

An Essay towards Fixing the True Standards of Wit, Humour, Railery, Satire, and Ridicule (1744) eBook

An Essay towards Fixing the True Standards of Wit, Humour, Railery, Satire, and Ridicule (1744)

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Title: An Essay towards Fixing the True Standards of Wit, Humour, Rallery, Satire, and Ridicule (1744)

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Essays on Wit

No. 4

[Corbyn Morris]
*An Essay towards Fixing the True Standards
of Wit, Humour, Raillery, Satire, and Ridicule
(1744)*

With an Introduction by
James L. Clifford
and
a Bibliographical Note

The Augustan Reprint Society
November, 1947
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* * * * *

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* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

The *Essay* here reproduced was first advertised in the London *Daily Advertiser* as “this day was published” on Thursday, 17 May 1744 (The same advertisement, except for the change of price from one shilling to two, appeared in this paper intermittently until 14 June). Although on the title-page the authorship is given as “By the Author of a Letter from a By-stander,” there was no intention of anonymity, since the Dedication is boldly signed “Corbyn Morris, Inner Temple, Feb. 1, 1743 [44].”

Not much is known of the early life of Corbyn Morris. Born 14 August 1710, he was the eldest son of Edmund Morris of Bishop’s Castle, Salop. (*Alumni Cantabrigienses*). On 17 September 1727 he was admitted (pensioner) at Queen’s College, Cambridge, as an exhibitor from the famous Charterhouse School. Exactly when he left the university, or whether he took a degree, is not certain.

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Morris first achieved some prominence, though anonymously, with *A Letter from a By-stander to a Member of Parliament; wherein is examined what necessity there is for the maintenance of a large regular land-force in this island*. This pamphlet, dated at the end, 26 February 1741/42, is a wholehearted eulogy of the Walpole administration and is filled with statistics and arguments for the Mercantilist theories of the day. At the time there was some suspicion that the work had been written either by Walpole himself or by his direction. When the *Letter from a By-stander* was answered by the historian Thomas Carte, an angry pamphlet controversy ensued, with Morris writing under the pseudonym of "A Gentleman of Cambridge." Throughout, Morris showed himself a violent Whig, bitter in his attacks on Charles II and the non-jurors; and it was undoubtedly this fanatical party loyalty which laid the foundation for his later government career.

The principal facts of Morris's later life may be briefly summarized. On 17 June 1743 he was admitted at the Inner Temple. Throughout the Pelham and Newcastle administrations he was employed by the government, as he once put it, "in conciliating opponents." From 1751 to 1763 he acted as Secretary of the Customs and Salt Duty in Scotland, in which post he was acknowledged to have shown decided ability as an administrator. From 1763 to 1778 he was one of the commissioners of customs. He died at Wimbledon 22 December 1779 (*Musgrave's Obituary*), described in the *Gentleman's Magazine* as a "gentleman well known in the literary world, and universally esteemed for his unwearied services and attachment to government."

Throughout his long years of public service he wrote numerous pamphlets, largely on economic and political questions. Merely the titles of a few may be sufficient to indicate the nature of his interests. *An Essay towards Deciding the Question whether Britain be Permitted by Right Policy to Insure the Ships of Her Enemies* (1747); *Observations on the Past Growth and Present State of the City of London* (containing a complete table of christenings and burials 1601- 1750) (1751); *A Letter Balancing the Causes of the Present Scarcity of Our Silver Coin* (1757).

It would be a mistake, however, to consider Morris merely as a statistical economist and Whig party hack. A gentleman of taste and wit, the friend of Hume, Boswell, and other discerning men of the day, he was elected F.R.S. in 1757, and appears to have been much respected. In later life Morris had a country place at Chiltern Vale, Herts., where he took an active delight in country sports. One of his late pamphlets, not listed in the *D.N.B.* account of him, entertainingly illustrates one of his hobbies. *The Bird-fancier's Recreation and Delight, with the newest and very best instructions for catching, taking, feeding, rearing, &c all the various sorts of SONG BIRDS... containing curious remarks on the nature, sex, management, and diseases of ENGLISH SONG BIRDS, with practical instructions for distinguishing the cock and hen, for taking, choosing, breeding, keeping, and teaching them to sing, for discovering and caring their diseases, and of learning them to sing to the greatest perfection*.

