf I, 205) Even the ability of a translator to capture the beauty of the original's plot and construction amounted to little, in Dennis's estimation, for the imitation of a well-known plot lacks the element of surprise, and surprise is one of the chief delights found in literature (cf I, 123) Furthermore, since a man is a poet only in so far as he invents his plot or fable (cf I, 60), one might question whether a translator, strictly speaking, was a real poet

Even among French critics of the seventeenth century, who recognized the value of imitating, or borrowing from, the ancients, servile imitation was frowned upon and the superior virtues of invention were insisted on (cf René Bray, *La Formation de la Doctrine Classique en France* [Paris, 1931], pp 162-163) As critics began to recognize the fact that literature is a product of its times, and that there was a gulf between the spirit and taste of the ancients and the spirit and taste of the seventeenth century, they realized that an imitation, to have value for seventeenth-century readers, must be accommodated to seventeenth-century manners and tastes (*ibid*, pp 174-175) A close translation, therefore, would lack the value of an original, it would be merely a makeshift, to satisfy the needs of the untutored multitude

The article on Epicurus in Bayle's *Dictionary* (4 vols, London, 1700, II, 1188-1189), discussing the value of original writing, concludes that the author who occasionally borrows from the classics and adapts such material to his own purposes is doing better than the author who strives to be completely original The case for such borrowing is made by the *Guardian*, no 12 "But over and above a just painting of nature, a learned reader will find a new beauty superadded in a happy imitation of some famous ancient, as it revives in his mind the pleasure he took in his first reading such an author" Even borrowing of this kind, however, was to be done in moderation After all, invention was the prime faculty of the poet (cf Edward Phillips, *Theatrum Poetarum* [1675], sig **5*v*) The author of the Preface to *Valentinian* found reason to praise Rochester for his complete originality (*Works of Rochester* [1714], sig [I 9])

> 'Tis sufficient to observe that his Poetry, like himself, was all Original and has a stamp so particular so unlike any thing that has been writ before, that as it disdain'd all servile imitation, and copying from others, so neither is it capable (in my Opinion) of being Copy'd, any more than the manner of his Discourse could be copy'd

In his Preface to *Silex Scintillans* the poet Vaughan remarked that "Those that want the *Genius of verse*, fall to translating" (cf *Works*, ed L C Martin [Oxford, 1914], II, 389) An imitation of the best authors, said Addison (cf *Spectator*, no 160), is not to be compared with a good original Imitation, said Welsted, is the bane of writing, no writing is valuable which is not an original (cf *Epistles, Odes, &c* [1724], Preface, p xxxvii) Oldmixon saw little merit in Pope's Homer except in its pure and harmonious diction and versification (cf *Essay on Criticism*, in the *Critical History of England* [1728], II, 69), on the other hand, he observed that Cowley, Flatman, and Orinda, though they had declined in reputation, yet, because they were originals, rose in merit above all the tribe of translators (*ibid*, p 60) It is difficult, from the evidence at hand, to escape the impression that critics of the Augustan period had no high regard for translation as a form of poetry

Page 14 28-29 *the Testimony of* Ben Johnson Verses "To the memory of my beloved the author, Mr William Shakespeare, and what he hath left us," line 31

Page 14 30-31 Milton, *L'Allegro*, lines 133-134 Dennis quotes the same two lines in his Prologue to *The Invader of His Country*

Page 14 32 *of Mr* Dryden Cf Ker, I, 79-80

Page 14 37-44 *Therefore he who allows that* Shakespear *had Learning* etc Dryden had suggested that he who accused Shakespeare of a lack of learning, gave him the greater commendation (cf Ker, I, 80)

Page 15. 8 Horace, Ars Poetica, line 118

Page 15 22-24 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 386-388

Page 15 33-35 *As for Friends*, etc For a somewhat similar opinion as to Shakespeare's handicap in having players as his familiar associates, see Pope's Preface to Shakespear (in Elwin-Courthope, X, 538)

Page 15 35-36 *as we are told by* Ben Johnson *in his* Discoveries But as Pope observed the same fact was reported by Hemminge and Condell in their preface to the first folio (Preface to Shakespear, in Elwin-Courthope, X, 538-539)

Page 15 39-42 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 291-294

Page 16 2-3 As Professor Nichol Smith has pointed out, this couplet is not by Roscommon but by Waller, from his poem "Upon the Earl of Roscommon's Translation of Horace, 'De Arte Poetica,' and of the Use of Poetry"

Page 16 7 *he seems to me to have had no right Notion of Tragedy* In spite of the high favor in which Jonson was held during the Restoration period, there were unfavorable comments upon his tragedies Dryden caused Lisideius to criticize Jonson for mingling serious and comic elements in *Sejanus* and *Catiline* (Ker, I, 60-61), he objected to Jonson's occasionally extravagant dialogue (*ibid*, I, 157) and his occasional impropriеties of language (*ibid*, I, 167) Rymer objected to faults in the structure of *Catiline* (*Short View of Tragedy* [1693], p 160) "In short, it is strange that *Ben*, who understood the turn of Comedy so well, and had found the success, should thus [as in *Catiline*] grope in the dark, and jumble things together without head or tail, without any rule or proportion, without any reason or design" Moreover, Rymer felt that the two Roman stories were improper subjects for tragedy Ridiculing Jonson for interlarding "fiddle faddle, Comedy, and *Apocryphal* matters in the History," he remarked (*Short View*, p 163) "Where the Poet has chosen a subject of importance sufficient and proper for Tragedy there is no room for this pretty interlude and diversion" Dennis's objections were more fundamental the subjects of the two tragedies were improper because they were incapable of arousing either compassion or terror (II 16 14-16) Professor R G Noyes points out that Dennis's observations on Jonson's failure to stir the passions formed the basis of subsequent criticism of the two tragedies (*Ben Jonson on the English Stage, 1660-1776* [Cambridge, Mass, 1935], p 312)

Page 16 22-26 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 445-449

Page 16 36-40 *There are in his* Coriolanus, etc For other comments on the faults in Shakespeare's style, cf note on II, 4 38-40

Page 17 17 *as he assures us that he himself did* Cf Milton's note on tragedy, prefixed to *Samson Agonistes*

To the Spectator, on Poetical Justice

This letter, written within a few months of April 16 1711 (the date of *Spectator*, no 40, to which it replies) was first printed with the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* in November of the same year It was reprinted in the *Original Letters* of 1721 Personal resentment played an important part in leading Dennis to compose this letter, for he believed that Steele was conducting a campaign to undermine his reputation (cf the introductory note to the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear*) and, since he had previously championed the doctrine of poetical

justice, he felt that the *Spectator's* attack upon the doctrine was in reality another attack upon himself Dennis's annoyance with the *Spectator* upon his discovering its attack on poetic justice was satirized by Pope in the *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris* (*Prose Works of Pope,* ed N Ault, I [1936], 166)

Two years after the letter on poetical justice was written Dennis returned to the attack on the *Spectator* and to the defence of poetic justice in his *Remarks upon Cato,* where he insisted that to observe poetic justice is the duty of every tragic poet (II, 49, cf also II, 43) Precisely what did he mean by poetic justice? In the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* he seemed to identify this term with distributive justice, in which good is rewarded and evil punished (cf II, 6-7, also II, 49) Such a view he had already accepted in 1701, when he declared that tragedy should represent Providence as "plainly protecting the Good, and chastizing the Bad, or at least the Violent" (I, 200) In the *Usefulness of the Stage* he had argued that if unlawful or irregular love is represented in tragedy, it must be "shewn unfortunate in the Catastrophe" (I, 153), he had not urged at the same time, however, that lawful and regular love must be rewarded His application of the doctrine to comedy is clear enough comedy must not show men unfortunate, for that is the part of tragedy, poetical justice is sufficiently observed if the folly or vice depicted in comedy is exposed to ridicule (I, 225) The important fact about Dennis's idea of poetic justice is that, though in theory he held that tragedy should reward the good as well as punish the evil, yet in his application of the doctrine he was convinced that a thoroughly evil character was "too scandalous for any Tragedy" (II, 53) and that a very virtuous character should be excluded from among the principal persons of tragedy (I, 20-21) In short, he believed with Aristotle that the main characters of tragedy should be neither virtuous nor villainous, but should be men who are led into error by the violence of their uncontrolled passions, and that these characters, thus led into error, should be unfortunate in the catastrophe (II, 21) Evidently it was his opinion that if a virtuous person appeared in tragedy, it must be as a minor character, such a person must be made happy at the end of the play, but his reward will not in any considerable way lessen the tragic effect of the whole, in which the principal character is involved The difference between the attitude of Aristotle and that of Dennis is that, whereas Aristotle was primarily interested in the psychological, Dennis was primarily interested in the moral effect of the catastrophe

It is commonly assumed that Dennis and Addison were diametrically opposed in their attitudes toward poetic justice Such an assumption is far from the truth Though in the *Spectator,* no 40, Addison refers to poetic justice as a "ridiculous doctrine in modern criticism," he says nothing in the body of his paper with which Dennis could not have agreed He asserts (and Dennis admitted) that the tragedy in which the main character ends unfortunately, is the best type He suggests that a double plot may weaken the tragic effect, and Dennis was willing to concede as much (II, 21) In *Spectator,* no 548, generally and with great probability assigned to Addison, we find a more fundamental agreement In a paragraph added in the 1713 reprint Addison, accepting the assumption that tragedy is essentially moral admits that all evil characters in tragedy must be punished, and he bases his contention that the apparently virtuous character may end unhappily on the grounds of poetic justice "the best of men are vicious enough to justify Providence for any misfortunes and afflictions which may befall them " Thus Dennis and Addison, though they quarreled over words, both agreed that tragedy is a vehicle of morality and that the catastrophe of a tragedy should administer justice at least to all of the important characters in the play

In France of the seventeenth century critics were almost unanimous in upholding the theory of poetic justice (cf Bray, p 80), though many of them thought that the requirements of the doctrine might be satisfied by having virtuous characters praised, and evil characters either exposed to detestation or led to repentance (*ibid,* p 81) As D'Aubignac remarked, "La principale regle du Poeme Dramatique, est que les vertus y

soient toûjours recompensees, ou pour le moins toûjours louées, malgré les outrages de la Fortune, & que les vices y soient toûjours punis, ou pour le moins toûjours en horreur, quand même ils y triomphent" (*Pratique du Theatre*, I, i [ed Amsterdam, 1715, I, 5]) Tragedy "lets Men see that Vice never escapes unpunish'd," said Rapin, "when it represents *Ægysthus*, in the *Electra* of *Sophocles*, punish'd after the ten Years Enjoyment of his Crime" (*Reflections on Aristotle's Poesie*, I, x, in *Works* [London, 1716], II, 144) The most important critic to object was Corneille, who pointed out that poetic justice was not a matter of rule but of usage, and that virtue is always lovable even when it is unfortunate, just as vice is always hateful, even when it is triumphant (Bray, pp 81-82)

English critics were inclined to doubt that classical authority supported the doctrine of poetic justice Drake remarked that neither Horace nor Aristotle had taken the least notice of it (*Antient and Modern Stages Survey'd* [1699], p 226) Gildon acknowledged that according to Aristotle a poet is not confined to administer poetic justice, but to move pity and terror (Preface to *Love's Victim* [1701], sig [a3]*v*) Addison was sure that the doctrine had no foundation in the practice of the ancients (*Spectator*, no 40) Collier, however, found authority for poetic justice in both Aristotle and Horace (*Second Defence of the Short View* [1700], pp 82-83)

The doctrine of poetic justice in England was foreshadowed by Sidney, approached by Jonson, and given its complete expression by Rymer (cf note on II, 19 28-29) In its simplest form—that is, in the idea that the drama should distribute rewards to the good and punishments to the evil—we find the doctrine supported by Rymer (Spingarn, II, 206), Temple (*ibid*, III, 89-90), Blackmore (*ibid*, III, 228), Collier (*ibid*, III, 258), Gildon (Preface to *Phaeton* [1698]), and Drake (*Antient and Modern Stages Survey'd* [1699], p 215) Even Congreve boasted that he had rewarded virtue and punished vice in his *Mourning Bride* (*Amendments of Mr Collier's False and Imperfect Citations* [1698], p 36) And Filmer was sure that "that one necessary Rule, of rewarding the Good and punishing the Bad," should invariably be observed (*Defence of Plays* [1707], p 43) Except for Addison's, there was no important attack upon the doctrine of poetic justice in this period, but those who crooked the knee before it were far from being agreed as to what it meant Dryden felt that it did not apply to comedy (Ker, I, 142) and that in tragedy it required only that the wicked should be punished (*ibid*, I, 210) Trapp contended that the tragedy in which the principal characters are evil and are punished, and the lesser characters are virtuous and are rewarded, is not so well adapted to display poetic justice as that in which the chief characters, being innocent, are rewarded and the lesser characters, being evil, are punished (*Lectures on Poetry* [1742], pp 314-315) But then he confused the issue by remarking that it is consistent with poetic justice that good men should meet with disaster, since that is also consistent with divine justice (*ibid*, p 316), he demanded, however, that if one innocent person in a tragedy is punished, then all other innocent persons in that play should also be punished, because there must be no discrimination among persons of equal innocency and of the same rank and eminence (*ibid*, p 310) Gildon, who in 1698 appeared to favor a system of distributive justice in tragedy, was convinced in 1718 that a plot with a double ending, embodying distributive justice, was improper for tragedy though it might do very well in comedy (*Complete Art of Poetry*, I, 244) He thought that a virtuous hero in tragedy must succeed (*ibid*, I, 189), but he added that a tragic hero ought to be neither virtuous nor evil, and that a tragedy with an unhappy ending is the more perfect sort (*ibid*, I, 189 and 243) In these views he agreed with his master, Dennis, and he gave evidence of his agreement by quoting with approval large portions of Dennis's letter *To the Spectator, on Poetical Justice* (*ibid*, I, 191-196)

It may be noted that the doctrine of poetic justice as it was developed by Dennis involved a belief in the possibility of the intervention of a "particular Providence" (cf I, 183), and therefore implied a belief in the immanence of God. It was, accordingly,

consistent with the doctrines of the Church of England, and inconsistent with the tenets of Deism

Page 18 1-2 *Esquire* Bickerstaff *attack'd the Sharpers with Success* Bickerstaff, of course, was the fictitious writer of the *Tatler* papers He (in actuality, Steele) carried on an intensive campaign against sharpers, attacking them in nos 56, 59, and 60, and returning to them frequently thereafter, as in nos 64, 65, 68, 71, 73, and 115 The success of his campaign is attested by various stories of indignant sharpers protesting against such treatment For a few specimens of these stories, see the *Tatler*, ed George Aitken (4 vols, 1899), III, 9-10, note

Page 18 2-5 Shadwell *is of Opinion* etc Lines 2-4 are a paraphrase of speeches by Bruce and Longvil in Shadwell, *The Virtuoso*, Act I (*Works of Shadwell*, ed Montague Summers [1927], III, 110)

Page 18 14-16 *if once a Week or once a Fortnight* etc Dennis actually wrote to the *Spectator* a long series of plaintive letters beginning at least by March 7, 1711 and extending through October of the same year (cf introductory note to the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear*)

Page 18 18-20 *For as* Hobbes *has observ'd*, etc Hobbes declared (*Leviathan*, Pt I, ch xi) "Ignorance of the causes, and originall constitution of Right, Equity, Law and Justice, disposeth a man to make Custome and Example the rule of his actions like little children, that have no other rule of good and evill manners, but the correction they receive from their Parents, and Masters, save that children are constant to their rule, whereas men are not so, because grown strong, and stubborn, they appeale from custome to reason, and from reason to custome, as it serves their turn, receding from custome when their interest requires it, and setting themselves against reason, as oft as reason is against them "

Page 18 36—19 2 *Does not* Racine *tell us*, etc Racine in the Preface to *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1674) goes on to say that he preferred as his principal character a second Iphigenia, a jealous woman who, falling into the misfortune into which she had desired to plunge her rival, deserved her punishment to some extent, yet without being entirely unworthy of pity This preference of Racine's is founded on good Aristotelian doctrine, and has nothing to do with poetic justice as it was ordinarily understood Dennis might, however, have found support for his argument in the Preface to Racine's *Phedre* (1677), in which the poet, announcing that this play was the best of his tragedies, said of it The slightest faults appearing in the characters are severely punished, the very idea of committing a crime is regarded with as much horror as the crime itself, the failings of lovers go down as real faults, the passions are set in view only to exhibit all the trouble of which they are the cause, and vice is everywhere depicted in such a way as to make it recognizable and to make its ugliness detestable Even this pronouncement goes only so far as to say that vice in tragedy must be punished, it does not in any way imply that virtue must be rewarded Thus it falls short of the doctrine of poetic justice which Dennis was trying to support in his letter to the *Spectator*

Page 19 23-25 *the Fable to which he gives the second Preference*, etc But see also II, 21 Aristotle says, according to the translation of Thomas Twining (*Aristotle's Treatise on Poetry* [1789], pp 88-89) "I place in the *second* rank, that kind of fable to which some assign the *first*, that which is of a *double* construction, like the *Odyssey*, and also ends in two opposite events, to the *good*, and to the *bad*, characters That this passes for the best, is owing to the weakness of the spectators, to whose wishes the Poets accommodate their productions This kind of pleasure, however, is not the *proper* pleasure of Tragedy, but belongs rather to Comedy, for there, if even the bitterest enemies, like *Orestes* and *Ægisthus*, are introduced, they quit the scene at last in perfect friendship, and no blood is shed on either side" It seems fairly clear to the modern reader that Aristotle, instead of giving "the second Preference" to the fable of double construction, is actually condemning it as a basis for tragedy, and so modern scholars are inclined to interpret the passage (cf M A Quinlan, *Poetic Justice in the Drama*

[Notre Dame Univ Press, 1912], pp 50-56) Dacier, whom Dennis had read religiously, believed that Aristotle intended to condemn the double-construction fable (cf *Poetique d'Aristote*, Remark 32 on chap xiii [ed Paris 1692, p 209]) Dryden spoke of "that inferior sort of tragedies" which end happily (cf Ker, I, 212) There seems, however, to have been among students of Aristotle in the 18th century an honest conviction that he meant to accept the tragedy of a double plan and meant to insist only that this type was not the best Even that excellent scholar, Thomas Twining, said in a note on this passage '[Aristotle] is not here rejecting this double plan, but only shewing why it is not, as some held it to be, the *best* " (*op cit*, p 313)

Page 19 28-29 *Mr* Rymer *was the first who introduc'd it* etc This is not strictly true According to J W Krutch, the doctrine of poetic justice in England was foreshadowed by Sidney, approached by Jonson in the dedication to *Volpone*, and merely given final expression by Rymer in his work of 1678, the *Tragedies of the Last Age* (cf *Comedy and Conscience after the Restoration* [N Y 1924], p 79) The idea of poetic justice was expressed by Dryden before Rymer took it up In the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) Eugenius criticizes some of the ancients because instead of punishing vice and rewarding virtue they brought wickedness to prosperity and made piety unhappy (cf Ker, I, 50) And in the Preface to *An Evening's Love* (1671) Dryden argues that in tragedy the "laws of justice" should be more strictly observed than in comedy and examples of punishment should be given to deter men from pursuing vice (cf Ker, I, 142) In 1679 Dryden uses the term "poetical justice," but it is clear from his remarks that at this time he conceives of the doctrine as involving the punishment of the wicked and not the rewarding of the virtuous (cf Ker, I, 210)

Page 19 31-32 *a most learned, a most judicious, and a most useful Critick* For Dryden's praise of Rymer as an excellent critic and a learned and judicious man, cf Ker, I, 200 and 206, II, 249 and 308

Page 21 14-16 *If upon this Foot we examine* etc So Rymer had asserted in his *Tragedies of the Last Age* (cf Spingarn II 188) Certain exceptions to this generalization were commonly noted Dryden observed that Oedipus had been punished for a sin of which he was not aware, and that Medea had committed murder and yet was not punished (Ker, I, 142) Gildon held that Sophocles had done wrong in punishing Oedipus (Preface to *Phaeton* [1698]) James Drake, objecting particularly to the *Oedipus* of Sophocles and the Hippolytus of Euripides, protested that the ancients generally had little regard for the moral in the disposition of their fables but contented themselves with delivering instruction in sage precepts and sententious utterances (*Antient and Modern Stages Survey'd* [1699], pp 146-147, 171, 179, 191) Corneille had remarked that the ancients often contented themselves with making evil actions detestable without punishing them (cf Vial, p 124)

Page 21 19 *the principal Characters* It is not clear from this paragraph whether Dennis means that all the chief characters of every play, or the one principal character of each play, should end unfortunately Dryden had observed in the Preface to *Troilus and Cressida* that pity and terror must be aroused by the one chief character, or hero, in a tragedy, a rule which, he added however essential it was, no critic had yet explained fully (Ker, I, 216) In all probability Dennis, like Dryden, proposed to apply the principle which he here discusses, only to the tragic hero

Page 21 31-35 *For when he enumerates and commends some* English *Tragedies*, etc The tragedies with unhappy endings commended by Addison are Otway's *The Orphan* and *Venice Preserv'd*, Lee's *Theodosius* and *The Rival Queens*, Dryden's *All for Love*, Southerne's *Oroonoko*, Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Lear*, and the *Oedipus* of Dryden and Lee When Dennis says that "there are not two of those which he commends, whose principal Characters can be said to be innocent," the one exception he has in mind is the *Oedipus* For his previous objections to the *Oedipus* on the grounds that its hero is too virtuous, see I, 21-22

Page 21 43-44 *perhaps I no more approve of Tragi-Comedies,* etc Addison did not disapprove of that type of tragedy which contained a double plot, he merely insisted that it was not the only good form of tragedy, and that it ran the risk of diverting the attention of the audience from the main action, thereby lessening the tragic effect, unless the sub-plot was very closely related to the principal action Although in this letter and in the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* Dennis contends that good characters in tragedy should be rewarded, and evil characters punished, he means to approve of tragedies which end "in two opposite events," not of tragedies with double plots He makes it clear that his own preference is for tragedies in which the main characters are in some sense guilty and therefore end in catastrophe (cf II, 21 17-25)

Tragi-comedy in Dennis's day was conceived as a poem in which tragedy and humor were commingled, or, in Addison's words, "a motley piece of mirth and sorrow" (*Spectator,* no 40) To Dennis's serious mind, this mixture of buffoonery, mirth, or low antics was inconsistent with the severe and grave tone which tragedy must maintain (cf I, 178), and he disapproved of it accordingly In this he was in agreement, not only with Addison, but with nearly all other critics of his time (cf "Charles Johnson's *The Force of Friendship* and *Love in a Chest*, a Note on Tragi-comedy and Licensing in 1710," in *Studies in Philology,* XXXIV [1937], 409-410, n 7)

Page 22 2-4 *But he is vilely mistaken* etc Dennis, of course, is right on this point, and Addison wrong But Dryden had asserted that tragi-comedy was "a drama of our own invention" (Ker, I, 57), and the opinion seems to have been common among Augustan critics

To the Spectator, on Criticism and Plagiarism

This letter was first published with the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* in November, 1711 and was reprinted in the *Original Letters* of 1721 Though it was composed as a reply to *Spectator,* no 47, for April 24, 1711, it could not have been written before the middle of May because it refers to a passage in Pope's *Essay on Criticism,* which was not printed until about May 15

Sometime before March 7, 1711, Dennis had become embroiled in a quarrel with Steele (cf introductory note to the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear*), and knowing of Steele's association with the *Spectator,* he was ready to see in every reference to himself, direct or indirect, which appeared in that periodical, an evidence of Steele's enmity In regard to *Spectator,* nos 40 and 47, he was mistaken for they were both written by Addison It is not even clear that Addison's quotation of Dennis's "humorous lines" was intended as a taunt Certainly the couplet quoted is excellent as an example simply of humorous and satiric verse But that his humorous verse should be quoted while his serious verse, which aimed at sublimity, was overlooked, undoubtedly seemed to the troubled mind of Dennis a deliberate affront At any rate, there is no justification for supposing that Addison, having received Dennis's reply to *Spectator,* no 40, decided to show his scorn for the critic by ignoring his arguments and by quoting one of his poorest couplets (this suggestion is made by M A Quinlan, *Poetic Justice in the Drama* [Notre Dame University Press, 1912], p 182), in the first place, we do not know that Addison intended his quotation to be a gibe, and in the second place, we do not know that Addison had received Dennis's letter on poetic justice when he wrote *Spectator,* no 47—since the reply to no 47 was written several weeks after that issue of the *Spectator* appeared, it is quite likely that the reply to no 40 was written after no 47 had appeared

The letter *To the Spectator, on Criticism and Plagiarism* lacks interest as literary criticism It reveals Dennis's vanity and his enormous pride in his own poetry His suspicion that the *Tatler,* no 119, had stolen some of its ideas from his paraphrase of the *Te Deum* is hardly worth a second thought Much more credible is his later insinua-

tion that the *Spectator* borrowed some of its ideas about Milton from his previously published criticism of that poet (cf II, 221 and note on I, 333 16—334 21)

Page 23 6-7 *as you have the Goodness to allow me to be an humourous Poet* In *Spectator,* no 47, Addison, commenting on Hobbes's remarks on laughter, says that everybody likes to divert himself at the expence of others who appear inferior in understanding "Mr Dennis has very well expressed this in a couple of humorous lines, which are part of a translation of a satire in Monsieur Boileau

> Thus one fool lolls his tongue out at another,
> And shakes his empty noddle at his brother"

Pope may have had these lines running through his mind when he wrote ("The Fourth Satire of Dr John Donne," lines 258-259)

> Nature made ev'ry Fop to plague his Brother,
> Just as one Beauty mortifies another

Page 23 8-9 *the Observation of the Author of a late Rhapsody* Pope, *Essay on Criticism,* lines 15-16 For Dennis's comment on these lines, cf I, 398 and note

Page 23 19-22 *As* Boileau *has observ'd* etc *L'Art Poétique,* IV, 83-84

Page 23 26-27 *my worthy Friend* the Spectator Dennis was convinced that Steele was the author of the *Spectator's* "attacks" upon him, and at this time he was engaged in a bitter quarrel with Steele (cf introductory note to the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear*) The present letter is addressed to Steele, to whom he says (II, 24 32-33), "you were present with your Friend Mr *A[ddison]* at the reading" of Dennis's *Battle of Ramillia* In 1713 Dennis was still convinced that Steele, not Addison, was the author of the objectionable papers (cf II, 399)

Page 23 33-35 *It was from those* Tatlers, *and one or two more,* etc In *Tatler,* no 29 (June 16, 1709), Steele, satirizing the Critic and the Wit, wrote

> These two gentlemen are great opponents on all occasions, not discerning that they are nearest each other, in temper and talents, of any two classes of men in the world, for to profess judgment, and to profess wit, both arise from the same failure, which is want of judgment The poverty of the Critic this way proceeds from the abuse of his faculty, that of the Wit, from the neglect of it It is a particular observation I have always made, that of all mortals a Critic is the silliest, for by inuring himself to examine all things, whether they are of consequence or not, he never looks upon any thing but with a design of passing sentence upon it, by which means he is never a companion, but always a censor

The same number of the *Tatler* satirized the Critic for his excessive dependence on authority, and told the story of the critic who justified the trip or hesitation in his voice by the fact that one of Dryden's dramatic characters was made to break off his speech when he was in a similar passion This story has been viewed as a particular assault upon Dennis (cf Paul, p 74), but without reason, for Dennis consistently stressed reason above authority and was but one in a multitude of critics who quoted Dryden's works and cited his example

Tatler, no 246 (Nov 4, 1710), was in part a satire on men of censorious disposition, in which Steele remarked, "It is very observable, that critics are a people between the learned and the ignorant, and, by that situation, enjoy the tranquillity of neither"

It is easy to understand why Dennis was annoyed by these attacks upon critics in general, for his own reputation at this time was based to a large extent on his work in criticism But he had a more compelling reason for anger In *Tatler,* no 4 (April 19, 1709), after acknowledging the receipt of letters which reported the great success of the opera *Pyrrhus and Demetrius,* Steele wrote

> That the understanding has no part in the pleasure [which operas produce] is evident, from what these letters very positively assert, to wit, that a great part of

the performance was done in Italian and a great critic fell into fits in the gallery, at seeing, not only time and place, but languages and nations, confused in the most incorrigible manner His spleen is so extremely moved on this occasion, that he is going to publish another treatise against operas, which, he thinks, have already inclined us to thoughts of peace, and, if tolerated, must infallibly dispirit us from carrying on the war

The "great critic" mentioned was clearly Dennis, who had published a treatise on the operas in 1706 and was to publish a second, the *Essay upon Publick Spirit* (cf Appendix), in 1711 Why Steele in 1709 should have gone out of his way to ridicule Dennis personally, I cannot discover, he may have been prompted to it by Swift Though Dennis does not mention the fourth number of the *Tatler* specifically among the papers to which he objected, he undoubtedly had read it, and it was probably the first cause of his quarrel with Steele

Page 24 14-15 *'Tis now thirty Years* etc By this calculation Dennis's translation of Boileau's Fourth Satire would have been written about 1681 The translation was published in 1693, in the *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose*, but it may well have been a specimen of juvenile verse, written years previously That Dennis had published some of his juvenile poems long before 1693 is indicated by a remark made by Motteux in the *Gentleman's Journal* for November, 1692 After announcing the forthcoming publication of Dennis's *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose* Motteux added (p 2) "Be pleas'd not to mistake for that Miscellany, when it is publish'd, a little Twelve-penny Book printed many years ago, and now once more offer'd to the World with the Title of *Poems and Letters by Mr* Dennis It seems to consist most of Juvenile Verses and was formerly publish'd without any Name to it, neither doth Mr *Dennis* own it to be his" I have not been able to locate a copy of the "Poems and Letters by Mr Dennis" The verse in it must have been execrable

Page 24 30-31 *which is the Subject of the 66th* Tatler Dennis's error The "couching of the Cataracts" is the subject of *Tatler*, no 55 (Aug 16 1709), written by Steele

Page 24 33 *your Friend Mr A* Cf note on II 23 26-27

Page 25 42 But starts, exclaims, and stamps, and raves, and dies A reasonably effective, and certainly conscious use of monosyllables Dennis probably learned the trick from Milton, who employs it magnificently in such passages as *P.L.*, II, 948-950

Page 26 35—27 8 This passage is taken from Dennis's paraphrase of the *Te Deum*, which was printed in the *Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* (1701)

Page 27 30-32 Horace, Epistles, II, II, 172-174

Of Simplicity in Poetical Compositions

This letter was apparently written late in May, 1711, to comment on the *Spectator*, nos 70 and 74, which were issued on May 21 and 25 It was not published, however, until 1721, when it appeared in the *Original Letters* Although Dennis undoubtedly did not care for ballads and did not approve of the ideas concerning simplicity of style that were developed in these numbers of the *Spectator*, he was probably impelled to attack these two papers on *Chevy Chase*, not merely because his opinion was requested (cf II 29 2-5), but because he mistakenly believed the papers to be the work of Steele (cf II 37 13 and note), with whom he was at this time in a state of hostilities (cf introductory note to the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear*)

The "H—— C——" to whom the letter is addressed, is probably Dennis's old friend Henry Cromwell Himself a pretender to poetry, Cromwell had contributed several poems to Gildon's *Miscellany Poems* of 1692 As a wit and a poet he moved in the circle of Dryden's friends, and probably made the acquaintance of Dennis at about this time We know that it was Cromwell who first introduced Pope to Dennis, apparently at Pope's request (cf II, 370), and some time before 1707 A classicist as well as a

gentleman and a man about town, Cromwell was given to discussing literary problems and was inclined to make full use of his knowledge of Latin literature, the correspondence of Pope and Cromwell was distinctly bookish (cf Elwin-Courthope, VI), and Dennis was accustomed to consult him about interpretations of passages in the poets (cf II, 159-161 and 407-409) Though Dennis and Cromwell remained firm friends for twenty to thirty years, Cromwell was probably capable of being amused at the critic's eccentricities, otherwise Pope would not have ventured to write in a letter addressed to him in July, 1707 (cf Elwin-Courthope, VI, 64)

> 'Tis known, a cook-maid roasted Prior,
> Lardella fired a famous author,
> And for a butcher's well-fed daughter
> Great D[enni]s roared, like ox at slaughter

During the years 1709-1711 Pope and Cromwell were corresponding frequently, and somewhere between June 25 and July 15, 1711, immediately after the publication of Dennis's *Reflections* on the *Essay on Criticism* Cromwell visited Pope at Binfield He must have discussed the *Reflections* with his host, and, no doubt, attempted to soothe his ruffled feelings All that we know about Cromwell's feelings at this time, however, is that on Dec 7, 1711, he wrote to Pope (cf Elwin-Courthope, VI, 128) "Leave elegy and translation to the inferior class on whom the Muses only glance now and then, like our winter sun, and then leave them in the dark Think on the dignity of tragedy, which is of the greater poetry, as Dennis says, and foil him at his other weapon, as you have done in criticism" The significance of this remark lies not in the fact that Cromwell seems to prefer Pope to Dennis as a critic (since Cromwell was acquainted with the amenities expected in friendly letters, the compliment means very little), but in the fact that he considered Pope's literary work up to that time slight and trifling It is as if he had said "What you have done thus far, Mr Pope, is all very well, but you have no solid ground for a reputation unless you succeed in the greater poetry, as to some extent Mr Dennis has done" The implication that Dennis was still the greater poet could no more have escaped Pope than it could have pleased him No wonder that the correspondence between Pope and Cromwell broke off completely after December, 1711, not to be resumed until 1727 In 1713 Pope issued his *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris*, in which he ridiculed Dennis and a companion critic who was probably intended to represent Cromwell When Cromwell charged Pope with the authorship of this pamphlet, he denied it (cf Elwin-Courthope, VI, 197) Though in the years that followed Pope and Cromwell were "very far from being enemies," it is not likely that Cromwell was fooled A few years after the publication of the *Narrative*, according to Dennis (II, 370), Pope subscribed to the two volumes of the *Select Works* "almost in spite of my Friend Mr *Henry Cromwell* in whose Hands he found the Proposals" In 1726 Dennis and Cromwell were still on friendly terms Cromwell seems to have been a gentleman of honor and integrity, and Dennis's long friendship with him reflects no discredit on either man

Apart from the attack on *Chevy Chase*, the Letter *Of Simplicity in Poetical Compositions* is notable for its attempt to reconcile the idea of a simple style with what the Augustans usually required of a good style ease, grace, and gentility This reconciliation Dennis achieves by following a path suggested by Rapin, a way which was taken by many English critics of Dennis's time (cf note on II, 32 38—33 16)

Several tendencies felt during the Restoration and early eighteenth century were emphasizing the desirability of a simple style Under the influence of Malherbe, Vaugelas, and the Hôtel de Rambouillet a process of simplification and purification had been going on in the French language from the beginning of the seventeenth century And such writers as Bossuet and La Bruyere, who were well known in England, advocated a simple, natural style, stripped of Gothic ornament (cf Vial, pp 168-169 and 210-211) The influence of the Court of Charles II established a predilection for a style

characterized by ease, clarity, and grace, a style void of pedantry, conceits, and affectation In the concept of nature which prevailed in this period there was contained the notion that style must be adjusted to subject, therefore such forms of poetry as the pastoral and the love poem should be written in simple, lucid English The style of classical literature, which served generally as a model to writers of this era, was conceived to be distinguished by an elegant simplicity Since only tragedy, the epic, and the Pindaric ode called for the sublime style and since in the period when Dennis was writing both tragedy and the epic were in a serious decline, there was in actual practice little occasion for the grand manner or style in literature In prose the same trend toward simplicity was noted Several members of the Royal Society advocated a plain and simple prose style, and there was at the same time a strong reaction against florid rhetoric in pulpit oratory The great popularity of the familiar letter gave occasion for the cultivation of an easy, informal style As a tribute to the growing importance of the mercantile class the assertion was frequently made that subjects which do not require the ornaments of fiction should be treated in the plain and simple style employed by a merchant in his business And finally, the research of antiquarians, from Camden to Elizabeth Elstob, in the documents and language of "Saxon" England had called attention to the virtues of the language of their forebears, its genuineness naturalness, simplicity, plainness, and succinctness, and these virtues were extolled as the grounds of the noblest beauties of language (cf Rosemond Tuve, "Ancients, Moderns, and Saxons," in *ELH*, VI [1939], 186-189) This fact is of special significance, for Dryden, who had his "old Saxon friends" (cf Ker, II, 267), must have known the import of their work, and Addison, who had the same opportunities for knowing, may have been led to champion the ballad partly through their influence

Addison's remarks on *Chevy Chase* were parodied and ridiculed in "A Comment upon the History of Tom Thumb" (in the *Miscellaneous Works of Dr William Wagstaffe* [1726], 3-36) Near the end of his Life of Addison Dr Johnson paraphrases a passage from Dennis's *Of Simplicity in Poetical Compositions* (II, 32-33), and he adds, in words that suggest Dennis, his opinion of the ballad which Addison had praised "In 'Chevy Chase' there is not much of either bombast or affectation, but there is chill and lifeless imbecility The story cannot possibly be told in a manner that shall make less impression on the mind" Dr Johnson's scorn for ballads is well known, for his parodies, see Boswell's *Life*, ed Hill, II, 136 and 212

Page 29 21-33 *For to affirm this of the Mind of Man*, etc Dennis had always protested against the idea that common sense is sufficient in evaluating and appreciating literary art (cf I, 13 33-34 and note) The value of a work of art, he thought, was established not by the universal consent of all men in all ages, but by the agreement of the most cultivated minds in the most cultivated nations and ages (cf note on I, 71 17-28)

Page 29 32 Bunyan The low esteem in which critics and men of taste held Bunyan is notorious *Spectator*, no 524 (Oct 31, 1712) printed a dull "vision" written in an insipid style, which it proclaimed to be superior to Bunyan That he was placed on a level with Quarles and Sternhold is clear from a passage in an anonymous poem, "Advice to One who was about to write, to avoid the Immoralities of the antient and modern Poets" (in *Miscellaneous Poems, By Several Hands*, compiled by David Lewis [1726], p 303)

> What tho' with Ease you could aspire
> To *Virgil's* Art, or *Homer's* Fire?
> If Vice and Lewdness breathes the Lyre,
> If Virtue it asperses
> Better with honest *Quarles* compose
> Emblem, that good Intention shows,
> Better be *Bunyan* in his Prose,
> Or *Sternhold* in his Verses

Even Edmund ("Rags") Smith spoke contemptuously of Bunyan (cf "Poem to the Memory of Mr John Philips," in *Works of Mr Edmund Smith* [4th ed, 1729], p 83) Cf also Addison, the *Whig-Examiner*, no 2 (Sept 21, 1710)

Page 30 24-28 *Human Nature was Human Nature before the Fall*, etc For a more extensive treatment of this subject, cf 1, 255-266, also 1, 336 The idea that one of the functions of poetry was somehow to compensate for "the Loss that Human Nature has sustain'd by the Fall," may be found, it has been pointed out (cf Paul, p 121), in Bacon, it is discussed by Steele in the *Tatler*, no 98

Page 30 38—31 3 Horace, Epistles, II, 1, 79-85

Page 31 8-12 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 270-274

Page 31 18 Horace, Epistles, II, 1, 63

Page 31 21-25 Horace, Epistles, II, 1, 64-68

Page 31 35-36 Horace, Satires, I, x, 73-74

Page 32 13 *I think I have call'd it somewhere so my self* In the *Essay on the Operas* he had defined Gothic as that which is opposed to the antique (cf 1, 391)

Page 32 38—33 16 *Sir, the* Spectator *imagines here*, etc In this paragraph Dennis is actually discussing not so much simplicity of style as naturalness of style Besides observing that simplicity of style precludes "Imbecility, Affectation and Extravagance," he contends sensibly that there is no one style suitable for all sorts of literary work His main point is that there must be an organic unity of subject matter, thoughts inspired by the subject matter, and the language in which those thoughts are expressed The necessary unity of subject matter and style is interestingly defined in an earlier work (1, 359) "For as the Thoughts produce the Spirit or the Passion, the Spirit produces and makes the Expression, which is known by Experience to all who are Poets " It follows from this conception that any style which falls short of what the subject demands, "shews not a Simplicity but an Imbecility of Expression"

Several tendencies in this age were emphasizing the desirability of a simple style (cf the introductory note to this letter), but Dennis here seems to be drawing most heavily upon Rapin, whom he quotes on pp 35 and 36 He might have quoted another pertinent remark from Rapin's *Reflections on Aristotle's Poesie*, I, xxx (in *Works* [London, 1716], II, 167) "For the most essential Virtue of Speech, next to the Clearness and Perspicuity, is, that it be chaste and modest, as *Demetrius Phalerus* observes, *There must be* (saith he) *a Proportion betwixt the Words and the Things* And nothing is more ridiculous, than to handle a frivolous *Subject* in a sublime *Style*, for whatsoever is disproportionate, is either altogether *false*, or at least, is *trifling* and *childish*" On the same subject Dennis might have quoted Dryden's definition of a judicious style—which he called "Wit"—as "a propriety of thoughts and words, or, in other terms, thoughts and words elegantly adapted to the subject" (Ker, I, 190, cf also I, 270, and II, 9) Dennis detested a low and mean style as much as he disliked rant and fustian, hence he was predisposed to agree with Rapin's assertion that "only *Simplicity* pleases, provided it be *sustain'd* with *Greatness* and *Majesty*"

At about the same time this letter was written Steele, perhaps in reaction against the florid style of the heroic tragedy, was urging that tragedy moves us, not by pomp of language or magnificence of dress, but by something of a plain and simple nature which breaks in upon our souls (*Tatler*, no 68, Sept 15, 1709) The cult of simplicity had other advocates, and among them was Henry Felton, whose ideas on the subject were strikingly similar to those of Dennis The peculiar felicity of Latin, he thought, was its ability to speak good sense in suitable terms, to express the finest thoughts in the most appropriate words, and to write up to any subject in an easy majesty of style "And in this, my Lord," he added, "lieth the great Secret of Writing well It is the elegant Simplicity, that ornamental Plainness of Speech, which every common Genius thinketh so plain, that any Body may reach it, and findeth so very elegant, that all his Sweat and Pains, and Study, fail him in the Attempt" (*Dissertation on Reading the Classics* [4th ed, 1730], p 29) Later in the same work Felton remarked

" There is no Inconsistency between the Plainness and Perspicuity, and the Ornament of Writing A Style, my Lord, resembleth Beauty, where the Face is clear and plain as to Symmetry and Proportion, but is capable of wonderful improvements, as to Features and Complexion" (p 83) In his Preface to the *Iliad* in 1715 Pope explained his idea of the kind of simplicity desirable in style "There is a *graceful* and *dignify'd* Simplicity, as well as a *bald* and *sordid* one, which differ as much from each other as the Air of a *plain* Man from that of a *Sloven* 'Tis one thing to be tricked up, and another not to be dress'd at all Simplicity is the Mean between Ostentation and Rusticity" (in the *Prose Works*, ed Ault, I [Oxford, 1936], 246) The "pure and noble Simplicity" which Pope admired, he found only in Homer and the Bible (*ibid*) Of considerable interest are the comments in the *Guardian*, nos 12 and 15, on Easy Writing—that is, writing distinguished by simplicity and grace According to Mr Ault, both of these numbers were composed by Pope (*Prose Works*, I, lxi-lxv), even if they were written by Pope however, they probably reflect more or less accurately the views of Richard Steele, with whom Pope was in frequent consultation at this time The writer of no 15 affirmed "that simplicity of all things is the hardest to be copied, and ease to be acquired with the greatest labour" Obviously simplicity was to this essayist not a virtue of the untutored And the author of no 12, pointing out that "nature and reason appoint different garbs for different things," proclaimed "I hereby therefore give the genteel part of the learned world to understand, that every thought which is agreeable to nature, and exprest in language suitable to it, is written with Ease" In other words, propriety, or the organic unity of subject emotion, and style, was the characteristic of simplicity and ease of expression

To Dennis and many of his important contemporaries, therefore, simplicity of style meant, not the plain and naked expression of the folk nor the unadorned speech of the simple man, but a cultivated expression judiciously suited to the subject and to the emotion which the author wished to convey

Page 33 31-34 *I am so very well convinced of the solid Judgment of* Ben Johnson, etc I have not been able to locate in any of Jonson's published works the remark attributed to him by the *Spectator*, to which Dennis here refers If Ben made the remark, it was probably in conversation, and the remark was apparently handed down in an oral tradition (cf Karl Nessler, "Geschichte der Ballade Chevy Chase," in *Palaestra*, no 112 [1911], pp 99-100)

Page 33 38-40 *I shrewdly suspect* etc Of the traditional airs for *Chevy Chase* which I have been able to find, not one might be described as a martial air—that is, an air written in march-time

Page 34 8-9 *let us give very near the same Account of it that we formerly did* etc Cf I, 336

Page 34 28-37 Horace, Satires, I, iv, 39-48

Page 35 8-11 Boileau, *Satire X*, lines 19-22

Page 37 13 *which the Captain has quoted* It is clear from this remark that Dennis mistakenly supposed Steele to be the author of the papers on *Chevy Chase*

Page 37 25-27 Virgil, Georgics, III, 43-45

Page 37 39-41 Virgil, Aeneid, II, 426-428

Page 38 8-47 Cf *The Whole Booke of Psalmes Collected into English Meeter, by Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins, and others* (1633), p 140

Page 39 13—40 17 Milton, *Paradise Lost*, v, 153-208

Remarks upon Cato

Addison's *Cato* was published on or about April 27, 1713 (cf note on II, 41 7-8), about two weeks after its first performance It was an immediate and sensational success, there were nineteen performances in its first run, and the demand for copies was so great that the printer could not always supply them A flood of complimentary

verse descended upon Addison, and critical treatises were written to point out the beauties of the play Because the play was obviously designed to foster sentiments of liberty, both Whigs and Tories hastened to endorse it, and to show their approval publicly by showering money upon Booth, who played the part of Cato To many Whigs it appeared that Cato was supposed to represent Marlborough, and Juba to represent the young Prince of Hanover The Tories, refusing to admit that *Cato* was a party play, suggested with pretty malice that if identifications were made, then it was Caesar, "the *General for Life*, the *Perpetual Dictator*," who should be taken as the representative of Marlborough (cf *Examiner*, vol III, no 46, for April 27-May 1, 1713)

Dennis's *Remarks upon Cato* were published before the middle of July The story of how this treatise came to be written and published is still somewhat involved, but certain facts may be noted According to Dennis himself (cf II, 104 and 371) the great success of *Cato* stirred up the malice and envy of Pope, who, conceiving of a means by which he might kill two birds with one stone, went to Lintot and egged him on to engage Dennis to write an attack on Addison's play Except for Dennis's statement (and he is reporting what he could not have known at first-hand) there is, as Professor Sherburn notes (*Early Career of Pope* [Oxford, 1934], p 105), no evidence that Pope acted in this matter If Pope did tease Lintot to publish a treatise by Dennis attacking *Cato*, then he cannot be acquitted of the charge of malice, for he, who had himself been so immeasurably hurt by the *Reflections* upon his own *Essay on Criticism*, knew well enough the critic's power of destructive analysis But there was, in fact, no need for Pope to urge Lintot on As a shrewd man of business, Lintot certainly must have seen the commercial advantage of printing an attack written by the most famous critic of the day, upon the most successful tragedy of the day Moreover, Lintot was not above hoping to capitalize on the popularity of *Cato* and at the same time to launch a devastating assault upon a play which was bringing in handsome profits to Tonson, his keenest competitor Whatever the source of the inspiration, Lintot teased Dennis to make the *Remarks upon Cato* public

Dennis's *Remarks* were completed at least by June 19, 1713, and, according to a letter which he wrote to Buckinghamshire on that date, he had virtually decided against allowing them to be printed (cf II, 398-399) In fact, Buckinghamshire had cautioned him against so rash an act But by June 26 he had changed his mind, for on that day the *Daily Courant* announced the forthcoming publication of the *Remarks* (cf Sherburn p 104) And in the *Daily Courant* of July 11 they were advertised as "This Day is Published" They were also advertised as published, in the *Evening Post* of July 9 (cf Ault, *Prose Works of Pope*, I [1936], xix)

Although Lintot teased Dennis to publish the *Remarks*, the critic required no solicitation to induce him to write them In the first place, he saw little merit in *Cato*, and the spectacle of its great success, promoted to some extent by political parties for reasons that had nothing to do with literature, and assured on its first night by the presence of Richard Steele at the head of a claque, aroused him to a furious indignation, just as had the success of Blackmore's *Prince Arthur* years before In the second place, he was annoyed with Addison, holding him morally responsible (cf II, 399) for the attacks which, he thought, Steele had made upon him and upon critics generally in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* In the third place, he was provoked by the adulation lavished upon Addison by two pamphlets, *Cato Examin'd* and George Sewell's *Observations upon Cato*—especially by *Cato Examin'd*, which professed to find the tragedy "regular" in every respect, down to the last detail These considerations were enough to move Dennis to compose his *Remarks*

One immediate outcome of the publication of Dennis's *Remarks* was the appearance, on July 28, 1713 (cf Sherburn, p 106), of *The Narrative of Dr Robert Norris*, a work for which Pope was primarily, if not solely, responsible, and for which Dennis blamed Pope alone (cf II, 157-158, 324, and 371) The *Narrative* pretended to be the account of Norris, a well-known physician for the insane, of how he treated Dennis for an ob-

session produced by *Cato*, in the course of it, Dennis is satirized not only for his objections to Addison's play, but also for his fear of the French, his untidiness, his furious temper, his irritation at the *Spectator*, his failure as a poet and dramatist, his interest in Milton and Longinus, his friendship with a grave grammarian (probably Henry Cromwell), his use of the technical vocabulary of criticism, his inability to appreciate Shakespeare, his dislike of authors, and his protests against Pope's *Essay on Criticism*. Though the *Narrative* is sometimes bright and amusing, it is as a whole not an example of valid satire, for it strikes at no legitimate object of ridicule except the critic's irritability and his over-readiness to find offense in inoffensive writings. In its attempts to ridicule Dennis's interest in Milton and Longinus and to deny his appreciation of Shakespeare, it is unfair or childish. In its attempts to deride Dennis's understanding, to mock at his poverty, to call him a fool, it is objectionable, as Addison himself clearly thought when "he said he could not, either in Honour or Conscience, be privy to such a Treatment, and was sorry to hear of it" (cf. II, 371).

Some of Dennis's objections to *Cato* had been anticipated by other writers and critics (cf. notes on II, 45 2-4, 45 35, 45 44—46 1, 46 29-30, 47 22-32, 63 15-28, and 67 11-14), but never had there been presented so damaging a case. *The Remarks*, which concern themselves with the plot, characters, and probability of *Cato*, succeed in laying open its vulnerable points, and posterity has largely confirmed the verdict which Dennis reached. As Dr. Johnson says in his Life of Addison, Dennis "found and shewed many faults: he shewed them indeed with anger, but he found them with acuteness, such as ought to rescue his criticism from oblivion." And to effect the rescue, Dr. Johnson quoted from the *Remarks* the following passages (with the exception of a few sentences omitted for their indecency): II, 41 28—42 13, 49 9-27, 67 10-31, 70 39—71 12, 71 18-30, 72 38—75 18, 75 29—76 5, 76 25—77 17, and 78 2—79 42. A surprising bulk of quoted matter in a short biographical-critical sketch! In a marginal annotation, against *Cato*, I, iii, in a copy of Tickell's edition of Addison's *Works* (London, 1746) now in the British Museum, Macaulay wrote, "Dennis' criticisms have a good deal of truth in them." The comments of Dennis may have been partly inspired by an unamiable vindictiveness, but that must not blind us to the fact that he hits the nail on the head.

In the *Remarks* Dennis set out to criticize *Cato* by following the conventional method: analysis of fable, characters, sentiments, and diction. Only part of the plan was completed, it was not until after the publication of the *Remarks* that he set down his observations on the sentiments of the play. He followed tactics which he had previously condemned: that is, he noted only the faults of the work under review. In its raillery, in its emphasis on faults, the attack on *Cato* bears the marks of Rymer's influence, as no other critical treatise by Dennis does so clearly. The coarseness, the indecency, the vigorous crudities, all go to suggest the style adopted for critical writing by the author of *Edgar*.

Of special significance in this treatise is Dennis's recognition that certain of the precepts accepted by neo-classical critics are merely "mechanick Rules," providing means to an end, and are to be observed only if they advance the legitimate design of the work of art, and that following the Rules regardless of whether or not the materials with which the artist is working are properly subject to them, may occasion serious, or even fatal, blunders.

It should be noted that Dennis was not entirely unaware of Addison's literary abilities. In the Preface to the *Original Letters* of 1721 he makes his apology for attacking *Cato*, and confesses the merit of some of Addison's contributions to the *Tatler* and *Spectator* (cf. II, 414-415, also II, 211). If Dennis had ever read *Spectator*, no. 253 (Dec. 20, 1711), in which Addison spoke deprecatingly of Pope's attacks on contemporary writers, he gave no evidence of it. He would not have been pleased, anyhow, for Addison went on to condemn critics "who write in a positive dogmatic way" and to praise the *Essay on Criticism* as a "masterpiece in its kind." Referring to this paper in a facetious dedica-

tion of *The Mohocks* addressed "To Mr *D*[*ennis*]," John Gay wrote (*The Mohocks* [1712], sig [A3]) "As we look upon you to have the Monopoly of *English* Criticism in your Head, we hope you will very shortly chastise the Insolence of the *Spectator*, who has lately had the *Audaciousness* to show that there are more Beauties than Faults in a Modern Writer" Such an attempt to link the names of Pope and the *Spectator* may have confirmed in Dennis's mind a suspicion which he had already formed that the *Spectator*—Steele, in particular—had been responsible for Pope's attack upon him (cf II, 422)

Page 41 6-7 *That it was acted Twenty Days together* Its first run, according to Professor Nicoll (*History of Early Eighteenth Century Drama* [Cambridge, 1925], p 294), was nineteen days April 14-18, 21-24, 28-30, May 1, 2, 5-9

Page 41 7-8 *That Ten thousand of 'em have been sold* etc There were at least eight editions or issues of *Cato* published in England in 1713, besides one at Dublin and one at the Hague On April 30, 1713, Pope wrote to Caryll (Elwin-Courthope, VI, 184) "The play was published but this Monday [April 27], and Mr Lewis tells me it is not possible to convey it to you before Friday next The town is so fond of it, that the orange wrenches and fruit-women in the park offer the books at the side of the coaches, and the prologue and epilogue are cried about the streets by the common hawkers"

Page 41 8-9 *That ev'n Authors have publish'd their Approbation of it* etc Commendatory verses were written by Steele, Hughes, Young, Eusden, Tickell, Digby Cotes, George Sewell, and Ambrose Philips The prologue was contributed by Pope, the epilogue, by Dr Garth Among the critical pamphlets written in praise of *Cato* were the anonymous *Cato Examined* and George Sewell's *Observations upon Cato* Enthusiastic praise of *Cato* is the subject of the *Examiner*, vol III, no 46 (April 27-May 1, 1713) Dennis's reference to authors "who never before lik'd any thing but themselves" is probably intended to strike at Pope and Steele

Page 41 9-10 *That Squire* Ironside, etc Nestor Ironside was the fictitious author of the *Guardian* Steele praised *Cato* in the *Guardian*, no 33 (April 18) and no 64 (May 25) *Cato* is mentioned in no 43 (April 30)

Page 41 12-13 *that a* Frenchman *is now actually translating this Play into* French Probably Abel Boyer, whose translation was published at London by Tonson in 1713 Dennis would have been driven into a frenzy if he had foreseen that two Italian translations were to appear in 1715 one by Anton Salvini, published at Florence, the other by Luigi Riccoboni, published at Venice By 1721, when he wrote the Preface to the *Original Letters*, he knew about the Italian translations (cf II, 414)

Page 41 19-20 *which seems writ with a Design* etc The design of supporting liberty appeared so obvious that both Whigs and Tories scrambled to climb on the band-wagon Pope described the concern of both parties (letter to Caryll, dated April 30, 1713, in Elwin-Courthope, VI, 184) "I believe you have heard that, after all the applause of the opposite faction, my Lord Bolingbroke sent for Booth, who played Cato into the box, between one of the acts, and presented him with fifty guineas, in acknowledgment, as he expressed it, for his defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual dictator The whigs are unwilling to be distanced this way, as it is said, and therefore design a present to the said Cato very speedily" The *Examiner*, vol III, no 46 (April 27-May 1, 1713), praised *Cato* enthusiastically for its design of "firing our Youth with high Sentiments of Vertue, and a generous Passion for their Country" On the side of the Tories, and possibly following a hint contained in this no of the *Examiner*, was written an ingenious pamphlet which attempted to show that if *Cato* were a Whig play, it might be understood as an attack upon Marlborough *Mr Addison turn'd Tory Or, The Scene Inverted Wherein It is made appear that the Whigs have misunderstood that Celebrated Author in his applauded Tragedy, Call'd Cato, And that the Duke of M——'s Character, in endeavouring to be a General for Life, bears a much greater Resemblance to that of Cæsar and Syphax, than the Heroe of his Play By a Gentleman of Oxford* (London, 1713)

Page 42 3-19 *But that when an Author writes* etc On the occasion of the first performance of *Cato* Steele filled the theater with his supporters, who were engaged to drown out opposition and to applaud the play into success The antics of these partisans drew down upon Steele a solemn reproof from the *Examiner*, vol III, no 46 (April 27-May 1, 1713)

> [On the first night] a Croud of silly People, Creatures, who wear the Ornaments of the Head altogether on the out-side, were drawn up under the Leading of the Renown'd *Ironside*, and appointed to Clap at his Signals I will not suppose them quite so Stupid and Senseless, but *Cato*, and a little Attention, might have warm'd them, without the *Word of Command* The *Spectator* never appear'd in Publick with a worse Grace I remember Mr *Bickerstaff* at the *Playhouse*, and with what a modest, decent Gravity he behav'd himself Hence he was so well supported in his Decline, and so heartily pitty'd at his Death He would have us'd the Grandson of the *Great Censor* better Mr *Add——on* had so often sav'd him from exposing himself in the Service of a Faction that he would never have requited his Friend, by an attempt to engage him, against his Will, in the same drudgery

Page 42 24-27 *the Author of* CATO Examin'd *has behav'd himself* etc Approximately three-quarters of the pamphlet *Cato Examin'd* are taken up with a conventional exposition of the Rules for tragedy, the rest is given up to a brief and unconvincing pronouncement that *Cato* in all respects conforms to the Rules

Page 42 31—43 3 *That his Father, Mr* Spectator, *had been so merrily in the wrong,* etc Addison deals with *Chevy Chase* in the *Spectator*, nos 70 and 74, and with the "Two Children in the Wood" in no 85 Dennis took particular exception to the remarks on simplicity of thought in no 70 Addison discusses the unity of action in *Paradise Lost* and the duplicity of action in the *Iliad*, in no 267 Addison condemned poetic justice in no 40 Dennis was right in asserting that Homer had commended the singleness of action in the *Iliad*

Page 43 4-10 *That the Attempt* etc It was a matter of sore vexation to the intensely nationalistic spirit of Dennis that the English language and literature should at that time be scorned and neglected in other nations This scorn and neglect he attributed to the fact that English literary works were highly "Irregular" (cf I, 203-206) That Spenser, Milton, Jonson, and Shakespeare should be neglected, while *Cato* was translated into French and hailed with enthusiasm naturally struck him as representing the height of injustice

For a similar explanation of the neglect of English literature in France, and the popularity of French literature in England, see Purney's Preface to his *Pastorals* (1717 in *Works of Thomas Purney*, ed H O White [Oxford, 1933], pp 40-41) In this attitude Purney was probably directly influenced by Dennis

Page 43 32 *partly to retort private Injuries* Dennis wrote the *Reflections upon An Essay upon Criticism* partly because he was attacked in Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, directly in lines 270 and 585-587, and indirectly in such lines as 36-37 He wrote a series of letters to the *Spectator* some of which were published in 1711 because he thought that Steele had ridiculed him in certain numbers of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* (cf II 399, 436, 440-442)

Page 44 2-5 *That this general ill Taste* etc It was a common feeling at this time that tragedy, and the taste for tragedy, were in a serious decline, and that the decline was attributable in part to the popularity of Italian song and opera Pope remarked in the Prologue to *Cato*

> *Our scene precariously subsists too long*
> *On* French *translation, and* Italian *song*

In his poem "Upon Mr Addisons's Cato" George Sewell remarked (*Poems on Several Occasions* [1719], p 15)

> Long had the *Tragic Muse* forgot to Weep,
> By modern *Operas* quite lull'd a-sleep
> No Matter what the Lines, the Voice was clear,
> Thus Sense was sacrific'd to please the Ear

Page 45 2-4 *For the Moral* etc The same point had been raised by the *Examiner,* vol III, no 46 (April 27-May 1, 1713) "These Straights, in Point of *History,* oblig'd the *Tragedian* to desert *Cato* after his Fall, and therefore he forms his Moral upon quite another Turn than the Imitation of his *Hero,* and only warns us to avoid *Civil Discord,* a Topick not touch'd upon in the Body of the *Play,* and not directly arising from his main Design"

Page 45 35 *but Particular and Historical* Even some of Addison's supporters admitted that the death of Cato was justified not by art but by history On the subject of Cato's suicide the *Examiner,* vol III, no 46 (April 27-May 1, 1713), says "Here the *Historian* must justifie the *Poet,* for making a *Self-murder,* infamous in it self, and done in Violation of the Law of Nature and *Pagan* Morality, the *Catastrophe* of a Character otherwise perfect, and raised to the highest Dignity of human Nature"

Page 45 44—46 1 *as long as his Life is necessary to the good of his Countrey* Compare the *Examiner,* vol III, no 46 (April 27-May 1, 1713) "He [Cato] fell indeed with his Country, but not for it, and by dying effectually deserted her Interests For, as a Judicious *Writer* observes, had He surviv'd the Murder of *Cæsar,* his popular Character might at that juncture have retriev'd the Commonwealth, tho' *Brutus* fail'd in the Attempt, who was detested for his Ingratitude"

Page 46 29-30 *so neither can it be said to be one* Cf the *Examiner,* vol III, no 46, which remarks that the subordinate actions even the love-scenes, are all made conducive to Cato's glory Yet the same writer senses a flaw in the conduct, and finally suggests that the strength of the play rests not upon unity of action as it was ordinarily conceived, but upon unity of *passion,* a strange and revolutionary principle in neo-classical criticism

> [Such matters] as the Character of *Juba,* directly opposite to what he has in *History,* the *Simplicity* of the *Plot,* the *Facility* of the *Incidents,* and the judicious Design of *Underwriting* the *Love-Parts,* are lesser Lights to set off the greater, those fine Descriptions of the Passions of a *Publick Spirit,* its Emotions, Resentments, and Searches after Glory, those exalted Principles of *Roman* Honour, those just and glowing Images of Liberty, Vertue Truth Valour, and all the Excellencies that human Nature can display, when it expands it self fo the good of Societies, which makes a *Unity* in the *Dialogue* as well as *Action*

The anonymous author of *Cato Examin'd* (1713) asserted that there was unity of action in the play but he lost his ease when he confessed his doubts as to whether the main action concerned the death of Cato or the evils that ensued upon civil discord (cf pp 14 and 16)

Page 47 8-9 *the celebrated Rivalship of* Pohdor *and* Castalio In Otway's *The Orphan* (1680) For Dennis's summary of this story cf II 66

Page 47 19-22 *Here then are none of those beautiful Surprizes* etc Even the strictest formalists among neo-classic critics insisted upon the element of surprise, if not novelty, in the drama D'Aubignac devoted two chapters (*Pratique du Theatre,* II, VIII and IX) to showing that the incidents and catastrophe of a play must be prepared for but never in such a way that they may be foreseen by reader or audience "Or il est certain que toutes ces Préventions au Theatre sont vicieuses, parce qu'elles rendent les evenemens froids & de peu d'effet dans l'imagination des Spectateurs qui attendent toûjours quelque chose au contraire de leurs préjugez"

Page 47 22-32 *Now as Tragedy is the Imitation* etc Dennis rightly perceived that there was nothing of tragic terror in *Cato*, and that the play therefore was not a tragedy according to Aristotle's definition It has been well observed (cf Bonamy Dobrée's introduction to *Five Restoration Tragedies* [Oxford, the World's Classics, 1928]) that in spirit *Cato* belongs to the Restoration tradition of heroic tragedy, and that it appeals not to tragic pity and terror but to admiration and a special sort of pity—that aroused by the distress of lovers Even one of Addison's admirers, George Sewell, who wrote in praise of *Cato*, recognized that the passions moved by this play were not those of classical tragedy (*Observations upon Cato* [1713], pp 17-18) "The Passions which the Character of *CATO* is most apt to raise, are Indignation, Admiration, and I can't tell if I mayn't add Pity "

The idea that tragedy should arouse admiration (particularly for the chief characters) derived its influence in the Restoration period largely from the theory and practise of Corneille (cf Bray, pp 318-322) Even Dryden, who was affected by the idea in his earlier period, observed that "the delight of serious plays" is, "above all, to move admiration," and that "the objects of a tragedy" are "to stir up a pleasing admiration and concernment" (cf Ker, I, 53 and 113) By the first decade of the eighteenth century, however, the tide had turned against this innovation Admiration is too weak a passion for tragedy, said Gildon (*Works of Shakespear*, VII [1710], xlii), and it requires too much time and scope to develop it (*Complete Art of Poetry* [1718], I, 199) To arouse admiration involves celebrating a hero, he thought, and the proper business of tragedy is not to celebrate a hero but to propose a moral (*A New Rehearsal* [1714], pp 50 and 53) Admiration is "too cold a Passion for Tragical Effects," admitted the author of *Cato Examin'd* (p 8) A few writers like George Sewell and Cuthbert Constable (cf C C Green, *Neo-Classic Theory of Tragedy in England* [Cambridge, Mass, 1934], p 180) and Joseph Trapp (*Lectures on Poetry* [1742], p 247) seemed to feel that moving admiration was a legitimate function of tragedy, but they were a small minority among the critics The generally accepted principle that the chief characters of tragedy should be neither greatly virtuous nor greatly villainous precluded admiration as a tragic passion

The tendency of tragedy to appeal to admiration was one factor making for sentimental drama To this Dennis was resolutely opposed His interest in the Sublime led him to stress terror above all the other passions to which art should appeal Even in the epic, he thought, admiration was not a sufficiently strong passion to give delight unless it was supplemented by terror and compassion (cf I, 127)

Page 49 40-41 Cato *himself, who is the principal Person*, etc Oldmixon informs us that several men of good judgment, including Arthur Maynwaring, were of the opinion that Cato was not a character suitable for tragedy ("Essay on Criticism," in *Critical History of England* [1728], II, 6) The hero of tragedy was conceived to be a man of action and of passion, marred by some great human frailty Hence the Stoic, who endured the slings and arrows of misfortune passively and calmly, was not fit to be a tragic hero And since the Stoic was sometimes pictured as the type of good Christian, unshaken by the storms of the world and scornful of the ills of the flesh (cf Watts, *Horæ Lyricæ* [1706], pp 150-152), he could not be decently represented with a tragic flaw, torn by the excess of passion Virtually alone in his opinion on this subject is Blackmore, who held that a tragic hero might be made passive in his sufferings (*Essays upon Several Subjects*, I [1716], 51)

There is something of irony in Addison's selection of Cato as the hero of his tragedy, for in *Spectator*, no 243 (Dec 8, 1711), he had written

> Stoicism, which was the pedantry of virtue, ascribes all good qualifications of what kind soever to the virtuous man Accordingly Cato, in the character Tully has left of him, carried matters so far, that he would not allow any one but a virtuous man to be handsome This indeed looks more like a philosophical rant, than the real opinion of a wise man Yet this was what Cato very seriously maintained

Page **50** 28-29 *because his natural Temper was repugnant to Passion* Cf Rapin, *Reflections upon Philosophy in General*, sect x (in *Works* [London, 1716], II, 364) "The younger *Cato*, was a *Stoick* by Constitution and natural Temper"

Page **53** 15-16 *those of* Sempronius *and* Syphax *are too scandalous for any Tragedy* Among French critics of the seventeenth century, at least in part as a result of the doctrine that art should provide moral instruction, rose the precept that tragedy should not employ very wicked characters, or that it should employ characters no more evil than was strictly necessary to carry out the design and moral of the play (cf Bray, pp 78-82) According to Dryden, one must not present a character with a natural inclination toward evil, he must be given a plausible reason for his evil conduct, and to make him more villainous than he has reason to be, is to produce an effect stronger than the cause and therefore to violate nature (cf Ker, I, 214) It will be recalled that Rymer in the *Short View of Tragedy*, protested against the motiveless malignity of Iago (cf Spingarn, II, 245-246) In the *Tragedies of the Last Age* he had expressed as forcibly as possible the doctrine that in tragedy "no shadow of sense can be pretended for bringing any wicked persons on the Stage" (*ibid*, p 197) Dennis was probably affected by Rymer in many of his views concerning tragedy, and perhaps by this view in particular

The doctrine had some slight foundation in Aristotle, though Aristotle, in preferring characters neither greatly virtuous nor greatly vicious, was apparently thinking only of the heroes of tragedy

Page **53** 17 *The Author of* Cato Examin'd, *says* etc Cf *Cato Examin'd* (1713), p 9

Page **62** 33-34 Dryden, *Spanish Fryar*, II, 1

Page **63** 4-5 For he who hangs etc *Hudibras*, Part II, Canto 1 (ed A R Waller [Cambridge, 1905] p 118)

Page **63** 15-28 *Upon which the Lady takes up an extraordinary Resolution*, etc The anonymous author of *Mr Addison Turn'd Tory* (1713), though on the whole he praises *Cato* highly and though he finds a good deal of merit in this dialogue between Portius and Lucia, yet admits that Lucia should have made her oaths with a little more room for mental reservations since she later forgets Marcus quickly enough (p 18)

Page **64** 3-4 Dryden, *Sir Martin Mar-all*, III, iii

Page **66** 1-2 *have a delicate green Gown given her* The meaning of this euphemism is too obvious to require explanation It is used, somewhat more elegantly, in Herrick's "Corinna's Going A-Maying," line 51

Page **67** 11-14 Cato *receives the News of his Sons Death* etc Even one of those critics who set out to praise Addison's tragedy complained that Cato appeared to rejoice at the sight of his dead son, Cato's following speech beginning "Welcome, my son," was a mere Rant, said the critic (*Mr Addison Turn'd Tory* [1713], pp 19-20)

Page **68** 17-23 *The Unities of Time and Place are mechanick Rules*, etc The tendency to consider the unities as of subordinate importance can be seen in Corneille Although Corneille recognized the need of concentration in the drama, he would not admit that any arbitrary rule could properly define the restrictions to be imposed upon all dramatic subjects The rules, he believed, were made for the subjects, and not the subjects for the rules (cf Bray, p 282) Some of his criticism was taken up with explaining how a dramatist might give the illusion of observing the unities without strictly observing them (by such devices, for example, as omitting all definite mention of the passage of time in the play and by causing excess time to be consumed between rather than during the acts Dryden followed Corneille in attempting to liberalise the strict interpretation of the unities of time and place These unities, he said, are the dead colors, whereas plot and wit are the "living beauties of a play" (Prologue to *Secret Love* [1668]), in the Preface to *Troilus and Cressida* he spoke of the unities as "the mechanic beauties of the plot" (cf Ker, I, 212) Rymer, who emphasized the fable, or design, as the soul of the drama, spoke of "the *unities* and *outward* regularities" as the "*mechanical part* of Tragedies" (cf Spingarn, II, 183) It is this attitude which Dennis adopted,

here and in the letter to Moyle dated Oct 26, 1695 (cf II, 386) A corollary to this idea is the observation that the minor rules may be neglected if the major purposes of the artist are thereby served (cf II, 198 14-21)

The idea that the unities are "mechanick Rules," subservient to the larger aims of the drama, paved the way for a heresy of which Dryden and Dennis could not be convicted but which Elkanah Settle uttered plainly and persuasively (*Farther Defence of Dramatick Poetry* [1698], p 33)

> If the *French* can content themselves with the sweets of a single Rose-bed, and nothing less then the whole Garden, and the Field round it, will satisfie the *English*, every Man as he likes *Corneille* may reign Master of his own Revels, but he is neither a Rule-maker nor a Play-maker for our Stage And the Reason is plain For as Delight is the great End of Playing and those narrow Stage-restrictions of *Corneille* destroy that Delight, by curtailing that Variety that should give it us, every such Rule therefore is Nonsense and Contradiction in its very Foundation Even an Establish'd *Law*, when it destroys its own *Preamble*, and the *Benefits* design'd by it, becomes void and null in it self

The anonymous author of *A Review of the Tragedy of Jane Shore Consisting of Observations on the Characters, Manners, Stile, and Sentiments* (1714) expressed a contempt for the unities almost as thoroughgoing as Settle's He said of the unities (p 4) " I ever look'd on these Niceties as a pure piece of Mechanism, which are to be attained without Genius, Spirit, or any Thing beside that makes a Poem admirable " It is significant that this same reviewer, professing scorn for Aristotelian rules, announced (pp 4-5) that in his analysis of *Jane Shore* he would not consider plot or action or incidents but only characters, expression, and moral Thus a distaste for the restrictions imposed by the unities was related to the new tendency to emphasize characters rather than action in the drama—a tendency seen particularly in the criticism of Shakespeare

Page 68 33-36 *From whence it follows*, etc This was part of the doctrine of the *liaison des scenes*, a doctrine which is implied in Dennis's definition of scenes (cf I, 323-324) When Dennis says of his *Plot, and no Plot* (cf I, 145) that "The Scenes are connected and dependant, each of them upon the following and the preceding," he affirms that he has observed the *liaison des scenes* For the most thoroughgoing and detailed exposition of this doctrine, cf D'Aubignac *Pratique du Theatre*, III, VII (ed Amsterdam, 1715, I, 220-228)

The doctrine was developed in France, and was widely accepted by the second half of the seventeenth century It was accepted as a rule by D'Aubignac, Boileau, and Racine, and, though not accepted as a rule, was regarded sympathetically by Chapelain and Corneille (cf Bray, pp 325-326) Dryden expressed his approval of the "continuity of scenes" in drama in the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (cf Ker, I, 83) and in the Prologue to the *Maiden Queen* (1668) In 1668 Shadwell wrote in the Preface to *The Sullen Lovers* (cf Spingarn, II, 149), "I have here, as often as I could naturally, kept the Scenes unbroken, which, though it be not so much practised or so well understood by the *English*, yet among the French-Poets is accompted a great Beauty " The doctrine was expounded in detail, and approved, by Trapp (*Lectures on Poetry* [1742], pp 259-263) On the whole the doctrine was not usually considered essential enough by English critics to warrant a full discussion Their attitude seems to have been much like that of Shadwell it was not a rule but an added beauty to keep the scenes unbroken, so far as it was convenient Or, as Corneille said in his *Discours des Trois Unités* (1660), "La liaison des scènes est un grand ornement dans un poeme mais enfin ce n'est qu'un ornement et non pas une règle "

Page 69 30 *the Character which* Juba *gives of him* One of the weaknesses of *Cato* lies in the fact that the dramatis personae are portrayed not simply by their own speech and actions, but also by "characters" put in the mouths of other actors This fact is

observed, though not as a criticism of the play, by the anonymous author of *Mr Addison Turn'd Tory* (1713), pp 14-17, who notes that all of the persons in the play are thus characterized except Lucius and Lucia

Page 71 1 *fegue* Sometimes spelled *feaque*, the word meant *to send packing*, or *to whiff away* (cf Farmer and Henley)

Page 72 41 *the Wisdom of the* O——'s The reference is to Titus Oates, prominent in the Popish Plot affair

Page 72 41-42 *even* Eustace Commins *himself* Eustace Cummins was a notorious informer who had followed in the footsteps of Titus Oates (cf I, 504) At first taken seriously, he was later thoroughly discredited For a brief record of his infamy, cf *CSP, Domestic, 1679-1680*, p 254, *CSP, Domestic, 1680-1681*, pp 303-304, 502, 623-624, and 672, also *A Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason*, compiled by T B Howell, VIII (1816), p 488

Page 72 44 J—— G—— Sir John Gibson, from 1710 Lieutenant-Governor of Portsmouth, popular and much beloved in the army (cf *Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed Murphy [London, 1824], VII, 116 n)

Page 75 31—76 5 *I do not remember that* Aristotle etc It was generally recognized that Aristotle was silent concerning the unity of place D'Aubignac said, "Aristote dans ce qui nous reste de sa Poétique n'en a rien dit, & j'estime qu'il l'a negligé, à cause que cette regle étoit trop connue de son temps, & que les Chœurs qui demeuroient ordinairement sur le Theatre durant tout le cours d'une Pièce, marquoient trop visiblement l'Unité du lieu" (*Pratique du Theatre*, II, VI [ed Amsterdam, 1715, I, 87]) Corneille noted in 1660 that there was no precept in Aristotle concerning this unity, unity of place was desirable but impractical, the scene of a play might be extended to include several places within the same town (cf Vial, pp 132-133) Dryden caused Eugenius to remark that unity of place was never a rule until French critics of his own day had made it a precept (Ker, I, 48), yet, though Dryden believed that one real place might well represent two or more imaginary places, he still felt that on the grounds of verisimilitude the scope of a play should be limited to rooms in the same house, or at least to houses in the same city (cf *ibid*, 127 and 129) Rymer was, as one should expect, among the strictest of English critics he desired the presence of the chorus in tragedy to prevent reckless change of scenes (cf Spingarn, II, 209), he held that any change of scene was implausible because an entire audience could not imagine itself to be transported in a body to another place (*ibid*, p 231) Almost equally strict in their interpretation of the unity of place were the anonymous author of the *Comparison between the Two Stages* (1702, p 132) and Charles Gildon (*Complete Art of Poetry* [1718] I, 231, *Laws of Poetry* [1721], p 175) Certain other critics, like Dryden, felt that the place of a drama might properly be extended to the limits of one town or city (cf Collier, in Spingarn, III, 289, also Trapp, *Lectures on Poetry* [1742], pp 254-255), although Trapp admitted that perhaps it might be better to have all scenes laid in one house During the Restoration period there were few English critics who did not affirm the desirability of observing unity of place whether in its strictest form or in the form as modified by Corneille and Dryden Even Settle, who denounced "those narrow Stage-restrictions of *Corneille*" (cf *Farther Defence of Dramatick Poetry* [1698], p 33), without realizing how much Corneille had liberalized the rigorous precepts of French criticism, was moved to urge the dramatist to confine himself within as narrow a compass of time and space as his subject would allow (*ibid*, pp 33-34)

It is true that as early as 1668 Sir Robert Howard delivered an attack upon the idea of the unity of place (cf Spingarn, II, 108-110), especially as Dryden had expounded it Thirty years and more passed, however, before his example was followed by another critic of importance In his *Discourse upon Comedy* Farquhar brilliantly ridiculed the arguments that had been set forth to defend the unity of place, but in the same breath he insisted that he was no friend to "rambling Plays" and that his own practise was opposed to needless change of scene (*Works*, ed Stonehill [1930], II, 342-343) Though

he believed that the poet must not be expected to starve his plot in order to observe the unities, yet he thought that the dramatist should observe as much decorum and regularity as the nature of his action would permit Following Farquhar there was a long series of attacks upon the rules, led by such writers as Steele and Cibber Steele sneered at the "little critics" who considered a breach of the Ten Commandments less serious than a breach of the unity of time and place (*Spectator,* no 270) After Dennis's death there were very few critics who held that it was necessary to observe the unity of place On the other hand, there were few who would have disagreed with Dennis's remarks on the subject Concerning the unity of place Dennis's ideas were as free of the influence of authority as were Farquhar's

During the Restoration period there was a general tendency among dramatists to observe the unity of place—at least such a unity as Corneille had defined (cf L B Campbell, *Scenes and Machines on the English Stage during the Renaissance* [Cambridge, 1923], pp 278-289)

For Dennis's earlier views on the unity of place, cf I, 145, also II, 386

Page 79 28-29 Plato's *Treatise translated lately by* Bernard Lintott To capitalize on the sensation created by *Cato* Lintot brought out the translation of Plato's "Treatise" In the same issue of the *Examiner* in which he advertised Dennis's *Remarks upon Cato* (vol IV, no 18, July 13-17, 1713), he announced for sale "The 2d Edit of the Life and Character of Cato, Price 6 d Plato's Dialogue on the immortality of the Soul, mentioned in Cato, Price 1 s"

Page 79 45 Boileau, *L'Art Poétique,* III, 122

Letters upon the Sentiments of Cato

When Dennis published his *Remarks upon Cato* early in July, 1713, he may have thought that the affair was ended He had made two main points that Addison's conduct of the plot was in many respects absurd, and that some of the main characters were unsuited to tragedy But he soon discovered that the admirers of *Cato,* though they were willing to concede his arguments to be in some measure justified, still regarded the play as a masterpiece on the grounds of the great beauty of its sentiments and diction (cf II, 81 3-7) His own friend, Charles Gildon, professed admiration for *Cato* as the best standard of dramatic diction in the English language (cf *A New Rehearsal* [1714], p 77) An anonymous writer asserted that this tragedy, "for its elegance of Stile, poignancy of Expression, and strength of Thoughts, surpasses most that have appear'd on the *English* Stage" (*Mr Addison Turn'd Tory* [1713], p 14) According to John Oldmixon, it was the opinion of several good judges of literature, including Addison's friend Arthur Mainwaring, that Cato was not a character suitable for tragedy, still, though he held this opinion himself and though he thought that the design of *Cato* was poor, Oldmixon protested that the thought and expressions of the tragedy were great and noble (cf *Essay on Criticism,* in *Critical History of England* [3rd ed, 1728], II, 6, 7) Blackmore, apparently thinking of its sentiments, praised *Cato* for being instructive and useful (*Essays upon Several Subjects,* I [1716], xliv) And an article entitled "Of Plays and Masquerades" in *The Occasional Paper* (III, no 9 [1719]) cited *Cato* as an example of plays which may "inspire Men with Sentiments of Liberty, and generous Regards" Perceiving that the fame of *Cato* rested upon its sentiments, Dennis set to work in an attempt to prove "the Sentiments to be at least as absurd as the Conduct"

Shortly after the *Remarks upon Cato* appeared, Dennis wrote his attack upon the sentiments of the play in the form of two long letters "to a learned and judicious Friend" These letters were submitted to Sir Richard Blackmore sometime before December 5, 1716 (cf II, 109) It was apparently after that date that the letters in some mysterious way were lost (cf II, 81), both the originals and the author's copies Dennis seems to have blamed Addison for the trickery which deprived him of them

(cf II, 415) It is much more probable, however, that Blackmore, who was a good Whig and was on friendly terms with Addison, aided in suppressing Dennis's second attack on *Cato* Even though Addison was so sensitive about the fame of his tragedy that he made Tom Burnet destroy a burlesque upon it (cf Sherburn, *Early Career of Pope*, p 123), it is very unlikely that he would have descended to the infamy of stealing the letters

Some time after the letters had been lost Dennis found himself discussing the incident with a certain "Mr *C*——", who expressed an interest in the opinions contained in the lost missives This "Mr *C*——" was probably Dennis's old friend Henry Cromwell If, as seems most probable, the "grave elderly Gentleman" in Pope's *Narrative* was intended to represent Cromwell, then Pope had hinted that Cromwell had been concerned with Dennis in the *Remarks upon Cato* (cf Ault, I, 162) As a result of "Mr *C*——"s interest, Dennis set out to recall the substance of the lost letters, which he finally transmitted to "Mr *C*——" in a series of seven short letters These short letters were printed first in the *Original Letters* of 1721, under the title of *Letters upon the Sentiments of the Two First Acts of Cato* When they were published, only the first and last were dated (cf II, 82 and 102) Obviously one of the two dates must be a typographical error Probably the letters were written between Nov 4, 1718, and Jan 15, 1719

Many of the observations which Dennis makes on the sentiments of *Cato* are perhaps just, but the *Letters* as a whole impress us now as a wearisome emphasis upon matters of little consequence As Dr Johnson said in concluding his summary of Dennis's *Remarks upon Cato* (Life of Addison) "Flushed with consciousness of these detections of absurdity in the conduct, he afterwards attacked the sentiments of Cato, but he then amused himself with petty cavils, and minute objections"

Page 81 10 *at Mr* W——*'s House* Mr W is probably the Mr Welbye whom Dennis mentions in a letter to Moyle dated Jan 16, 1720 (*Original Letters*, pp 159-162) Welbye, Sir George Markham, Congreve, and Mr Mein are mentioned as old friends of Moyle's whom Dennis has been in the habit of conversing with

Page 82 22-24 *according to that Reflection of* Rochefoucault etc Cf *Réflexions, Sentences et Maximes Morales de La Rochefoucauld* (Paris, Garnier Frères), no ccccxc

Page 84 4 *as* Manly *did my Lord* Plausible Cf Wycherley, *The Plain-Dealer*, I, 1

Page 86 43 "Edit 4" is probably a printer's error, it should be "Edit 1" In other places where he specifies the edition he is using (cf II, 85 31 and 41), Dennis refers to *the first edition His page-references fit the first edition*

Page 89 36-38 an Observation which Rapin makes etc In discussing the impropriety of expressing low thoughts in a sublime style Rapin says (*Reflections on Aristotle's Poesie*, I, xxx, in *Works* [London, 1716], II, 167) "Most *French* Poets fall into this Vice, for want of Genius, their Verses where *Logick* is much neglected, are either *Pedantry* or *Nonsense*"

Page 101 8-10 *and therefore* Rochefoucault *is in the right in his 29th Reflection*, etc Cf *Réflexions, Sentences et Maximes Morales de La Rochefoucauld* (Paris, Garnier Frères), no xxv This "Reflection" was, with a slight variation, no xxvIII in the first edition (1665)

A True Character of Mr Pope

This work was advertised in the *Flying Post*, issue of May 31, 1716, as published on that day It was issued anonymously, under the imprint of Sarah Popping, who was sometimes a front for Edmund Curll Both the *True Character* and *The Catholick Poet*, which was published at the same time, seem to be part of Curll's program of retaliation directed against Pope in consequence of the emetic which Pope administered and of the *Full and True Account of a Horrid and Barbarous Revenge by Poison on the Body of Mr Edmund Curll, Bookseller*, in which Pope described the administration of the emetic and its effects

There is no longer any reason to doubt that Dennis was the author of the *True Character* The style is unquestionably his, and the point of view is just as clearly his If the pamphlet seems to be scurrilous and indecent, it must be remembered that Dennis had been subjected to almost continuous attacks by Pope and his friends from 1711 to 1716, and that during this period Dennis had held his peace with remarkable patience and self-restraint, the *True Character* was his first published reply since the *Reflections on An Essay upon Criticism* Moreover, it should be noted that the *True Character* was composed as a personal letter, and that three weeks passed between the time it was written and the time it was published, it may not have been designed for publication, and we do not know that Dennis was responsible for giving it to the printer The fact that it was addressed to a man who had been injured by Pope may help to explain why it was made public