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Although there is little surviving evidence of Morris's purely literary interests, a set of verses combining his economic and artistic views appeared in a late edition of *The New Foundling Hospital for Wit* (new edition, 1784, VI, 95). Occasioned by seeing Bowood in Wiltshire, the home of the Earl of Shelburne, the lines are entitled: "On Reading Dr. Goldsmith's Poem, the Deserted Village."

This was the man who at the age of thirty-three brought out *An Essay towards Fixing the True Standards of Wit, Humour, Raillery, Satire, and Ridicule*. That it was ever widely read we have no evidence, but at least a number of men of wit and judgment found it interesting. Horace Walpole included it in a packet of "the only new books at all worth reading" sent to Horace Mann, but the fulsome dedication to the elder Walpole undoubtedly had something to do with this recommendation. More disinterested approval is shown in a letter printed in the *Daily Advertiser* for 31 May 1744. Better than any modern critique the letter illustrates the contemporary reaction to the *Essay*.

Christ Church College, Oxford,

SIR:

I have examin'd the *Essay* you have sent me for *fixing the true Standards of Wit, Humour, &c.* and cannot perceive upon what pretence the Definitions, as you tell me, are censured for Obscurity, even by Gentlemen of Abilities, and such as in other Parts of the Work very frankly allow it's Merit: the Definition of Wit, which presents itself at first, you say is, particularly objected to, as dark and involv'd; in answer to which I beg Leave to give you my plain Sentiments upon it, and which I apprehend should naturally occur to every Reader: In treating upon Wit, the Author seems constantly to carry in his View a Distinction between *This* and *Vivacity*: there is a Lustre or Brilliancy which often results from wild unprovok'd Sallies of Fancy; but such unexpected Objects, which serve not to *elucidate* each other, discover only a Flow of Spirits, or rambling Vivacity; whereas, says he, Wit is the Lustre which results from the quick *Elucidation* of one Subject, by the just and unexpected Arrangement of it with another Subject.—To constitute *Wit*, there must not only arise a *Lustre* from the quick Arrangement together of two Subjects, but the new Subject must be naturally introduced, and also serve to *elucidate* the original one: the Word *Elucidation*, though it be not new, is elegant, and very happily applied in this Definition; yet I have seen some old Gentlemen here stumble at it, and have found it difficult to persuade them to advance farther:—I have also heard Objections made to the Words *Lustre* and *Brilliancy* of Ideas, though they are Terms which have been used by the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and by elegant Writers of all Ages and Nations; and the Effect which they express, is perfectly conceiv'd

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and felt by every Person of true Genius and Imagination. The Distinctions between *Wit* and *Humour*, and the Reasons why *Humour* is more pleasurably felt than *Wit*, are new and excellent: as is the Definition of an *Humourist*, and the happy Analysis of the Characters of *Falstaff*, *Sir Roger de Coverly*, and *Don Quixote*; But, as you say, the Merit of these Parts is universally allowed; as well as the Novelty, and liberal Freedom of the [word apparently omitted]; which have such Charms in my Eye, as I had long ceased to expect in a Modern Writer.

I am, &c
25 May, 1744
J—— W——
[not identified]

If the “Gentlemen of Abilities” of the day found some of Morris’s definitions obscure, modern readers will find them more precise than those of most of his predecessors. All who had gone before—Cowley, Barrow, Dryden, Locke, Addison, and Congreve (he does not mention Hobbes)—Morris felt had bungled the job. And although he apologizes for attempting what the great writers of the past had failed to do, he has no hesitation in setting forth exactly what he believes to be the proper distinctions in the meanings of such terms as wit, humour, judgment, invention, raillery, and ridicule. The mathematician and statistician in Morris made him strive for precise accuracy. It was all very clear to him, and by the use of numerous anecdotes and examples he hoped to make the distinctions obvious to the general reader.

The *Essay* shows what a man of some evident taste and perspicacity, with an analytical mind, can do in defining the subtle semantic distinctions in literary terms. Trying to fix immutably what is certain always to be shifting, Morris is noteworthy not only because of the nature of his attempt, but because he is relatively so successful. As Professor Edward Hooker has pointed out in an Introduction to an earlier *ARS* issue (Series I, No. 2), his is “probably the best and clearest treatment of the subject in the first half of the eighteenth century.” It may be regretted that political and economic concerns occupied so much of his later life, leaving him no time for further literary essays.