For a detailed discussion of the reasons for attributing this pamphlet to Dennis, and of the circumstances which led up to it, cf "Pope and Dennis," in *ELH*, VII (1940) pp 188-198

Dennis had tried his hand at Characters previously there are two brief ones in his *Answer to Collier's Dissuasive* (I, 311-312), both, interestingly enough, based upon suggestions found in Horace, and both done with a racy vigor that recalls the Characters of Dennis's prime favorite, Samuel Butler He cultivated the same form again in 1720 when he wrote the *Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar*

The *True Character* passed through a second edition in 1717, in preparing which there is no reason to suppose that Dennis played any part

Page 103 3 *I Have read over the* Libel The Libel was called an "Imitation of Horace," as is made clear in II, 104 18 and 30-31, 105 39-40 I have not been able to identify the piece referred to, nor have other scholars been more successful Professor Sherburn suggests (*Early Career of Pope*, p 180) as a possibility the poem sometimes ascribed to Swift, *John Dennis, the Sheltering Poet's Invitation to Richard Steele, the secluded Party-Writer and Member, to come and live with him in the Mint In Imitation of Horace's 5th Epistle, Lib I* (1714) Another possibility is *The First Ode of the Second Book of Horace Paraphras'd And Address'd to Richard St——le, Esq*, (1713 or 1714), which Mr Williams assigns to Swift (*Poems of Swift* [Oxford 1937], I, 179-184), this piece ends with an attack on Dennis But the dates make it highly improbable that either of these was the "Libel" referred to, the fact that Dennis had just received two copies of the "Libel" as he was writing the *True Character* suggests that it was hot off the presses

Page 103 6—104 2 *That he is one*, etc Though Dennis assuredly was the author of the *True Character*, he was evidently not the author of this Character within a Character The presence in the pamphlet of this Character "from another Hand" probably explains why Pope was inclined to blame two writers for the *True Character* Yet Dennis was probably truthful when he said in 1729 that he had never written "so much as one Line, that was afterward printed, in Concert with any one Man whatsoever (cf II, 374), his quoting the Character "from another Hand" did not constitute writing "in Concert with" the individual who had sent it

Page 103 12-19 *'Tis*, says he, *a very little but very comprehensive Creature*, etc With a few omissions this passage is quoted in the "Testimonies of Authors" printed in the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*

Page 103 16-17 *a Writer of* GUARDIANS *and of* EXAMINERS *The Catholick Poet* in 1716 and *Pope Alexander's Supremacy* in 1729 both accused Pope of having written for the *Examiner* (cf Sherburn, *Early Career of Pope*, pp 152-153) That he did write for the *Examiner* is improbable His activity in the Scriblerus Club might easily have given rise to such a charge Pope is known to have written for the *Guardian* nos 4, 40, 61, 78, 91, 92, and 173, as well as a letter in no 132 (cf *Prose Works*, ed Ault, I [Oxford, 1936], lvii), and Mr Ault contends that he also contributed nos 11, 12, 15,

169, and 172 According to Pope, the report that he wrote for the *Examiner* was spread by Ambrose Philips (cf the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*, note on III, 322)

Page 103 21 *a lurking way-laying Coward, and a Stabber in the Dark* The phrase is quoted by Pope in the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*, note on I, 104

Page 103 25-28 The first two lines are from *Hudibras*, III, II (ed A R Waller [Cambridge, 1905], p 277) The last two lines are from *Hudibras*, III, II (*ed cit*, p 249) Dennis is apparently quoting from memory

Page 103 29 *He is a Professor of the worst Religion, which he laughs at* This line, together with part of lines 15-16 above, is quoted with a few slight changes in the "Testimonies of Authors" printed in the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*

Page 103 36 *some Men of good Understanding, value him for his Rhimes* Quoted in the "Testimonies of Authors" printed in the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*

Page 104 6-8 *who attempted to undermine Mr* PHILIPS etc Pope wrote an ironical tribute to Philips, actually praising his own pastorals at the expense of Philips's, in the *Guardian*, no 40 (April 27, 1713) During this period apparently Philips and Pope met nearly every evening at Button's and were ostensibly on friendly terms (cf Pope to Caryll, June 8, 1714, in Elwin-Courthope, VI, 209-210)

Page 104 11-12 *secretly publish'd the Infamous Libel of Dr* Andrew Tripe *upon him* The pamphlet referred to, *A Letter from the Facetious Doctor Andrew Tripe, at Bath, to the Venerable Nestor Ironside*, apparently published about the middle of February, 1714 (cf Aitken, *Life of Steele* [1889], II, 10), was definitely not written by Pope It has been variously ascribed to Swift, Wagstaffe, Arbuthnot, or the Scriblerus Club This work should be distinguished from the later pamphlet, *A Letter from the Facetious Dr Andrew Tripe, at Bath, to His Loving Brother the Profound Greshamite* (1719), which is included in the *Miscellaneous Works* of Wagstaffe (1726) The second of these letters contains only a brief and incidental attack upon Steele

Page 104 17-23 *For in all his Productions*, etc Compare II, 416-417

Page 104 32-40 Butler, *Hudibras*, II, III (ed A R Waller [Cambridge, 1905], p 157)

Page 105 7-11 Horace, Satires, I, IV, 81-85

Page 105 16-32 *his Natural Deformity, which did not come by his own Fault*, etc This passage with some omissions, was paraphrased and quoted by Pope in the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*, note on II, 134

Page 105 19-21 *has upbraided People by administring Poison to them* This passage is partly quoted and partly paraphrased in the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*, note on I, 104 Dennis's remark is a reference to Pope's administering an emetic to Curll, a feat which was recounted by Pope himself in *A Full and True Account of a Horrid and Barbarous Revenge by Poison, on the Body of Mr Edmund Curll, Bookseller*, published on or about April 1, 1716 (cf *Prose Works of Pope*, ed Ault, I [Oxford, 1936], xcviii)

Page 105 33-34 *he has been lately pleas'd to say*, etc The poem referred to was entitled *To the Ingenious Mr Moore, Author of the Celebrated Worm Powder*, it was issued on or about May 1, 1716 (cf Sherburn, *Early Career of Pope*, p 175) The fourth stanza, to which Dennis particularly objects, ran as follows (it is omitted from the Elwin-Courthope edition, and should be inserted after line 12 of the poem as therein printed, vol IV, pp 484-485)

> But whether Man, or He, God knows,
> *Fœcundify'd* her Belly,
> With that pure Stuff from whence we rose,
> The Genial *Vermicelli*

Page 105 35-38 *'tis certain at least, that his Original* etc This passage was (with certain discreet omissions) quoted by Pope and attributed to Gildon in the "Testimonies of Authors" printed in the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* The first part of the passage was quoted again in the *Dunciad*, note on II, 134

Page **106** 25 Horace, Odes, IV, IX, 50

Page **106** 41-42 *in his Admirable Epistle to* Monsieur SEIGNELEY Boileau, *Épitre* IX

Page **107** 1-3 *The Persons whom he has attack'd* etc These two sentences were quoted by Pope, and attributed to Dennis, in the *Dunciad Variorum* (1729) directly after Cleland's "Letter to the Publisher" They apparently inspired Pope with an idea, for in Cleland's Letter he drew up a parallel between himself and Boileau

Page **107** 20-21 *and plagu'd the World with Five or Six Scandalous Libels, in Prose* Dennis was probably referring to the *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris*, in which he himself was ridiculed, to *Guardian*, no 40, in which Ambrose Philips was ridiculed, to the *Letter from the Facetious Dr Andrew Tripe* (1714), in which Steele was ridiculed, to the *Account of a Horrid and Barbarous Revenge by Poison* (1716), in which Curll, Oldmixon, and Blackmore were ridiculed What the other pamphlets were is not clear Possibly he was thinking of *The Critical Specimen* (1711), which attacks Dennis and which Mr Ault attributes to Pope

Page **107** 26-28 *he has attack'd no one so often as Sir* Richard Blackmore Besides being referred to in an uncomplimentary way in the *Essay on Criticism*, line 463, Blackmore was ridiculed in Pope's *Full and True Account*, published about April 1, 1716 He was assailed in the anonymous *Moore' Worms for the Learned Mr Curll, Bookseller*, published in May, 1716 (cf Straus, *The Unspeakable Curll* [N Y and London, 1928], pp 58-59) According to Sherburn, Gay at this time wrote a poem satirizing Blackmore (*Early Career of Pope*, p 167), which might have been attributed to Pope I can discover no other attack upon Blackmore written before the publication of Dennis's *True Character* unless perhaps Pope's *Further Account of the Most Deplorable Condition of Mr Edmund Curll, Bookseller*, the exact date of which is still uncertain, appeared shortly after the *Full and True Account*

Page **107** 29-30 *that Gentleman had laid very great Obligations on him* Possibly by his praise of Pope in the *Essays upon Several Subjects*, I [1716], VI The first volume of the *Essays* was published in March, 1716 On his obligations to Blackmore, Pope remarked, "He never had any, and never saw him but twice in his Life" (the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*, note on II, 258)

Page **107** 31 *his Excellent* Poem *upon* CREATION Blackmore's *Creation*, "a philosophical poem demonstrating the existence and providence of God," was published in 1712 It seems to have been well received, Addison praised it in *Spectator*, no 339

Page **107** 42 *the Squire of* Alsatia Shadwell's *Squire of Alsatia* was first produced in May, 1688

Page **108** 5-6 *he has, like Mr* Bayes, *got a notable knack of Rhiming and Writing smooth Verse* Quoted in the "Testimonies of Authors" printed in the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*

Page **108** 14-15 *in the Prose Translations of Him* Madame Dacier's *l'Iliade d'Homere* (Paris, 1711) was done in prose In 1711-1712 Ozell and others turned Dacier's translation into English, this version was done in a crude blank verse, but it was printed as prose

To Sir Richard Blackmore, on the Moral of an Epick Poem

This letter, written on Dec 5, 1716, was published in the *Original Letters* of 1721 About seven years after Dennis's attack on *Prince Arthur* Blackmore had made friendly overtures by subscribing to *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* Dennis later responded to the gesture, and the two men carried on an amiable correspondence for several years (cf I, 448-449) The fact that from 1711 on Pope took pleasure in satirizing both men probably drew them closer together, in the *True Character* Dennis complimented Blackmore with uncritical extravagance (cf II, 107)

The ideas in this letter are completely consistent with those expressed by Bossu in his treatise on the epic and with those developed by Dennis himself in the *Remarks*

on Prince Arthur Dennis here reiterates the orthodox Augustan doctrine that everything good in art proceeds from a conscious purpose and that, even as each *genre* has a definite end in view, so there are definite and recognized means of attaining that end The belief, so emphatically stated on pp 113-114, that the epic is fundamentally an effort to serve the state, is an interesting survival of Renaissance criticism

Page 109 3-4 *my Observations upon the Two first Acts of the Play* These observations were the originals of the *Letters upon the Sentiments of the Two First Acts of Cato* After the remarks sent to Blackmore had been lost, Dennis tried to recall their substance in a series of short letters addressed to a "Mr C——", which were published in 1721

Page 109 6 *your* Essay *upon* Epick Poetry Blackmore's "Essay upon Epick Poetry" was published in the first volume (1716) of his *Essays upon Several Subjects*

Page 109 8-9 *a* late Translation Pope's translation of the Iliad, the first volume of which appeared on or about June 6, 1715 and the second about March 22, 1716 (Sherburn, *Early Career of Pope*, p 190)

Remarks upon Pope's Homer

This work was advertised in the *Daily Courant*, issue of Feb 9, 1717 (cf Paul, p 92), but it could not have been published for a week or two thereafter since the Postscript was written on Feb 12 (cf II 150) A good part of the volume had been written two years or more before publication In May, 1714, two months after the appearance of the augmented *Rape of the Lock*, Dennis commenced to write a series of letters on that poem In December, 1714, he composed his remarks on *Windsor Forest* in a letter to Barton Booth, the actor And sometime in 1715, apparently, he wrote the observations on the *Temple of Fame*, likewise in the form of a personal letter These materials he seems not to have intended for publication Although the first volume of Pope's Homer was published about June 6, 1715, Dennis did not see a copy of it until early in May, 1716 (cf II, 108) At that time he promised to send his friend Thomas Sergeant some remarks on the translation, but he seems to have had no particular design in this except to enlighten his correspondent, and he was in no hurry to perform his promise On Dec 5, 1716, he wrote to Blackmore, offering to send that gentleman, if he so requested, some reasons for disapproving of Pope's Iliad (cf II, 109), apparently he had no idea of publication at this time Sometime between Sept 20, 1716, and Feb 1, 1717 he jotted down a few comments on the first book of the translation In all probability they would never have been printed except for two incidents which occurred in January, 1717

The first of these incidents was the appearance of a paper by Lewis Theobald (*Censor*, vol II, no 33, for Jan 5, 1717), in which Dennis was attacked and Pope's Homer was enthusiastically praised Dennis was infuriated at this attempt to elevate Pope at his expense The second incident was the production, on Jan 16-23, 1717 of *Three Hours after Marriage*, a work by Pope, Gay, and Arbuthnot, in which Dennis was satirized under the name of Sir Tremendous Longinus Dennis (no doubt rightly) attributed this attack to Pope (cf II, 120 and 122)

Under this double provocation Dennis acted quickly He gathered together his old letter on *Windsor Forest*, his letter on the *Temple of Fame*, and his comments on the first book of Pope's Homer To these he hurriedly added a few pages in answer to the *Censor*, a Preface, and a Postscript As he wrote the additions, he thought of including the remarks on the *Rape of the Lock* (cf II, 122), but he changed his mind on this point, preferring to hold these remarks back *in terrorem* The undertaking was rushed through at top speed, and the *Remarks upon Pope's Homer* went on sale, according to the *Daily Courant*, on Feb 28

For a more detailed account of the circumstances leading up to the *Remarks upon Pope's Homer*, cf "Pope and Dennis," in *ELH*, VII (1940), pp 188-198

The reception of the first volume of Pope's Homer was generally favorable, and most contemporary readers preferred Pope's to Tickell's translation of the first book Yet Addison, Burnet, and other Whigs at Button's were convinced that Tickell's version had more of the flavor of Homer (cf Sherburn, *Early Career of Pope*, p 144), and even Pope's warmest admirers at Oxford admitted, according to a letter of Edward Young, that Tickell had "outdone Pope in some Particulars" (cf R E Tickell *Thomas Tickell* [London 1931], p 43) Although Dr Johnson warmly admired Pope's Homer, he still felt that "the first lines of Tickell's were rather to be preferred" (cf Life of Tickell, in *Works*, ed Arthur Murphy [1824], VII, 247), in which opinion he was probably influenced by Dennis's demonstration of the superiority of Tickell's first ten lines (II, 153)

Although Dennis's observations on Pope's Homer are the work of an angry man, they are not without a measure of justice The accusation that Pope's translation has neither "any Beauty of Language, nor any Variety of Numbers" (II, 123) is, of course, preposterous, but the opinion that "the Homer which Lintott prints, does not talk like Homer, but like Pope," was the verdict of Bentley and is the verdict of posterity Some of Dennis's objections to specific passages in Pope's translation impress us as mere cavilling or perversity (cf notes on II 124 12—125 23 and 129 34-38), others, which call attention to mistranslations, or to the injection of florid ornament or amorous pathos, are well founded His comments on the word *murmur* (II, 154-157) are both learned and sensible Most interesting of all, perhaps, are the remarks on the difficulties of translating Homer into English (II, 123)

It is impossible to estimate the influence which Dennis's remarks on Pope's Homer may have had, for there are few references to them Probably the influence was slight One of the few references occurs in a work by J Breval, who wrote under the pseudonym of Joseph Gay (*The Confederates* [1717], p 32) He represents Lintot addressing Pope as follows

> Look on your HOMER, there, behind the Door
> Thou little dream'st what Crowds I daily see,
> That call for TICKELL, and that spurn at Thee!
> Neglected there, your Prince of Poets lyes
> By DENNIS justly damn'd, and kept for Pyes

Pope's *Windsor Forest* was published in March, 1713, and Dennis's observations on it were written in December, 1714 shortly after he had finished writing a series of letters on the *Rape of the Lock* Unimportant as a criticism of *Windsor Forest*, the 'Observations" are chiefly interesting as an enthusiastic appraisal of that most famous and influential of topographical poems *Cooper's Hill* Except for the first paragraph and the last sentence, the "Observations upon Windsor Forest" were reprinted in 'H Stanhope," *The Progress of Dulness* (1728)

Pope's *Temple of Fame* was published by Feb 1, 1715, and Dennis's observations upon it were probably written shortly thereafter Perhaps the most astonishing feature of this piece of criticism is Dennis's apparent failure to recognize that the *Temple of Fame* was a translation from Chaucer—a fact which he came to realize later (cf II 355 and 417) It is difficult to understand Dennis's lapse in view of Pope's own statement in the Advertisment to the first edition (cf Elwin-Courthope I, 187) 'The hint of the following piece was taken from Chaucer's House of Fame" Perhaps he was misled into crediting Pope with more originality than he deserved by the words that followed in the Advertisment "The design is in a manner entirely altered, the descriptions and most of the particular thoughts my own " However it was, Dennis made the silly error of ridiculing passages in the *Temple of Fame* which follow Chaucer closely (cf notes on II, 133 26-31, 143 40—144 2, 144 3-16, 145 25-28) Yet a few of his specific objections are valid (cf notes on II 138 44—139 1, 143 1-12), and he was undoubtedly right in criticizing the conclusion where Pope himself, standing in the

Mansion of Rumour, discourses solemnly on Fame Still, on the whole Dennis's criticism blunders even more outrageously than the poem which he was judging

Except for the Latin and Italian quotations, practically all of the "Observations upon the Temple of Fame" was reprinted in "H Stanhope," *The Progress of Dulness* (1728)

Pope took careful note of the *Remarks upon Pope's Homer,* and quoted or referred to it in the following pages of the *Dunciad Variorum* (references are to the first issue of the 1729 ed) sigs [B4], D2, D2*v*, G2, [M4], [R4], [U3], [U4], and X.

Page 115 22 *and Reputation, as Hobbes says,* is Power Cf *Leviathan,* I, x (Everyman's Library ed , p 43)

Page 116 4-6 Horace, Satires, I, IV, 21-23

Page 116 7-15 *what Dacier says upon this Passage* etc André Dacier's *Remarques Critiques sur les Œuvres d'Horace, avec une Nouvelle Traduction* (10 vols , Paris, 1681-1689) That portion of the *Remarques* which concerned the Ars Poetica was widely known in England, it was translated and frequently published (without acknowledgment to Dacier) as an appendage to Roscommon's version of the Ars Poetica

Page 116 33 *And thus Mr Dryden has Translated it* Dryden's translations from Juvenal and Persius appeared in October, 1692, though the volume was dated 1693

Page 117 8-9 *and Mr Dryden after him* Dryden cites Casaubon in the first explanatory note to the first satire of Persius

Page 117 13-42 Jonson, *Timber or, Discoveries,* ed C B Harrison (Bodley Head Quartos), pp 26-27 and 28

Page 118 28-32 *Mr Dryden began to grow Jealous* etc The "Confederacy" wrote *Notes and Observations on the Empress of Morocco* in 1674 Settle answered in the same year with his *Notes and Observations on the Empress of Morocco Revised*

Page 118 37 *The Fortune that has happen'd to Mr Settle since* In the early years of the 18th century Settle was writing drolls for Bartholomew Fair (and apparently acting in them) He progressed in poverty, and entered the Charterhouse in about 1718

Page 119 1-8 *the following fine Reflection of Monsieur* De La *Bruyere* etc Cf *Characters,* III, § 4 (in *The Characters of Jean de la Bruyère,* trans Henri van Laun [London, 1929], p 40)

Page 119 20-23 *That there is no Nation* etc From St Évremond's letter "Upon Opera's to the Duke of Buckingham," in *Works of St Evremont* (London, 1700), I, 526 Dennis sharpened his point by omitting part of the second sentence, which should read, according to the English edition, "'Tis impossible to have every thing, and where so many good Qualities are to be found so common, 'tis no great Misfortune that a good Taste is a Rarity there"

Page 119 27-40 *For, for the greatest Part of that Time,* etc From 1710 to 1714 a Tory ministry headed by Harley and St John held the reins of government, supported by a majority of the nation Under the Tory rule several of Dennis's Whig friends were deprived of places and influence, and were subjected to scurrilous attacks from the pens of Tory journalists and pamphleteers He could no longer look for aid from Godolphin, Halifax or Marlborough The Tories supported Sacheverell, they tended to favor the landed gentry as opposed to the new banking and trading interests, and some of them inclined toward the Pretender, they wanted to bring the war with France to a speedy end, and to discredit Marlborough To Dennis these policies appeared contrary to the public welfare Even after the fall of the Tory ministry in 1714 there remained some danger of an uprising in favor of the Pretender

Page 120 12-13 *Volpone,* I i—at the end of Volpone's first speech

Page 120 14-17 *What Pulpiteer, for these last Seven Years,* etc Dr Henry Sacheverell, an enthusiast in the high church and Tory cause, who was impeached for two sermons delivered and printed in 1709 His trial, and subsequent suspension, stirred up popular feeling against the Whig leaders and gained him the support of a clamorous faction

Page 120 19 Abel Abel Roper, a Tory journalist, who was connected with the *Post Boy* for many years

Page 120 22-26 *Who is the Author that has printed Rhymes* etc A thrust at Pope The "thoughtless, unmeaning Farces" referred to were *Three Hours after Marriage*, produced in January, 1717, in which Pope had a hand, and *The What D'Ye Call It*, produced in February, 1715, in which Dennis thought (erroneously, it seems) he found traces of Pope's craft

Page 120 30-31 *We have had a Poet*, etc Milton, whom Dennis invariably thought of as the best example of sublimity

Page 120 32-33 *We have had Eight Gentlemen alive at a Time*, etc It is a bit surprising to find Howard included in, and Congreve and Sedley omitted from, this list Dennis's great admiration for Congreve is clear from what he says in the two following pages

Page 120 35-38 *We have lately been entertained* etc Dennis had already praised Blackmore's *Creation* (1712) in the *True Character* (cf II, 107)

Page 120 42—122 4 *the* English *have often neglected their True Geniuses*, etc This passage was quoted by Caleb D'Anvers (Nicholas Amhurst?) in *The Tuickenham Hotch-Potch* (1728), pp II-VI

Page 121 1-36 *The great Lord Bacon was suffer'd* etc This passage was quoted by Curll in *The Curliad* (1729, pp 2-3), retorting to Pope's satire on poverty-stricken poets

Page 121 37—122 4 *There is a Gentleman*, etc An admirable tribute to Congreve His *Way of the World*, produced in March, 1700, was coldly received, whereupon "he quitted the Stage in Disdain"

Page 122 7-18 *If I should now shift the Scene*, etc "This one Creature" who had been treated with such profuse generosity was, of course, Pope The subscriptions to his translation of Homer had raised him to a position of financial independence Swift alone undertook to collect a thousand guineas in subscriptions

Page 122 18 *the Humour and Spirit, and Art and Grace of C*—— With this tribute to Congreve compare II, 121 37—122 4

Page 122 23-24 *he has writ Two Farces and a Comick Poem* The "Comick Poem" was, of course, the *Rape of the Lock* For the "Two Farces" cf note on II, 120 22-26

Page 122 38 *and* the Rape of the Lock The first five letters of Dennis's observations on the *Rape of the Lock* were written in May, 1714, the sixth and seventh were written later, probably in the autumn of the same year Dennis's remark indicates that early in 1717 he was intending to publish the letters on the *Rape of the Lock* in the same pamphlet with his remarks on Pope's *Homer, Windsor Forest*, and the *Temple of Fame* He speedily changed his mind, however, preferring to hold back the letters on the *Rape of the Lock in terrorem* (cf II, 322)

Page 122 40-44 *There is a notorious Ideot, one Hight* Whachum, etc Line 40 is a paraphrase of a note by Butler on the Second Part of *Hudibras* (ed A R Waller [Cambridge, 1905], p 193) The name of *Whachum* is here applied to Lewis Theobald, probably in reference to his editorship of the *Censor* The attack upon Theobald was inspired by the *Censor* for Jan 5, 1717 (vol II, no 33 in the reprint), in which Theobald not only praised Pope's Homer but also ridiculed an ill-natured critic named "Furius," by which name Dennis was clearly intended When Theobald's friendship with Pope commenced is uncertain, they may have been on amiable terms by October, 1716, when Theobald brought out a translation of *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, which included Pope's "Vertumnus and Pomona" (cf Sherburn, *Early Career of Pope*, p. 183)

Page 123 1 *In the Third of which* etc Cf note on II, 122 40-44

Page 123 12-28 *Indeed it is impossible for any Translator*, etc Compare II, 108 Dennis had long believed that the English language was less capable of beauty and harmony than even the Latin (cf I, 271) That the language of Homer was superior to both Latin and English seems to have been a common belief among critics (cf

Trapp, *Lectures on Poetry* [1742], p 351). According to William Wotton, the beauty of the Greek language, with its "natural Softness, Expressiveness, and Fulness," gave Greek poets and orators an enormous advantage over writers of all other nations (cf Spingarn, III, 204-210) Pope himself recognized the great difficulties of translating Homer partly because Homer had written "in a superior Language" (cf Preface to the *Iliad*, in Ault, *Prose Works of Pope* [Oxford, 1936], p 244), and he confessed himself "utterly incapable of doing Justice to *Homer*" (*ibid*, p 250)

It will be recalled that Madame Dacier's translation of the Iliad (Paris, 1711) was done in prose, attempting to render Homer's sense rather than the beauty of his style In England Ozell and others made a translation of Madame Dacier's translation, done in a rough sort of blank verse but printed as prose, this was published in 1711-1712 There was undoubtedly a formidable group in the coffee houses who insisted that Homer could not be translated properly—that is, translated in such a way as to retain the sweetness, grandeur, and noble simplicity of his style Burnet evidently had reference to some such group when he wrote in 1715 (*Homerides or, a Letter to Mr Pope, Occasion'd by His Intended Translation of Homer*, p. 9) "I know the Criticks affirm, that it will be impossible to make any thing of [Homer's] antiquated Phrases and quaint Nicknames " Largely to silence such critics, Parnell, urged by Pope, wrote and published a Preface to the *Life of Zoilus*, in which he said (Preface, p vi in the edition printed with the *Poems on Several Occasions*, 1737) "Let the *French*, whose Language is not copious, translate in Prose, but ours, which exceeds it in Copiousness of Words, may have a more frequent Likeness of Sounds, to make the Unison or Rhime easier, a Grace of Musick, that atones for the Harshness our Consonants and Monosyllables occasion"

Page 124 10-11 Pope, *Iliad*, II, 109-110, translated from Homer's Iliad, II, 85-86

Page 124 12—125.23 *Now, where is the Justness of the Original* etc Dennis's objection to Pope's augmentation of the numbers is mere cavilling The following objections, however, are better grounded Compared with Homer's words, the passage in Pope is florid, Pope certainly weakens the effect by wordiness and by fuzzy imagery

Page 125 3-8 Virgil, Georgics, IV, 103-108

Page 125 28 Pope, *Iliad*, II, 249, translated from Homer's Iliad, II, 209-210

Page 125 31-33 Homer, Iliad, II, 144-145 Dennis's translation of this passage is accurate, but Pope's line upon which he is commenting was based upon a later passage in Book II Before the *Remarks upon Pope's Homer* was published, Dennis corrected his error (cf II, 154)

Page 125 36-43 Boileau, *l'Art Poetique*, I, 225-232

Page 126 11-14 Pope, *Iliad*, II, 470-473

Page 126 20 Homer, Iliad, II, 394 Dennis's translation is accurate Homer goes on to compare the "great Cry" of the Greeks to the sound of a wave hurled by the wind against a projecting rock on a steep shore Pope's delight in onomatopoeia caused him to elaborate on the sound-effects, which are barely suggested in the original

Page 126 24-30 This is Dennis's almost literal translation of Homer's Iliad, I, 182-187

Page 126 35-36 Pope, *Iliad*, I, 249-250 Pope blunders in these lines, as Dennis correctly observes

Page 127 6 *he has been pleas'd to vindicate* etc Cf Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, line 162

Page 128 8-11 Reign *signifies the Duration* etc Dennis was not alone in making this objection In a letter to Thomas Tickell dated July 3, 1715, Dr W Lancaster wrote that he and a certain Mr Farrer objected to "Pluto's gloomy Reign" since *reign* denotes time and not place (cf Richard Tickell, *Thomas Tickell and the Eighteenth Century Poets* [London, 1931], p 52)

Page 128 25-27 Boileau, *l'Art Poétique*, I, 98-100 The lines are apparently quoted from memory.

Page 128 36 Homer, Iliad, I, 52

Page 128 40-41 Pope, *Iliad*, I, 71-72 Pope went astray by condensing or confusing two sentences Homer says (Iliad, I, 52 ff), "There were always a great many fires with dead bodies burning For nine days, then, the darts of the god kept winging through the army" Tickell's translation of this passage is accurate Tickell himself pointed out Pope's error in an essay "On the Remarkable Beauties in the First Iliad" (cf R E Tickell, *Thomas Tickell* [London, 1931], p 210), which was not published until 1931

Page 129 34-38 *This Line is obscure*, etc Dennis's objection is a mere quibble, based on deliberate misunderstanding He might more properly have noted that the original contains no equivalent of Pope's line

Page 130 20-24 *an Observation of Rapin* etc Rapin *Reflections on Aristotle's Poesie*, I, IX, in *Works* (London, 1716), II, 143

Page 130 25-26 *who in his* Rape of the Lock, *could not forbear* etc Dennis was thinking of Belinda's speech, Canto IV, lines 175-176

Page 130 29-30 *For, notwithstanding his Jesuitical Advertisement*, etc Without his knowledge or consent Pope's *Version of the First Psalm* was published on or about June 30, 1716 In some alarm at the resulting scandal he inserted an advertisement in the *Postman*, July 31, and the *Evening Post*, August 2, in which he appeared to deny having any knowledge of the piece (cf Sherburn, *Early Career of Pope*, p 181) This advertisement Pope himself described as a bit of genteel equivocation

Page 131 13-14 From the final scene in Act II of Lee's *The Rival Queens*

Page 131 33-34 *which puts me in mind of a* Bill of Exchange etc Cf *Don Quixote* Pt I, bk III, ch 9 (trans Motteux-Ozell, Modern Library ed p 164)

Page 133 16-17 *Temple of Fame*, lines 11-12

Page 135 4-12 *The Reader may easily see*, etc In 1716 Dennis admitted that Pope had "a notable knack of Rhimeing and Writing smooth Verse, but without either Genius or Good Sense, or any tolerable Knowledge of *English*" (II, 108) With this judgment compare that of Thomas Burnet, given in a letter written shortly after the appearance of the first volume of Pope's Homer " Pope's [translation], if you were extravagant enough to buy it, would appear only like a smooth soft Poem rather of Dryden's than Homer's Composing" (*Letters of Thomas Burnet to George Duckett, 1712-1722*, ed D N Smith [Oxford, 1914], p 92) When Dennis deplores the lack of "a pleasing Variety of Numbers" in Pope's poetry, especially in the Homer, it should be remembered that he believed blank verse to be the only proper medium for heroic poetry, obviously rhymed couplets cannot match the variety and flexibility of blank verse In 1728 Dennis repeated this objection to Pope's "Numbers" in almost the same words (cf II, 324)

Page 135 26-31 *the Translation of Lucan* etc Rowe's Lucan appeared in 1718, the year of his death

Page 135 36-37 *which were formerly writ to some Gentlemen of my Acquaintance* According to "H Stanhope" Dennis's letters on *Windsor Forest* and the *Temple of Fame* were both written to Barton Booth (cf *The Progress of Dulness* [1728], p 9) I can find no evidence for the belief that the letter on the *Temple of Fame* was written to Booth In the face of Dennis's statement it is highly improbable

Page 135 39 To Mr *B B* The gentleman addressed was Barton Booth, the actor According to *The Progress of Dulness* (1728) the letter on the *Temple of Fame* as well as the one on *Windsor Forest* was directed to Booth Dennis's friendship with this distinguished tragedian began early in the century, by the summer of 1708 he was waiting upon Booth with the four completed acts of his *Appius* (cf II, 392) Educated at Westminster School and related to the Earls of Warrington, Booth entered his career as an actor with unusual qualifications One interest which he shared with Dennis was a passionate love of Milton, according to Theophilus Cibber, who claims to have heard him, he was accustomed up to the very end of his life to repeat with great force certain passages from *Paradise Lost* and *Samson* (cf *Lives and Characters of the Most Eminent Actors and Actresses of Great Britain and Ireland* [1753], p 2) In 1719 some

difficulties arose between critic and actor because of the long delay in producing *The Invader of His Country*, two letters which Dennis wrote Booth at this time were printed in the *Original Letters* of 1721 under the title "To Judas Iscariot, Esq," (cf II, 165 and 167) It appears that Booth was something of a poet, shortly after his death some of the pieces found among his papers were published—and among them, at least one poem that was not his (cf *Works of Hildebrand Jacob* [1735], p 57)

A copy of the *Remarks upon Pope's Homer*, presented to Booth by Dennis, is now in the Dyce Collection at South Kensington

Page 136 18-19 *In* Windsor Forest *there is no manner of Design*, etc In his Life of Pope Dr Johnson referred to this objection by Dennis (*Works*, ed Murphy [1824], VIII 163-164) and remarked

> There is this want [of design] in most descriptive poems, because as the scenes, which they must exhibit successively, are all subsisting at the same time, the order in which they are shewn must by necessity be arbitrary, and more is not to be expected from the last part than from the first The attention, therefore, which cannot be detained by suspence, must be excited by diversity, such as his poem offers to its reader

Page 138 6-8 For Verisimilitude, *says he, p 4*, etc The page-reference is wrong—probably a typographical error The note quoted occurs on p 47 of the first edition of the *Temple of Fame* All of Dennis's other page-references to the *Temple of Fame* check with the first edition except that in 139 15, where the "6" is apparently a printer's error for "8"

Page 138 44—139 1 *In the 34th Page*, etc In the *Temple of Fame*, beginning with line 418 the scene shifts from the Temple of Fame to the Mansion of Rumour In the Mansion of Rumour Pope introduces himself (lines 501-524) speaking as a candidate for fame This blunder which Dennis properly ridicules, is a departure from Chaucer, who represents himself as speaking of fame with humorous modesty in the House of Fame itself where such speech is appropriate (cf *Hous of Fame*, ed Skeat, III, 778-816)

Page 139 26-31 *If all we will allow that* etc The passage against which this objection is raised follows Chaucer closely cf *Hous of Fame*, ed Skeat, II, 388-395

Page 140 18-25 *Temple of Fame*, lines 21-28

Page 140 31-32 *contrary to Nature, and to the Eternal Laws of Gravitation* "Which," remarked Pope sarcastically in a manuscript note on this passage, "no dream ought to be" (cf Elwin-Courthope I, 203, n 1)

Page 141 7-8 Horace Ars Poetica, lines 9-10

Page 141 10 Horace, Ars Poetica, line 12

Page 141 10—142 4 *Temple of Fame*, lines 394-401

Page 142 10-11 *Temple of Fame*, lines 49-50

Page 142 16 *Temple of Fame*, line 53

Page 142 25 *Temple of Fame*, line 75

Page 142 34-43 *Temple of Fame*, lines 83-92

Page 143 1-12 *Now these are Ideas* etc Recollecting this passage, Dr Johnson remarked in his Life of Pope (*Works*, ed Murphy [1824], VIII, 68) "On [the *Temple of Fame*] Dennis afterwards published some remarks, of which the most reasonable is, that some of the lines represent Motion as exhibited by Sculpture" Pope's blunder is a departure from Chaucer

Page 143 22-27 *Temple of Fame*, lines 372-377

Page 143 37-40 *Virgil describes her* etc Aeneid, IV, 173-195

Page 143 40—144 2 *For our Author*, etc The objections are weak Pope's goddess, like Chaucer's, metes out both fame and ill-fame

Page 144 3-16 *Temple of Fame*, lines 328-341 This passage is based on the *Hous of Fame*, III, 546-566.

Page 144 22-29 Butler, *Hudibras*, II, 1 (ed A R Waller [Cambridge, 1905], p 107) Butler's description of Fame served as a source for Preston's *Æsop at the Bear-Garden A Vision* (1715), a burlesque of Pope's *Temple of Fame*

Page 145 13-16 Aeneid, IV, 178-181

Page 145 25-28 *Temple of Fame*, lines 270-273 This passage is based on the *House of Fame*, III, 309-316

Page 145 33-36 *Temple of Fame*, lines 294-297

Page 146 11-14 *Temple of Fame*, lines 288-291

Page 146 17-20 *Temple of Fame*, lines 69-72

Page 146 22-25 *Temple of Fame*, lines 149-152

Page 146 30-41 *Temple of Fame*, lines 342-353

Page 146 42—147 2 *For God's Sake, Sir, tell me*, etc The same inconsistency is noted in Elwin-Courthope, I, 222, n 1

Page 147 9-20 *Temple of Fame*, lines 406-417

Page 147 21-24 *Do me the Favour, Sir, to tell me*, etc In Chaucer the black trumpet as well as the golden one, was blown by Eolus, in Pope it appears to blow itself

Page 147 29-42 *Temple of Fame*, lines 378-391

Page 148 7-12 *Temple of Fame*, lines 394-401

Page 148 19-20 *Temple of Fame*, lines 294-295

Page 148 40—149 4 *Temple of Fame*, lines 356-363

Page 149 39—150 1 *Or, How will he answer this*, etc The answer which Dennis here ascribes to Pope does not occur in the first edition of the *Temple of Fame* Referring to this answer, the Elwin-Courthope edition comments (I, 186) "The remark does not occur in the first edition, nor in the reprints of the poem in Pope's collected works, and it may, perhaps, have been taken from the second edition" There was a second edition of the *Temple of Fame* in 1715, but it follows the first edition page for page The editorial hypothesis in Elwin-Courthope is, therefore, unjustified For the sake of argument Dennis was obviously supplying an answer to his own question

Page 150 22-23 *Temple of Fame*, lines 418-419

Page 151 1-3 *Madame Dacier is of Opinion*, etc Madame Dacier observed (*l'Iliade d'Homere, Traduite en François, avec des Remarques* [Paris, 1711], I, 289) "Agamemnon a parlé de Chryseis en homme passionné, & en homme qui veut faire valoir le sacrifice qu'il est prest de faire en la renvoyant " But Dennis was probably thinking of Madame Dacier's comment on the words *"Et ayant soin de mon lict"* (*ibid*, pp 280-281) "Eustathe remarque fort bien qu'Homere se sert icy d'un mot qui ne présente aucune idée deshonneste, & il le fait pour epargner Agamemnon & ses auditeurs, qui n'auroient pas manqué d'estre choquez, si Agamemnon eust dit ouvertement ce qu'il fait entendre, mais il le fait aussi par respect pour la Déesse qu'il fait parler une Muse ne doit parler qu'avec pudeur & bienséance "

Page 152 25-26 *Madame Dacier's Remark upon the Word* etc In *l'Iliade d'Homere* (Paris, 1711), I, 277, commenting on the words *"Les ames genereuses de tant de heros,"* Madame Dacier remarked

> Qui furent emportez par la peste, ou qui moururent par l'espée des Troyens Homere appelle icy *heros* tous les Grecs si ces troupes estoient toutes de heros, quels devoient estre les capitaines?

Page 153 4-28 *Thus has he been guilty* etc Tickell's translation of the first book of the Iliad appeared on June 8, 1715, two days after the publication of the first volume of Pope's Homer Although Pope's translation, supported by the praise of such men as Parnell, Jervas, Gay, Berkeley, Arbuthnot, and Theobald (cf Sherburn, *Early Career of Pope*, p 143), was in the main preferred, yet Addison, Burnet, and the Little Senate at Button's felt that Tickell's version possessed more of the flavor of Homer According to Edward Young, even Pope's admirers confessed that Tickell had "outdone Pope in some Particulars" (cf R E Tickell, *Thomas Tickell* [London, 1931], p 43),

and Dr Johnson, who greatly admired Pope's translation, felt like Dennis that "the first lines of Tickell's were rather to be preferred" (Life of Tickell, in *Works* [1824], VII, 247) It is not true that the Whigs inevitably favored Tickell, nor is it true that fair-minded men naturally deprecated the rivalry The attitude of a staunch and literate Whig may be illustrated by an entry in the journal of Dudley Ryder (*Diary of Dudley Ryder, 1715-1716,* ed Wm Matthews [London, 1939], pp 32-33, entry for June 11, 1715)

> Came to Hackney with Mr Tickell's new translation of the first book of Homer's *Iliad* Read part of it Seems to be done well in the general Should be glad to see Mr Pope's Emulation will I hope be a spur to their geniuses that something extraordinary may be produced

An interesting aspect of town gossip is recorded in another part of Ryder's diary (*ibid*, p 102, entry for Sept 22, 1715)

> Went to Captain Cumming, sat with him from 5 to 7 He is a mighty obliging gentleman Our conversation turned upon poetry and particularly Pope and Tickell's translation of part of Homer He says Mr Berkeley and two other gentlemen that are well versed in the classics read them over with the original together and compared them and they give the preference very much to Pope's translation and think it admirably done, that it is better than could be expected and shows the very great extensiveness of the English language

Pope set down copious notes in the margins of his copy of Tickell's translation, apparently preparing to attack it (cf Sherburn, p 145) Tickell, on the other hand, wrote a brief essay in which he compared his and Pope's translations of the first Iliad, concluding that his own was much the more accurate (cf R E Tickell, pp 209-216) That Pope was not unaware of the merits of Tickell's translation is indicated by the fact that he borrowed freely from it when he was revising his own

Page 153 29-32 *I have now strong Temptations* etc Dennis published a series of remarks upon the Preface of Pope's Homer in 1729 (*cf* II, 362-369)

Page 153 32-43 *But I cannot miss the Opportunity* etc Pope expressed his obligations to Addison, Steele, Garth, Congreve, Rowe, Parnell, Stanhope, Harcourt, St John, Lord Bolingbroke, Granville, Lord Lansdowne, Montagu, Earl of Halifax, Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, and the Earl of Carnarvon There is not the slightest reason for supposing that any of these gentlemen (with the possible exception of Addison) were displeased or embarrassed by Pope's reference to them in the Preface

The "old Trick play'd over again, of writing an Encomium upon Himself, and putting other Peoples Names to it" (lines 35-36) refers to a stratagem of which Dennis had accused Pope in 1711 (cf note on I, 417 17-23) According to Mr Ault, Pope in 1717 was guilty of a variation of the "old Trick" the anonymous panegyric, "To Mr Pope on his Translation of Homer," was actually, says Mr Ault (*Prose Works of Pope* [Oxford, 1936], pp lxxvii-xc), composed by Pope himself and inserted in his own miscellany

Page 154 9-10 *I made a considerable Blunder my self* Cf note on II, 125 31-33
Page 154 22-25 Pope, *Iliad,* II, 249-252
Page 154 28-31 Homer, Iliad, II, 207-210
Page 155 4-5 Virgil, Aeneid, I, 55-56
Page 155 7-8 Virgil, Aeneid, I, 124-125
Page 155 10-11 Virgil, Aeneid, I, 245-246
Page 155 18 Horace, Ars Poetica, line 72
Page 155 31-34 Roscommon, *Essay on Translated Verse,* in Spingarn, II, 303
Page 156 7-8 Roscommon, *Essay on Translated Verse,* in Spingarn, II 307
Page 156 17-18 Virgil, Eclogues, IX, 57-58
Page 156 20-22 Virgil, Georgics, I, 108-110
Page 156 24 Virgil, Aeneid, X, 212

Page 156 26-28 Virgil, Aeneid, XI, 297-299
Page 156 30 Virgil, Aeneid, XII, 239
Page 156 34-38 Virgil, Aeneid, I, 52-56
Page 156 40-41 Virgil, Aeneid, I, 124-125
Page 157 2-3 Virgil, Aeneid, I, 245-246
Page 157 5-6 Virgil, Aeneid, III, 581-582
Page 157 8-9 Virgil, Aeneid, IV, 160-161
Page 157 11-13 Virgil, Aeneid, IV, 208-210
Page 157 15 Virgil, Aeneid, V, 369
Page 157.34—158 1 *And now let him, if he pleases,* etc For Dennis's account of the *Narrative of Dr Robert Norris,* cf II, 371

Page 158 7 *his Poyson* A reference to the emetic which Pope had administered to Curll in March, 1716 (cf Sherburn, *Early Career of Pope,* pp 169-171)

To Henry Cromwell, on the Vis Comica

This letter, written Oct 11, 1717, was not published until 1721, when it appeared in the *Original Letters,* pp 13-18 In the history of literary theory it is interesting for several reasons It recognizes the value of a naive and artless style in the dialogue of comedy By emphasizing the importance of characterization and dialogue it breaks away from the common neo-classic assumption that plot is the main element in comedy, as in tragedy And most important of all, it reveals in Dennis a certain breadth and sensitivity of mind which could go beyond the rules to discover the beauty of great works of art, for, though he confessed that Terence was deficient in the *vis comica,* the peculiar force of comedy, he professed an increasing delight in the grace and charm of Terence's plays In a similar manner, after reflecting severely upon the faults of Shakespeare, he had described himself as one 'who loves and admires his Charms and makes them one of his chief Delights, who sees him and reads him over and over and still remains unsatiated" (cf II, 17)

Dennis's comments on Terence show taste and understanding His interpretation of Caesar's epigram on Terence, however, is open to question The epigram may be taken as a playful and humorous sally rather than a serious estimate of Terence as a man of letters, the word "maceror" in the last line has the appearance of a punning reference to the *Heauton Timorumenos* (cf J J Savage, "Caesar's Epigram on Terence," in *The Classical Weekly,* XXIX [May 11, 1936], 185-186)

Page 159 11 *in the* Cambridge *Quarto Edition* The work referred to is probably *P Terentii Comoediæ recensitæ,* ed J Leng, Cambridge, 1701

Page 159.32—160 10 *Mrs* Dacier *in her Remarks* etc Cf *Les Comedies de Terence, avec la Traduction et les Remarques de Madame Dacier* (Amsterdam, 1768), I, pp lx-lxi The first edition of this work was published in three volumes, Paris, 1688

Page 160 5-6 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 93-94

Page 160 35-37 *which yet is but a part of the* Vis Comica, *for* etc Here and elsewhere Dennis departs from the conventional position, that plot or fable was the main element of comedy Just as Dryden was inclined to stress "colouring" over design (cf his "Parallel of Poetry and Painting," in Ker, II, 147-148), so Dennis and some of his contemporaries, especially in the discussion of comedy, diverted their attention from the plot to the elements of characterization and dialogue (cf note on I, 224 34)

Page 161 7-11 *but not one of them has enter'd into that* naiueté etc This naiveté of manner, of which Dennis so surprisingly approves, is quite different from mere simplicity of style It was universally agreed that simplicity of style was one of Terence's great virtues, but naiveté, according to Dennis, was not one of his strong points By a simple style Dennis meant a style that was figurative, harmonious, and exactly proportioned to the ideas which it expressed (cf II, 34-37), by a naïve style he evidently meant a style that was both natural and artless The attitude of neo-classic criticism

was generally opposed to the naïve Father Bouhours, who adequately represents this attitude, was careful to distinguish the simple and natural from the naive His Second Dialogue deals with the idea that a certain charm must be given to poetry and language in addition to naturalness " je vous disois qu'en matiére de pensées ingénieuses, le vray ne suffisoit pas, & qu'il y falloit ajoûter quelque chose d'extraordinaire qui frappât l'esprit" (*La Maniere de Bien Penser dans les Ouvrages d'Esprit* [3rd ed, Amsterdam, 1705], p 85) Although every naive thought is natural, he believed, the charming naturalness of good literature is far removed from the naive (*ibid*, p 249) Dennis himself had no taste for such naive and unornamented works as *Chevy Chase*, but he could still perceive the value of naiveté in the dialogue of comedy This recognition of the value of the naive style is probably connected with the fact that the trend toward realism was further advanced in comedy than in any other form of poetry (cf notes on I, 185 30-37 and 285 22-24)

Letters to Steele and Booth

These four letters, written between March 26 and Sept 4, 1719, were first published in the *Original Letters* (1721) The reason for grouping them together is obvious Dennis wrote them to express his indignation at the neglect of his tragedy, *The Invader of His Country*, and to convince Steele and Booth that his tragedy should be produced during the following theatrical season

The second and third letters, superscribed "To Judas Iscariot, Esq " were actually addressed to Barton Booth This fact was understood in Dennis's time (cf Charles Wilson, *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Amours of William Congreve* [1730], Part II, p 136) When Dennis remarked (II, 165 37-38) that he had "never so much as once in Twenty Years miss'd an opportunity of serving" this manager whom he addressed, he was undoubtedly speaking to Booth, his old and intimate friend, and not to Wilks or Cibber, with whom he was only slightly acquainted

By March 7, 1711, Dennis was involved in a quarrel with Steele (cf the introductory note to the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear*), a quarrel which lasted for an uncomfortably long period In 1713 he wrote a letter attacking Steele, whom he referred to as "Teague" ("To *** Esq, Upon the first publishing the Guardians" in *Original Letters*, II, 284-286), and his letter to Walter West dated March 31, 1714 (*ibid*, II, 287-288), in which he reported the folly and brutality of "that Captain of Farce," seems to indicate that his hostility toward Steele persisted By February of 1718, however, they were friends again, and Steele was undertaking with the approval of at least two of the managers of Drury Lane, to produce *The Invader* during the winter of 1718-1719 Though Steele probably had every intention to keep his promise, yet certain obstacles intervened The preparations and rehearsals for the revived *All for Love* occupied most of October and November, 1718, and in December when the managers of Drury Lane might have taken up *The Invader*, they were anticipated by their rival John Rich, who produced Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* with new scenes and decorations (cf R H Barker, *Mr Cibber of Drury Lane* [N Y, 1939], pp 119-120) Being virtually certain that Dennis's adaptation would not succeed if it followed shortly upon a somewhat lavish presentation of the original, the managers postponed *The Invader* In his complaints about the neglect to which his tragedy was subjected Dennis disingenuously omits all mention of Rich's production and shows himself petulant and unreasonable Yet he takes care to compliment Steele (II 163 32-33, 171 36-38, 175 36-38), and he implies that the managers, not the patentee, were to blame for his troubles (cf II, 162 35-39)

Part of Dennis's petulance may have proceeded from the dearth of subscriptions to his *Select Works*, finally published on Feb 2, 1719 Whatever its cause, he developed a sharp indignation when he thought of the failure of his own hopes and of the success of such trivia as *Chit-Chat*, *The Masquerade*, and *Busiris* On March 10, 1719, he

wrote George Sewell a letter deprecating *The Masquerade* (cf II, 403-404) Four days later he wrote Penkethman, reflecting sadly on the state of the current drama and speaking with particular scorn of *Chit-Chat* (cf *Original Letters*, I, 112-114) On March 26 he wrote the first of the *Letters to Steele and Booth*, a series in which he condemned *Chit-Chat*, *The Masquerade*, and *Busiris* This attitude was not mere petulance, however, for the plays were of slight merit At least one of Dennis's contemporaries displayed an equal contempt for them (cf *Critical Remarks on the Four Taking Plays of This Season By Corinna, a Country Parson's Wife* [1719])

To a modern reader Dennis's comments on *All for Love* seem strange and perverse They were not so in 1719, when readers and play-goers expected tragedy to teach them delightfully, and when a timely political message was taken with relish and regarded as a service to the state Addison's *Cato* and Cibber's *Non-Juror*, to mention only two of many, succeeded in large part because of the timeliness of their political teaching In a year of Jacobite intrigue and conspiracy Dennis was justified in observing that *All for Love* had nothing to teach whereas *Coriolanus* was very much to the point

The two letters to Steele were reprinted in John Nichols' edition of the *Theatre* (1791)

Page 162 18-19 *the other Manager* Robert Wilks, with whom Dennis seems never to have been on friendly terms

Page 162 20-24 *Now I appeal to your self*, etc English Jacobites had been actively concerned in an attempt to secure Swedish forces, by the aid of which they hoped England would rise in favor of the Pretender This attempt was temporarily checked by the arrest of the Swedish ambassador, Gyllenborg, early in February, 1717, but the Jacobites continued to hope for Swedish or Spanish intervention to aid their cause In the winter of 1718-1719 the danger from such sources appeared real enough to warrant the following report in a contemporary periodical (*Present State of Europe*, XXX [Jan, 1719], p 4)

> A Conspiracy has been discover'd in France, fomented by the Spanish Ambassador against the Regent, and on the other hand its said there are Proofs of his Intrigues for exciting a Rebellion in Great Britain, and bringing the Swedes, and perhaps the Muscovites against the Powers concern'd in the Quadruple-Alliance

Page 162 35-37 *Why, instead of keeping their Word with me*, etc Dryden's *All for Love* was produced at Drury Lane early in December, 1718, it had a run of ten performances (cf Nicoll, *History of Early Eighteenth Century Drama* [Cambridge, 1925], p 57) Preparations for this production were elaborate and expensive, the scenery and costumes costing nearly £600 (cf R H Barker, *Mr Cibber of Drury Lane* [N Y, 1939], p 109)

Page 163 3-4 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 34-35

Page 163 38-41 Horace, Odes, III, VI, 17-20

Page 164 42-45 *They knew very well that it was but twelve Years* etc Upon the revival of *All for Love* on Dec 3, 1718, the managers announced it as "not acted 12 years" In his theatrical history of *All for Love* Mr Summers records one performance in 1701, two in 1704, one in 1705, and one in the season of 1708-1709 (cf *Dryden the Dramatic Works*, IV [1932], 167-168) Dennis fails to mention that the revival of 1718 justified the managers' confidence, for it had a run of ten nights

Page 165 18 Cæzar Borgia A tragedy by Nathaniel Lee, first produced in 1679 It had a run of two nights in the season of 1718-1719

Page 165 19 the Masquerade A comedy by Charles Johnson, whose work Dennis had previously criticized with strong distaste (cf II, 398) *The Masquerade* was produced on Jan 16, 1719, there were seven performances during this season For further comments on *The Masquerade* by Dennis, cf II, 403-404

Page 166 8 *Busiris* A tragedy by Edward Young, produced March 7, 1719, there were eight performances during this season

Page 166 14-15 *which, if you will believe Monsieur* Hedelin, etc Hedelin, l'Abbé D'Aubignac, after noting that not all materials of history can be turned into drama because the beauty of certain stories depends upon circumstances that would not be tolerated on the stage, continues (*Pratique du Theatre*, II, I [ed Amsterdam, 1715, I, 56-57])

> *La Theodore* de Monsieur Corneille par cette même raison n'a pas eu tout le succez ni toute l'approbation qu'elle meritoit C'est une Piéce dont la constitution est très-ingenieuse, où l'Intrigue est bien conduite & bien variée, où ce que l'Histoire donne, est fort bien manié, où changemens sont fort judicieux, où les mouvemens & les vers sont dignes du nom de l'Auteur Mais parce que tout le Theatre tourne sur la prostitution de Theodore, le Sujet n'en a pu plaire

Page 166 31-34 *I have read two Comedies* etc Charles Jonnson's *The Masquerade* and Thomas Killigrew's *Chit-Chat* By the time Dennis wrote, *The Masquerade* had been performed seven times, *Chit-Chat*, eleven times (cf Nicoll, *History of Early Eighteenth Century Drama* [Cambridge, 1925], pp 339-340)

Page 167 8 *a Sirreverence* Cf note on II, 170 10-14

Page 169 17-20 *And when that noble Peer* etc The source of this story is the following remark by Burnet (*Some Passages in the Life and Death of Rochester* [London, 1805], p 24) 'Boileau among the French, and Cowley among the English, wits, were those he admired most"

Page 169 20-21 *Mr* Rymer *in his first Book of Criticism* etc *The Tragedies of the Last Age Consider'd and Examin'd* (1678), in Spingarn, II, 208

Page 170 10-14 *what* Boccalin *says of some Princes of* Parnassus etc Cf Trajano Boccalini, *Ragguagli di Parnasso or, Advertisements from Parnassus*, Second Century, Advertisement LXXIX (trans Henry, Earl of Monmouth [3rd ed, London, 1674], p 231) The aim of the Princes of Parnassus is thus related in Monmouth's translation "The *true end of these Princes, was to know for certain, whether they could happily compass* the difficult business of preserving Turds, a business which had been formerly endeavoured by many great men, but still unfortunately "

Page 170 28-38 *witness the Epigram of* Selvaggi, etc For the epigram of Selvaggi, as well as that of Salzilli, cf Milton, *Poetical Works*, ed W V Moody (Houghton Mifflin, Cambridge Edition), p 321 Dryden's epigram, which paraphrased Selvaggi's, was first printed below the portrait of Milton in the 1688 folio edition of *Paradise Lost*

> Three Poets, in three distant Ages born,
> *Greece, Italy*, and *England* did adorn
> The first in Loftiness of Thought surpass'd,
> The next in Majesty, in both the last
> The Force of Nature could no farther go,
> To make a third she join'd the former two

Page 170 43—171 8 These two quotations come from Milton's verses to Manso, lines 24-26 and 81-84 (cf *Works*, ed W V Moody [Houghton Mifflin, Cambridge Edition], pp 365 and 366-367)

Page 171 29—172 2 *I Here send you by the Bearer*, etc In October, 1716, Dennis ordered a bookseller to collect his various published works Some time thereafter he issued *Proposals for Printing by Subscription the Select Works of Mr John Dennis* It appears that the proposals met with very little favor, there is no list of subscribers in any of the copies of the *Select Works* which I have seen We know, however, that Pope, who found the proposals in the hands of Henry Cromwell, insisted on subscribing (cf II, 370) And Addison, according to an inaccurate and unreliable story told by Charles Wilson, subscribed to the *Select Works* only when Dennis promised him (with Rowe present as a witness) that "he would burn some other *Remarks* on *Cato* [the *Letters upon the Sentiments of Cato*] which he had then by him, and never more

engage in any Controversy against him" (*Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Amours of William Congreve* [1730], Part II, pp 140-141) After some delay the two volumes of *Select Works* were finally printed by John Darby, advertised in the *Daily Courant* of Feb 2, 1719, as published on that day Besides the two volumes presented to Steele, Dennis sent out complimentary copies to such gentlemen as Walter Moyle (cf *Original Letters*, I, 159-162) and Sir Thomas Parker, the lord chancellor (*ibid*, I, 148-149)

Page 173 7-8 *the Precept of* Horace, etc Horace, Ars Poetica, line 388

Page 173 25-28 *My Lord* Lansdown, *by making me a Present* etc Dennis had dedicated the *Comical Gallant* (1702) and the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* (1711) to George Granville, Lord Lansdowne It was probably in 1711 that Lansdowne bestowed the noble present upon Dennis (cf note on II, 1 24-27)

Page 173 28-33 *And 'tis to the warm Approbation* etc The poem referred to is *Britannia Triumphans* (1704) Godolphin's interest led to Dennis's appointment as a waiter in the custom house In a letter dated June 10, 1706, Dennis tried to persuade Godolphin to lay certain proposals, of which he enclosed an abstract, before the House of Commons, the proposals aimed at a new tax for the protection and encouragement of merchant shipping (cf *Original Letters*, I, 119-121) Dennis's *Appius and Virginia* (1709) was dedicated to Godolphin

Page 174 43—175 1 *The Generality of Poets*, etc Cf note on II, 285 34-40

Page 175 3-5 Boileau *l'Art Poetique*, IV, 82-84

Page 175 11-20 Cf *Dryden's Works*, ed Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 409

Dedication to The Invader of His Country

The Invader of His Country, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, was produced at Drury Lane on Nov 11-13, 1719 On Nov 20, 1719 the play was published (cf R H Barker, *Mr Cibber of Drury Lane* [N Y, 1939], p 121), its dedication being addressed to Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle, then serving as lord chamberlain The choice of Newcastle to receive the dedication was a brilliant one Apart from his having jurisdiction over the theaters in his capacity of lord chamberlain, Newcastle was the logical patron, for he had already been irritated by Steele's opposition to the Peerage Bill and by Cibber's recent denial of his request that Elrington should be given an important part in *The Spanish Friar* (*ibid*, p 122) Dennis's dedication of *The Invader* was favorably received, within a few days after it was published Newcastle sent Dennis a present (cf dedication to *The Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar* *In a Third and Fourth Letter to the Knight* [1720], sigs A-A2) And perhaps partly under the influence of Dennis's complaints in the dedication of *The Invader*, Newcastle on Dec 19, 1719, ordered Cibber off the stage (cf *Mr Cibber of Drury Lane*, p 123)

The complaints which Dennis made in his dedication were answered by an anonymous pamphlet, *A Critic no Wit or, Remarks on Mr Dennis's late Play, call'd the Invader of his Country*, published on Dec 1, 1719 (cf Paul, p 78) This pamphlet attempted to vindicate the generosity of the managers, and to convict Dennis as an ill-natured, ignorant, and impudent critic Possibly instigated by Cibber, the author of *A Critic no Wit* may have served to fan the flames of Dennis's resentment toward Steele and the managers—a resentment which was to burst out a little later in the *Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar*

In 1721 there appeared what purported to be a second edition of *The Invader* Except for the title-page, however, it is identical with the first I have seen copies of this "second edition" bound up in the 1721 reissue of the *Select Works*, the unsold sheets of the first edition were thus conveniently disposed of

Page 176 11 *two or three insolent Players* Cibber Booth, and Wilks, the managers of Drury Lane

Page 177 25-26 *because there was a daily Expectation of the KING's Arrival* After one of his continental visits George I arrived at Gravesend on November 14 at about

1 p m Thence he proceeded to London by coach, and reached St James' at about 7 p.m The streets were crowded with people, and there were bonfires and other demonstrations of joy (cf *Present State of Europe*, xxx [Nov, 1719], 482) As Dennis complained, the excitement aroused by the expectation of the King's arrival was enough to ruin the prospects of a good house on Friday, Nov 13, which was his "Third Day"

Page 177 28-30 *They were inform'd that it was the Third Day* etc Charles Beckingham's play, *The Tragedy of King Henry IV of France*, was produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields on Saturday, Nov 7, 1719, and it was continued on Nov 9-11 (cf Nicoll, *History of Early Eighteenth Century Drama* [Cambridge, 1925], p 297) Beckingham's "Third Day," then, came on Tuesday, Nov 10

Page 178 41 *For great Actors are not to be made but by Original Parts* Dennis is not alone in this belief In spite of the fact that for many decades in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the great reputations on the stage were largely made by interpreting Shakespeare and other classics, the distinguished actors themselves were aware of the necessity of original parts In 1816 Macready wrote (*Diaries*, pp 102-103) "An original part is justly considered (as Kemble before me, and as I myself in the Slave had already proved) of the greatest service to an actor "

Page 179 32-34 *I have had this Play long enough* etc Dennis had finished his adaptation of *Coriolanus* by Feb 1, 1711 (cf II 4)

Page 179 38-41 *excepting Mr* Cibber's Heroick Daughter, etc Cibber's *Ximena or, The Heroick Daughter*, an adaptation of Corneille's *The Cid*, was first produced in November, 1712 (cf Nicoll, *History of Early Eighteenth Century Drama* [Cambridge, 1925], p 311) It was fresh in Dennis's mind because it had been revived in October and November 1718, and had been published in 1719 For further remarks by Dennis on the subject of *Ximena*, cf II, 407, 408

Page 179 44-45 Cibber *has lately employed thirty Pages* etc In the prefatory address "To the Reader," prefixed to *Ximena* (1719)

Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar (First Two Letters)

The first letter in this work was written shortly after Jan 2, 1720, the date of the first number of the *Theatre* upon which it comments The second letter is dated Jan 23 The two letters were published together, appearing on or shortly before Feb 5, 1720 In the *Theatre*, no 11 (Feb 6), Steele noted that he had received the *Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar* from a hawker on the preceding day The anonymous *Answer to a Whimsical Pamphlet, called The Character of Sir John Edgar*, which is a reply to Dennis is dated Jan 26, but it was not published until Feb 11 (cf Aitken, *Life of Steele* [1889] II, 234), it is highly improbable that the author had seen Dennis's pamphlet by Jan 26 On Feb 10 Cibber ran an advertisement in the *Daily Post*, offering a reward of ten pounds to anyone who could by legal proof establish the authorship of the *Characters and Conduct* (cf Aitken, II, 232)

Although both parts of the *Characters and Conduct* were issued anonymously, there was no secret about the authorship One of the earliest replies *An Answer to a Whimsical Pamphlet, called The Character of Sir John Edgar*, was addressed to "Sir Tremendous Longinus" the name which had been applied to Dennis in *Three Hours after Marriage* In the *Theatre*, no 12, Steele, recognizing the author of the *Characters and Conduct*, retorted with a highly uncomplimentary description of Dennis's person Dennis himself showed no desire to keep the authorship a secret, for in the dedication of the second part of the *Characters and Conduct* he identified himself with the author of *The Invader of His Country*

The quarrel with Steele and the managers of the Drury Lane playhouse arose in the winter of 1718-1719 over the delay in the production of *The Invader of His Country* In November, 1719, Dennis's anger flared up anew because he thought he had been unfairly treated, the *Invader* having been produced at an unpropitious time, and withdrawn before it could justify itself In his Dedication of the *Invader* to Newcastle,

Dennis appealed his case to the Lord Chamberlain, requesting an effective regulation of the stage which would curb the powers and insolence of the managers Although at this time Dennis's advocacy of a regulated stage was immediately inspired by the failure of the *Invader*, he had always been convinced that the government should keep a firm hand on the playhouse (cf I, **509-510**) His plea to Newcastle came at a moment when that nobleman had already determined to assert his authority over the theater and to destroy the patent under which Steele and the managers had set up their "separate ministry"

On Jan 2, 1720, appeared the first number of the *Theatre*, written by Steele under the pseudonym of Sir John Edgar Its announced purpose was to improve the drama and to encourage the actors, but its real purpose was to defend the "separate ministry" and to stir up popular opinion against the Lord Chamberlain in order to ward off his impending action against patentee and managers In this situation Dennis wrote and published the first part of the *Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar* What were his motives? Professor Paul suggests (p 78) that he was impelled partly by resentment at an abusive tract called *A Critic no Wit* (published Dec 1, 1719), which he believed, according to Paul, had been instigated by Steele But there is no evidence to support this conjecture We know, however, that Dennis was furiously angry at Cibber for the gratuitous insults which that worthy had inserted in the Epilogue to the *Invader* (cf II 406), and it is necessary to remark that in the first part of the *Characters and Conduct* Dennis reserved his most brutal strokes for Cibber In addition, Steele had borrowed money from Dennis at about the time when negotiations were begun for the production of *The Invader of His Country*, and he had not repaid the loan (cf II, **206**), for this reason Steele's failure to intervene on behalf of *The Invader* when in November, 1719, it was beset with dangers in production, struck Dennis as a sign of heartless ingratitude Moreover, Dennis was committed to the support of a regulated stage, and he saw in the *Theatre* an attempt to glorify the selfish and irresponsible conduct of the managers and to prevent a system of regulation that would encourage aspiring dramatists and elevate the standard of dramatic art These were sufficient motives for his attack That the *Characters and Conduct* was, as Aitken charges (*Life of Steele*, II, 231), "a hireling pamphlet," we have no reason to believe Our knowledge of Dennis's independence makes the accusation difficult to accept In addition, as Dennis relates in the Dedication of the second part of the *Characters and Conduct*, he did not receive a present from the Duke of Newcastle until after the first part of the *Characters and Conduct* was in print, and at that time he certainly would not have acknowledged the present publicly if he had regarded it as in any way a bribe

Copies of the *Theatre* were in considerable demand, and were apparently widely read (cf Aitken, II, 223-224) The first part of the *Characters and Conduct* immediately became popular, and speedily went into a second edition One of Dennis's opponents warned him (cf *An Answer to a Whimsical Pamphlet*, in the *Theatre*, ed John Nichols [1791], p 393) "Don't be so vain to think the success of thy paltry piece of stuff is owing to thy stupid pen, but to the names in the title" A veritable state of warfare ensued On or about Feb 5 appeared a satire on Dennis (which I have not seen) entitled *A New Project for the Regulation of the Stage By Mr D—nis and Mr G—don* On Feb 11 appeared another attack, entitled *An Answer to a Whimsical Pamphlet, called The Character of Sir John Edgar, &c, humbly Inscribed to Sir Tremendous Longinus* This piece, besides defending Cibber, discharged a full measure of contempt and scurrility upon Dennis The *Anti-Theatre*, a periodical begun on Feb 15, 1720, although it proceeded with comparative restraint and good-nature, and although it referred to Dennis as "the sour LONGINUS of the present times" (no 2), yet opposed Steele upon nearly every issue it ridiculed his fish-pool idea (no 10), it ridiculed the obscurities of his style (nos 2 and 4), it expressed a dislike for the type of plays which the managers were producing (no 15), it defended the Lord Chamberlain for revoking the patent which had been granted to Steele (no 7), and it insisted that the drama could flourish only under effective regulation by the government (no 3) A series of three letters entitled *A*

Full Consideration and Confutation of Sir John Edgar, signed by "Sir Andrew Artlove," appeared in Applebee's *Weekly Journal* on Feb 13, 20, and 27 In these letters the unidentified author satirized Steele for his vanity (cf the reprint in the *Theatre*, ed J Nichols, pp 452 and 464), he reflected upon the low condition of the contemporary drama, insinuating that the managers were at fault (*ibid*, p 453), he argued for the necessity of established rules in every art (*ibid*, pp 454-455 and 459-460), and he defended the French theater against Steele's attack, observing that Dennis "has plainly confuted all that the Knight has brought against the regularity of the French Tragedy" (*ibid*, pp 461-462) On Jan 30, 1720, Mist's *Weekly Journal* published verses attacking Cibber for the insolence displayed by the managers of the Drury Lane playhouse, and after the publication of Dennis's *Characters and Conduct* Mist took up the cue and set himself whole-heartedly to the task of worrying Colley (cf R H Barker *Mr Cibber of Drury Lane* [N Y, 1939], pp 125-131) On March 12 appeared *The Battle of the Authors Lately Fought in Covent-Garden, between Sir John Edgar, Generalissimo on One Side, and Horatius Truewit, on the Other* Horatius Truewit turns out to be none other than John Dennis, leading a band of doughty warriors that included Ambrose Philips, Theobald, Sewell and Young, Steele, leading a band of actors and scribblers, and representing the cause of irregularity in art, joins battle and is defeated Designed as an attack upon Steele, the *Battle of the Authors* makes a point of defending critics and of upholding the rules as well (cf note on II, 197 22-30) On or about April 9 was published a pamphlet entitled *The State of the Case between the Lord Chamberlain and Sir Richard Steele, Restated*, which assailed the vanity and insolence of Steele and Cibber, and defended the right of the Lord Chamberlain to revoke the patent On April 20 another attack on Steele appeared in Applebee's *Weekly Journal* (*cf* Aitken, II, 234 n) *On the whole*, Steele and the managers fared badly in this war of words

The first part of the *Characters and Conduct* is a regrettable performance There is little to be said in defense of Dennis's mean and scandalous remarks about Cibber except, perhaps, that they represented popular prejudice The remarks directed against Steele are less virulent, chiefly because Dennis regarded him as "a mere Nominal Sovereign" over the playhouse (cf II, 188), whose chief sin was negligence Most easily justifiable are the severe reflections upon the *Theatre*, for the essays in that periodical were generally hastily and badly written, and they were saturated with a certain unpleasant self-righteousness which could not make a reader forget that Sir Richard was fighting to protect his very large, unearned income from the Drury Lane theater In the province of literary theory the important aspects of the *Characters and Conduct* are its defense of the rules, and its statement of the very significant principle that minor rules may be violated if the major purposes of the art are thereby served (cf note on II, 198 22-30)

The first part of the *Characters and Conduct* went into a second edition in 1720 It was reprinted in the *Theatre*, ed John Nichols, 1791 My quotations from the *Theatre* and the *Anti-Theatre* are taken from the edition by Nichols

Page 181 2-4 Horace, Epistles, I, i, 98-100

Page 181 8 *should contantly chuse to go by an* Alias In the *Tatler* the "alias" of Steele and his associates was Isaac Bickerstaff, in the *Spectator*, merely The Spectator, in the *Guardian*, Nestor Ironside, in the *Theatre*, Sir John Edgar In the *Theatre*, no 11 (Feb 6, 1720), Steele defended his use of a pseudonym, to this defense Dennis later retorted (*cf* II, 200-201)

Page 181 12-13 *The Pedantry of your* Motto The motto which heads the *Theatre*, no 1, is taken from Virgil, Georgics, IV, 3-5

> Admiranda tibi levium spectacula rerum,
> Magnanimosque duces, totiusque ordine gentis
> Mores, et studia, et populos, et prœlia dicam

These Latin lines are followed by Dryden's translation of them

Page 181 16 id populus curat scilicet Terence, *Andria*, I, II, 14

Page 181 30-32 *You say you are engaged*, etc In the *Theatre*, no 1, Steele announced his aim thus

> It is therefore from the generous concern of SOPHRONIA, that I am prevailed upon to undertake (in this public manner) the preservation and improvement of the English Theatre It is certainly, when well regulated, a most liberal and ingenuous diversion, and I doubt not but I shall bring the world into my opinion, that the profession of an Actor, who in the other part of his conduct is irreproachable, ought to receive the kind treatment and esteem, which the world is ready to pay all other Artists Their necessary talents and qualifications will support me in asking for them the regards due to inoffensive men, if nothing more favourable than their bare due must be allowed them

Page 182 15 Bessus A character in Fletcher's *King and No King*

Page 182 20-22 *and* C—r *is to place you among the Gods*, etc In the dedication of *Ximena* (1719), addressed to Steele, Cibber had fatuously cited a passage from Dryden's *All for Love*, II, 1 (in *Works*, ed Scott-Saintsbury, V, 365) in referring to Steele's relations with Addison, thereby comparing Addison to the wren, and Steele to the eagle that bore the wren upon its back

Page 183 19-20 Cicero, *Pro Archia*, VIII, 17

Page 184.20—186 11 *I defy any one to name so much as one great Actor* etc Dennis follows an old and popular prejudice against actors Addison remarked (*Spectator*, no 592) that actors were professed enemies to critics because critics had a habit of falling upon successful plays Well might actors have cherished grievances, for poets and critics alike treated them with unconcealed disapproval In his fulminations against the stage Collier gave a summary of opinions past and present against the players (*cf Short View*, chap IV, in *A Short View with the Several Defences of the Same* [1730], pp 157-189, cf also *A Second Defence of the Short View ibid* pp 332-340), of which the gist runs thus

> Indeed the *Players* should be generally discouraged They have no relish of Modesty nor any Scruples upon the Quality of the Treat The grossest *Dish* when 'twill down is as ready as the best To say Money is their Business and they must *Live*, is the Plea of *Pick-Pockets* and *Highway-men* These latter may as well pretend their *Vocation* for a lewd Practice as the other

These charges were endlessly repeated during the Augustan period Many accused the players of ill-conduct and incontinence (cf R Gould, *Poems* [1689], p 181, anon, *Comparison betwixt the Two Stages* [1702], p 17, Richard Burridge (?), *A Scourge for the Play-Houses* [1702], pp 1-2, Gildon, *Life of Betterton* [1710], pp 15, 20-21, anon, *A Full Consideration and Confutation of Sir John Edgar* [1720], in the *Theatre*, ed Nichols, pp 454-456) Others insisted that players lacked the taste to distinguish good drama from bad, that their influence upon dramatists was degrading, and that they had no interest but in filling the theaters (cf Pope, Preface to Shakespeare, in Elwin-Courthope, X, 538, Blackmore, *Essays upon Several Subjects*, I [1716], 227 and 230) In their defense the author of the *Comparison between the Two Stages* said feebly (p 198) that though players are merely base mechanics, yet they may have some excellence deserving of praise James Wright, one of the earliest historians of the English stage, defended players on the questionable grounds of the general depravity of human nature After noting that the Roman actor Masculas had been made a Saint, he commented (cf *Historia Histrionica* [1699], Preface)

> It appears from this, and some further Instances in the following Discourse, That there have been Players of worthy Principles as to Religion, Loyalty, and other Virtues, and if the major part of them fall under a different Character, it is the general unhappiness of Mankind, that the *Most* are the *Worst*

In France the players found a stalwart defender in D'Aubignac, who suggested that, if the theater was to be brought to its full perfection in France, the burden of infamy under which the players labored, and which they no longer deserved, should be removed by royal decree, but even D'Aubignac proposed that there should be a Director appointed who should be responsible to the king and who should have authority to supervise the public and private conduct of actors and actresses (cf *Pratique du Theatre* [Amsterdam, 1715], I, 354-355)

Page 184 32-35 *For have not they turn'd Booksellers* etc This seems to allude to the fact that Thomas Southerne received from Chetwood £120 for the copyright of *The Spartan Dame*, produced and published in 1719 Chetwood was not merely a publisher, but also the prompter at Drury Lane

Page 186 15-16 *since it has been under the Intendency of this separate Ministry* Cibber, in replying to a request of the Lord Chamberlain, had asserted that the Lord Chamberlain had no authority over the Drury Lane playhouse because the patentee and managers were "a sort of a separate ministry" (cf Aitken, *Life of Steele*, II, 222-223) Steele's license, which established the "separate ministry," was issued in January, 1715

Page 186 32-33 *you are bragging that they will exalt it higher* etc A gross misrepresentation Steele actually said (*Theatre*, no 1, Jan 2, 1720)

> I prefer the present British Stage to any other now in Europe, nor shall I fear in my following Discourses to aver, that it will not be the fault of the persons concerned in it, if it does not arrive at as great Perfection as was ever known in Greece or Rome

Page 187 5-17 *The Romantick Lady, in the* Tender Husband, etc Steele's *Tender Husband* was produced and published in 1705 The "Romantick Lady" in Steele's play was Biddy Tipkin Dennis's objection to the "Romantick Lady" is consistent with his belief that the characters of a comedy must be faithful pictures of the manners and customs prevailing in the period when the comedy is first produced (cf I, 496)

Page 187 18-20 The Lying Lovers *is made up* etc Steele's *The Lying Lover* (produced in 1703) was based largely upon Pierre Corneille's *Le Menteur*, perhaps, to some extent, upon the anonymous English comedy, *The Mistaken Beauty, or The Lyar* (produced c 1661), which was itself adapted from *Le Menteur* Dennis probably objected to *The Lying Lover* because it is more sentimental than comic and possibly because it violates poetic justice That *Le Menteur* is 'a very indifferent Original" may be questioned, for an opinion to the contrary, cf Voltaire's Preface to *Le Menteur*

Page 187 22-24 *he has bravely turn'd the* Tartuffe etc Cibber's *The Non-Juror*, produced in 1717 is based on Molière's *Tartuffe*, Professor Nicoll thinks that the direct source was probably Matthew Medbourne's *Tartuffe or, The French Puritan* (*History of Early Eighteenth Century Drama* [Cambridge, 1925], p 189) For Dennis's objections to the *Non-Juror*, cf II, 408 The subject of the *Non-Juror* is Jacobite intrigue, which Dennis probably considered too serious a subject for comedy Cibber "burlesqu'd" Corneille's *Cid* in *Ximena* (cf note on II, 179 38-41)

Page 187 26 *and continue to rail at them* In the *Theatre* no 2 (Jan 5, 1720), Steele had railed at French drama thus

> In France they are delighted either with low and fantastical farces, or tedious declamatory tragedies Their best plays are chiefly recommended by a rigid affectation of regularity within which the genius is cramped and fettered, so as to waste all its force in struggling to perform a work not to be gracefully executed under that restraint, they fall into the absurdity of thinking it more masterly to do little or nothing in a short time, than to invade the rules of time and place, to adorn their plays with greatness and variety

Cibber criticized the French for approving only severely virtuous heroes in the drama, the English, he said, were so good-natured as to pity even criminals provided that they

repented and were miserable He continued ("To the Reader," in *Ximena* [1719] p xliv)

> I am therefore convinc'd, that Criminal Characters so artfully conducted, have much the Advantage of the Perfect and Blameless, and perhaps 'tis the Narrowness of the *French* Genius, that would never let their best Authors attempt to raise Compassion upon such bold and natural Foundations

Page 187 32-33 *He had the Modesty and the Prudence to affirm*, etc Cf Horace, Odes, IV, II, 1-32

Page 188 35-36 *Hudibras*, I, I (ed A R Waller [Cambridge, 1905], p 8)

Page 188 42—189 7 *This irreproachable, inoffensive Person* etc Cibber was apparently not a pious soul, but there is no evidence to back the wild rumors which Dennis reports Cibber may have "believ'd he was in the Article of Death" some nine months before Dennis wrote this, for *Saturday's Post* on April 18, 1719, had announced the death "on Monday last" of Mr Cibber—a report happily exaggerated, as Cibber himself later pointed out (cf *Apology*, ch xv [in Everyman's Library ed , p 266]) As to the rumor that Cibber had "spit on the Face of our Saviour's Picture at the *Bath*," the anonymous author of a reply to Dennis asserted that he had inquired widely among Cibber's acquaintances, and not one, even among his enemies, had heard of the story, therefore, concluded the author of the pamphlet, Dennis had coined the story himself (cf *An Answer to a Whimsical Pamphlet, called The Character of Sir John Edgar, &c Humbly inscribed to Sir Tremendous Longinus*, reprinted in *The Theatre*, ed John Nichols [1791], p 396)

Page 189 10-14 *He has neither Tenderness for his Wife*, etc Cibber did frequent the Groom Porter's and was an inveterate gambler, often losing heavily (cf R H Barker, *Mr Cibber of Drury Lane* [N Y , 1939], pp 13-14). The *Weekly Journal* for March 1, 1718, accused Cibber of neglecting his family (*ibid*, p 19), and the fact that Mrs Cibber was compelled to file suit against him to prevent his appropriating legacies designed for herself and her daughter Elizabeth (*ibid*, pp 18-19) would seem to indicate that he was not an indulgent husband and father The author of *An Answer to a Whimsical Pamphlet, called The Character of Sir John Edgar*, however, denied that Cibber had lost £6 000 in one season without providing for his family, he asserted that Cibber had actually settled £3,000 on his children that very year (cf *The Theatre* ed John Nichols [1791], p 396)

Page 189 20 *who* neither fears God, nor regards Men A paraphrase of *Luke*, XVIII, 4—one of many instances of Dennis's employing Biblical phrases

Page 190 17-19 *like a certain Knight's Fish-Pool* etc Cf also lines 34-35 below As early as 1716 Steele was active in promoting the idea of a fish-pool sloop, an invention designed to transport fish alive to the markets The chief innovation in this project was a device for allowing water and air to flow horizontally through the vessel In 1718 letters patent were issued to Steele, and in November of the same year he and his co-worker, Gillmore, published *An Account of the Fish Pool* During the following three or four years attempts were made to carry out the project, but they failed completely Steele must have lost heavily in this undertaking He was twitted about the fish pool in *A Letter to a Buttonian K**** (1718) and in the *Anti-Theatre*, no 10 (March 17, 1720) In the *Theatre*, no 11 (Feb 6, 1720), he defended himself and his interest in the fish pool For details of the project, cf George Aitken, *Life of Steele*, II, 115, 157-179, and 252-256

Page 190 24-31 *Some of your Gold has been consum'd* etc It was probably in 1703 that Steele was squandering his substance in alchemical experiments Dennis is our only authority for the statement that Steele's partners were Tilly and Burnaby, but he is probably correct for he was well acquainted with both Steele and Burnaby at this time Mrs Manley in 1709 gave an account of Steele's dabbling in alchemy (cf *Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality* [1709], pp 188-192), and there is

a reference to it in the Epilogue printed in Steele's *Town Talk*, no 4 (Jan 6, 1716) Steele himself referred to it in the *Tatler*, no 89

William Burnaby was a comic dramatist, born *c* 1672 and died in 1706 (cf *Dramatic Works of Burnaby*, ed F E Budd [London, 1931], pp 14 and 72) Like Dennis and Steele he contributed to the *Commendatory Verses, on the Author of the Two Arthurs, and the Satyr against Wit* (1700), and he wrote the Epilogue for Dennis's *Comical Gallant* (1702)

Tilly was a not entirely reputable character, the subject of many tracts and broadsides in the first two decades of the eighteenth century (cf Aitken, *Life of Steele*, I, 144 n)

Page 190 32-33 *Some of your Pelf has been wasted* etc In 1717 Steele assisted John Rollos in promoting plans for a new kind of hooped petticoat, the chief feature of which was that when the wearer of the petticoat pressed a spring, the contraption folded about her ankles, enabling her to enter a coach with modesty In the *Theatre*, no 11 (Feb 6, 1720), Steele asserted that he had not invested any of his money in the project, but had merely instructed Rollos in the methods of obtaining a patent

Page 190 36-37 *for the* Censor *of* Great Britain, *and for the Auditor General of the Universe* "The Censor of Great Britain" is a title humorously adopted by Isaac Bickerstaff (cf *Tatler*, no 162), in the *Theatre*, no 2, Sir John Edgar refers to himself as the Auditor-general of the real and imaginary Theatres"

Page 191 7-11 *Which puts me in mind of a notorious Tragedian*, etc On this passage Nichols comments (*The Theatre*, ed John Nichols [1791], p 365) "This seems to allude to Mr Booth's marriage with Miss Santlow, who had been the Mistress of the Duke of Marlborough and Mr Craggs"

Page 191 12-26 *With how great Satisfaction*, etc The practise described is that of Bayes, the chief character of the *Rehearsal* by Villiers, Duke of Buckingham

Page 191 27—192 8 *I was formerly so weak as to think*, etc This train of thought appeared in Dennis's writings in 1711 (cf II, 27-28) Dennis was not disturbed by the fact that he himself had offered to the public two "improved" versions of Shakespeare, apparently he felt that improving an older author was laudable, but that adapting or borrowing without acknowledgment was culpable

Page 191 32-35 Horace, Epistles, II, ii, 171-174

Page 192 22-26 *In short, you have almost fill'd the Pit* etc For a flagrant instance of Steele's filling the pit, cf note on II, 42 3-19

Page 192 35-38 Terence, *Phormio*, II, i, 264-267

Page 192 44—193 11 *For tho' in the other Papers* etc Perhaps the only instance of Dennis's recognizing merit in Steele's periodical essays, the merit of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* Dennis unfairly attributed entirely to Addison and Arthur Mainwaring, and he felt that the *Guardian* was dull and pedantic (cf II, 204-205 and 415) It will be recalled that the public had no way of knowing the extent of Addison's (and, therefore, of Steele's) contributions to the *Tatler* until it was revealed in Tickell's edition of Addison's *Works*, published in October, 1721 Dennis mistakenly attributed to Steele several critical remarks in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* to which he took violent exception (cf II, 436, 440-442) Others besides Dennis were inclined to deny Steele his full due of glory for the merit of the periodicals in which he had been concerned In *The Importance of the Guardian Considered* (1713) Swift intimated that Steele, though he actually contributed to the *Guardian*, had merely published the work of other men in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* (cf *Prose Works of Swift*, ed Temple Scott, v [1901], 298) Pope thought the early papers in the *Guardian* inferior to those in the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, and explained the inferiority on the grounds that in the *Guardian* thus far (i e up to June 23, 1713) Steele had lacked the assistance of Addison (cf *Works of*

Pope, ed Elwin-Courthope, VI, 189) In his Diary, entry for March 23, 1714, Thomas Hearne wrote (cited in Aitken, *Life of Steele* [1889], II, 22-23)

> [Steele] got a good Reputation by publishing a Paper that came out daily called the Tattler, and by another called the Spectator, but the most ingenious of these Papers were written by Mr Addison, and Dr Swift, as 'tis reported And when these last two had left him, he appeared to be a mean, heavy, weak Writer, as is sufficiently demonstrated in his Papers called the Guardian, the Englishman, and the Lover

The public's inclination to credit Addison, Swift, Mainwaring and others with the chief virtues of the periodicals in which Addison and Steele had collaborated was the cause of Cibber's unguarded praise of Steele at the expense of Addison in the Dedication to *Ximena* (1719)

Page 193 13 *the more* wrong-headed *Person of the Two* The adjective *wrong-headed* is a sly allusion to an anecdote related in the *Theatre*, no 4, where two gentlemen are humorously represented as discussing the *Theatre* and its author

> My reader asked his friend "if he knew this Sir John Edgar?" "Yes," replied the gentleman, "he has been these twenty years a Wrong-headed fellow, and a Whimsical"

Page 193 13-15 *For he has writ such a Letter in it*, etc The writer of the Letter in the *Theatre*, no 2, describes himself merely as a "Comedian" in the Drury Lane company, it seems fairly clear, however, that Cibber was the author After thanking Steele for his generous design of encouraging the actors, the letter goes on to suggest that perhaps it might be well for the *Theatre* to desist, for the prejudice against the players was so strong that any defense of them might serve only to arouse the town more strongly against them, and the position of the players was already dangerous

> You cannot but be sensible, Sir, that the English Actors stand upon a more precarious foot than persons of any other profession whatsoever, nay, than even Actors themselves do in any other country Our neighbours, the French, it is true, are under absolute power, but then they are under absolute protection

At the end of this letter Steele commented

> The terror with which Mr *Dramatis Persona* pleads against my warmth, even in his own defence, at once demonstrates the distress the THEATRE is under for want of an advocate, and at the same time how much it deserves one

Page 193 40-45 *He sometimes appears pretty well upon the Stage*, etc Among the parts in which Cibber excelled, as Steele pointed out in the *Theatre*, no 7, were Sir Fopling Flutter, Sir Courtly Nice, Sir Novelty Fashion, in *Love's Last Shift*, Lord Foppington, in the *Relapse*, Sparkish, in the *Country Wife*, Witwoud, in the *Way of the World*, Tattle, in *Love for Love*, Attall, in Cibber's *Double Gallant*, Brazen, in the *Recruiting Officer*, and Gibbet, in the *Beaux Stratagem* It is a tribute to the excellence of Cibber's acting that Dennis and many other contemporaries identified him with the type of character which he delighted in playing After enumerating Cibber's favorite parts Steele remarked

> I have been at first view much astonished to observe a strong inclination and propensity of the Town to receive with pleasure any thing that tends to the personal mortification of Mr CIBBER, who with much address and capacity has pleased them in all these characters But considering this matter more closely, I have readily accounted for it, when I have reflected, in all these performances he has personated nothing but vices and imperfections, and by that means insensibly drawn upon himself the contempt and hatred of the Audience

Page 194 43—195 1 *You say that in* France, etc Cf note on II, 187 26

Page 195 8-11 *How angry were you once* etc Edmund "Rag" Smith's *Phædra and Hippolitus* was produced in 1707 It was Addison, not Steele, who scolded the town for not liking it (cf *Spectator*, no 18 [March 21, 1711]) Addison was not unique in admiring the tragedy Oldisworth in his "Character" of Smith remarked (*Works of Smith* [4th ed , 1729], p xiv)

> His *Phædra* is a consummate Tragedy, and the *Success* of it was as great as the most sanguine Expectations of his Friends could promise or foresee The *Number* of Nights, and the common Method of filling the *House*, are not always the surest Marks of Judging, what Encouragement a Play meets with But the Generosity of all the Persons of a refined Taste about Town, was Remarkable on this Occasion And it must not be forgotten how zealously Mr *Addison* espoused his Interest, with all the elegant Judgment and diffusive Good-Nature, for which that accomplished Gentleman and Author is so justly valued by Mankind But as to *Phædra*, she has certainly made a finer Figure under Mr *Smith's* Conduct, upon the *English Stage*, than either *Rome* or *Athens*, and if she excels the *Greek* and *Latin Phædra*, I need not say, she surpasses the *French* one, though embelished with whatever regular Beauties, and moving Softness, *Racine* himself could give her

In his brief biography of Smith's close friend, John Philips George Sewell referred to Smith as the "Author of the incomparable Tragedy of *Phædra* and *Hippolitus*" (*Life of Mr John Philips* [3rd ed , 1720], p 9)

There is no indication that Dennis was ever personally acquainted with Edmund Smith The fact that Smith set up as a critic and had undertaken, some time before he died, a comprehensive survey of the beauties and faults of ancient and modern poets—a project strikingly similar to that which Dennis had begun in the *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*—would not have endeared him to Dennis's mind

Page 196 3-8 John Sheffield (Duke of Buckinghamshire), *An Essay upon Poetry*, lines 177-182 (in Spingarn, II, 291)

Page 197 12-14 *It had then been Time to consider*, etc In spite of his tendency to dwell upon the Bard's faults, Dennis considered himself, and was considered by his friends, to be the champion of Shakespeare One of Dennis's followers, relating allegorically the feud between Dennis and Steele, told of the gathering of Sir Richard's army, using the head of Shakespeare as their banner Suddenly and mysteriously the banner disappeared To account for its disappearance the narrator ventured the conjecture (cf *The Battle of the Authors* [1720], p 22)

> that *Shakespear's* Ghost disdaining to see his Head made use of as a protection to Fools and Scribblers, who only admir'd his Faults, and knew nothing of his Perfections, had taken away his *Picture*, and transported it to [Dennis's camp], who paid a due Homage to his real Excellencies, and with himself condemn'd his irregularities

Page 197 22-30 *The Rules of Poetry constitute the Art of it*, etc Other critics as well felt that the authority of the rules was endangered by the assaults of Steele and Cibber The author of *A Full Consideration and Confutation of Sir John Edgar* wrote (cf the *Theatre*, ed J Nichols, pp 459-460)

> there are no means of pronouncing justly, and like a man of sense and understanding, but by having recourse to the known and established Rules of each Art, which, being founded in reason and truth, I always make the measure of my censure

And another writer, answering Steele, said (*The Battle of the Authors* [1720], p 29)

> for an Art must purpose to itself a certain End, and must by Consequence have some certain means of arriving at that End, which means are what is call'd the Rules, to deny which, to *Poetry*, is to deny it to be an Art, and to make it a meer Whimsey, of no Use or intrinsick Value

When these pronouncements were made, Steele's most recent attack on the rules was that in the *Theatre*, no 2 (cf note on II, 187 26) Cibber had recently attacked the rules in the Prologue to *Ximena* (1719)

> So Plays are valued, not confin'd to Rules,
> Those *Prudes*, the Criticks, call them Feasts for Fools,
> And if an Audience 'gainst those Rules is warm'd,
> Or by the lawless Force of Genius charm'd,
> Their whole Confederate Body is alarm'd
> Then every Feature's false, though ne'er so taking,
> The Heart's deceiv'd, though 'tis with Pleasure aking

And in the Epilogue to the *Non-Juror* (1718) he had written

> As for the Criticks, Those, he owns, may Teize him,
> Because he never took such Pains to please them,
> In Time, Place, Action, Rules by which Old Wits
> Made Plays, as —— Dames do Puddings, by Receipts

The answer of Steele's followers to Dennis's defense of the rules was sharp and disdainful (cf *An Answer to a Whimsical Pamphlet*, in the *Theatre*, ed Nichols [1791], p 395) "Thy fund of Criticism is a set of terms of art, picked out of the French translations this for thy *Intellects*'

Page 198 22-30 *For as 'tis the Prerogative of a King*, etc This principle, that minor rules may be disregarded if the major purposes of the art are thereby served, was of vital importance in the criticism of the Augustan period In 1711 Dennis had stated the principle thus (cf I, 406) " a less Law may be violated to avoid the infringing of a greater, and 'tis equally the Duty both of Ancients and Moderns, to break thro' a less important Rule, when without that Infringement a greater must be violated, or the great End of all the Rules neglected" As early as 1701 he had recognized the principle when he asserted that "seeming Irregularities" may be admitted into a work of art if "they are indispensably necessary to the admirable Conduct of a great and a just Design" (cf I, 202-203) Precisely what he thought were minor rules is not exactly clear, but it is certain that he included among them the unities of time and place, those mere "mechanick Rules" which, he insisted, must not be followed if the result would violate probability (cf II, 68) The major rules, as he conceived them, were apparently the rule of decorum and probability, and the rule of the distinction of *genres* that each *genre* has a specific end which it must achieve by its own peculiar means The principle meant then, according to Dennis, that violations of the rules were permissible if a work of art maintained probability and effected its purpose But there are no objective standards to measure how a poem effects its purpose, the test must be a pragmatic one does it produce the desired results upon the right sort of people? In short, if a poem is successful among men of taste, any irregularities in it are justified (cf note on I, 43 36-39)

The principle here stated by Dennis was clearly recognized by Boileau when he wrote (*l'Art Poétique*, IV, 78-80)

> Quelquefois dans sa course un esprit vigoureux,
> Trop resserré par l'art, sort des règles prescrites,
> Et de l'art même apprend à franchir leurs limites

And Boileau recommends that the poet should consult a friendly critic to determine whether the violation of the rules is justified by the "transport heureux" which it produces upon him Another interesting expression of the same principle is to be found in the writings of Addison (*Spectator*, no 592 [Sept 10, 1714])

> First, we may often take notice of men who are perfectly acquainted with all the rules of good writing, and notwithstanding choose to depart from them on extraordi-

> nary occasions I could give instances out of all the tragic writers of antiquity who have shown their judgment in this particular, and purposely receded from an established rule of the drama when it has made way for a much higher beauty than the observation of such a rule would have been Those who have surveyed the noblest pieces of architecture and statuary both ancient and modern, know very well that there are frequent deviations from art in the works of the greatest masters, which have produced a much nobler effect than a more accurate and exact way of proceeding could have done This often arises from what the Italians call the *gusto grande* in these arts, which is what we call the sublime in writing

In this and in other comments upon that art which goes beyond the rules (e g , *Spectator*, no 409), that art which produces magnificent effects that can be understood not by critics who judge by the rules, but by men of good taste and polite genius, Addison was evidently influenced by Longinus and by Boileau's exposition of him That Boileau was aware that the pragmatic test of good art must often supersede the test of the rules is clear from the following remark (*Réflexions sur Longin* no xi)

> Lorsqu'un endroit d'un discours frappe tout le monde, il ne faut pas chercher des raisons, ou plutôt de vaines subtilités pour s'empêcher d'en être frappé, mais faire si bien que nous trouvions nous-mêmes les raisons pourquoi il nous frappe

The minor rules were clear and definite and a poet's success in following them was objectively determinable The major rules, however were vague and general, and the poet could determine his success in following them only by the effect of his poem upon cultivated readers As a consequence of exalting the major rules at the expense of the minor ones, there was a tendency to discredit the rules as adequate criteria of artistic excellence, and to substitute for them certain undefined principles that were manifest only in the esthetic reactions of men of taste

In France the School of Taste, inspired in large measure by Longinus, was represented by Boileau, Rapin, Bouhours, and, perhaps, St -Évremond Dennis's indebtedness to Boileau in his theories of taste has been briefly and incompletely related by A F B Clark, *Boileau and the French Classical Critics in England* (Paris, 1925), pp 392-397

Page 199 11-13 *I have known a grave Divine* etc Dr Henry Sacheverell, a popular Tory preacher

Page 199 18-20 *I have likewise known a Salt-Water Mountebank*, etc Cf note on II, 190 17-19

Page 199 21-27 *I know a certain vile Scribbler* etc Colley Cibber Cf also II, 187 21-24 The two tragedies were *Ximena or, The Heroick Daughter* and *Perolla and Izadora*, both are undistinguished and were unsuccessful Cf II, 407 Dennis admired only one of Cibber's comedies, *Love's Last Shift, or, The Fool in Fashion* (1696), and this, he suspected, was not the work of Cibber (cf II 408)

Page 199 31-32 *For News is come to me* etc On Jan 23 1720, the day on which Dennis was writing this second Letter, the Lord Chamberlain issued an order revoking Steele's license, as a power in Drury Lane therefore Steele was "defunct" (cf Nicoll, *History of Early Eighteenth Century Drama* [Cambridge, 1925], p 283)

Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar (Third and Fourth Letters)

The second part of the *Characters and Conduct* followed soon after the first part Letter III was written largely as a reply to the *Theatre*, no 11 (Feb 6, 1720), and Letter IV, as a reply to the *Theatre*, no 12 (Feb 9) In Nichols' edition of the *Characters and Conduct* (in the *Theatre*, ed J Nichols [1791]) Letter III is dated March 1, and Letter IV, March 21 I know of no reason for attaching these dates to the letters In all probability they were written in February, and published together not later than March, 1720

The tone of the second part of the *Characters and Conduct* was obviously affected by the satirical portrait of Dennis in the twelfth number of the *Theatre* Whereas the first part is aimed at both Cibber and Steele (and much more savagely at Cibber than at Steele), the second part concentrates upon Sir Richard, paying indelicate tribute to his appearance and character as well as to his ideas A few portions of Letters III and IV are, perhaps, legitimate satire especially those concerning Steele's grumbling at being subjected to a state of indigence that was produced by his own extravagance, and those which comment upon his continual protestations of patriotism and benevolence and pious intentions Other portions are based upon a misunderstanding of Steele's words, and still other degenerate into senseless abuse It is just as well that the fifth and sixth letters which Dennis promised (cf II, 213) either were never written or were written and never published

Dennis's attempt at the end of Letter IV to justify by classical precedent that satire which reaches into the private concerns of individuals is weak and disingenuous, as he himself well knew The tendency of the great classical satirists was to attack types of public vice and folly, illustrating them by occasional reference to the behavior of real or imaginary persons Dennis's remarks on *Absalom and Achitophel, MacFlecknoe,* and *The Medal* show that he was aware of the objections to personal satires, or lampoons (cf II, 201)

The idea that good critics may become good poets—an idea developed in Letter IV—is implicit in Dennis's conception of a critic *A good critic, he thought,* must have not only a knowledge of the rules but also genius (i e , passion) and taste (cf note on I, 13 34), in short, he must have much the same qualities as the poet himself Dennis was convinced, on the other hand, that only great poets can be good critics (cf note on I 398.25—399 11), for only great poets have a full understanding of the art which they practice

The second part of the *Characters and Conduct* was dedicated to the Duke of Newcastle, then Lord Chamberlain The dedication is of no interest apart from its complaint that the present which Newcastle had sent the author on the previous November was not delivered, and from its acknowledgment that this was the author's second public complaint addressed to Newcastle (the first was the dedication of *The Invader of His Country*)

John Nichols reprinted the second part of the *Characters and Conduct* in his edition of the *Theatre* (1791)

Page 200 28-29 Terence, The Eunuch, IV, VII

Page 202 25—203.6 *But here, my dear Friend,* etc In *the Theatre,* no 8 (Jan 26, 1720), Steele had printed the Lord Chamberlain's order of Jan 25, which had closed the Drury Lane playhouse Following this he had printed his own letter of protest, in which he said

> I wish your Grace had been as careful as [the King] in leaving me to the Law But if you will allow me to ask you one favour, before you have quite broke my heart and spirit, give me but the name of your Adviser, that is to say, your Lawyer, on this occasion, and you shall see that it is not for want of skill in life, that I am subjected to all the pains and punishments to which those wicked ones are exposed, who are described by the monosyllable *Poor*

The lawyer who had advised Newcastle that the patent could be revoked, the "notable Serjeant at Law, with a hard Name," as Dennis refers to him, was Sir Thomas Pengelly By the time Steele wrote the *Theatre,* no 9, he had learned the lawyer's name His wild threats against Pengelly were, of course, never carried out

Dennis's remarks about Steele's predilection for "going to Law" are a palpable hit, for twenty years Steele had been involved in one law-suit after another

Cf also II, 214 28-36 and note

Page 203 12 ***which you were so eager to demolish*** etc The hoop-petticoat was satirized in the *Spectator*, no 127

Page 203 22-23 Butler, *Hudibras*, I, 1 (ed A R Waller [Cambridge, 1905], p 8)

Page 206 33-35 ***thou hast given us the Picture of a*** Wren, etc An allusion to the Dedication of Cibber's *Ximena* (1719), in which Steele is compared to an eagle, and Addison to the wren which is carried on the eagle's back The Dedication was written by Cibber, not by Steele

Page 206 41 Boileau, *Satire* VIII, line 279

Page 209 16-18 ***To this blessed Maxim, thou art pleas'd*** etc Steele had written (*Theatre*, no 12)

> I have often asserted that it is generally for want of judgement that men set up for the character of being judicious, every body of any standing in town knows that the dullest and most stupid Writers we have had have set up for Criticks, and, after abusing the most celebrated and bright personages of the age, have made reproofs and answers needless, by some undeniable evidence of their inability in publications of their own

Critics were Steele's chief aversion In the *Englishman*, no 7 (Oct 20, 1713), he had written

> Those who set up for Criticks in Poetry, and are met with in ordinary Conversation, may be reduced to two Classes, such as judge by *Rule*, or such as judge by *Nature* The first are Men of little or no Taste, who having read over the Mechanical Rules, and learned a few Terms of Art, are able to point out palpable Faults or Beauties in an Author, and thereby gain a Reputation for *Learning* The others are generally Talkers, of glittering Fancies, and hurried Imaginations, who despise Art and Method, who admire what was never said before, and affect the Character of *Wits* It is pleasant to see the Man of Judgment start at a Turn or a Metaphor, and the Men of *Taste*, as they call themselves, yawn at a plain and noble Description

The idea that critics are frustrated men of letters was notably expressed by Pope in his *Essay on Criticism* (lines 36-37)

> Some have at first for Wits, then Poets past,
> Turned Critics next, and proved plain fools at last

Page 211 22-25 ***I come now to some of the pretended Facts*** etc In the *Theatre*, no 12, Steele had written concerning Dennis

> As for this Critick, he has distinguished himself by no spirit but that of contradiction men the most amiable and unblameable in their persons and conduct, most perfect and correct in their writings and discourse, have been the peculiar objects of this Gentleman's reproof and dislike To finish him at once as to this particular, the men of all the world upon whom he has fallen hardest are ADDISON and CONGREVE

The accusation that Dennis had "fallen hardest" upon Congreve is, of course, false, he never mentioned Congreve without paying him honor As to Dennis's quarrel with Addison, Steele was not in a position to discuss it with propriety, for he had quarreled with Addison himself

Page 211 34-35 ***thou pretendst to insinuate that I have been us'd*** etc In the *Theatre*, no 12, Steele wrote "[Dennis] has the face and sullenness of a Mastiff, which has often saved him from being treated like a Cur, till some more sagacious than ordinary found his nature, and used him accordingly" Steele was probably referring, not to a physical beating, but to the assault of such pamphlets as *A Critic no Wit* (1719) and *An Answer to a Whimsical Pamphlet, called The Character of Sir John Edgar* (1720)

Page 211 37-39 ***I'll tell thee whom I have us'd at that rate***, etc I have been unable to find any confirmation of, or reference to, this boast of having beaten Cibber

Page 211 41-42 *Thou sayst that my Pamphlet* etc Steele remarked (*Theatre*, no 12)

> His Pamphlet is so cruel, that it could not be writ by any thing but a coward, indulging, eating, and wreaking his malice upon an object wholly in his power, which he could *stab* without resistance

The word *stab* in this remark is a sly reference to a story then current (and now authenticated) that Dennis had been expelled from his college for assaulting a fellow-student with a sword

Page 212 2-5 *Then, then, was the Cruelty,* etc A reference to the action of Cibber, Wilks, and Booth in withdrawing Dennis's *Invader of His Country* after its third night

Page 212 14-15 *to endeavour to set both the* King's *Horse* etc A groundless accusation At the end of the *Theatre*, no 12, Steele had, following his portrait of Dennis, written

> P S The Gentlemen of the Horse and Foot Guards, who, it seems, are offended at the treatment of Sir Richard, their old Comrade, are desired to leave the face of What D' Call just as it is

Page 213 14-17 *as thou hast form'd a Fantom* etc In the *Theatre*, no 12, Steele had given a Character of Dennis, representing him as dull, stupid, surly, cowardly, cruel, and malicious (cf notes on II, 209 16-18, 211 22-25, 211 34-35, and 211 41-42) Steele pictured Dennis as a creature so contemptible that "it would be ridiculous to talk of the animal, any further than to give good people a right notion of it" The author of *An Answer to a Whimsical Pamphlet, called The Character of Sir John Edgar,* who was more scurrilous in his description of Dennis, gave the following details concerning his appearance (cf the *Theatre*, ed J Nichols, pp 393-394)

> Your years are about sixty-five, an ugly vinegar face, that, if you had any command, you would be obeyed out of fear from your ill-nature pictured there, not out of any other motive Your height is about some five feet four inches Your doughty paunch stands before you like a firkin of butter, and your duck legs seem to be cast for carrying burdens

Page 213 30-34 *Yet with such a Shape,* etc In the *Theatre*, no 11, Steele had commented whimsically and amusingly upon Dennis's few remarks about his personal appearance (cf II, 181) Like Dennis, the author of *A Full Consideration and Confutation of Sir John Edgar* deliberately misinterpreted Sir Edgar's humor and referred sneeringly to Steele's concern over his beauty (cf the *Theatre*, ed John Nichols [1791], p 464)

Page 214 1-11 *He is the greatest Pretender* etc Perhaps the most irritating feature of Steele's periodical essays, especially in the *Theatre*, was his constantly repeated protestation of great virtue and good intentions Others besides Dennis called attention to it Said the author of *A Full Consideration and Confutation of Sir John Edgar* (in the *Theatre*, ed Nichols, p 452) Steele "has spent near two-thirds of his Twelve Papers [of the *Theatre*] in the most fulsome and impudent praise of himself that ever was published by any Author in the world " And the anonymous author of *The State of the Case between the Lord Chamberlain and Sir Richard Steele, Re-stated* wrote (*ibid*, p 531)

> The Knight [Steele] has made a great stir, in many of his Papers, with his Courage, his Honesty, and his Religion I shall not lose time here to examine into the validity of either of them, but shall only observe, that I never knew a man truly brave, make such *Thrasonic* boasts of his courage, nor a man truly virtuous, make such a noise with his honesty, nor a man truly religious, crying up his sanctity at the corner of the streets, and on the tops of houses

Page 214 28-36 *He had that seeming respect* etc The first part of this paragraph is a paraphrase of a remark in the *Theatre*, no 11

> Let the Gentleman [Steele] have but the freedom of the Laws, and be permitted to do good to himself and others, and his condition is as happy as that of any subject the King has

To Prior, upon the Roman Satirists

This letter, first published in the *Original Letters* (1721) was written shortly after Jan 10, 1721 On Jan 10 Dennis wrote to Prior, announcing that he had just sent him a friend's translation of the Seventh Satire of the Second Book of Horace (cf Hist MSS Com , Bath, III, 494) He added that the translation had caused him to reflect upon the nature of Horatian satire, and to consider the opinions of the commentators upon Horace, Juvenal, and Persius Believing the commentators to have been entirely in the wrong, he decided to set his own thoughts down in writing, and he offered to communicate these thoughts to Prior Evidently Prior replied graciously, or diplomatically, whereupon Dennis dispatched the letter *To Prior, upon the Roman Satirists*

There were few among his friends to whom Dennis could more suitably have communicated his thoughts on Roman satire than to Matthew Prior, a gentleman of wide learning, possessor of a splendid library of several thousand volumes, and a devotee of Horace from his very tender years It is not known how or when Dennis became acquainted with Prior They both contributed to Motteux' *Gentleman's Journal* (1692-1694), and Dennis's first influential patron, Charles Montagu, later Earl of Halifax, was one of Prior's warmest and closest friends In a letter dated Dec 5, 1698, Dr William Aglionby wrote Prior, informing him of his intention to aid Dennis "a poor poet who has made us a fine entertainment of *Rinaldo and Armida*", Dennis was in need of aid because he had just been indicted by the Grand Jury of Middlesex (cf Hist MSS Com , Bath, III, 302) But there is no evidence that Prior and Dennis were acquainted at this time Years later Dennis sent Prior a copy of his *Remarks upon Cato* Prior acknowledged the presentation in a discreet and tactful letter dated March 13, 1714, in which he expressed a high esteem for Dennis's merit and learning, and suggested a desire upon his return to London to improve his acquaintance with the critic (cf P R O, State Papers, France, 105/29, fo 87, the letter is printed in C K Eves, *Matthew Prior* [N Y , 1939], p 285) Sometime before 1721 Dennis was on sufficiently good terms with Prior as to feel justified in asking him to secure subscriptions for the proposed *Original Letters* (Dennis to Prior, Jan 10, 1721, in Hist MSS Com , Bath, III, 494), and in a letter dated March 23, 1721, he thanked Prior for his services in obtaining four subscriptions (*ibid*, pp 499-500) A letter from Dennis on March 17 indicates that the critic occasionally waited upon Prior, probably at his home on Duke Street (*ibid*, p 498) The friendship was cut short by Prior's death in September, 1721 Although they were far apart in social training, temperament, and political beliefs, Dennis and Prior were drawn together by their common passion for letters and learning, and perhaps by their affection and respect for Congreve

The debate concerning the relative merits of Horace and Juvenal as satirists had been carried on for many decades before Dennis presented his arguments—a debate which he found conveniently summarized in Dryden's *Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* (1693) Dennis's solution, that Horace's satire was of a kind very different from Juvenal's and that therefore no just comparison could be made between the two, is eminently sensible and satisfactory The most significant feature of Dennis's letter is its insistence that ease, pleasantry, urbanity, raillery, those qualities of style which were associated with Horace and which were in highest esteem in Augustan England (cf introductory note to the letter *Of Simplicity in Poetical Compositions*),

were suited to subjects of a comic nature, whereas subjects of a serious or tragic nature required a style both vehement and passionate

Page 218 14-19 *Mr* Dryden *endeavours to divide the Palm* etc Cf Ker, II, 81-82, 84, 86 Dennis is not quite fair to Dryden, who did not intend to make "his own Taste the Argument for preferring" Juvenal Dryden's words are extremely modest (Ker, II, 81-82) " . in my particular opinion, which I set not up for a standard to better judgments, Juvenal is the more delightful author"

Page 218 23 *your old Friend Monsieur* Despreaux Prior first made the acquaintance of Boileau in 1699, their friendship developed chiefly in the summer of that year (cf C K Eves, *Matthew Prior* [N Y, 1939], pp 122 and 137)

Page 218 31-35 *For is there not Reason to believe* etc Dryden observed that the true line of Roman satire, from Ennius and Pacuvius through Lucilius and Horace, imitated the Old Comedy of the Greeks (cf Ker, II, 57-62) He did not, however, admit that "Juvenal afterwards started a new Satire," though he perceived that Juvenal's was rather of the tragic than of the comic sort (cf note on II 219 22-26)

Page 219 22-26 *Now, Sir, ought not we to make the same Judgment* etc This idea of the essential difference between Horace and Juvenal is present, though not developed, in Dryden's *Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire*, where Dryden asks (cf Ker, II 96) " what disreputation is it to Horace, that Juvenal excels in the tragical satire as Horace does in the comical"

Page 220 8 *Your Friend, Monsieur* Dacier Prior associated with Dacier in Paris during the period of his friendship with Boileau (cf Eves *Matthew Prior* p 137)

Letters on Milton and Wycherley

The *Letters on Milton and Wycherley* were attached as a specimen to the *Proposals for Printing by Subscription, in Two Volumes in Octavo, the Following Miscellaneous Tracts, Written by Mr John Dennis* The *Proposals* are dated Oct 25, 1721 but the specimen could not have been issued at that time since Letter III is dated Jan 24, 1722 The approximate date for the publication of the specimen is given in the following letter, which I print from the autograph manuscript now in the British Museum (Sloane, 4046)

Sr

I have here the Honour to send you proposals for the printing Two volumes of miscellaneous Tracts, to which is annexd a large specimen of the work which subscription I Hope you will have the goodnesse to encourage by your example If you doe me the Honour to subscribe, Mr Man [Mein] will Deliver to You a signed Receipt

Sept the 17 1722

I am
Sr
Your most Humble Servant
John Dennis

The first volume of the *Miscellaneous Tracts*, after a long delay, was finally printed in 1727 Dissatisfied with its appearance or binding Dennis put off for months the distribution of copies to some of his subscribers To Sir Hans Sloane he wrote (I print from the autograph manuscript now in the British Museum, Sloane, 4049)

Sr

I Here send You by the Bearer the first volume of miscellaneous Tracts for which you some time since did me the Honour to subscribe I Have had it some time by me, & had sent it sooner, as I Had done to several other gentlemen, for whom I Have likewise a very great respect & esteem, if I had not been in expectation of

being in an condition of sending it in a fairer condition But since a further Delay may be misinterpreted, I Desire you would have the goodnesse to accept of it as it is

I am
Sr
Your most Humble &
most obedient servant
John Dennis

April the 30
1728

According to the "Advertisement" printed in the first volume, the second volume, except for two or three letters relating to *Paradise Lost*, was then ready for the press The second volume, however, never appeared Probably the failure of the town to respond generously to the *Proposals* was responsible for its non-appearance, both volumes were to have been published at Dennis's expense An alternative explanation is provided in a letter from Dr W Stratford to Edward Harley dated Aug 4, 1726 (Hist MSS Com , Portland, VII, 442), in which Stratford expressed sorrow over "the circumstance of poor Mr Dennis burning his papers" Dennis, continued Stratford, "was a curious man and a scholar, I fancy there must have been something valuable in them" If the letters from Prior, Rowe, and Walter Moyle, together with other material prepared for volume two were consumed in this fire, it is easy to understand why the volume never was published At any rate, the *Letters on Milton and Wycherley*, which were to have been printed in volume two together with two or three additional letters on *Paradise Lost* that were not yet finished when the first volume went to press slipped into obscurity as a mere specimen of an undertaking that was not carried out The *Letters* are now probably the rarest of all Dennis's printed works

Dennis's enthusiasm for Milton was displayed as early as 1692 (cf I, 3-4), and he discussed Milton at length in works published in 1696, 1701, and 1704 Why he resumed the subject in 1721-1722 is a difficult question Perhaps he was inspired by the separate publication in 1719 of Addison's critique of *Paradise Lost* Whatever the inspiration, he added little in substance to what he had previously written, but he discoursed upon Milton's Godlike Genius" with a zeal and intensity of conviction almost unique in Augustan criticism Even his objection to Milton's machinery was set forth modestly and tentatively, rather as a point to be explained than as a consideration that should lessen our admiration for the great puritan poet

The defense of Wycherley is astute, and the analysis (II, 234) of that scene in the *Plain Dealer* where Novel attempts to give an account of the guests at Lady Autumn's table is admirable The suggested distinction between vivacity and wit is a valuable one for anybody to keep in mind who contemplates the dialogue of Restoration comedy particularly of Wycherley

An indication of the soundness of Dennis's taste for dramatic comedy is his remark concerning Shadwell (II, 232, cf also II, 201), whose work he persisted in admiring though Dryden had damned it and though its popularity had greatly declined since 1685

Page 221 3 *To* Dr *S*—— "Dr S——" is almost certainly George Sewell, who studied medicine at Leyden and practised in London for a brief time before he turned author As early as 1712 he addressed a poem to the Duke of Marlborough, censuring the tory ministry for neglecting the great general He was probably among the whig hacks patronized by Halifax, for upon that statesman's death he wrote a long elegy addressed to Addison Previously he had written the *Observations upon Cato* (1713), in which he professed almost unbounded admiration for Addison's tragedy His chief work was *The Tragedy of Sir Walter Raleigh* (1719), which Dennis evidently knew when he wrote to Sewell on March 10, 1719 (cf II, 403-404), this work proved to be distinctly popular, for it went into a fifth edition in 1722 Sewell was described as a follower of Dennis's in *The Battle of the Authors* (1720)

Page 221 16-30 *And in most of the Treatises which I have publish'd* etc Professor Paul's excellent study, *John Dennis*, lists in a bibliography of the critic's writings (p 213) a work called *Letters on Milton and Congreve*, supposedly issued in 1696

Scholars have failed to locate copies of this work, for the sufficient reason that it never existed The mistake seems to have been launched by William Godwin in his *Lives of Edward and John Philips* (1815, pp 291-292), where he says "A still more decisive testimony to the reputation of Milton, is in the appearance of a book, by John Dennis in the year 1696, entitled, 'Letters on Milton and Congreve'" It is clear, however, that Godwin had never seen such a book, for he adds (p 292 n) "It is to be found in the Catalogue of the British Museum, but has been reported to me by the librarians as mislaid" Writing in December, 1721, Dennis lists the titles of works in which he had discussed Milton, and we note that the *Letters on Milton and Congreve*, dated 1696, are not mentioned If he had written such a work, he could not have failed to mention it, for he was anxious to establish the priority of his remarks on Milton What Godwin was looking for in the British Museum was the series of letters which I have reprinted under the title of *Letters on Milton and Wycherley*, written 1721-1722, the series was originally published without a title, merely attached as a specimen to the *Proposals for Printing by Subscription Miscellaneous Tracts, Written by Mr John Dennis* There are three letters on Milton, the fourth, on Wycherley, was addressed to Congreve Hence the error in the title which Godwin mentions Dennis did publish a volume of letters in 1696, but it was called *Letters on Several Occasions*, and it had nothing to do with Milton

Page 221 20-22 *In the* Remarks on Prince *Arthur*, etc Cf I, 107 and 108

Page 221 23-25 *In the* Advancement and Reformation etc Cf I, 272-277

Page 221 26-30 *In the* Grounds of Criticism in Poetry etc Cf I, 347, 351-352, and 343-344

Page 221.31—222.3 *Some Persons, who long since the Publication* etc Dennis is thinking specifically of Addison, whose papers on Milton appeared in the *Spectator* every Saturday from no 267 (Jan 5, 1712) to no 369 (May 3) It is true that Addison "made particular mention" of many of the same beauties which Dennis had previously pointed out (cf I, 513-514), and was unfair to Dennis in failing to acknowledge his priority

Page 222 4-21 *They have not allow'd that* Milton etc It was not Addison's intention to show that Milton had "in the Sublimity of his Thoughts surpass'd both Ancients and Moderns" Rather he proposed to demonstrate that Milton had written in the great tradition, following Homer and Virgil, that *Paradise Lost* fulfilled the chief requirements of the epic as defined by Aristotle and explained by Le Bossu, that it contained great beauties comparable with those of Homer and Virgil, and that it imitated with great ingeniousness, and at times even derived its fire from, certain passages in Homer and Virgil As he says in *Spectator*, no 297

> Whether Milton's [action] is not of a sublimer nature [than Homer's and Virgil's] I will not presume to determine It is sufficient that I show there is in the *Paradise Lost* all the greatness of plan, regularity of design, and masterly beauties which we discover in Homer and Virgil

Though Addison spoke frequently of Milton's sublimity, he was incapable of expressing himself with the intense and rapturous enthusiasm that Dennis sometimes displayed in discussing *Paradise Lost* (cf, for example, II, 224 32-40) As to originality, Addison, like many other Augustan critics, did not value it so highly as Dennis did, or as we do today When he remarked (*Spectator*, no 321) that "Milton is everywhere full of hints, and sometimes of literal translations, taken from the greatest of the Greek and Latin poets," he meant no dishonor to the author of *Paradise Lost*, it was the part of wisdom, he believed, to avail oneself of the great thoughts and fine images of the classic writers

Even if Addison's papers on *Paradise Lost* were, as Dennis says, unfair to Milton in failing to give an adequate impression of the poem's sublimity, they were none the less successful, for they probably did more to spread the fame of Milton than any other critical works of that century

Page 222 20-21 *which is the surest and noblest Mark*, etc Cf I, 462-463

Page 223 1 *Of all the Commentators on the Paradise Lost* Strictly speaking, there had been only two up to the time when Dennis wrote this letter Addison, and the slightly mysterious "P H," who wrote the *Annotations on Milton's Paradise Lost* (1695) Only one edition had been printed to which the name of an editor was attached the *Poetical Works*, ed Tickell (2 vols, 1720) The brief, and usually incidental, remarks of such men as Marvell, Dryden, Roscommon, Bysshe, and Coward scarcely entitle them to be called "commentators."

Page 223 6-9 *Spectator*, no 279

Page 223 15-18 *for says he*, etc *Spectator*, no 267

Page 223 24-26 *Spectator*, no. 333

Page 224 10-19 *Spectator*, no 333

Page 225 1-21 *Paradise Lost*, VI, 203-223

Page 225 28-30 *Paradise Lost*, VI, 238-240

Page 225 39-45 *Paradise Lost*, VI, 245-251

Page 226 12-26 *Paradise Lost*, VI, 296-310

Page 227 3-11 *Paradise Lost*, VI, 304-315

Page 227 26-29 *Paradise Lost*, II, 506-509

Page 227 36 *nor my Lord* Roscommon Roscommon did not venture a criticism of Milton At the end of his *Essay on Translated Verse* (1684) he merely paid tribute to blank verse and to Book VI of *Paradise Lost*

Page 228 14-15 *Paradise Lost*, I, 789-790

Page 228 26-34 *Paradise Lost*, I, 423-431

Page 228.39—229 9 *And here let me deplore one Unhappiness* etc In 1696 Dennis had remarked that Christian machinery in an epic might be objected to because angels are "out of nature" and therefore not delightful (cf I, 105 and 460) He did not consider this to be an insuperable objection, however, for Christian machines might be properly employed to produce wonder and terror, thus justifying their use

Page 230 24-30 John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, *Essay upon Poetry*, lines 262-268 (in Spingarn, II, 293-294) Buckinghamshire died in 1721

Page 231 3-7 Dryden, *A Parallel of Poetry and Painting* (1695), prefixed to the translation of Du Fresnoy's *De Arte Graphica* Cf Ker, II, 142

Page 231 8-9 *who in this Passage doth certainly reflect upon Mr* Wycherley Malone, and Scott after him thought that Dryden was referring to Etherege Ker makes no attempt to identify the too witty poet In all probability Dennis was right, he had undoubtedly discussed Wycherley with Dryden, and was in a position to know Dryden's meaning For a brief note on this point, cf "Dryden's Allusion to the Poet of Excessive Wit" in *Notes and Queries*, CLXVIII (1935), 421

Page 231 26-29 Dryden, "To Mr Southerne," prefixed to Southerne's comedy, *The Wives Excuse* (1692)

Page 231 35-39 *where he declares the Author of the* Plain-dealer etc Cf Ker, I, 182 Dryden does not call Wycherley "the greatest Comick Poet of the Age" After defining two kinds of comedy that which lashes vice and that which through humour renders folly ridiculous, Dryden said "Many of our present writers are eminent in both these kinds, and, particularly, the author of the *Plain Dealer* whom I am proud to call my friend, has obliged all honest and virtuous men, by one of the most bold, most general, and most useful satires, which has ever been presented on the English theatre"

Page 232 6-8 *but shew'd the Esteem which he had for Mr* Wycherley, etc Cf II, 410

Page 232 12-16 Rochester, *Allusion to Horace*, in Spingarn, II, 283 Dennis is quoting from memory.

Page 232 40-41 *the 523d Reflection of* Rochefoucault etc In *Réflexions Sentences et Maximes Morales de La Rochefoucauld* (Paris, Panier Frères), no 456

Page 233 23-26 *that Reflection of* Rochefoucault etc In *Réflexions de La Rochefoucauld* (Paris, Garnier Frères), no 451

Page 234 14-20 On s'est trompé etc *Réflexions de La Rochefoucauld* (Paris, Garnier Frères), no 97

Of Prosody

Dennis's essay *Of Prosody* appeared as Part v in the second edition of James Greenwood's *An Essay towards a Practical English Grammar, Describing the Genius and Nature of the English Tongue, Giving Likewise a Rational and Plain Account of Grammar in General, with a Familiar Explanation of Its Terms* (1722) Greenwood was the sur-master of St Paul's School The only other trace of an acquaintance between Dennis and Greenwood is a letter, probably written in 1720, in which Dennis informed Greenwood that he had just dispatched to him copies of *The Invader of His Country* and the two parts of the *Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar* (cf *Original Letters* [1721], pp 457-460)

For at least thirty years Dennis had been interested in questions of prosody, and in 1696 he had planned to include in the *Remarks on Prince Arthur* a section on the art of versification (cf I, 47-48) Until he complied with Greenwood's request to write on the harmony of our English poetry, however he had confined himself to incidental remarks on the numbers suitable to lyric poetry (I, 9), the necessity for a pause at the end of a couplet (I, 25), the necessity for contracting the final '-ed' of the past participle (I, 26), and the disadvantages of the use of rhyme in the greater poetry (cf I, 499) There was undoubtedly an interest in prosody among Augustan readers, but good poets seem to have been reluctant to reveal the secrets of their art to the public (cf I, 453) The most popular treatment of prosody during the eighteenth century was an essay called "Rules for Making English Verse," prefixed to Edward Bysshe's *Art of English Poetry*, a pedestrian work first published in 1702 The most significant point of difference between Dennis's treatment of prosody and that of Bysshe, apart from the question of the value of rhyme, is that Dennis recognized the existence of the hypermetrical line in heroic verse and the effectiveness of the dactylic and trochaic foot to vary the march of iambics, whereas Bysshe counted his syllables painfully and allowed nothing over ten except in an occasional alexandrine or fourteener

Dennis's essay *Of Prosody* was one of the most widely circulated of all his works It appeared in the fourth edition of Greenwood's grammar, published in 1740, beginning with the second edition it was probably a regular feature of the grammar

Page 236 37-39 *The* Numbers *are equal, when the* Accents *lye* etc Bysshe expressed the prevailing opinion when he wrote ("Rules for Making English Verse," chap 1, in *The Art of English Poetry* [4th ed, 1710], p 1) "The Structure of our Verses, whether Blank, or in Rhyme, consists in a certain Number of Syllables, not in Feet compos'd of long and short Syllables, as the Verses of the *Greeks* and *Romans*" Dennis appears to use the word *Numbers* in its conventional sense, but it is clear that he recognized different types of feet in English poetry, for he pointed out a dactyl in one of Dryden's lines (cf II, 237 6-8) Bysshe allowed for no irregularities in heroic verse except for an occasional triplet, alexandrine, or fourteener Dennis was unwilling to force heroic verse into so hard and inflexible a mold By recognizing the existence of trochaic and dactylic feet in heroic measures, he indicated that he possessed a finer ear for the harmonies of poetry than did Bysshe and his school of mathematical prosodists

Page 237 14-16 *But the* Stanza *is certainly very improper* etc This was the common opinion of Spenser's stanza Bysshe remarked that Spenser's unlucky choice of a stanza which is difficult to maintain in compositions of any length drove him to use far too many obsolete words ("Rules for Making English Verse," chap III sect 6, in *The Art of English Poetry* [1710], p 33)

Page 237 19 *the* Ode *which is Vulgarly called* Pindarick Dennis, like many of his contemporaries, realized that the irregular ode, introduced by Cowley, differed considerably from the ode of Pindar (cf I, 510-511)

Page 237 34-38 *The Pauses in the Middle of the Verse,* etc Bysshe allowed the middle pause to fall after the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, or seventh syllable (cf "Rules for Making English Verse," chap I, sect 1, in *The Art of English Poetry* [1710], p 4) In a letter to Cromwell dated Nov 25, 1710 Pope remarked that in any *smooth* English verse of ten syllables there should be a pause after the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllable (cf Elwin-Courthope, VI, 113)

Page 237 39 Roscommon, *Essay on Translated Verse,* line 47, in Spingarn, II, 298

Page 238 4-9 *But it is not necessary that the Pause* etc This agrees with the opinion and practise of most of Dennis's contemporaries Cf Bysshe "Rules for Making English Verse" chap I, sect 2, in *The Art of English Poetry* (1710), pp 8-9

Page 238 19-23 *but because double and treble* Rhymes etc Double and treble rhymes were employed chiefly in burlesque and humorous verse, they were discredited elsewhere (cf I, 434)

Page 239 10-11 "Part of the Fourth Book of Virgil, Translated," lines 17-18, in *Poems of Waller,* ed G Thorn Drury (Muses' Library, 1901), II, 29

Page 239.38—240 7 Rhyme, *as I observed heretofore* etc Dennis had frequently argued against the use of rhyme in serious poetry (cf I, 499) Quite different were the views of Bysshe, who remarked near the end of the Preface to "A Dictionary of Rhymes" (in *The Art of English Poetry*) "Rhyme is by all allowed to be the chief Ornament of Versification in any of the Modern Languages, and therefore the more Exact we are in the Observation of it, the greater Applause our Productions of that Nature will deservedly challenge and find" There were many who agreed with Bysshe (cf I, 500)

A Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter

This pamphlet according to an advertisement in the *Daily Post,* was published on Nov 2, 1722 (cf Aitken, *Life of Steele* [1889], II, 280) It is in part a result of the quarrel with Steele begun in 1719, it is also a result of Dennis's extreme annoyance at the methods which Steele was using to prepare the way for his new comedy, *The Conscious Lovers* No English play had ever received half of the advance publicity which *The Conscious Lovers* enjoyed Nearly three years before the comedy was produced Steele had begun to puff it in his periodical the *Theatre* (nos 19 and 28, March 5 and April 5, 1720) Soon it was the talk of the town On Nov 18, 1721, Mist's *Weekly Journal* ran a paragraph about it remarking that Sir Richard's new play would represent a character that had never yet been seen upon the stage (cf Aitken, II 283, n) To cap the climax advertisements were run in the newspapers on Oct 2, 1722, describing the forthcoming comedy as probably "the best modern play that has been produced" (cf note on II 241 19-22) Detesting cabals, claques, and all devices that would give a play a false renown, Dennis took up his pen and produced the *Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter* It was issued five days before *The Conscious Lovers* was staged

To attack Steele's forthcoming comedy by defending Etherege's *Man of Mode, or, Sir Fopling Flutter* was a shrewd and logical move In 1711 Sir Richard had denounced the character of Dorimant in *Sir Fopling Flutter,* had ridiculed the play for its licentiousness and lack of gentility, and had set forth his own ideas of what a fine gentleman should be In several essays subsequently written he had developed his conception of the fine gentleman, or the man of honour, and by 1720 he had made it clear that his projected comedy would present a hero who was a fine gentleman and who would be held up as an example for the imitation of the spectators of the play (cf note on II, 244 10-13) Before it was produced, Steele's comedy was referred to as *The Fine Gentleman,* and if this were not enough, some of Dennis's friends who had read the play long

before it was staged brought him reports of it (cf II, 241) He knew its nature, then, and he knew that, setting up its hero as a model for imitation, it represented an idea of comedy exactly the contrary of his idea and Etherege's By defending *Sir Fopling Flutter*, therefore, Dennis was taking issue with Steele on a point of fundamental importance in literary theory

Shortly after Dennis's pamphlet was published, he was answered by Steele's friend Benjamin Victor, who wrote (with Steele's encouragement) *An Epistle to Sir Richard Steele, on His Play, Call'd, The Conscious Lovers* This reply appeared on Nov 29 (cf Aitken, II, 281) Victor, besides assuring Sir Richard that his "Works abound with polite Delicacies, which are beyond the common Capacity of Mankind" (2nd ed , 1722, p 3), assailed Dennis for his ill-nature, impudence, the contradictions in his preface, and his use of ridicule in literary criticism, and he urged that Dennis must have been void of shame when he attempted to prove that the business of comedy was to represent corrupt and objectionable characters rather than models of virtue and innocence (cf note on II, 245 23-29) On Nov 15 the *St James's Journal* announced a work directed against Dennis, entitled *A Short Defence of Two Excellent Comedies, viz , Sir Fopling Flutter, and The Conscious Lovers, in answer to many scandalous reflections on them both, by a certain terrible Critick, who never saw the latter, and scarce knows anything of comedy at all* (cf Aitken, II, 284) On Dec 13 another reply to Dennis was issued, *Sir Richard Steele, and His New Comedy, Called, The Conscious Lovers, Vindicated from the Malicious Aspersions of Mr John Dennis Wherein Mr Dennis's vile criticisms in defence of Sir Fopling Flutter are detected and exposed, and the author of them proved to know nothing of criticism* (cf Aitken, II, 285) Instead of being thanked, as he expected (cf II, 253), for defending *Sir Fopling Flutter* and for exposing the false notions of comedy upon which Steele's new play was based, Dennis was surprised to find himself attacked and reviled

Considered solely as a vindication of Etherege, the *Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter* is a sound and commendable piece of work, though it applies the doctrine of decorum somewhat heavily and pedantically Its chief significance, however, lies in the fact that Dennis saw the danger lurking in Steele's notion of comedy and set out vigorously to oppose it Believing that the hero of comedy should be a pattern of innocence and virtue, Sir Richard constructed a play in which the suspense turned upon the temporary distress of a righteous man, and which intended primarily to arouse a gentle feeling of pity mingled with admiration for the paragon This type of comedy almost inevitably became sentimental, and of course, it swerved sharply away from the sort of comedy which Dennis and most of the critics contemporary with him considered entertaining and profitable (cf I, 477) Like other Augustan critics Dennis had little or no taste for the lightness and delicacy of romantic comedy as Shakespeare had developed it, but he had a true understanding of the robust and realistic comedy such as Jonson, Shadwell, and Wycherley had cultivated, and he felt, quite properly, that Steele departed to no good results from the sound English tradition Commenting on the *Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter*, Krutch says (*Comedy and Conscience after the Restoration* [N Y , 1924], p 245)

> Here again Dennis was right so far as theory was concerned He put his finger upon the danger of Steele's comedy, which lay in the fact that by proposing examples of virtue it was likely to cease to be either realistic or funny

Page 241 5-6 *a certain Comedy now in Rehearsal* Steele's *The Conscious Lovers* This play was first produced on Nov 7, 1722 Rehearsals were going on in October, when Dennis was writing the *Defence of Fopling Flutter*

Page 241 12 *I have formerly made Mention of Poetical Mounte-banks* Cf II, 199

Page 241 14-16 *His Play has trotted as far as Edinburgh* etc Parts of *The Conscious Lovers* were written by January, 1720 As a member of the Commission for Forfeited Estates Steele was in Edinburgh from August to October, 1720, and again in October,

1721 While there, he presumably discussed, or even read portions of, his new comedy There is a story that he wrote *The Conscious Lovers* during a stay in Wales and that the play was first acted in his own house there by a group of his friends (cf Aitken, *Life of Steele* [1889], II, 318)

Page 241 19-22 *Now, Advertisements have been sent* etc On Oct 2, 1722, the newspapers carried an advertisement which announced that Steele's new comedy would be ready by the 6th of November, and which concluded "It is thought that this play is the best modern play that has been produced" (cf Aitken, *Life of Steele* [1889], II, 276, n 4)

Page 242 7 *three or four sordid Wretches* The managers of the Drury Lane playhouse Cibber, Wilks, and Booth

Page 242 27-29 Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer*, I, i This is Olivia's account of Novel Dennis is quoting from memory

Page 243 14-17 *And has not* Horace, etc Cf Horace, Satires, I, iv, 1-5

Page 243 17 *says a modern Critick* Dacier, in his commentary on Horace Cf also Dacier, *Poetique d'Aristote*, Remark no 1 on chap v (ed Paris, 1692, pp 58-60)

Page 243 32-33 *because Comedy is nothing but a Picture of common Life*, etc It was generally agreed that comedy should be a realistic portrayal of men in private stations (cf I, 496-497), and even that the instruction afforded by comedy depended upon its realism (cf I, 477)

Page 243 34-37 *Now this Comedy of Sir* Fopling Flutter, etc Etherege's *The Man of Mode, or, Sir Fopling Flutter*, first produced in March, 1676, was an immediate success and, according to Downes, the prompter, "got a great deal of Money" It appeared under impressive auspices Dryden wrote an epilogue for it, Sir Car Scroope wrote the prologue, and the dedication was accepted by the Duchess of York Both Langbaine and Gildon praised the comedy, noted that it was received with universal approval, and remarked that the characters were "drawn to the Life" (cf *Dramatic Works of Etherege*, ed H F B Brett-Smith [Boston and New York, 1927], I, p xxiii)

Page 244 10-13 *The Knight certainly wrote the forementioned Spectator*, etc Steele had intended to call his comedy *The Fine Gentleman*, and prior to its production and publication it was referred to by that title in the newspapers (cf Aitken, *Life of Steele* [1889], II, 283-284) For years, certainly as early as *The Christian Hero* (1701), Steele had been obsessed with a new concept of a "fine gentleman," an idealized picture of a man from any station in society who abounded in virtue and innocence In the *Spectator*, nos 65 and 75 (1711), he deprecated the sort of gentleman represented by Dormant, and set up his own picture of what a fine gentleman should be In the *Guardian*, nos 34 and 38 (1713) he again developed his idea of the fine gentleman In the *Theatre*, no 16 (Feb 23, 1720), he described the Man of Honour, another version of the fine gentleman By this time he had definitely decided to transfer his fine gentleman to the stage In the *Theatre*, no 19, he spoke of his new comedy and of the fine gentleman, its hero

> The third act of this comedy, which, had not some accidents prevented, would have been performed before this time, has a scene in it, wherein the first character bears unprovoked wrongs, denies a duel, and still appears a man of honour and courage This example would have been of great service, for since we see young men are hardly able to forbear imitation of fopperies on the Stage, from a desire of praise, how warmly would they pursue true gallantries, when accompanied with the beauties with which a Poet represents them, when he has a mind to make them amiable!

That Steele in writing *Spectator*, no 65, was deliberately paving the way for *The Conscious Lovers*, is unlikely But there is no doubt that the idea of the hero in this comedy was being formed within Steele's mind for many years before the comedy was written

Page 244 24-25 *For it has pass'd for a very genteel Comedy*, etc Steele was singular in his objections Years later Horace Walpole remarked that *The Man of Mode* was

nearly the best comedy in English, it was our first genteel comedy, he said, and if the conversation in it had been less licentious, it would not have reflected its age accurately (cf *Thoughts on Comedy*, in *Works* [1798], II, 315)

Page 244 44—245.2 *For* Dorimont *not only pass'd for a fine Gentleman* etc Edward Filmer, defending Etherege against Collier's attack, insisted that Dorimant was truly a *fine gentleman He might* be lewd and a sinner, admitted Filmer, but nobody "can be so dull as to mistake him for a Clown" Etherege was true to his characters (cf *A Defence of Plays* [1707], p 15)

Page 245 23-29 *How little do they know of the Nature of true Comedy,* etc In answer to this passage Benjamin Victor wrote (*An Epistle to Sir Richard Steele, on His Play, Call'd, The Conscious Lovers* [2nd ed, 1722], p 17)

> Is it possible, Sir, that *De*——*s* can be so void of Shame to attempt to prove, that vicious Characters is the only Business of Comedy, and that their corrupt Examples have the same design'd Effect upon the Audience as a virtuous honourable Character

Page 246 2-7 Roscommon, *Horace Of the Art of Poetry*, in *Works of Roscommon* (Glasgow, 1753) p 93

Page 247 11-20 This is Dennis's own translation of Dacier's comment on line 157 of Horace's Ars Poetica For another translation cf *Works of Roscommon* (Glasgow, 1753), p 158

Page 247 35-36 *he understood neither* Greek *nor* Latin This may be true The catalogue of Etherege's books (cf *Letterbook of Etherege*, ed Sybil Rosenfeld [London, 1928], pp 376-378) lists no work in Latin or Greek But Brett-Smith notes that in his letters Etherege quotes lines from the Latin poets appositely (cf *Dramatic Works of Etherege* [Boston and New York, 1927], I, p xiv, n 2)

Page 248 2-8 *For* Rapin *tells us* etc Rapin, *Reflections on Aristotle's Poesie*, Pt II sect xxv (in *Critical Works* [London, 1716], II, 220)

Page 248 25-28 Boileau, *l'Art Poétique*, III, 391-394

Page 248 32-38 *it was unanimously agreed, that he had* etc St Evremont and Oldys corroborate Dennis's statement, Dean Lockier thought that Etherege himself was the original of Dorimant, and the second Duke of Dorset claimed that his grandfather, the witty Lord Buckhurst, was the original (cf *Dramatic Works of Etherege*, ed Brett-Smith [Boston and New York, 1927], I, pp xxiv-xxv)

Page 248 36 *which the late Bishop of* Salisbury *takes Notice of* Burnet merely records that during his illness, relapsing momentarily into his familiar mode of swearing, Rochester referred to a dilatory servant as "that damned fellow" (cf *Some Passages in the Life and Death of Rochester* [1805], p 88)

Page 248 44—249.2 *they who were acquainted with the late* etc Dennis speaks with some authority, for he himself had been acquainted with Sir Fleetwood Sheppard Oldys suggested that Sedley was the original of Medley, and Brett-Smith agrees that there are definite resemblances between Medley and Sir Charles Sedley (cf *Dramatic Works of Etherege*, I, p xxv)

Page 249 17-21 *Comedy, says* Rapin, etc Cf Rapin, *Reflections on Aristotle's Poesie*, Pt II sect xxv (in *Critical Works* [London, 1716], II, 219)

Remarks on The Conscious Lovers

Steele's *Conscious Lovers* was first produced on Nov 7, 1722 Although even before its production and publication Dennis had attacked the idea of comedy which it represented, he was not content His *Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter* had been treated severely by some of Steele's adherents, his own theory of comedy had been challenged, and the great success of the *Conscious Lovers*, which he thought unmerited, seemed to him a sign of prevailing bad taste that he was duty-bound to correct From these,

and perhaps other, considerations he proceeded to write the *Remarks on The Conscious Lovers*, which was published on or about Jan 24, 1723 (cf Aitken, *Life of Steele* [1889], II, 281, n 3)

Over ten pages of the *Remarks on The Conscious Lovers* are given over to observations on the improbabilities of incidents and characters in the play—observations which were reasonably well grounded Even some of Steele's friends felt that Bevil's strange deference to his father was implausible (cf note on II, 263.34—265.37) Of much greater significance, however, is Dennis's attack on the idea of sentimental comedy In the *Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter* he had attacked the sort of comedy which sets up the hero as a pattern of virtuous conduct In the *Remarks upon The Conscious Lovers* he completed his attack by reflecting upon the comedy of sighs and tears His own concept of comedy was not developed merely as a weapon against Steele, but had been expressed at length as early as 1702

Although the *Conscious Lovers* was greatly successful on the stage, having a run of twenty-two performances in November and December of 1722, and although it was received with great favor by the *beau monde*, there were others besides Dennis who did not consider it a masterpiece Mrs Sarah Byng Osborn remarked in a letter to her brother Robert that her set at Danbury Place could not relish the new play (cf *Letters of Sarah Byng Osborn*, ed J McClelland [Stanford University, 1930], p 12) The anonymous author of *The Censor Censured, or, the Conscious Lovers Examined* (1723) found many faults in the play, though he disapproved of Dennis's sweeping attack (cf Aitken, *op cit*, II 282-283) A series of articles generally unfavorable to the *Conscious Lovers* ran in the *Freeholder's Journal*, and Mist's *Weekly Journal* published several articles both attacking and defending the play (*ibid*, II, 284-286) A few authors of pamphlets and articles attempted to vindicate Steele's comedy from Dennis's criticism (cf introductory note to the *Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter*)

In his acute criticism of the *Remarks on the Conscious Lovers* Joseph Wood Krutch says (*Comedy and Conscience after the Restoration* [N Y, 1924], p 250)

> Whatever one may think of Dennis, he showed considerable penetration and a tendency to go directly to the root of the matter Even before the appearance of 'The Conscious Lovers' he had recognized Terence's weakness on the comic side, and in the pamphlet just referred to he goes immediately to the point Steele had said that his chief design was to write an innocent performance Dennis thereupon points out that, while innocence may be a good beginning, it is hardly a satisfactory chief design He points out so well the fact that Sentimental Comedy is bad Comedy because it is not comedy at all that it is worth while to quote him

Whereupon Krutch quotes the admirable passage that begins on II, 259 28

Page 251 9-13 *when you endeavour'd to serve it so warmly*, etc Walpole had always opposed the South Sea Company After the crash of its stock in the summer of 1720 he took the lead in attempting to save the wreckage For a brief account of his "Use of Lenitives" cf W T Laprade *Public Opinion and Politics in Eighteenth Century England* (N Y, 1936), pp 240-251

Page 252 21-22 *Never did such a Crowd of ill Plays* etc This seems to have been a general impression Writing to Jacob Tonson on June 18, 1722, Vanbrugh said (*Works*, ed Dobrée and Webb [London, 1928], IV, 146) 'But with all this encouragement from the Towne, not a fresh Poet Appears, they are forc'd to Act round and round upon the Old Stock, though Cibber tells me, 'tis not to be conceiv'd, how many and how bad Plays, are brought to them"

Page 253 21-28 *But instead of meeting with the Thanks* etc Dennis had been answered or attacked in several pieces published toward the end of 1722 (cf introductory note to the *Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter*)

Page 253 30-35 Butler, *Hudibras*, II, III, 1-6

Page 254 13-15 *or the raising the Prices* etc Mist's *Weekly Journal* also criticized the action of the managers in raising the prices for the *Conscious Lovers* (cf Aitken, *Life of Steele* [1889], II, 285)

Page 254 28-29 *They are not contented to loll each of them in his gilded Chariot* The prosperity of the managers at Drury Lane evoked sharp disapproval from many contemporary observers Vanbrugh in a letter to Tonson dated June 18, 1722, noted that "the fine Gentlemen of the Buskin in Drury Lane, ride about in their Coaches" (cf *Works of Vanbrugh*, ed Dobrée and Webb [London, 1928], IV, 146)

Page 255 1-3 Horace, Satires, I, IV, 21-23

Page 255 14-17 Horace, Satires, II, I, 62-65

Page 255.31—257 11 Shaftesbury, "Advice to an Author," in *Characteristics* (5th ed., 1732), I, 230-236

Page 258 11-22 *'Tis true, indeed, most Plays are design'd* etc It was a common opinion among critics that plays can be judged most properly by readers rather than by an audience (cf I, 519-520)

Page 259 5-7 *who has ... inveigh'd against the Rules,* etc Steele had a contempt for the minor rules when they served as a restraint upon the poet in his endeavor to attain greatness and variety (cf note on II, 187 26) Critics who judged according to the rules were contemptuously described by Steele as "Men of little or no Taste, who having read over the Mechanical Rules, and learned a few Terms of Art, are able to point out palpable Faults or Beauties in an Author, and thereby gain a Reputation for *Learning*" (cf *The Englishman*, no 7 [Oct 20, 1713]) In the *Tatler* Steele had frequently satirized the pedant and the critic who leaned heavily upon authority (cf note on II, 23 33-35) Some of Addison's remarks on pedants and critics who thrived on the cant of the French Aristotelians (cf *Spectator*, nos 105, 291, and 592) were probably taken by Dennis as the work of Steele

Page 259 18 Horace, Ars Poetica, line 89

Page 259 21-22 Boileau *l'Art Poétique*, III, 401-402

Page 259 28—260 8 *When Sir* Richard *says, that any thing that has its Foundation in Happiness* etc As early as 1702 Dennis had begun to develop at length his idea that the Ridiculum is the soul of comedy and that the Ridiculum is achieved mainly by Humour (cf I, 494-495, also II, 159-161) In the *Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter* he had set himself to combat against the notion that the hero of comedy should be, or might be, a pattern for imitation Like most of the critics contemporary with him, he believed that comedy should exhibit foolish and vicious characters in a realistic manner, and should instruct men by reducing current vices and affectations to ridicule (cf I, 477)

The majority of critics in the Augustan period held, with Horace and Boileau (cf II, 259), that comedy is inconsistent with sighs and tears Although Rapin despised the sort of comedy which could arouse laughter in the provinces by means of extravagant and improbable incidents and characters he still insisted that "that which is most proper to excite Laughter is that which is most essential to *Comedy*" (*Reflections on Aristotle's Poesie*, Pt II, sect XXV, in *Critical Works* [London, 1716], II, 219-222) The Abbé D'Aubignac noted that Terence, though pleasant to read, did not succeed in the theater so well as Plautus, because "Le premier se charge de plusieurs entretiens sérieux, & ce n'est pas ce qu'on cherche dans la Comédie, où l'on veut trouver de quoi rire . . ." (cf *Pratique du Theatre*, IV, II [ed Amsterdam, 1715, I, 263]) Dacier remarked (*La Poetique d'Aristote*, remark no 2 on chap V [ed Paris, 1692, p 61])

> Tout ce qui est accompagné de douleur, ou qui va à la destruction du sujet, n'est pas ridicule, & on ne sçauroit en rire sans inhumanité. Il ne peut donc pas faire le sujet de la Comedie, & par consequent Aristote bannit du Theatre comique, non seulement tout ce qui peut donner de l'horreur de l'aversion ou de la pitié mais

encore tout ce qui est trop serieux ou trop austere Et je croy qu'il avoit raison La Comedie ne souffre rien de grave & de serieux, si on ne trouve le secret d'y attacher le ridicule

In comedy, says the Critic in the *Comparison between the Two Stages* (1702, p 165), "All *Ideas* of distress are to be banish'd" A subject is unfit for ridicule, and therefore for comedy, said Addison (*Spectator*, no 446), if it is likely to stir up commiseration rather than laughter Cibber himself thought that the *Conscious Lovers* was too grave for an English audience (cf Aitken, *Life of Steele* [1889], II, 277)

The idea that arousing outright laughter is a positive fault in comedy was present in English criticism as early as the Renaissance When Steele said in the Preface to the *Conscious Lovers* (1723) that he proposed to introduce in comedy 'a Joy too exquisite for Laughter, that can have no Spring but in Delight," his words strongly suggested a remark by Sidney in the *Apology for Poetry* (cf *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed Gregory Smith [Oxford, 1904], I, 199) "Delight hath a joy in it, either permanent or present Laughter hath onely a scornful tickling" Ben Jonson, who blindly followed Heinsius's misinterpretation of Aristotle spoke deprecatingly of the moving of laughter in comedy, and this idea influenced the views of Sprat, Shadwell, and Edward Howard (cf Spingarn, I, 58 and 231-232) Furthermore, the fact that the *Conscious Lovers* had its origin in Steele's conception of the "fine gentleman" (cf note on II, 244 10-13), suggests another important factor in laughterless comedy the seventeenth-century code of gentlemanly conduct The elegant Earl of Chesterfield, when he advised that a gentleman should smile rather than laugh out loud, was merely echoing the sentiments of a former century George Savile, Lord Halifax, suggested in his *Advice to a Daughter* that laughter, because it made one conspicuous, was unbecoming to a person of good breeding It was almost inevitable that such an ideal of the gentleman should affect the treatment of gentlemen in comedy as well as the attitude of gentlemen toward comedy But for the sources of Steele's sober and sentimental comedy, one should consider at least three further possibilities Steele's own sentimental Irish temperament, the movement of moral reform which reached a crest in Collier's attack on the licentiousness of the stage, and the current admiration for Terence In 1712 Steele revealed his predilection for sober comedy by praising Terence's *Heauton Timorumenos*, in which he found not one passage that could raise a laugh (cf *Spectator*, no 502), and he yearned for the day when English audiences should reach that pitch of elegance and refinement at which they could enjoy comedy shrouded in sober and polite joy Trapp, who had a vast admiration for Terence, admitted that the chief business of comedy is ridicule, but he believed nevertheless that comedy might represent the entire range of our passions, and that parts of it might properly be grave, sententious, or even sorrowful (*Lectures on Poetry* [1742] pp 288-289) John Hughes, a sober and virtuous man strongly endorsed Steele's remarks on the *Heauton Timoroumenos*, and gave his own definition of true comedy (*Poems on Several Occasions* [1735], II, 312-313)

> It is not the lively Jest, the smart Repartee, or the witty Conceit, but the natural Views of Life, the moral Painting, the Manners, the Passions, the Follies, the Singularities, and Humours, in a Word it is the human Heart in all its odd Variety, pleasantly represented, that makes up the elegant Entertainment of Comedy

Hughes saw little virtue in laughter After the production of the *Conscious Lovers* several articles and pamphlets appeared in Steele's defence One of these, *An Epistle to Sir Richard Steele, on His Play, Call'd, The Conscious Lovers*, written by Benjamin Victor, expressed in an extreme form the view of comedy toward which the school of Steele were inclining (2nd ed, 1722, p 11)

> It was the Opinion of all the Antients, that Love (the usual Argument of all Comedies) is there best written, where it is most distress'd, and in despairing Passion, that Part of Comedy seeming best which is nearest Tragedy

We need go only one step beyond this to find sentimentalism full blown

The lusty, brawny, realistic comedy of which Dennis approved, and from which Steele was breaking away, did not lack a serious element or even a potentially tragic element Those who have seen Restoration comedies will recall how closely they skirt along the edge of tears and catastrophe, but they had the art of employing serious matters for comic effects Their authors did not, like Steele, put off the sock as a necessary preliminary to describing the travails and triumphs of the pure heart

Page 261 8-9 Virgil, Eclogues, VIII, 27-28

Page 261 11-16 *Sir* Richard *says, that he is extremely surpriz'd* etc The last paragraph of Steele's Preface to the *Conscious Lovers* was clumsily worded, it could be taken to mean that Steele was surprized that any truth should come from Cibber Various wags took pleasure in construing it this way (cf Aitken, *Life of Steele* [1889], II, 284 n)

Page 261 21-29 *He ought to have known the Defect*, etc Cf II, 159-161

Page 261 33-41 *the following Censure of* Quintilian etc Cf Quintilian, De Institutione Oratoria, X, I, 99-100

Page 262 23-24 *that arriv'd by the last Fish-Pool* A waggish allusion to one of Steele's unsuccessful projects Cf II, 190 17-19 and note

Page 262 30-31 Cibber *indeed has receiv'd some transitory Rebukes* etc On Dec 19, 1719, the Duke of Newcastle, acting as lord chamberlain, had ordered Cibber off the stage—a first step in breaking down the authority of the managers of Drury Lane

Page 262 38 *which I have lately taken Notice of* Cf II 241-242 and 244

Page 263.34—265.37 *But secondly, the filial Obedience of young* Bevil etc In a letter to Steele written shortly after the production of the *Conscious Lovers*, Highmore, the painter, objected to the improbabilities in the more-than-dutiful behavior of Bevil toward his father Dennis's point is sound, even if he is tedious and heavy in his reasoning

Page 264 13—265.22 Locke, *Of Civil Government* Bk II chap VI, in the *Works of Locke* (12th ed 1824), IV, 369, 370, 371, and 375

Page 269 19-22 Terence, Andria, I, I, 128-131

Page 270 4-6 Terence, Andria, V, III, 8-10

Page 272 8-18 Terence, Andria, I, I, 130-143

Page 273 14-21 Boileau, *l'Art Poétique*, III 413-420

Page 273 34-35 Terence, Andria, V, II, 15-16

Page 274 8-9 Caesar on Terence, quoted in Suetonius's Life of Terence Cf II, 159

The Decay and Defects of Dramatick Poetry

This essay, which I have printed from the autograph manuscript in the possession of the Folger Shakespeare Library, was in the main probably written as I have indicated elsewhere (cf *ELH*, I [1934], 156-162), in 1725 An extract from the essay badly mangled in the process of transcription, was published in the *Monthly Magazine* for June, 1817, otherwise it has never before been printed

The original title inscribed at the head of the manuscript was "New Advice from Parnassus" This title was scored through, and the present title substituted in Dennis's hand From the original title we may infer that the essay was prepared for inclusion in the *Miscellaneous Tracts* since in the *Proposals for Printing the Miscellaneous Tracts*, issued in 1721, an essay entitled "On the Present State of Parnassus" was listed among the materials to be issued in Vol II of the *Tracts* The second volume of the *Tracts* never appeared, and for some unknown reason the *Decay and Defects of Dramatick Poetry* was not printed in Dennis's life In some measure, however, it served the critic's end, for he succeeded in borrowing money on it, on the back of the manuscript is written "Copies of Mr Dennis, lodgd for money borrowd No 6" According to an editorial note in the *Monthly Magazine* for June 1817, the manuscript had been found among the papers of the late Mr Richardson Later the manuscript

fell into the hands of Mr Thomas Rodd and it was sold among other items from Rodd's collection at Sotheby's in Feb, 1850 Two years later it was listed in the catalogue of the Shakespeare collection owned by James Orchard Halliwell (Brixton Hill, 1852) From the Halliwell collection it was acquired by the Warwick Castle Library, whence it passed into the collection of Mr Folger

The manuscript acquires a certain importance from the fact that no other manuscript of a critical essay by Dennis has thus far come to light It helps to illuminate Dennis's methods and practice in writing, and, therefore, the alterations in spelling, punctuation, and capitalisation which printers made in setting up the essays from his manuscripts For a discussion of this point see "An Unpublished Autograph Manuscript of John Dennis," in *ELH*, I, 159-161

The first third of the *Decay and Defects of Dramatick Poetry* is given up to a lament for the good days of the past (i e, from 1660-1700), when the taste for dramatic poetry was at its height, and an analysis of the chief causes of the decline in taste since then The passage extending from page 278.25 to 280.34 is contained in two large sheets folded in folio, which are bound at the end of the manuscript and which are marked for insertion in the spot where the passage now stands The second of these large sheets contains the paragraphs extending from page 279.30 to 280.34, this sheet was probably written before the rest of the essay, for it introduces a new subject—poetry in general, and the undiscerning choice which the government had made in its selection of a poet laureate—and a subject of freshest interest to Dennis in 1718 when by the appointment of Eusden his own hopes of becoming the laureate had for the second time been smashed The attack upon the player-managers of Drury Lane (pages 277-279) and upon Cibber specifically (pages 281-282) is but a continuation of the quarrel which Dennis began in 1719 It is interesting to note that when this essay was written Dennis's antagonism toward Steele was apparently fading since he devoted only one paragraph (page 281) and part of a sentence in another paragraph (page 283.3-5) to remarking upon Sir Richard and even here he is unwontedly mild

The bulk of the essay is given up to answering Welsted's preface to the *Epistles, Odes, &c* (1724) Dennis had never mentioned Welsted previously, and seems to have had no quarrel with him although Welsted had been for years an intimate friend of Steele's A reading of the preface makes it clear why Dennis attacked, for Welsted sneered at critics derided the rules deprecated the sort of literature that was heavily influenced by classical models, defined taste as a mysterious and indefinable "new Sense or Faculty superadded to the ordinary ones of the Soul" and tended to prefer the moderns above the ancients Welsted's contempt for the ancient authorities and for all those who followed them obediently was so pronounced that he seemed to imply an idea of progress At least one contemporary critic, who called himself 'Alexis," read in the preface a belief that the moderns had advanced far beyond the ancients in knowledge and wisdom Said Alexis, addressing Welsted with obvious irony (*The Present State of Poetry, a Satire* [1726], p iv)

> The *miraculous* Advancements, which, according to You we have lately made from meer *Barbarity*, to the very Extremity of *Politeness*, and curious *Knowledge*, (and by Means, I presume, no less wonderful) make me particularly regard, what I ever before thought excessively *false* and *trivial*, I mean the *vulgar* Notion, *that every Age grows wiser and wiser*

In certain respects Welsted was definitely in advance of the ideas of his day, and Dennis's disagreement turned upon questions of fundamental importance in contemporary literary theory

One of the most interesting points of disagreement was their attitude toward Aristotle's Poetics To Welsted the Poetics was merely a series of generalizations based upon the small body of literature known to Aristotle, and therefore of no authority to govern the practice of writers in succeeding ages To Dennis the Poetics

was a "Beautifull System of precepts" which, being based upon a deep understanding of unchanging human nature, was valid for all times and places (cf II, 286-287) Welsted rejected the authority of rules because many of the graces of poetry are too elusive and too individual to be created or comprehended by anything less than a natural taste, a certain sixth sense (cf *Epistles, Odes, &c*, p xix), and because the rules, being merely generalizations founded upon the practice of past authors, cannot govern the composition of new works inasmuch as new works, to achieve value, must be fresh, original, and free of the tyranny of models (*ibid*, pp xxxvii-xxxviii) Dennis accepted the rules not because they were stamped with the sacred authority of Aristotle and Horace but because, founded upon an investigation of the workings of the human mind, they revealed the best and surest way by which an artist might produce in his readers or audience the psychological effect which the *genre* in which he wrote was intended to produce The point should be emphasized that Aristotle's rules might be accepted by one who did not accept the idea of the superiority of the ancients over the moderns in genius and knowledge and who did not accept the theory of the decay of nature, and who did not believe that the rules had been and might still be derived from nature by the *a priori* method of reasoning To Dennis the rules of Aristotle were empirical and scientific, they were laws describing how the human mind operated under certain circumstances, and they were based upon observation and understanding and they had been confirmed by the experience of the ages

A second interesting point of disagreement between Dennis and Welsted was their attitude toward reason To Dennis, who followed the conventional faculty-psychology reason was a distinct and separate power of the mind the power that is active in logic and mathematics a power which in the poet serves to control the memory and the imagination (cf II, 297 and 298), and which provides the structure and design in any work of art Welsted on the other hand, perceived that the sort of reason exercised in mathematics was different in kind from the reason exercised in art, he insisted that reason in poetry includes imagination just as certainly as it involves memory and judgment (cf *Epistles, Odes, &c*, p xxii) From this disagreement it is not proper to conclude that Dennis held reason in higher or lower esteem than did Welsted, but only that they employed different systems of psychology and attached different meanings to the same word Welsted's concept of reason pointed forward to the romantic attitude (cf note on II 285 34-40), and Dennis, a much older man than Welsted failed completely to comprehend it

The significance of Dennis's stalwart defence of the rules in this essay lies simply in the fact that Dennis felt the rules were in grave danger, subjected as they were to innumerable attacks by poets and critics alike Dennis had no child-like faith in the rules, he fully realized that they were not enough to make a poet He knew, too, that under certain circumstances the minor rules, such as the unities of time and place, were better neglected than observed He preferred the *Oedipus* of Dryden and Lee, which violated the rules, to the *Cato* of Addison which attempted to observe the rules But he believed that all art must be consciously directed toward a definite goal, that each *genre* has a certain effect which it must achieve, and that there is one best way by which the effect can be achieved This one best way, he thought, was indicated by the rules The alternative to art written according to the rules, it appeared to Dennis, was art created without plan or purpose, art which did not fulfill its design, subconscious art—or, in short, chaos His defence of the rules in the *Decay and Defects of Dramatick Poetry* does not indicate that at the close of his career as a critic Dennis was yielding completely to the authority of Aristotle

Page 275 5-7 *and yet evn then we had Two Comick poets*, etc Dennis probably refers to Congreve and Vanbrugh, whom he thought of as the leading comic poets of the reign of William III (cf II, 252 30-33) Congreve was alive until 1729 Vanbrugh died in 1726, in the summer of 1725, however, he was afflicted with a painful distemper, and Dennis may have anticipated his demise

Page 275 7 Virgil, Aeneid, XII, 649

Page 275 14-20 Cf *Isaiah*, XXXIV, 10-14

Page 276 3-6 *And what Countenance His Daughter Queen Elizabeth* etc Cf I, 279 and 164

Page 276 37-38 *in the wrecks of the fraudulent Pacifique Ocean* A reference to the South Sea Bubble, which burst in 1720

Page 277 14 *Mr Savil, Mr Buckley* "Mr Savil" was Rochester's good friend and correspondent, Henry Savile The fame of "Mr Buckley" as a noted wit has grown dim with time, and it is difficult to identify him with any assurance He is probably identical with the "Buckly" who in 1677 engaged in a tavern-brawl with Etherege (cf Hist MSS Com, Bath, II, 160) He may have been Henry Bulkeley, master of the household in the reign of Charles II, and husband of the noted court beauty, Lady Sophia

Page 277 33-39 *Their oracle of wit, is an Amphibious creature,* etc The "Amphibious creature" was Colley Cibber, both an actor and a writer of plays His two 'Rhapsodies" were *Perolla and Izadora* (produced in 1705) and *Ximena or, The Heroick Daughter* (produced in 1712) They were both tragedies, and neither was successful Cf also II, 407

Page 277 40 *but He has lately writ a third Cæsar in Ægypt,* produced at Drury Lane in December, 1724

Page 277 43—278 2 *a passage in Boccalin, where, He tells us,* etc Cf II, 170 10-14 and note

Page 278 2-4 *Yet this very oracle rejected* etc I have been unable to discover anything about Cibber's part in bringing about the rejection of Nicholas Rowe's *Ambitious Step-Mother* Fenton's *Mariamne* was offered to the Drury Lane company sometime between 1719 and 1723, and refused by Cibber (cf R H Barker, *Mr Cibber of Drury Lane* [N Y 1939], p 115) Cibber was notorious for his harsh and insolent treatment of playwrights (*ibid*, pp 112-116)

Page 278 9-11 *At The Restoration The Theatres were in the Hands* etc In August, 1660 patents were issued, giving a monopoly in theatrical affairs to Thomas Killigrew and Sir William D'Avenant (cf Nicoll *History of Restoration Drama* [Cambridge, 1923] p 270) Killigrew's company came to be known as the King's company, and D'Avenant's group as the Duke of York's company

Page 279 12-14 *For great Actours are only made* etc Cf II, 178 41 and note

Page 279 21-27 *Tis true indeed the Court may aply a Remedy* etc Cf II, 303

Page 279 34-37 *They seem to have in their eye* etc According to Burnet (*Some Letters, Containing, an Account of What Seemed Most Remarkable in Switzerland, Italy, &c* [Rotterdam 1687], pp 223-224), a celebrated resident of Rome told him that Catholics

> thought it was so much the better to have to do with a poor ignorant Priest for then they had to do only with the Church and not with the man Pursuant to this that person's Confessor was the greatest and the most notorious blockhead that could be found and when they were asked why they made use of so weak a man, they answered, because they could not find a weaker

According to a story current in the early part of the eighteenth century, the Duke of Shrewsbury had related this anecdote in an argument to block the appointment of Stillingfleet as Archbishop of Canterbury (cf *Diary of Dudley Ryder*, ed W Matthews [London, 1939], pp 167-168)

Page 279 39-41 *For when They gave Mr Bays* etc Laurence Eusden was appointed poet laureate in 1718, the usual stipend was a hundred pounds a year and a butt of wine Dennis probably wrote with a certain strain of bitterness, for he himself had been a candidate for the laureateship in 1718 as well as in 1715 I have been unable to identify "Nichl" The name is almost certainly a pseudonym, taken from an old

form of the Latin *nihil* It strongly suggests Thomas Tickell, whose appointment as an under-secretary of state in April, 1717, aroused some jealousy among other whigs

In 1715 Dennis had some reason to expect official recognition of his services in the commonwealth of letters The *Weekly Packet*, no 161 (July 30-Aug 6, 1715), announced

> Nahum Tate, departed this Life on Saturday last, and will, it is said, be succeeded by Mr John Dennis, one of the King's Waiters at the Custom-House

One week later the *Weekly Packet* announced "Nicholas Row and John Dennis Esqs are made Poet-Laureat and Historiographer to his Majesty" But Dennis's hopes were doomed to be blasted again

Page 280 36 *But as They have been treated of formerly* Cf I, 289-294 and 382-393 Dennis also attacked luxury and effeminacy in his *Essay upon Publick Spirit* (1711), in *Julius Caesar Acquitted* (1722), and in *Vice and Luxury Public Mischiefs* (1724)

Page 281 1 *as to suffer vice and Luxury to be preachd up with Impunity* Probably a reference to Bernard Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, published in 1714 and reprinted with important additions in 1723 Dennis answered Mandeville in *Vice and Luxury Public Mischiefs* (1724)

Page 281 18-25 *The Doge of Drury did formerly* etc Sir Richard Steele was the patentee of the Drury Lane theater In 1720 he launched a new periodical, the *Theatre*, which he wrote under the pseudonym of Sir John Edgar, in the *Theatre*, no 2, he made an oblique attack upon the rules (cf note on II, 187 26) His first play produced after he wrote the *Theatre* was the *Conscious Lovers* (1722)

Page 281. 29-31 *As for The Ægyptian* etc Colley Cibber is referred to as the "Ægyptian" because of his recently published tragedy, *Cæsar in Ægypt* In the Epilogue to the *Non-Juror* Cibber expressed scorn for those playwrights who made plays by rules or recipes, as women make puddings (cf note on II 197 22-30)

Page 281 39-45 *Moliere, among a great many other* etc Cibber's *Non-Juror* was produced in December, 1717 Cf note on II 187 22-24 His *Refusal* was produced in February, 1721

Page 282 23 Horace, Ars Poetica, line 188

Page 282 24-27 Rapin, *Reflections on Aristotle's Poetic*, Pt I, sect XII, in *Critical Works* (London, 1716), II, 146

Page 282.31—283.2 *Soe the Third Authour whom I have mentiond above*, etc The "Third Authour" mentioned, the author of *Applepye*, was Leonard Welsted The poem *Applepye* was included in Welsted's *Epistles, Odes, &c* (1724) It had previously appeared in *The Northern Atlantis* (1713), in a miscellany edited by Curll and entitled *Original Poems and Translations by Mr Hill, Mr Eusden, Mr Broome, Dr King, &c* (1714), and in Breval's *The Art of Dress* (1717), usually it was assigned to Dr King, and it was later included in *The Original Works of William King* (1776) According to the *DNB*, *Apple-Pye* was Welsted's first poem, and it was originally published in 1704

The comedy of which Dennis speaks is Welsted's *Dissembled Wanton*, rejected by Cibber and finally produced in December 1726 at the new theater in Lincoln's Inn Fields

The "long præface of almost seventy pages" which Dennis mentions is the dissertation prefixed to Welsted's *Epistles, Odes, &c Written on Several Subjects With a Translation of Longinus's Treatise on the Sublime By Mr Welsted To which is prefix'd, A Dissertation concerning the Perfection of the English Language, the State of Poetry, &c* (1724)

Page 284 3 *the D of N* The Duke of Newcastle

Page 284 40-41 *a wretched Translation of the Rules of an Ancient Rhetorician* Welsted's translation of Longinus, which had first appeared in 1712

Page 284. 44-45 *And yet p 47 commends the French critacks* etc Cf Welsted's *Epistles, Odes, &c* (1724), p lvii

Page 285 34-40 ***Now if the Imagination is a part of Reason,*** etc Even though he contended that the imagination was strongest in persons with the weakest minds, Dennis did not underestimate the importance of the imagination in art (cf I, **462-463** and **489-490**) Like most of his contemporaries, Dennis held to some form of the faculty-psychology, according to which imagination is a wild and licentious power of the mind, entirely separate from reason Uncontrolled by reason, the imagination was presumed to be disordered, pulled by impulse and whim, and unpurposeful Before it can be valuable in art, it must be made to serve an artistic purpose, and the faculty which can direct it to a legitimate end is reason To believe this was not to disparage the imagination, it was an inevitable consequence of the faculty-psychology, in which the powers of the human mind were sharply distinguished and in which only reason, the one characteristic which lifted man above the beasts, was considered strong enough to stand alone

Even in the first quarter of the eighteenth century the faculty-psychology was breaking down Reason, the prime faculty, was being enlarged, credited with certain powers which we associate with the imagination, a few writers, indeed, conceived of reason as capable of transcending experience (cf I, **490**) Thus reason broke the bounds, becoming something more than the faculty exercised in the solution of mathematical problems In the dedication of the *Epistles, Odes, &c* of 1724 Leonard Welsted stated flatly that reason as it is applied to mathematics is a very different thing from reason as it is applied to practical affairs or to art, reason in poetry, he said, includes imagination just as certainly as it involves memory and judgment (p xxii) Here the strict categories of the faculty-psychology are already broken down It remained for William Law, however, finally to demolish the accepted system of faculty-psychology (cf Ernest Mossner, *Bishop Butler and the Age of Reason* [N Y, 1936], p 127) Reason, insisted Law, cannot be separated from the passions and the imagination (cf *The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion, Fairly and Fully Stated* [1731], pp 157 and 152)

> We say that our passions paint things in false colours, and present to our minds vain appearances of happiness
>
> But this is no more strictly true, than when we say, our *imagination* forms castles in the air For the imagination signifies no distinct faculty from our reason, but only reason acting upon our *own ideas*
>
> For the distinction of our reason from our Passions, is only a distinction in language, made at pleasure, and is no more real in the things themselves than the *desire* and *inclination* are really different from the *will* All therefore that is weak and foolish in our passions is the weakness and folly of our reason, all the inconstancy and caprice of our humours and tempers is the caprice and inconstancy of our reason

By insisting that "it is necessary to consider human reason, and human nature, not as it is represented in common language but as it is in reality in itself," Law provided the means of overthrowing the idea of reason as a distinct faculty of human nature, a faculty of absolute perfection "as immutable, and incapable of any addition or improvement, as God himself" And it was not until doubts had been cast upon the perfection and immutability of reason that imagination could come into its own Law's *Case of Reason* seems to have had comparatively little influence in its own day, but in its attempt to treat reason empirically it represented a tendency well under way before 1731, a tendency which was to make possible the glorified position which the imagination held in the age following A remark made by William Melmoth, writing only a few years after the publication of Law's *Case of Reason*, will illustrate how completely the Cartesian idea of reason had broken down In defining *good-sense*, Melmoth equated it with *right reason*, and added (cf *Letters of Sir Thomas Fitzosborne, on Several Subjects* [3rd ed, 1750], p 240): " I should call it right reason, but right

reason that arises, not from formal and logical deductions, but from a sort of intuitive faculty in the soul, which distinguishes by immediate perception, a kind of innate sagacity, that in many of its properties seems very much to resemble instinct"

Page 286 39-43 *The Authour of the Dissertation says,* etc Cf Welsted, *Epistles, Odes, &c*, p xvii

Page 288 23 *at Mother Needhams* A notorious procuress, at one time associated with Colonel Charteris (cf *DNB*, under Elizabeth Needham)

Page 288 33-37 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 114-118

Page 289 19-22 Welsted, *Epistles, Odes, &c*, p xxxiv

Page 289 34-35 Lines 20-21 of the poem by Catullus beginning "Suffenus iste, Vare, quem probe nosti" (cf ed by F W Cornish [Loeb Classical Library, 1931], p 26)

Page 289 37-38 *His own version of that ode of Horace* etc Welsted's translation of Horace, Odes, IV, III, is given on pp lv-lvii of the *Epistles, Odes, &c*

Page 290 11 *the Ingenious Morris, the Facetious Giles Jacob* Very little is recorded about Bezaleel Morrice He was known as Capt Morrice, and apparently had some connection with the East India Company In or about 1716 he published in a thin folio of twelve pages a poem called *A Voyage from Bengale in the East-Indies* Pope satirized him in the *Dunciad* (1729), II, 118 Giles Jacob was amiably disposed toward Dennis in 1719 when he published the *Poetical Register* In 1721 Dennis received a visit from Jacob, and when Jacob became somewhat officious, Dennis turned him out of doors (cf Dennis to Prior, April 11, 1721, Hist MSS Com, Bath III, 501-502) By 1729 they were on friendly terms again (cf II, 372)

Page 290 26-32 Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, *Essay upon Poetry*, in Spingarn, II, 293-294

Page 291 5-6 Horace, Epistles, II, I, 197-198

Page 291 8-16 Welsted, *Epistles, Odes, &c*, p xxviii

Page 291 23-26 Horace Ars Poetica, lines 408-411

Page 293 5-7 *But if He has said,* etc Sir William Temple remarked in his essay 'Of Poetry" that the rules could not make any man a good poet, they could only hinder some men from becoming very bad poets (cf Spingarn, III, 84-85)

Page 294 3-4 *as He tells us Himself* etc In the Advertisement to his *Reflections on Aristotle's Poesie* Rapin remarks (cf *Critical Works* [London, 1716], II, 133) " *I have precisely* [followed Aristotle] *in these* Reflections, *where I bring only* Examples *to confirm the* Rules *he gives us*"

Page 295 15-18 *there is a Blunder that puts me in mind* etc I have been unable to identify the play from which this stage-direction was taken In the early eighteenth century it was a stock joke (cf Pope, Preface to Shakespeare in Elwin-Courthope X, 543, also Addison, *Spectator*, no 29)

Page 295 22-23 Roscommon, *Horace Of the Art of Poetry*, lines 108-109, in *Works* (Glasgow, 1753), p 87

Page 298 18-20 Welsted, *Epistles, Odes, &c*, p xlii

Page 298 45 *He comes in the 56 page* The reference should be p xlvi

Page 299 13-39 *Upon which says Dacier* etc *La Poetique d'Aristote*, Remark no 5 on chap IX (ed Paris, 1692, pp 137-138)

The Stage Defended

This essay was written in reply to William Law's *The Absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage-Entertainment Fully Demonstrated* (1726) In his attack upon the stage, the distinguished author of *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* had ventured upon a subject with which he had little acquaintance, and he had given utterance to a violent hatred of nearly every human pleasure and diversion The tide of abuse and bigotry flowing in Law's pamphlet is oppressive to the nostrils of a modern reader, and, as Dennis remarked (II, 310), it was so fantastic and naive as to arouse in worldly

men a scorn and contempt of religion itself The tone of Law's *Absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage-Entertainment* may be judged from a few examples he proclaimed that the use of cosmetics "is undoubtedly a great Sin" (4th ed, 1759, p 23), he denounced all actors indiscriminately as "the most open Enemies of the Purity and Holiness of Christ's Religion" (*ibid*, p 52), and he condemned classical allusions in literature on the grounds that "they who call up Devils to their Entertainment, who cannot be enough delighted, unless the impious Demons of the Heathen World converse with them, are in a stricter Communication with the Devil, than they who only eat of that Meat which had been offered in Sacrifice" (*ibid*, p 31) In the entire pamphlet there is not one trace of Law's really keen mind, there is only evidence of a rabid and ferocious asceticism He undoubtedly deserved the treatment which he received from "the impartial Pen of Mrs S—— O——, a Lover of Both Houses," who replied in a little pamphlet called *Law Outlaw'd* (1726) Mrs S—— O—— described Law as a troublesome maniac and proposed that he be admitted into the Incurable Ward of Bethlehem Hospital

Dennis's *The Stage Defended* marked his fourth appearance in defence of the theater (cf note on II, 304 31-32) Virtually all of the essential arguments in it had appeared in his previous treatises in fact, he probably wrote with the other three treatises at his elbow, and in one spot he quoted word for word a passage from the *Essay on the Opera's* (cf II, 311 25-31) *The Stage Defended* will serve to demonstrate Dennis's genuine love of the drama for he wrote it disinterestedly, years after he had abandoned the hope of seeing any more of his own plays produced (cf II, 304) At the time he wrote this essay Dennis seems to have been occupied with plans for restoring the glory of the drama by the establishment of two annual prizes for the best new works in comedy and tragedy (cf II 303 31-43 and note), and he addressed the essay to George Bubb Dodington with the aim of enlisting his support

Law's attack upon the stage went through four editions by 1759 Dennis's reply apparently aroused little interest, it has never before been reprinted

Page 300 4-5 *to address it to a Gentleman of your distinguish'd Rank* The essay was addressed to George Bubb Dodington who had been since 1724 one of the lords commissioners of the treasury

Page 300.32—301 2 *As for the first of these, the Combats of our modern Gladiators*, etc During the reign of Queen Anne sword-play was a popular sport, the exhibitions being commonly held at the Bear Garden in Hockley Fights with cudgels and threshing flails were also held Following the reign of Anne sword-fighting was driven out of favor by pugilistic combats Foreigners visiting England, like Misson, commented on the Englishman's strange pleasure in fighting Cf John Ashton, *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne* (London, 1904) pp 237-241

Page 301 12-13 *which Mr* Law *affirms to be more innocent than the Drama* Law remarked (*Absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage-Entertainment* [4th ed, 1759], I p 22-23)

> For the Entertainment of the *Stage* is more directly opposite to the Purity of Religion, than *Masquerades*, and is besides as certain a Means of Corruption, and serves all bad Ends in as great a degree as they do

Page 301 19-26 *To which I might add the late Remark* etc The remark occurs in a sermon preached by Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, on Jan 6, 1724, at Bow-Church in Cheapside, the sermon was preached to the Societies for Reformation of Manners (cf *Political State of Great Britain*, xxvii [Jan 1724], pp 96-97) A contemporary account informs us that (*ibid*, p 98)

> This Sermon, together with the Representations made by the Lord Bishop of *London*, and other Prelates, had their due Weight, so that Orders were given from Above, That there should be no more *Masquerades*, but what were Subscribed for at the Beginning of this Month *viz* only Six

Page 302 6-7 *the other, upon publishing his Book* etc Dennis is confusing two different individuals It was Arthur Bedford who followed Collier's footsteps in attacking the stage, it was Hilkiah Bedford, a nonconformist divine, who was imprisoned on the charge of having written *The Hereditary Right of the Crown of England Asserted* (1713)

Page 302 13-16 Butler, *Hudibras*, I, II (ed A R Waller [Cambridge 1905], p 36)

Page 303 17-18 Virgil, Georgics, III, 8-9

Page 303 31-43 Sir, *with Submission to your better Judgment*, etc For another presentation of Dennis's plan for restoring the drama, cf II 279

Page 304 3-8 *The Strangers who have been introduced* etc Compare II, 276

Page 304 31-32 *this is the fourth Time that I have appear'd* etc The three previous works in defence of the stage were *The Usefulness of the Stage* (1698), *The Person of Quality's Answer to Collier's Dissuasive* (1704), and the *Essay on the Opera's* (1706)

Page 305 22-31 *For St Paul, who was educated in all the Learning* etc The reference to "the vith Chapter of the *Acts*, Ver 28" is an error, it should be *Acts*, xvii, 28 The reference to "*Titus*, Ver 10" is an error, it should be *Titus*, 11-12 The Athenian dramatic poet referred to was Menander In finding traces of Aratus, Epimenides, and Menander in these verses Dennis was following the authority of Hugo Grotius (cf *Annotationes in Vetus et Novum Testamentum* [London, 1727], II, 233, 363, and 308)

Page 306 28-39 *the Passage which he quotes from Archbishop* Tillotson, etc Cf Law, *Absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage-Entertainment* (4th ed, 1759), p 43 This passage from Tillotson was often cited by the enemies of the stage Dennis had dealt with it on a previous occasion (cf I, 319 and note)

Page 306 40—307 4 *For after he has told us, in this blessed Pamphlet*, etc The passage in italics is not an exact quotation, but a collection of phrases and clauses which Dennis found scattered over approximately two pages of Law's pamphlet (4th ed, 1759, pp 17-18)

Page 307 5-7 *he assures us, that the Play-house* etc Law remarked (4th ed, 1759 p 19)

> Now it is to be observed, that this is not the State of the *Play-House* through any accidental Abuse, as any innocent or good thing may be abused but that Corruption and Debauchery are the truly natural and genuine Effects of the *Stage-Entertainment*

Page 307 30-31 Horace Ars Poetica, lines 189-190

Page 307 33-34 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 319-320

Page 307 36 Horace, Ars Poetica, line 339

Page 308 7-9 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 286-288

Page 309 22—310 24 *Poetry, says that most judicious Critick*, etc Cf Dacier, *La Poetique d'Aristote* (Paris, 1692), Preface sig [*8]*v*—[*9]*v*)

Page 311 25-31 to shew that Gaming, by giving Men a Privilege etc Dennis here quotes himself (cf I, 383)

Page 312 26-27 Cowley, *Davideis*, III, 429-430, in *Poems*, ed A R Waller (Cambridge, 1905), p 335

Page 312 44—313 6 *he gives the following Reason for it* etc Molière, *La Critique de l'École des Femmes*, Scene VII, in *Œuvres Complètes* (Paris, Garnier Frères), I, 466

Page 313 42-46 Horace, Epistles, II, 1, 119-123

Page 314 18—315 17 *And yet I cannot help thinking*, etc Dennis had treated this subject previously (cf I, 156) He was not alone in noting the prevalence of sodomy at this time Edmund Gibson remarked (*The Bishop of London's Pastoral Letter to the People of His Diocese* [3rd ed, 1728], p 2)

> They who live in these great Cities, or have had frequent recourse to them, and have any Concern for Religion, must have observ'd to their great grief That a new sort of Vice of a very horrible nature, and almost unknown before

in these parts of the world, was springing up and gaining ground among us, if it had not been check'd by the seasonable Care of the Civil Administration

Page 315 23-28 Boileau, *l'Art Poétique*, IV, 91-96

Page 317 23-25 Horace, Satires, I, III, 96-98

Page 320 37-40 *And what are his two Predecessors*, etc Collier was in truth a nonjuror, but Arthur Bedford was not Dennis confused Arthur Bedford with Hilkiah Bedford (cf II, 302 6-7 and note)

Page 321 20-23 *As for Mr* Bedford's Serious Remonstrance, etc Arthur Bedford's *Serious Remonstrance in Behalf of the Horrid Blasphemies and Impieties Which Are Still Used in the English Playhouses* was published in 1719, when there was some danger of a Jacobite invasion

Remarks on the Rape of the Lock

The seven letters included in this work were written to a friend during the year 1714, the first one on May 1, less than two months after the first publication of the augmented *Rape* These letters were composed with no thought of publication, it was not until early in 1717 that Dennis was tempted to turn them over to the printer (cf II, 122), and then he resisted the temptation, preferring to hold back the remarks on the *Rape* as a constant threat against Pope (cf II, 322) After the appearance of the *Remarks upon Pope's Homer* in February, 1717, Dennis and Pope dropped their hostilities for a period of several years In 1721, in fact, as a result of apparently friendly overtures on the part of Pope (cf II, 370-371) a kind of reconciliation was effected and Dennis deleted a few unpleasant comments on Pope which he had intended to publish in the *Original Letters* At this point the letters on the *Rape* seemed to be destined to eternal oblivion

But Pope was not satisfied with such a state of affairs He began to polish up a fragment of a satire in which he attacked both Dennis and Gildon This fragment was published in 1723 (cf Elwin-Courthope, III, 536), and again, with certain revisions, in Curll's *Miscellanea* of 1727, where the first quatrain read (I, 133)

> If *Dennis* writes, and rails, with furious Pet,
> I'll answer *Dennis*, when I am in *Debt*,
> If meaner *Gildon* draws the *venal* Quill,
> I wish the Wretch a Dinner, and sit still

These lines were later used in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* This was only a beginning On March 8 1728, appeared the third volume of the *Miscellanies* edited by Pope and Swift, containing the prose satire, *Peri Bathous*, which came to be known as Pope's *Profund* In the *Profund* Pope was pleased to ridicule a large number of contemporary writers, including Blackmore Ambrose Philips, Sewell, Hill, Gildon, Theobald, Defoe, Eusden, Broome, Cibber, Welsted, Ned Ward, Motteux, and Dennis From Dennis's poetry Pope had culled two feeble—and perhaps silly—passages to illustrate types of bathos (cf Elwin-Courthope, X, 382 and 392) Certainly there was no evil in this act Yet it was uncalled for and could serve no useful purpose, Dennis was no longer esteemed as a poet, and the passages cited, written nearly forty years before Pope pounced upon them, were no longer appropriate illustrations of flaws in contemporary taste Pope evidently was up to mischief More serious, however, than the citation of these two passages, was the attack in chap VI, in which Dennis is classified as a "Porpoise," the porpoises being defined as shapeless and ugly monsters, unwieldy and big, who go in for turmoil and tempest In addition, Pope devoted a good share of chap XVI to giving an abstract of a satire upon Dennis and Gildon which had appeared in 1720 It is easy to understand why Dennis was annoyed Nor was he alone in his annoyance For two months after the publication of the *Profund* the newspapers ran a series of angry letters from bards whose feelings had been injured Most of these

items were gathered together in a little volume entitled *A Compleat Collection of All the Verses, Essays, Letters and Advertisements, Which Have Been Occasioned by the Publication of Three Volumes of Miscellanies, by Pope and Company* (1728). The last letter in this collection, taken from the *Daily Journal* of May 11, 1728, was, according to a note by Pope in the *Dunciad Variorum* of 1729, composed by John Dennis There is a strong probability that this attribution is correct The letter (cf II, 416-417) contains several critical opinions which Dennis had previously expressed, it refers to Pope as "A P——E", just as Dennis does in the *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock*, and the style is such that it could have been the work only of Dennis or, what is less likely, of someone consciously imitating him Apart from this letter Dennis took no immediate action with regard to the *Profund*

In the second appendix to the *Dunciad Variorum* in 1729 Pope attempted slyly to convey the impression that he had been widely and unfairly attacked in the months prior to the publication of the 1728 *Dunciad* As a matter of fact, several of the letters included in his "List of Books, Papers, and Verses, in which our Author was abused, printed before the Publication of the Dunciad" were objections to the *Miscellanies* in general, or attacks upon Swift, or criticisms of the *Profund*, in which Pope was not even mentioned Moreover, some of the treatises which Pope included in the same list were printed some time after the appearance of the *Dunciad* The *Dunciad* was first published on May 18, 1728 *Gulliveriana*, which Pope intimated was produced before this date, could not have appeared before July since it contains a portion of a letter dated July 4 1728 Dennis's *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* which according to Pope, was printed before the *Dunciad*, actually appeared more than a month after the *Dunciad* In *The Progress of Dulness*, published on June 11, 1728 (cf Ralph Straus, *The Unspeakable Curll* [London and New York 1928], pp 285-286), the author, after making a few comments on the *Rape of the Lock*, remarked (p 29), 'But I shall explain no farther, since Mr *Dennis* in a short time intends to give the Publick an exact *Dissection* of this chaste *Performance*" Dennis had undoubtedly read the *Dunciad* before he published his *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* (cf II, 325) In the first edition of the *Dunciad*, it will be recalled, Dennis was ridiculed in four different passages, in one of which he was called fool and blockhead (cf Elwin-Courthope, IV, 273, 284, 286, and 294) The *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock*, therefore, is a retort to both the *Profund* and the *Dunciad*

On April 14, 1728, Edward Young wrote to Tickell (cf R E Tickell, *Thomas Tickell* [London, 1931], p 146), "I have no Manner of News, but that the offended Wits are entered into a Club to take Revenge on Swift & Pope for their late attack " There was undoubtedly a certain measure of co-operation among the writers who in 1728-1729 published replies to Pope's satires, and it is interesting to speculate as to Dennis's part in their undertakings An article dated Nov 19 1730 referred to Dennis as "the worthy President of our [the Grub-Street] Society' (cf *A Collection of Pieces in Verse and Prose, Which Have Been Publish'd on Occasion of the Dunciad*, ed Rich Savage [1732], p 30) It would not have been surprising if he had taken a leading part in the counterattack against Pope, for he had been Pope's earliest opponent and, with the possible exception of Blackmore, he was in 1728 probably the best known of all the "Dunces" He was in high esteem among the "gentlemen of the *Dunciad*", the author of the *Twickenham Hotch-Potch* spoke of him as "our modern Longinus" (p II), and the author of *Gulliveriana* gave warning to Pope and Swift (p x)

> let these Dualists be never so hardy and fearless, I expect every Moment to hear and see *Shadwell's* and *Settle's* Ghosts hawking and stalking along the Streets, nor do I know what may be the Issue of the *fell Ire* of the living *Dennis*

He undoubtedly discussed the *Dunciad* among his friends, for the author of the *Popiad* reports (p 32)

> Mr *Dennis* lately observ'd in Conversation, nothing shows a greater Act of Lunacy, than that Mr *Pope*, could not be content with the *Enjoyment* of a *Fame* to which he has not the least *Title*, but that he Himself must call in the *right Owners* to assert their *Claims*

And it is quite possible that he gave suggestions to other writers as to how Pope should be answered Moreover, portions of his works were frequently reprinted at this time His letter to the *Daily Journal* of May 11, 1728, was reprinted in the *Compleat Collection of All the Verses, Essays, Letters and Advertisements, Which Have Been Occasioned by the Publication of Three Volumes of Miscellanies* (1728) and in *Gulliveriana* (1728) Portions of the *Remarks upon Pope's Homer* were reprinted in the *Curliad* (1728) and the *Twickenham Hotch-Potch* (1728), and the *Popiad* (1728) consists almost entirely of quotations from the same work The *Progress of Dulness* (1728) reprinted nearly all of the 'Observations upon *Windsor Forest*" and the "Observations upon *The Temple of Fame*" A surprising amount of space was devoted to Dennis in the notes to the *Dunciad Variorum* Yet in spite of this evidence of his prominence in the attack upon Pope, it is unlikely that he presided over the meetings of the "Dunces," or that he had a hand in their publications For one thing, Dennis was not at this time on particularly good terms with Curll, who was a ringleader in the pamphlet-warfare against the little gentleman of Twickenham He could not have countenanced the *Popiad*, for it reprinted from the *Remarks upon Pope's Homer* his attack on Theobald and in 1728 Dennis was one of Theobald's champions Furthermore, Dennis in 1728 was a man of threescore years and ten, infirm and impoverished, an object of compassion rather than a leader in battle The picture of him at this time, given by one of his contemporaries who was engaged against Pope, makes it clear that Dennis was not the generalissimo of the "Dunces" He says of Dennis (*Characters of the Times, or, an Impartial Account of the Writings, Characters, Education, &c of Several Noblemen and Gentlemen, Libell'd in a Preface to a Late Miscellany Publish'd by P——pe and S——ft* [1728], pp 39-40)

> This Gentleman however his too great warmth and vehemence of Temper may have led him into some Imprudences, has yet deserv'd well of the learned World in many Instances He was reputed and esteem'd formerly by Mr *Dryden*, and has been treated with much Candour and Friendship by many other Persons far superior for Wit and Reputation to those Men who have now laid such a heavy Load on him At present his Age, his Wants and Infirmities greatly entitle him to the Compassion of Men of Goodness as his Critical Learning and other Knowledge, does, to the Regard of Men of Letters
>
> 'Twas monstrously inhuman to persecute this unhappy Gentleman in his decline of Life and at a Time when he had almost all Ills to struggle with, without any Support but the Friendship of a few worthy Men, who cou'd not persuade themselves that a bare Contempt of *P——pe's* Verses, and the preferring better Writers to him was a Wickedness of the last Dye

It is safe to assume that in writing the letter to the *Daily Journal* and the *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* Dennis was acting as an individual rather than as spokesman for a club, and that he had comparatively little voice in directing the campaign of the "Dunces'

Much can be said to justify Dennis's attempt to strike back at Pope, but little can be said in favor of the *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* as a piece of literary criticism It is fundamentally wrong and fundamentally bad Its fundamental wrongness, however, is not the result of mere anger or perversity Dennis had no sympathy with the "fairy way of writing" By nature and temperament he was committed to high

seriousness and to a belief that literature should deal realistically with the important concerns of civilised men Consequently he was unable to understand or enjoy the exquisite trifling of the *Rape* His criticism reaches the apogee of ineptitude when he cites classical authority to support his contention that native beauty is superior to that achieved by the use of cosmetics (cf II, **332-334**), arguing therefrom that Belinda was not truly beautiful, though she was so represented by Pope The comments on the use of machines in epics are interesting (II, **335-339**), and the objection to the unnecessary obscenity in the *Rape* is perhaps a valid point (cf II, **335, 342-343, 347-348**) Not altogether unjust is the observation that the device of anti-climax is employed so much in the *Rape* that it becomes "a Receipt for dry Joking" (II, **349**) On the whole, however, the *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* is a mistaken effort

Although it affects an informal tone, the *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* follows the method of Bossu analysis of fable manners, sentiments, and diction Pope read the *Remarks* with some care, and left several manuscript notes in his copy (cf Elwin-Courthope, II, **132**)

This essay was dedicated to George Duckett

Page **322** 21-23 *And about that Time I receiv'd a Letter from him,* etc Pope wrote the letter referred to in 1721, four years after the publication of Dennis's three treatises In the letter Pope did not acknowledge and express sorrow for "his Offences past", he merely expressed regret for the differences which had arisen between himself and Dennis (cf II, **370-371**)

Page **323** 40-41 *that nothing qualify'd him to enter the Lists* etc Pope entered the lists against Denham by writing *Windsor Forest,* which follows the tradition of the topographical poem as established by Denham's *Cooper's Hill*

Page **324** 1-4 *That a Man may be a very great Fool* etc This seems to be a free translation of La Rochefoucauld, *Sentences et Maximes Morales,* no CCCCLVI (ed Paris, Garnier Frères, p **76**) "On est quelquefois un sot avec de l'esprit, mais on ne l'est jamais avec du jugement"

Page **324.39—325 9** *In the Height of his Professions of Friendship* etc Cf II, **371** for a more extended account of the same story The "scandalous Pamphlet" which Pope wrote was *The Narrative of Dr Robert Norris, concerning the Strange and Deplorable Frenzy of Mr John Denn——* (1713)

Page **325** 10 A P——E *libell'd him in Manuscript while he luv'd,* etc The libel was the "Atticus" portrait, probably composed in 1715 or early in 1716 (cf Sherburn, *Early Career of Pope,* pp **146-147**), first printed, apparently, in 1722, and reprinted in the Pope and Swift *Miscellanies* of 1727, which Dennis read Dennis's statement seems to indicate his awareness of the fact that the "Atticus" portrait had existed during Addison's lifetime He probably did not know that Pope had sent the portrait to Addison himself, a circumstance which removed the culpitude, though not the sting, from the satire

Page **325** 14-15 *by which he has made, by a modest Computation,* etc A paraphrase of a remark in "The Publisher to the Reader," prefixed to early editions of the *Dunciad* (cf Elwin-Courthope, IV, **265**)

Page **325** 21-24 *Mr* Theobald, *who by delivering* Shakespear etc Lewis Theobald, whose *Shakespeare Restored* (1726) had revealed many of the faults in Pope's edition of the Bard

Page **325** 32-35 *And* Boileau *declares,* etc Cf Boileau, *Épitres,* V, 95-98

> Mais pour moi que l'eclat ne sauroit décevoir,
> Qui mets au rang des biens l'esprit et le savoir,
> J'estime autant Patru, même dans l'indigence,
> Qu'un commis engraissé des malheurs de la France

Page **326** 8-11 Horace, Epistles, II, II, **49-52**

Page **326** 17-20 Virgil, Aeneid VIII **362-365**

Page 326 23-25 Virgil, Georgics, II, 513-515
Page 326 32-39 Horace, Odes, I, XII, 37-44
Page 326 42-43 Horace, Epistles, II, I, 119-120
Page 328 28-29 Roscommon *Essay on Translated Verse*, lines 161-162, in Spingarn, II, 302
Page 328.37—329.2 Cf *Hudibras*, ed A R Waller (Cambridge, 1905), pp 17 and 99
Page 329 25 Horace, Ars Poetica, line 140
Page 330 10-15 Boileau *l'Art Poétique*, IV, 85-90
Page 330 17-20 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 341-344
Page 330 23-29 Roscommon *Essay on Translated Verse*, lines 118-124, in Spingarn, II, 300
Page 330 38-40 Boileau *Lutrin*, I 69-70
Page 330 42-44 Boileau *Lutrin*, I, 185-186
Page 332 5-6 *Rape of the Lock*, I, 13-14
Page 332 8-9 *Rape of the Lock*, I, 27-28
Page 332 12-23 *Rape of the Lock*, I, 129-134, 139-144
Page 332 28-33 *Rape of the Lock*, IV 97-102
Page 332.41—333.3 Tibullus, Elegies, I VIII, 41-44 15-16
Page 333 32-36 Terence Phormio, I II, 54-58
Page 334 13 *Rape of the Lock*, II, 11
Page 334 16 *Rape of the Lock*, II 15
Page 334 18-19 *Rape of the Lock*, III, 99-100
Page 334 25-28 *Rape of the Lock*, V 103-106
Page 334 32-35 Virgil, Aeneid, VII, 808-811
Page 335 3-6 *Rape of the Lock*, V 75-76 87-88
Page 335 9 *Rape of the Lock*, II, 11
Page 335 12-13 *Rape of the Lock*, IV 175-176 Gildon had noted the indecency of these lines and their inappropriateness in the mouth of a lady (cf *A New Rehearsal* [1714] p 43)
Page 335 16 *a Lady of the Lake* A kept woman or a bawd Cf Richard Perkinson, 'Lady Du Lake' in *Notes and Queries*, vol 168 no 15 (April 13, 1935), pp 260-261
Page 335.41-336.4 For says Bossu etc *Traité du Poeme Epique*, I, II (ed Paris, 1693 p 7)
Page 336 14-29 Boileau *l'Art Poetique*, III, 177-192
Page 337 37 Horace Ars Poetica, line 338
Page 338 4-17 *Rape of the Lock*, II, 73-80 85-90
Page 338 25-26 *Rape of the Lock*, II, 93-94
Page 339 13-15 *Rape of the Lock*, II, 126-128
Page 341 18-20 Virgil Aeneid, VI 653-655
Page 341 22-27 *Rape of the Lock*, I, 51-56
Page 341 40-43 *Rape of the Lock*, II, 25-28
Page 342 11 Virgil, Aeneid, II, 390
Page 342 15-20 *Rape of the Lock*, II, 29-34
Page 342 28-31 *Rape of the Lock*, II, 117-120
Page 342 40-41 *Rape of the Lock*, V, 39-40
Page 343 5-8 *Rape of the Lock*, III, 117-120
Page 343 15-22 *Rape of the Lock*, III, 171-178
Page 344 16-17 *Rape of the Lock*, IV, 15-16
Page 344 23-28 *Rape of the Lock*, IV, 81-86
Page 344 37-39 *Rape of the Lock*, III, 155-157
Page 344 42-43 *Rape of the Lock*, IV, 89-90
Page 345 3-5 *Rape of the Lock*, IV, 91-93
Page 345 20-21 *Rape of the Lock*, IV 141-142
Page 345 27 29 *Rape of the Lock*, IV 25-27

Page 345 36-37 *Rape of the Lock*, IV, 31-32
Page 346 7-14 *Rape of the Lock*, IV, 47-54
Page 346 17 Horace, Ars Poetica, line 309
Page 346 20-21 Boileau, *l'Art Poétique*, I, 27-28
Page 346 35-40 *Rape of the Lock*, V, 39-44
Page 347 3-10 *Rape of the Lock*, V, 45-52
Page 347 18-25 *Rape of the Lock*, V, 57-64
Page 347 38-41 *Rape of the Lock*, V, 75-78
Page 348 3-4 *Rape of the Lock*, V, 97-98
Page 348 7-8 *that* Nykin *says to* Cocky etc Cf Congreve, *The Old Batchelour*, IV, IV Dennis is quoting from memory, and inaccurately a speech of Fondlewife to Laetitia
Page 348 10-13 *Rape of the Lock*, V, 99-102
Page 348 22-31 *Rape of the Lock*, II, 101-110
Page 351 5-6 *Rape of the Lock*, IV, 175-176
Page 351 37-38 Statius, Thebaid, I, 416-417

Remarks upon the Dunciad

After the publication of the *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* in the middle of 1728 Dennis sat back to wait The next move was up to Pope It suited Pope's whims, later, to intimate that after the publication of the 1728 *Dunciad* Dennis became associated with a club of gentlemen aiming to revile Pope, and in the list of works which had abused him he included the letter to Mist's *Weekly Journal*, dated June 8 1728, which he attributed to Dennis, Theobald, and others (cf 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* p 94) The letter of June 8, however, bears not the slightest trace of Dennis's hand, and so far as I know there is not a shred of evidence to show him as an active member of a club of "Dunces" The tone of his remarks to Theobald (II 354) is not that of a man addressing a collaborator Dennis himself declared emphatically (II 374) that he "never wrote so much as one Line, that was afterwards printed in Concert with any one Man whatsoever" There is no reason to doubt that assertion

On April 10, 1729, the *Dunciad Variorum* was first openly published Though Theobald was ostensibly the hero of the poem, Dennis had no cause to feel that he himself was neglected In the "Testimonies of Authors" prefixed to the 1729 *Dunciad* Dennis was quoted or referred to on the following pages (I use the facsimile reprint edited by R K Root) 2, 3, 5, 15-16 17, 19, and 20 In the notes of Scriblerus on the poem Dennis is dealt with in the following pages 6, 9, 10 11, 31, 34 39 40 42 43 44 45, 46 51, 55, 56, and 65 And there are other places, besides, in which Dennis is exposed to contempt and ridicule In the prose *apparatus* which accompanied the *Dunciad* Dennis was treated at least as roughly as Theobald, and one cannot avoid the impression that Pope intended to designate him as one of the chief dunces Again Dennis took up the challenge, and prepared to retaliate In the *Flying Post*, issue of May 13, 1729, it was announced "We hear that next Week will be published Remarks upon Pope's Dunciad by Mr Dennis"

Portions of the *Remarks upon the Dunciad* are not without some justification Dennis is right in objecting to the lack of action in the *Dunciad*, the framework of the poem is indeed too flimsy to bear up the satire He objects quite properly to the nastiness of part of Book II He is right, moreover, when he insists that Boileau was more discriminating than Pope in apportioning praise and blame He is sound in objecting to Pope's view of Homer (cf II, 363 ff), for the *Iliad* cannot be regarded as the work of a wild genius who was artless and unsophisticated Of chief interest to the student of literary theory are the incidental remarks concerning the relationship between genius and invention (cf II, 365 and 367)

The *Remarks upon the Dunciad* was Dennis's last thrust at Pope, and, apparently, his last adventure in the field of literary criticism Distressed by poverty and the infirmities of age, left alone after the death of his early friends and patrons and of his closest companions, he survived as an object of pity and mercy until Jan 6, 1734

Probably inspired by Pope's war on the "Dunces" and specifically by the *Dunciad Variorum*, Joseph Spence took up his weapons in support of the Twickenhamite He produced a mock-epic called the *Charlad*, replete with the pseudo-learned apparatus of notes, commentaries, and preliminary sketches, much of it aimed against Cibber, Dennis, Theobald, and Bentley The work was not published, but a brief account of it may be found in Austin Wright's *"The Charlad*, an Unpublished Mock-Epic by Joseph Spence," in *PMLA*, xlvi (1932), 554-558 It should be noted that the letter "John Dennis Esqr to Lewis Tibbald, Attorney at Law," catalogued in the British Museum as Add MSS 25897, P 22270, is part of Spence's jovial enterprise, and therefore an innocent and transparent forgery

Page 353 25-26 *to which latter he very impudently compares himself*, etc The comparison of Pope with Boileau is made in the "Letter to the Publisher," first printed in the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* Though printed over the name of William Cleland this piece was probably written by Pope himself

Page 354 12-17 *I have lately read over the Two Letters* etc Letters by Theobald appeared in the *Daily Journal*, November 26, 1728, and April 17, 1729 Dennis refers specifically to the letter of April 17, where Theobald, speaking ironically of Pope's beneficence in promoting him to the throne of Dullness, says (cf Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, II, 215)

> I would not willingly act like the favourite, whom Shakespeare somewhere describes, who being made proud by his Prince advanced his pride against the Power that bred it But I would rather, like a grateful favourite, lay out my talents in asserting the legality of my Master's title to those dominions, in which he exercises so free a sway, and from whence he so unsparingly dispenses his promotions

Page 355 8-10 *It was long before I had the Happiness* etc When Dennis published his *Remarks upon Pope's Homer*, Theobald was twenty-eight or twenty-nine Dennis's attack upon Theobald in the *Remarks upon Pope's Homer* (cf II, 122-123) had been induced by Theobald's criticism of Dennis in the *Censor* Apparently Dennis is here trying to imply that Theobald's criticism of him was an error pardonable because of the author's extreme youth

Page 355 18-20 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 391-393

Page 355 45 Horace, Ars Poetica, line 309

Page 356 6-7 *But now, Sir, to come to the Preliminaries* etc The "imperfect" editions of the *Dunciad*, in 1728, were done mainly in duodecimo The earliest issue, and some of the later issues, of the *Dunciad Variorum* (1729) were printed in quarto The 'preliminaries" to the "imperfect" editions of 1728 consisted of a preface, "The Publisher to the Reader," which was relegated to the Appendix in the *Variorum* of 1729

Page 356 9-10 *As he formerly writ Rhimes in his own Commendation*, etc Cf note on I, 417 17-23

Page 356 31 *That the latter was printed by one* Wr——t J Wright was a printer with whom Pope had had business relations as early as 1723 (cf Sherburn, *Early Career of Pope*, pp 310-311)

Page 356 35 *his Brother Proctor* John Littlewit Apparently a reference to Pope's good friend, John Gay

Page 358 30-35 *In order to shew this, let us see the Account* etc The "Account" is part of the preface to the "imperfect" editions of the *Dunciad*, of 1728

Page 359 7-32 The Proposition of an Epick Poem *says Bossu*, etc *Traite du Poeme Epique*, III, in (ed Paris, 1693 pp 190-191)

Page **361. 29** Horace, Ars Poetica, line 338

Page **361 33-36** Boileau, *l'Art Poétique*, III, 47-50

Page **362 9-10** Roscommon, *Essay on Translated Verse*, lines 113-114, in Spingarn, II, 300

Page **363 6** Terrasson, Le Motte, *or* Perrault Jean Terrasson had published a *Dissertation Critique sur l'Iliade d'Homère* (2 vols, Paris, 1715), which was translated into English by F Brerewood under the title *A Critical Dissertation upon Homer's Iliad* (2 vols, 1722) Antoine Houdar de La Motte, who was involved with Madame Dacier in a quarrel over Homer, was the author of *Lettres sur Homère et sur les Anciens* (1723) Charles Perrault, one of the chiefs of the Moderns in the Battle of the Books, was known primarily for his *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*

Page **363 14-17** *For Memory may be justly compar'd* etc This was probably suggested by Dryden's description of the work of the imagination, given in the Preface to *Annus Mirabilis* (cf Ker, I, 14)

Page **364 9-10** *as the Author of this Paragraph has affronted*, etc This charge was made also in *Pope Alexander's Supremacy and Infallibility Examined* (1729), p 14 a little volume sometimes attributed—though without any good reason—to Dennis In this passage Dennis probably refers to a ballad called "The Challenge" (1717) or to the *Court Poems* (1716), or to *News from Court* (1719) Professor Sherburn points out that "The Challenge" was pleasant persiflage, quite inoffensive to the ladies concerned, and that *News from Court* and that portion of the *Court Poems* which satirizes the maids of honor were very likely not the work of Pope (cf *Early Career of Pope* p 153)

Page **364 15—365 23** *What!* says she, etc Madame Dacier Reflexions sur la Premiere Partie de la Préface de M Pope," in *L'Iliade d'Homere, Traduite en Francois avec des Remarques par Madame Dacier* (Paris 1756) sig *II-*IIV

Page **365 15-16** Horace, Epodes, II, 13-14

Page **367 3-10** Roscommon, *Essay on Translated Verse*, lines 167-174, in Spingarn, II 302

Page **367 15-17** *The Fire of a great and judicious Poet* etc This seems to be a contradiction of what Dennis says in II, 365 34-37 The fault lies in an ambiguity of expression rather than in a confusion of ideas What he apparently means is, that a poet of a warm and passionate nature will conceive of many and varied ideas ("the more warm any one is by Nature, the more inventive is that Person"), but only the poet who conceives of great and sublime ideas will express himself with fire and magnificence ("the Fire of a great and judicious Poet is caused by his Ideas")

Page **367 19-25** Virgil, Aeneid, VI, 45-51

Page **367 28-33** Roscommon, *Essay on Translated Verse*, lines 290-295, in Spingarn, II, 305-306

Page **367 38-39** *What? is the Transcendency of* Milton's *Genius* etc One of the many signs of Dennis's recognition of the fact that in the make-up of the poet and in the esthetic experience there are elements which transcend art and reason In certain experiences of Beauty or of the Sublime he found an unknown something for which he could give no rational account, an unknown something which many of his contemporaries called the *je-ne-sais-quoi* Dryden's muse, he felt, possessed certain "Secret, Unaccountable, Enchanting Graces," which, though often enjoyed, remained always fresh and delightful (cf II, 384) Certain objects of beauty, he thought, contained a charm which spoke directly to the heart, and the charms of the English countryside shared a mysterious kinship with the human soul (cf II, 387) To Dennis the sight of the Alps brought horror, terror, and a transporting pleasure that was wholly inconsistent with reason (cf II 381) Throughout his life Dennis proclaimed the necessity of genius in the poet, and by genius he meant great passion and the power of arousing great passion Art at its best was capable of exciting "those happy Enthusiasms, those violent Emotions, those supernatural transports which exalt a mortal above mortality", and though such art

might give pleasure to all the world, it could "shake and ravish with insupportable pleasure" the souls only of that small minority of cultured and sensitive readers "who have some particles in their breasts of the same eternal Fire" (cf II, 379-380) Any critic, he thought, might by common sense judge of the faults in a work of art but only one with genius could appreciate its beauties (cf I, 440-441) Only the man of taste could discern the beauties produced by genius, and so affecting are the beauties produced by genius that they atone for whatever defects may accompany them "Wherever Genius runs thro' a Work," said Dennis, "I forgive its Faults and wherever that is wanting no Beauties can touch me" (cf II 400) In the Sublime, according to Dennis, there are elements which transport us out of ourselves, and which therefore cannot be judged by reason The poet's imagination has the power of transcending experience, to "pass the Bounds that circumscribe the Universe" (cf I, 489), and common sense, or mere reason, cannot follow it

The recognition of mysterious charm an irrational element in art (an element which might be referred to as the *nescio quid*, *el no se qué*, the *je-ne-sais-quoi* *il poco piu*, or the "grace beyond the reach of art") came to Dennis through the influence of no one writer Probably Boileau, Bouhours, and Voiture played a part in it, and the Longinian doctrine of the Sublime, which Dennis had from Boileau, undoubtedly contributed to the recognition One important result of this recognition in Dennis's case, is his steady insistence upon the value of the pragmatic test in art that which strikes and warms men of good taste is good art (cf I, 446-447) and even violations of the rules are fully justified if the work in which they appear is successful among readers of taste (cf II, 484-485)

Page 368 36-38 *The Fable of an Epick Poem* etc This is a translation of Le Bossu's definition (cf *Traité du Poeme Epique*, I, iii [ed Paris, 1693, pp 9-10])

Page 369 33-43 Nothing, *says Madam* Dacier, etc Cf "Reflexions sur la Premiere Partie de la Preface de M Pope," in *L'Iliade d'Homere, Traduite en François, avec des Remarques par Madame Dacier* (Paris, 1756), sig [*7]v-[*8]

Page 369 44—370 8 *I come now to the second Preliminary*, etc This 'second Preliminary" was the 'Letter to the Publisher," prefixed to the *Dunciad Variorum* in 1729, and signed by William Cleland Most authorities on Pope agree with Dennis in thinking that the 'Letter to the Publisher' was probably written by Pope himself (cf, for example, the *Dunciad Variorum*, ed R K Root [Princeton, 1929], Introduction, p 40) There was a real person named William Cleland, who probably gave Pope permission to attach his name to the "Letter to the Publisher ' Cleland was an obscure official, but important enough to warrant the *British Mercury* on Wednesday, Oct 7 1713, to announce his appointment as one of the five Commissioners of the Customs in Scotland

Page 370 17-21 *The Recommendation of* Mr Cromwell *engaged me* etc Compare I 396 35-38 and note

Page 371 19-23 *He writes a very scurrilous and impertinent Pamphlet*, etc The pamphlet was *The Narrative of Dr Robert Norris, concerning the Strange and Deplorable Frenzy of Mr John Dunn*—— (1713) It was, as Dennis thought probably the work of Pope, though Professor Sherburn suggests that Steele and Arbuthnot may have had a hand in it (cf *Early Career of Pope*, pp 107-112)

Page 372 10-11 *He is pleas'd to say somewhere* etc Cf *Dunciad Variorum*, note on I, 104

Page 374 16-20 *As Mr* P *has been pleas'd in several Places* etc In several places in the *Dunciad Variorum* Pope referred to the *True Character of Mr Pope* (1716) as a collaborative effort by Dennis and Gildon Cf "Pope and Dennis," in *ELH*, VII (1940), pp 189-192

Page 374 25-30 *I this Minute receiv'd your Letter*, etc Dennis's letter had probably praised Gildon's *Laws of Poetry*, published in 1721 Gildon's remarks on Wycherley were published in 1718, under the title of *Memoirs of the Life of William Wycherley*,

Esq -This was a hasty and slovenly performance, with which Dennis might well have been displeased Dennis's own notes for a life of Wycherley are much more valuable and informative (cf II, 409-412)

Page 374 37-40 *My Amanuensis, Mr* Lloyd, *having been very ill,* etc Gildon was dependent upon his amanuensis because he was at this time nearly blind The pamphlet by Dennis which he refers to was probably the political tract, *Julius Cæsar Acquitted, and His Murderers Condemn'd* (1722), written in support of the King and his ministers The second letter in the tract was dated Oct 6, 1721, and the first letter, Dec 29, 1721 It was probably published in the first week of January, 1722

Page 376 11-28 Boileau, Préface IV, in editions of 1683, 1685, and 1694 (cf *Œuvres* [Paris, 1928], pp 5-6)

Page 376 35-38 *For if your Translation of* Æschylus *is equal* etc In 1713 Theobald entered into a contract with Lintot to translate all of the tragedies of Æschylus Nearly a decade later he issued proposals for a subscription-edition of the tragedies Apparently only two selections from the translation were ever published, though a specimen may have been issued with the proposals Cf R F Jones, *Lewis Theobald* (N Y. 1919), pp 3-5

Page 376 40 Hurlothrumbo's *Hurlothrumbo* was a burlesque written by Samuel Johnson of Cheshire, and produced first on March 29, 1729

The Dedication to Dorset (pp 379-380)

The compliments in this dedication, however extravagant they may seem today were of a kind that Dorset was accustomed to receive His great generosity to poets together with his own prestige as a poet and wit, made him the muses' favorite For an account of the adulation paid to his Lordship, cf Bruce Harris, *Charles Sackville, Sixth Earl of Dorset* (Urbana, 1940) pp 173-214

Probably the most interesting feature of the dedication is the evidence of Dennis's early interest in Longinus and the theories of the sublime In attributing to the true poet "those happy Enthusiasms, those violent Emotions, those supernatural transports which exalt a mortal above mortality, give delight and admiration to all the World, but shake and ravish a Poet's Soul with insupportable pleasure" (379 42-44), Dennis shows the effects of Longinus as popularized by Boileau, for Longinus meant to Dennis and his contemporaries an emphasis on rapture and transport rather than on order, restraint, and a meticulous attention to details

In suggesting that the higher function of criticism was to discover beauties rather than to point out faults (379 15-27), Dennis was touching upon a subject which he developed in the *Impartial Critick* (cf I, 13)

The Letter on Crossing the Alps (pp 380-382)

This letter is conclusive proof of the vast delight which Dennis took in mountain scenery It is remarkable that he thought his great pleasure derived from the sight of the Alps was inconsistent with reason (cf 381 34-38) The sensations aroused in Dennis by the mountains ("transporting Pleasures unusual transports horrours despair") are sensations which were then commonly associated with the esthetic experience of the sublime For an excellent note on this letter, cf Clarence Thorpe, "Two Augustans Cross the Alps," in *Studies in Philology,* XXXII (1935), 463-468 For a later manifestation of Dennis's interest in mountains, cf II, 401

It is amusing to note that the inscription which Dennis so carefully copied (380 40-44) was later to catch the eye of Horace Walpole, who copied it in a letter to Richard West dated from Turin, Nov 11, 1739

Advertisement to the *Letters upon Several Occasions* (p 382)

In this period, when the familiar letter was first coming to be recognized as a form of English literature, it was almost inevitable that critics should attempt to ascertain its proper function and to lay down rules for it Dennis's "Advertisement" is a step in this direction—and the first attempt of its kind with which I am acquainted Thirty years later Dennis's "Advertisement" was reprinted, with a few slight changes and without acknowledgment to Dennis, as the preface to vol I of the *Miscellanea* issued by Curll (published on July 14, 1726, though dated 1727 on the title-page) It is a delicious piece of irony that a miscellany containing as its most important feature a group of letters by Pope should be introduced by a preface on the art of letter-writing by John Dennis

Page 382 29-32 *that* Voiture *was easie and unconstrain'd*, etc Voiture's letters enjoyed a wide popularity in England Dudley Ryder said of them (*Diary of Dudley Ryder*, ed W Matthews [London, 1939], p 168)

> They are writ in a very free, negligent way with ease and without anything of stiffness, but a certain agreeable familiarity runs through the whole, which are full of wit and humour I think this is the best epistolary style and manner I ever met with

Letter to Dryden (p 384)

By intimating that extraordinary beauty should display, besides regularity, certain "Secret, Unaccountable, Enchanting Graces" Dennis shows his inclination toward the School of Taste, which held that there is a *je ne sais quoi*, a "grace beyond the reach of art," present in the best works of literature, a grace that can be appreciated only by the man of taste not by the critic who merely applies the rules For an account of the School of Taste cf Spingarn I lxxxviii-cvi, also A F B Clark, *Boileau and the French Classical Critics in England* (Paris 1925), pp 390-397

Letter to Congreve (pp 384-385)

This letter, together with the one following it was responsible for moving Congreve to write his *Letter concerning Humour in Comedy* (July, 1695)

Dryden had previously criticized the inconsistency in Volpone's character (cf Ker, I, 73), but had praised the fifth act Dennis's comments are sounder and more discerning Cf R G Noyes *Ben Jonson on the English Stage, 1660-1776* (Cambridge, Mass 1935), pp 51-52

Page 384 44-45 Horace Ars Poetica lines 126-127

Letter to Congreve (p. 385)

Professor Noyes has commented on the excellence of the criticism in this letter, observing that it hits upon the main defects of Jonson's comedies, their excessive stress upon the local and the temporary and their intellectual indifference to the simple and common human emotions (cf *Ben Jonson on the English Stage, 1660-1776* [Cambridge, Mass, 1935], p 185) Dennis's objection to Jonson's dialogue is natural, since his taste for lightness, grace, and wit in dialogue had been cultivated by his reading of Terence, Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve

In lines 36-37 Dennis seems to be referring to the passion of Love Elsewhere he defended the use of love in the drama, though he was aware that the theme might be abused (cf note on I, 12 36-37)

Page 385 41-48 Boileau, *l'Art Poétique*, III, 405-412

Letter to Moyle (p 386)

Walter Moyle was one of the wits who frequented Will's coffee house in the 1690's, a friend of Congreve, Wycherley, and other distinguished men of letters After 1700 Moyle spent most of his time on his estate at Bake, in Cornwall, where he died June 10, 1721 On Jan 16, 1720, Dennis wrote Moyle from London, informing his correspondent, whom he had not seen for twenty years, that the *Select Works* were being sent as a present to Moyle (cf *Original Letters* [1721], I, 159-162) After Moyle's death his works were prepared for publication by Dennis's old friend, Thomas Sergeant, they were printed by Curll and issued Aug 23, 1726, with an account of the author's life and writings contributed by Anthony Hammond

Although this letter is essentially a defence of the rules, on the grounds that the rules "are nothing but an observation of Nature," yet Dennis is careful to acknowledge that the rules are not enough, that "a Man may write regularly, and yet fail of pleasing," and that "a Poet may please in a play that is not regular"

The Mock-Marriage, the preface to which Dennis is here answering, was written by Thomas Scott, it was produced and published in 1696

Letter to Montagu (pp 388-389)

The trouble in which Dennis found himself shortly before the writing of this letter, and to which he refers in this letter, was occasioned by a remark in his treatise, *The Usefulness of the Stage* (cf note on I, 151 26-34)

Preface to *Iphigenia* (pp 389-390)

Among the significant features of this preface are first the view (sound Aristotelian doctrine) that fable or action is the essence of a tragic poem, and that, therefore, a dramatic poet should avoid "fine reflections" and sparkling utterances which slow down or impede the course of tragic action, and second, the view that, while a play should be as regular as possible, it must, to please an English audience, satisfy their demands for variety, and that a good play must display genius by touching the passions with sufficient force and in appropriate language Dennis says in effect that a play should be as regular as the nature of its subject and the need for variety permit it to be

Page 389 32-34 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 409-411

Letter to Richard Norton (pp 392-393)

Dennis's play *Appius and Virginia* was being passed around in manuscript during the year 1708, though it was not produced until 1709 Among those who read it in manuscript was Arthur Mainwaring, who on April 7, 1708, wrote Dennis as follows (cf *Select Works* [1718], II, 543)

> I am very much ashamed that you have been so often at my Lodgings to call for your Play, which I would have sent to you long since, if I had known where you liv'd I read it over with a great deal of Pleasure, and am of opinion it will be the best Tragedy that has appear'd these many Years

Apparently Dennis succeeded in rallying a number of his friends and acquaintances to support his play (cf the Prologue to *Appius and Virginia*)—an action which probably seemed justifiable to him because the drama, since the advent of the Italian opera, was overshadowed in popularity by the art of song and dance

Excerpt concerning the Opera (pp 393-396)

The *Essay upon Publick Spirit*, from which this excerpt is taken, attempted primarily to show the dangers into which the use of luxuries might plunge the state—a favorite theme in Dennis's works Dennis's somewhat insular mind was distrustful of all foreign manners and customs, and he hated the operas in particular because they tended to drive the English drama from the stage What Dennis has to say of the operas here was anticipated in the *Essay on the Operas* (1706)

Page 394 27-28 *The Rehearsal*, v, 1

Page 396 4 *Sir* Martin The chief character in Dryden's comedy, *Sir Martin Mar-all*

Page 396 23-28 *Richard the Second*, II 1

Excerpt concerning Satire (pp. 396-397)

Page 397 5-7 Petty Merchants of small Concerts etc Cf George Savile, Marquess of Halifax "Some Cautions offered to the Consideration of those who are to chuse Members to serve for the Ensuing Parliament" in *Complete Works*, ed Walter Raleigh (Oxford, 1912) p 148

The Letter to the *Examiner* (pp 397-398)

In the *Examiner*, issue for Jan 3-10, 1712 there is a discussion of an anonymous pamphlet called *The Englishman's Thanks to the Duke of Marlborough* Said the *Examiner*, in attempting to discover the author of the pamphlet

> By a thoroughly mistaken Imitation of Ancient Oratory, a false Aim at Eloquence, consisting only in certain wretched Singularities of Style, and some manifest Thefts from his own unlucky Plays, I soon guess'd the Author to be an old sowr dry Critick and blasted Poet, who in spight of all that can be writ or said, will die without being convinc'd that he is the most insipid and contemptible of all Human Creatures I am only concern'd in Charity, that so stupid a Head should endanger its Neck or Ears

Obviously enough the writer was referring to Dennis, and Dennis thought that he recognized the hand of Swift It is very unlikely however that Swift had any part in the writing of this number of the *Examiner*

Page 397 35-39 *by publishing a Piece of waggish Divinity*, etc Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, published in 1704 Though the *Tale of a Tub* was intended to support the party of moderate Churchmen it was received by many contemporaries as a banter on all religion Dudley Ryder although he admired the wit and spirit of the *Tale*, thought that the writer's attitude was hostile to religion (cf *Diary of Dudley Ryder*, ed W Matthews [London, 1939], p 114)

Letter to the Master of the Revels (p 398)

Charles Johnson's *The Successful Pyrate* was first produced on Nov 7, 1712 Dennis's letter indicates his deep concern with the moral effects of the drama

Letter to the Duke of Buckinghamshire (pp 398-399)

When Dennis wrote this letter, he had already completed his *Remarks upon Cato* Dennis himself asserted that he had been solicited by Lintot to write the treatise against Addison, and that Lintot had been egged on by Pope (cf II, 104 and 371) In the Letter to Buckinghamshire, however, Dennis justified the treatise on the grounds that he had been injured by the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* and that he deserved the opportunity of retaliating Though he believed that Steele had actually written the

injurious articles, yet he felt that Addison, as Steele's partner in the two periodicals, was morally guilty Within a week or two of writing the Letter to Buckinghamshire, Dennis decided upon publishing the *Remarks*, the work was issued on or about July 9, 1713 Cf introductory note to the *Remarks upon Cato*

Page 399 9 *I was attack'd in the ——, in the very second or third* Not in the second or third, but in the fourth number of the *Tatler* (April 19, 1709), Steele ridiculed Dennis and the operas Commenting on the opera *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* and on the letters which he had received concerning it, Steele wrote

> That the understanding has no part in the pleasure is evident, from what these letters very positively assert, to wit, that a great part of the performance was done in Italian and a great critic fell into fits in the gallery, at seeing, not only time and place, but languages and nations, confused in the most incorrigible manner His spleen is so extremely moved on this occasion, that he is going to publish another treatise against operas, which, he thinks, have already inclined us to thoughts of peace, and, if tolerated, must infallibly dispirit us from carrying on the war

Other papers in which Dennis thought he was attacked *Tatler*, nos 29 and 246, *Spectator*, nos 40 and 47

Letter to Jacob Tonson (pp 399-401)

Nothing more is known of the "conspiracy" which Dennis mentions in this letter It is a curious circumstance that Tonson should have spread such a report, for Tonson was a responsible and reputable man Perhaps the fact that Pope had allied himself with Lintot may explain Tonson's motive, but it is also possible that there was a modicum of truth in the information Whatever the case, the letter is interesting for its eloquent and discerning comments on the mind and art of Dryden, also for its statement of the idea that the presence of genius in a work of art is sufficient to excuse the faults of the work (i e, its violations of the rules)

Letter to Mr *** (pp 401-402)

The distinction between the *pulchrum* and the *dulce* which Dennis makes in this letter is of considerable historical interest The *pulchrum*, appealing to the enthusiastic passions, becomes the equivalent of the sublime, and the *dulce*, appealing to the quieter, ordinary passions, becomes the equivalent of the beautiful This distinction between the beautiful and the sublime, made explicit here, was implicit in the *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*, published in 1704 (cf I, 508) Dennis should probably share with Addison the honor of having been the first critic to make this distinction

Page 401 31 Virgil, Eclogues, VII, 16

Page 401 33-35 Virgil, Aeneid, v, 354-356

Page 401 47-48 Horace, Ars Poetica, lines 99-100

Letter to Blackmore (pp 402-403)

Dennis's choice of Sir Richard Blackmore as arbiter in the dispute with Rowe may strike us as being somewhat ironic Evidently Sir Richard's virtue in private life was less formidable and austere than it appeared in his epic poems

Page 402 17-18 Virgil, Eclogues, III, 64-65

Page 402 28-29 Horace, Satires, I, x, 44-45 Dennis is probably misinterpreting Horace, who by *molle atque facetum* may mean nothing more than the simple charm found in the plain style of writing

Page 403 5-22 This is apparently Dennis's own translation of Montaigne Compare John Florio's translation, *The Essayes of Montaigne* (Modern Library edition), p 794

Letter to Sewell (pp. 403-404)

The Preface which Dennis here objects to was written by Charles Johnson and prefixed to his comedy, *The Masquerade* Johnson's Preface was a burlesque of the Preface to Sewell's pretentious tragedy, *Sir Walter Raleigh* (1719) Dennis is unfair to Johnson, for the Preface to the *Masquerade* is obviously facetious and humorous until near the close of p viii, where Johnson turns serious in rendering thanks to Robert Wilks Dennis's attitude in this letter is partly to be explained by the fact that he was at variance with the Drury Lane company because of their delay in producing his tragedy, *The Invader of His Country,* and Johnson's Preface praised the Drury Lane company Dennis evidently cherished a hearty dislike for Wilks (cf II, 407 4-6)

Letter to Cromwell (pp 407-409)

Page 407 38-39 *the Manager of the Play-House who acts the Part of* Othello Robert Wilks Othello was one of Wilks's first parts, he was playing it at least as early as 1691

Letter to Major Pack (pp 409-412)

Richardson Pack's *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose,* containing memoirs of Wycherley, was first issued in July, 1718, with a second edition in 1719 The "Mr C——" from whom Dennis received a copy was probably Congreve or Henry Cromwell Though Dennis's letter was courteous and friendly, he was later scolded for having insisted wrong-headedly, against Major Pack that Wycherley never attended a university (cf Charles Wilson [?], *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Amours of William Congreve* [1730], Pt II p 142)

Letter to Bradley (pp 412-413)

The 'Accusation of Ill-nature' made against Dennis at this time was brought about largely by his harsh treatment of Cibber and Steele in the two parts of the *Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar* (1720) Even some of Dennis's acquaintances remonstrated with him for his severity (cf II, 408 10-12)

Preface to the *Original Letters* (pp 414-415)

For an account of the circumstances in which the *Remarks upon Cato* came to be printed and in which the *Letters upon the Sentiments of Cato* came to be written, cf II 447 and 456-457 It took courage to publish an attack upon a man recently dead, and Dennis in this Preface shows his awareness that many of Addison's friends would not easily forgive him The praise accorded Addison (II 415 24-27) seems meager and grudging

Preface to *The Faith and Duties of Christians* (pp 415-416)

This was the first of two treatises by Dr Thomas Burnet which Dennis translated, the second, *A Treatise concerning the State of Departed Souls,* was published in 1733, shortly before Dennis's death Dennis's old friend who induced him to translate Burnet was F Wilkinson of Lincoln's Inn (cf Paul, *John Dennis,* p 103) Wilkinson's anxiety that Dennis should undertake the translations was probably prompted by the fact that as early as 1727 Curll was beginning to issue a series of unauthorized translations of Burnet, some of which Dennis considered scandalously bad (cf Dennis, *Treatise concerning the State of Departed Souls* [1733], Preface, sig [A4])

Burnet's *De Fide et Officiis Christianorum* was published by Wilkinson's authority in June 1727 (cf Paul p 103) Wilkinson was still alive when Dennis wrote the Preface

of this translation, and since Wilkinson was dead by Sept 3, 1728 (cf Straus, *The Unspeakable Curll* [N Y and London, 1928], pp 286-287), Dennis's translation must have been written between June, 1727, and Sept, 1728

Worthy of note is Dennis's low opinion of translation

Letter to the *Daily Journal* (pp 416-417)

It is not certain that this letter was written by Dennis In the "List of Books, Papers, and Verses, in which our Author was abused," printed in the Appendix of the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*, Pope attributed the letter to Dennis There is some internal evidence to support this attribution In the first place the letter refers to Pope as A P——E, as Dennis did in his *Remarks on the Rape of the Lock* In the second place, concerning Pope's *Windsor Forest*, the St Cecilia's Day Ode, the *Pastorals*, and the *Temple of Fame* Dennis elsewhere expressed opinions similar to those in the letter (cf II, 355) In the third place, the style of the letter points directly at Dennis One may safely assume that the letter was composed either by Dennis or by someone who knew his work and imitated his manner

The letter was occasioned by Pope's prose satire, *Peri Bathous*, known commonly at the time of its publication as Pope's *Profund*, published in March 1728 as part of the third volume of the *Miscellanies* edited by Pope and Swift

Page 416 30 L T The initials of Lewis Theobald

Page 416 30 L W——d The initials of Leonard Welsted

TEXTUAL NOTES

Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear

The text is based on that of the second edition (B), in the *Original Letters* (1721) The first edition, dated 1712, is here designated as (A) I have used the title of A, the title of B reads *Letters on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare* I have omitted the headings of Letters II and III The heading of Letter II is the same as that of Letter I, the heading of Letter III reads *On the Writings and Genius of* SHAKESPEAR

Page 3 7 Modern A] Mordern B, 9 30 *accapunt*] *accipant* A, B, 12 12. a Scene A] a, Scene B, 13 27 *Horace,*] *Horace* A, B, 14 15-16 in Him B] in this A, 16 26 *mutanda*] *metanda* A, B, 17 31 makes them B] makes of them A

To the Spectator, on Poetical Justice

The text is based on that of the second edition (B), in the *Original Letters* (1721) The first edition (A) appeared in the same volume with the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear*, dated 1712

Page 18 36-19 2 Have not *Iphigenia*] *typography of* A *and* B *is here reversed*, 20 8 Practice A] Pactice B, 21 2 Destiny B] Dealing A, 21 25 otherwise would B] would otherwise A

To the Spectator, on Criticism and Plagiarism

The text is based on that of the second edition (B), in the *Original Letters* (1721) The first edition (A) appeared in the same volume with the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* dated 1712

Page 26 43 Tatler] Tat A, B, 27 27 pass from him] pass, A, B, 27 31 *pretio*] *precio* A B

Of Simplicity in Poetical Compositions

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), in the *Original Letters* (1721)

Page 30 40 *pene*] *pen* A 32 34 those who by] those by A, 33 8 is, an] is an A, 34 21 Besides] Besides A, 34 33 *sonaturum des*] *sonaturum dee* A, 35 8 *quelle*] *quelle* A 36 5 *Buenscance*] *Buenaance* A, 36 7 *extraordinaires*] *extraordinaries* A, 36 32 swell Us] swell Use A, 40 28 no,] no A

Remarks upon Cato

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1713

Page 42 21-22 and so] and so A, 44 24 endeavour] endeavour A, 45 3 foisted] foiste'd A, 47 29 Indolence] Idolence A, 49 21 Dispensation] Dispensation A, 49 22 run counter] run-counter A, 50 4 *Pharsalia"*] *Pharsalia* A, 50 27 so"] so A, 50 34 Terror"] Terror A, 52 13 *near,*] *near*, A, 52 13 *hast*] *has* A, 52 17 me] we A, 53 12 resembling] resembling A, 54 30 Poet] Poets A, 55 29 Marc] Merc A, 58 9 *Friends*] *Frinds* A, 58 10 That] *new paragraph in* A, 61 17 in the very] in very A, 62 8 'Tis] *new paragraph in* A, 62 35 As] *new paragraph in* A, 63 34 *o'erwhelm*] *o'orwhelm* A, 63 45 *from me*] *from thee* A, 64 33 *Innocence*] *Incocence* A, 65 20 *If*, Portius,] *If*

Portius A, **65** 21 *farewell,*] *farewell?* A, **65** 26 *suffers!*] *suffers?* A, **66** 26 improbable,] improbable A, **66** 39 is dissembling] in dissembling A, **66** 42 is dissembling] in dissembling A, **69** 37 *Behold*] *Beheld* A, **72** 44 carrying off] carrying of A, **73** 33 And] *new paragraph in* A, **75** 11 In] *new paragraph in* A, **79** 45 *raison*] *rarson* A

Letters upon the Sentiments of Cato

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), in the *Original Letters* (1721) I have omitted the headings of Letters II to VII The heading of Letters II, III, IV, V, and VII reads *On the Sentiments of* CATO The heading of Letter VI reads *On the Sentiments of the second Act of* CATO

Page **86** 37 *Juba*] *Juba?* A, **89** 24 Contemporary] Cotemporary A, **89** 38-39 Nonsense But] Nonsense, but A, **93** 22 Fondness] Fondess A

A True Character of Mr Pope

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1716 The second edition (B), of 1717, was probably not authorized, and the first may not have been Differences in the use of capitals, small capitals, and italics and in spelling, are not recorded here

Page **103** 27 *th' Earth* A] the Earth B, **104** 21 *Roscommon,* A] *Roscommon* B, **105** 6 *Horace,* A] *Horace* B, **105** 11 *tu Romani, caveto*] *tu Romam Caveto* A, B, **105** 12 As] *new paragraph in* B, **105** 12 As to B] As to A, **105** 19-20 Diseases, and Calamities and Diseases, which A] Diseases which B, **107** 15 hard B] heard A, **107** 33 So that B] So, that A, **108** 28 *May* 7 1716 A] *May* 7 1717 B

On the Moral of an Epick Poem

The text is based on that of the first edition (A) in the *Original Letters* (1721)

Page **112** 30 that is,] that is A, **113** 20 Member,] Member, A, **113** 31 *somnio Scipionis Sed*] *somnio Ciceronis Sed* A, **113** 32 *Omnibus*] *Oomnibus* A

Remarks upon Pope's Homer

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1717 In the Preface I have reversed the system of typography using Roman for italic and italic for Roman Instead of relining, I have left Dennis's prose translations of Homer as they appear in the original text

Page **116** 5 *legat*] *leget* A, **126** 20 ἴαχον] ἰάχον A, **128** 1 *membra*] *membre* A, **128** 26 *Rives*] *Rivis* A, **131** 29 *Altars*] *Actors* A, **133** 26 *without receiving a Ransom*] *my italics*, **133** 27 *the Great King*] *my italics*, **139** 38 *China,*] *China* A, **139** 41 *cagion*] *lagion* A, **140** 6 *luma*] *luma* A, **140** 12 *cercando*] *cercando* A, **141** 10 *placidis*] *placedis* A, **141** 15 *vraisemblables*] *vraisemblable* A, **141** 23 *incompatibles*] *incompatibiles* A, **141** 24 *la Vraisemblance, ou la Verité*] *le Vraisemblance ou le Verité* A, **145** 14 *Encelladoqua*] *Encelladaque* A, **150** 8 Have there] Have their A, **157** 5 *fessum*] *fossum* A, **157** 5 *intremere*] *in tremere* A, **157** 15 *tollit*] *tollet* A

On the Vis Comica

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), in the *Original Letters* (1721)

Page **160** 5 *tollit*]*tellit* A

Letters to Steele and Booth

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), in the *Original Letters* (1721)

Page 164 44 call it,] call, A, 165 8 self (I] self, I A, 165. 9 it),] it, A, 166 12 *Grecians*] *Greecians* A, 167 36 *obeys*] *obey* A, 169 17-18. afterwards] terwards A, 171 6 *fadere*] *federe* A, 172 24 resolv'd] resov'd A, 173 32 own him for] own for A. 175 4 *dans*] *par* A, 175 10 Art'] Art A

Dedication to *The Invader of His Country*

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1720

Page 179 4 one] one A, 179 5 Weakness (I] Weakness, I A, 179 6 which) to] which, to A

The Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar, Part One

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1720 The second edition (B), printed in the same year is in part a reissue of A

Page 181 2 *quadrato* B] *quadrate* A, 181 26 Greatness of thy B] Greatness thy A, 182 2 it than A] it more than B, 183 19 *amorem sibi conciliarat*] *amorem conciliarat* A, B, 183 40 *Actor*] *Orator* A, B, 184 33 *mal à*] *mal' a* A, B, 187 1 *Roman* Stage B] *Roman*, Stage A, 188 39 act the Saint B] eat the Saints A, 190 18 Fish-Pool] Fish-Fool A, B, 191 13 Transport] Tansport A B, 191 15 *Colley Bays*] *Colley Boys* A, B, 192 11 becoming an Author] becoming Author A, B, 192 35-36 *congruunt /Unum*] *congruunt unum* A, B, 193 41 designs] designs A B, 195 6 *Corneille*] *Corneile* A, B, 195 10 *Phedra* B] *Phedron* A, 195 17 *Studium*] *Studiam* A, B, 195 18 *rude*] *rade* A, B 195 25 *Nescit*] *Nescat* A B, 195 36 Chance?] Chance, A, B, 196 10 give A] gives B

The Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar, Part Two

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1720

Page 200 17 upon thy] upon A, 200 28-29 *Do Doctior*] *the verse-lining is mine*, 200 28 *vestram*] *vostram* A, 200 29 *accedo ad te, Quin*] *accedo, Quin* A, 202 22 dead-doing] dead doing A. 202 25 here] here A, 205 6 Nay,] Nay A, 205 11 well,] well A, 205 32 *&c* '] *&c* A, 206 1 Apprentice] Apprentis A, 209 18 yes,] yes A, 209 39 Dramatick] Dematick A, 210 11 Criticks] Criticks A, 210 34 Book,] Book A, 210 41 couldst] coulst A, 212 33 *Qui bene latuit*] *Qui latuit* A, 214 23 good-will] good will A

To Prior, upon the Roman Satirists

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), in the *Original Letters* (1721)

Page 219 33 that is] that is A

Letters on Milton and Wycherley

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), issued probably in 1722 as a specimen to accompany the *Proposals for Printing by Subscription Miscellaneous Tracts, Written by Mr John Dennis*

Page 226 36 Worlds *correction written into B M copy, probably by Dennis himself*] Would A, 230 4 LETTER IV] *my insertion*, 230 26 *is, be none at all,*] *is be none*

at all A, 232 40 Just *On*] Just *On* A, 233 2 Judgment'] Judgment A, 233 26 Wit"] Wit A, 234 16 *l'Esprit*,] *l'Esprit* A, 234 19 *d'accord que*] *d'accord qu* A, 234 27 Judgment'] Judgment A

Of Prosody

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1722

Page 237 11 is what] is, what A, 238 5 that is,] that is A, 238 8 that is,] that is A, 238 12 *Rhyme*, that] *Rhyme* that A, 238 39 *Love*, agree] *Love* agree A, 239 22 Amarillis] *Amarillis* A, 239 30 Phoebus'] Phoebus A

A Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1722 In the Preface I have reversed the system of typography, using Roman for italic and italic for Roman

Page 242 20 scurrilously] scurriously A, 242 27 *Plain-Dealer*] plain'd Dealer A, 242 27 *than*] *then* A, 242 29 *than not*] *then not* A, 243 32 than they] then they A, 243 36 than] then A, 244 10 has been] as been A, 244 20 and *The*] *and the* A, 244 33 agreeable] agreeble A, 245 40 *populus*] *populo* A, 246 11 *Imberbus*] *Imberbis* A, 248 26 *toujours*] *toussors* A, 248 27 *ecrits*] *evrits* A, 248 28 *le prix*] *la prix* A, 248 41 *unconfin'd*] *unconfind* A, 249 26 Poems,] Poems A, 249 40 *Musanthrope*] *Mis-Antrope* A, 249 41 *Savantes*] *Secuante* A, 249 43 *L'Etourds*] *L'Etoardy* A, 249 43 *Les Facheux*] *Le Fascheux* A, 249 44 *Pourceaugnac*] *pousceaugnac* A, 249 44 *des Maris*] *de Maris* A, 250 1 *L'Amour Medecin*] *L'Amour Medicis* A 250 1 *Le Medecin*] *Le Medicin* A, 250 1 *Le Mariage*] *La Mariage* A

Remarks on The Conscious Lovers

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1723 In the Preface I have reversed the system of typography, using Roman for italic and italic for Roman

Page 255 6 *totiens*] *toties* A, 255 22 *quotiens*] *quoties* A, 259 20 of his] of his A, 261 13 *Terence*,] *Terence* A, 267 8 Catastrophe] Catastophre A, 269 41 Scene] Scence A, 270 4 *impotents*] *n'impotents* A, 270 43 Sir] *Sir* A, 272 9 *denegel*] *degenet* A, 272 14 Si] Si A, 272 20 Inconsistencies] Inconsistences A

The Decay and Defects of Dramatick Poetry

The text is transcribed from Dennis's autograph manuscript now in the Folger Shakespeare Library I have silently supplied italics and expanded the ampersand Because Dennis's small letters and capitals are often similar, I have sometimes been unable to distinguish, in these cases I have presumed to guess, following what appears to be his customary usage I have silently supplied punctuation in some instances (as on p 275, line 3 after *Milton* and after *Rochester*) where the printer would undoubtedly have inserted it and where there was little doubt as to the kind of punctuation required

Page 275 14 *It*] I ms, 275 17 that is,] that is ms, 275 18 Baboons)] Baboons ms, 276 14 Daniel] Daniel ms, 276 15 Companys,] Companys ms 277 38 from] fro *ms reading uncertain*, 278 9 At] *new paragraph intended?*, 278 25 Nothing] *new paragraph intended?*, 278 45 them] them ms, 278 45 succeeds] succeds ms, 279 1 Houses,] Houses ms, 279 2 succeed] succed ms, 279 30 Another] *new paragraph intended?*, 280 3 not,] not ms, 280 6 that is,] that is ms, 280 9 Learning,] Learning ms, 280 35 There are] *new paragraph intended?*, 281 16 Drury] Drury ms, 282 17 Pelusium] Pelusiũ ms,

282 27 *dans les*] dans le ms, 282 30 But now] *new paragraph intended?*, 284 43 us, p 33,] us p 33 ms, 284. 44 p 47] p 47 ms, 285 2 us, p 37,] us p 37 ms, 285 16 If we] *new paragraph intended?*, 285 21 Discourse,] Discourse ms, 285 31 Reason] *ms reading uncertain*, 285 33 us, p the 22,] us p the 22 ms, 286 43 *without them*] without them, *-last part of sentence is crossed out*, 287 4 without it,] without it ms, 287 27 that is,] that is ms, 287 41 in p 30] in p 30 ms, 288 3 says He] *inserted without punctuation between the lines*, 288. 11 above,] above ms, 288 23 Needhams] Needhams ms, 288 31 character,] character ms, 289 6 that is,] that is ms, 289 43 must He,] must He ms, 290 23 apear] appear ms, 290 36 that is,] that is ms, 293 14 this, *viz* p 53,] this viz p 53 ms, 294 14 *Mais*] Mas *ms reading uncertain*, 294 19 *Pyrenees*] Pireneans *ms reading uncertain*, 294 31 passage is, that] passage, that ms, 295 24 says He,] says He ms, 295 22-23 *Why Rule*] *the verse-lining is mine*, 295 31 sanction] *alternative reading*-authority, 296 14 page 33] *written above the line;* 296 24 From] *new paragraph intended?*, 296 35 contrary,] contrary, ms, 297. 1 that is,] that is ms, 297 11 that is,] that is ms, 297 11 reasoning,] reasoning ms, 297 41 epick,] epick ms, 297 45 P 34] p 34 *-written in margin*, 299 7 that is,] that is ms, 299 9 that is,] that is ms

The Stage Defended

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1726

Page 302 4 became] because A, 308 38 satisfie] satifie A, 313 4 *veut que*] veut qui A, 313 6 *les Gens*] le Gens A, 313 42 *Avarus*] *Avarus* A, 315 28 *Lecteurs*] *Lectures* A, 316 36 that is,] that is A, 320 38 *Jacobite*] *Jacabite* A

Remarks on The Rape of the Lock

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1728

Page 326 33 *Paullum*] *paulum* A, 326 34 *referam*] *referem* A, 326 36 *Curium*] *curium* A, 333 27 *in comptum*] *incomptam* A, 334 33 *teneras*] *teneres* A, 336 1 *quels*] *quals* A, 336 16 *aventure*] *avanture* A, 336 20 *en sa*] *on sa* A, 336 26 *ornemens*] *ornamens* A, 340 26 *Lavinaque*] *Lavinaque* A, 342 11 *requrat*] *requrit* A, 343 1 the latter] he latter A, 346 21 *la rime*] *le rime* A, 347 28 fulminate] fulminate A

Remarks on the Dunciad

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1729 In the Advertisement I have reversed the system of typography, using Roman for italic and italic for Roman Elsewhere I have normalized the use of italics in quotations

Page 355 10 by *P*,] by *P* A, 357 18 says *P*,] *says* P A, 359 1 little] little A, 359 7 *is that*] *is, That* A, 359 29 *there*,] *there,* A, 360 1 *C'est*] *C'est* A, 361 30 *Horace*,] *Horace,* A, 366 40 by] by A, 373 38 Company,] Company A, 376 28 them'] them A

Appendix

I *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose*

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1693

A In this selection I have reversed the system of typography, using Roman for italic and italic for Roman

B Page 380 15 Marsh] Marsh A, 380 31 infinitely pleas'd,] infinitely, pleas'd A, 381 31 her careless,] her, careless A

II *Letters upon Several Occasions*

The text is based upon that of the first edition (A), of 1696 The second authorized edition of the *Letters* (B) is to be found in the *Select Works* (1718), from which several interesting items were excluded, and in which several deletions were made

A This item was omitted from B I have reversed the system of typography, using Roman for italic and italic for Roman Page 382 20 joyn'd it] joyn'd in A, 382 29 easie] easy A

B Page 383 1 as the greatest Comick Wit that ever *England* bred A] *omitted in* B, 383 15 than Men B] then Men A

D Page 383 45 *To Mr* Wycherly B] *To Mr* —— A

E Omitted from B

F Omitted from B Page 384 25 *Fox*] Fox A, 384 29 *Bonario*] *Bonario* A, 384 32 Comedy,] Comedy A, 384 46 And Secondly] *new paragraph in* A

G Omitted from B Page 385 44 *Jamais*] *Jamma* A, 385 44 *Scene*] *Scens* A, 385 48 *hées*] *heés* A

I Page 386 30 thorowly B] throughly A, 386 30 of course B] on course A, 386 38 to be to a B] to be a A

III *A Plot, and No Plot*

A The text is based on that of the first edition of 1697 Both Prologue and Epilogue are omitted from the second edition, in the *Select Works* (1718) I have reversed the system of typography, using Roman for italic and italic for Roman

IV *Amintas*

A The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1698 I have reversed the system of typography using Roman for italic and italic for Roman Page 387 25 They who] They who A, 387 32 Folds,] Folds A

V *Rinaldo and Armida*

A The text is based on that of the first edition (A) of 1699 I have reversed the system of typography, using Roman for italic and italic for Roman Page 387 43 you] you' A, 388 2 we're] were A

VII *Iphigenia*

A The text is based on that of the first edition (A), of 1700 The second edition, in the *Select Works* (1718), does not contain the Preface Page 390 20 desire I] desire, I A

B The text is based on that of the second edition (B), in the *Select Works* (1718) The first edition, of 1700, is here designated as (A) I have reversed the system of typography using Roman for italic and italic for Roman Page 390 44 I've led B] I have led A, 391 1 said she B] said she A, 391 25 Song' B] Song A

VIII *The Comical Gallant*

A The text is based on that of the first edition, of 1702 This item is omitted from the second edition, in the *Select Works* (1718) I have reversed the system of typography, using Roman for italic and italic for Roman

IX *Liberty Asserted*

A The text is based on that of the second edition, in the *Select Works* (1718) I have reversed the system of typography, using Roman for italic and italic for Roman

X *Gibraltar*

A The text is based on that of the first edition, of 1705 It is omitted from the *Select Works* (1718) I have reversed the system of typography, using Roman for italic and italic for Roman

XII *Letter to Norton*

The text is based on that of the first edition, in the *Original Letters* (1721)

XIII *Appius and Virginia*

A The text is based on that of the second edition, in the *Select Works* (1718) I have reversed the system of typography, using Roman for italic and italic for Roman

XIV *An Essay upon Publick Spirit*

The text is based on that of the second edition (B) in the *Select Works* (1718) The first edition, of 1711 is here designated as (A)

A Page 394 1 much is it] Bl much 'tis A, 394 30-32 Counsel] Council A, 395 54 address'd] addrest A

XV *Letter to the Examiner*

The text is based on that of the first edition (A) in the *Original Letters* (1721) Page 397 22 *Billingsgate*] *Billinsgate* A, 397 42 surpass'd] surpss'd A, 397 42 thou wouldst] thou wouldst A

XVI *Letter to the Master of the Revels*

The text is based on that of the first edition, in the *Original Letters* (1721)

XVII *Letter to Buckinghamshire*

The text is based on that of the first edition in the *Original Letters* (1721)

XVIII *Letter to Tonson*

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), in the *Original Letters* (1721), and supplemented by the suppressed portions as given by Malone (M) in his edition of Dryden's *Prose Works* Page 400 7 favour of humanity M] favour of —— A 400 13 many of us shewn to all the A] many made it plain to the M, 400 16-17 the empty Pretender M] the Pretender A, 400 17-18 and the little Mr Pope to the illustrious Mr *Dryden* M] and Mr —— to Mr *Dryden* A, 400 18 appear a little too warm M] appear too warm A, 400 24-38 But Pope the world M] *omitted in* A, 401 1-6 most humble Dennis M] &c A

XIX *Letter to Sergeant*

The text is based on that of the first edition in the *Original Letters* (1721)

XX *Letter dated Oct 1, 1717*

The text is based on that of the first edition (A) in the *Original Letters* (1721) Page 401 47 *Poemata,*] *Poemata* A

XXI *Letter to Blackmore*

The text is based on that of the first edition (A) in the *Original Letters* (1721) Page 402 37 Sense so] Sense so A

XXII *Letter to Sewell*

The text is based on that of the first edition in the *Original Letters* (1721)

XXIII *Letter concerning John Crowne*

The text is based on that of the first edition in the *Original Letters* (1721)

XXIV *The Invader of His Country*

A The text is based on that of the first edition of 1720

B Text of 1720 I have reversed the system of typography using Roman for italic and italic for Roman

XXV *Letter to Cromwell*

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), in the *Original Letters* (1721) Page 407 46 third, Scene] third Scene A, 407 50 An *Miser*] *An* Miser A, 408 46 *Misanthrope*] *Misantrope* A

XXVI Letter to Major Pack, concerning Wycherley

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), in the *Original Letters* (1721)

Page 409 37. Mistresses] Mistesses A

XXVII Letter to Bradley

The text is based on that of the first edition, in the *Original Letters* (1721)

XXVIII Advertisement to *The Person of Quality's Answer to Collier*

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), which was attached to the second edition of *The Person of Quality's Answer to Collier's Dissuasive*, included in the *Original Letters* (1721) I have reversed the system of typography, using Roman for italic and italic for Roman Page 413 35 acknowledg'd] *acknowled'd* A

XXIX Preface to the *Original Letters*

The text is based on that of the first edition, of 1721

XXX Preface to *The Faith and Duties of Christians*

The text is based on that of the first edition (A), issued probably in 1727 I have reversed the system of typography, using Roman for italic and italic for Roman Page 416 8 Felicity] *Fecility* A

XXXI Letter to the *Daily Journal*

This item is probably, but not certainly, by Dennis I have not seen the *Daily Journal*, but base my text on the reprint of the letter which appeared in *A Compleat Collection of all the Verses, Essays, Letters and Advertisements, which have been occasioned by the publication of three volumes of Miscellanies, by Pope and Company* (London, 1728)

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