In the present facsimile edition, for reasons of space, only the Introduction and the main body of the *Essay* are reproduced. Although Morris once remarked to David Hume that he wrote all his books “for the sake of the Dedications” (*Letters of David Hume* ed. Greig, I, 380), modern readers need not regret too much the omission of the fulsome 32 page dedication to Walpole (The Earl of Orford). Morris insists at the beginning that the book was inspired by a fervent desire of “attempting a Composition, independent of Politics, which might furnish an occasional Amusement” to his patron. The praise which follows, in which Walpole is said to lead “the *Empire of Letters*,” is so excessive as to produce only smiles in twentieth

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century readers. Walpole is praised for not curbing the press while necessarily curbing the theatre, his aid to commerce and industry, indeed almost every act of his administration, is lauded to the skies. The Church of England, in which “the *Exercise of Reason* in the solemn Worship of God, is the sacred *Right*, and indispensable *Duty*, of Man,” receives its share of eulogy. In every connection the Tories are violently attacked.

The Dedication ends in a peroration of praise for Walpole’s public achievements which “shall adorn the History of *Britain*,” and for his “*Private Virtues* and all the *softer Features*” of his mind. His home of retirement is referred to in the lines of Milton:

“Great Palace now of Light!
Hither, as to their Fountain, other Stars
Repairing, in their golden Urns, draw Light;
And here [sic] the Morning Planet gilds her Horns.”

[P.L. 7. 363-66]

“Thus splendid, and superior, your Lordship now flourishes in honourable Ease, exerting universal Benevolence....” But in dedications, as in lapidary inscriptions, as Dr. Johnson might have agreed, a writer need not be upon oath.

At the end of the *Essay* Morris reprinted two essays from *The Spectator*, Nos. 35 and 62, and William Congreve’s “An Essay concerning Humour in Comedy. To Mr. Dennis” (Congreve’s *Works*, ed. Summers, III, 161-68). Since these are readily available, they have not been included in this edition.

The present facsimile is made from a copy owned by Louis I. Bredvold, with his kind permission.

James L. Clifford

Columbia University

* * * * *

[Transcriber’s Note: The ARS edition included an errata slip, reproduced here. Where text was changed or deleted, the original is given in brackets. Corrections to the *Essay* itself are listed after the ARS errata.]

Please paste the following in your copy of Corbyn Morris’s *Essay towards Fixing the True Standards of Wit*....

(ARS, Series One, No. 4)

ERRATA

INTRODUCTION:

page 5, line 1—"word apparently omitted" should be inclosed in brackets.

page 5, line 6—"not identified" should be inclosed in brackets.

page 6, line 5—the first "of" should be omitted.

["modern readers need not regret too much of the omission
of the fulsome 32 page dedication"]

page 6, line 12, should read

"Walpole is praised for not curbing the press while necessarily
curbing the theatre, his aid to commerce".

["Walpole is praised for not curbing the theatre; his aid to
commerce"]

page 6, line 25—"sic" should be inclosed in brackets, as also "P.L. 7. 363-66" in the next line.

[ESSAY ON WIT:

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page viii: Whence in *Aristotle* such Persons are termed
“epidexioi”, dexterous Men
The Greek *may* read “epidezioi”; the letter-form makes it
uncertain.

page 14: ... without any Reference to their whimsical *Oddities*
or *Foibles*;
Text reads *Oddistie*.

page 20 and elsewhere: “Biaass” is an attested variant spelling;
it has not been changed.

page 25: “teizes” (modern “teases”) is an attested variant spelling;
it has not been changed.

page 40: —It is therefore no wonder that Signior *Don Quixote of*
la Mancha ...
Text reads *Quoxote*.]

* * * * *
* * * * *
* * * * *

An
ESSAY

Towards Fixing the
TRUE STANDARDS
of
WIT, HUMOUR, RAILLERY,
SATIRE, and RIDICULE.

To which is Added, an
ANALYSIS
Of the CHARACTERS of

An HUMOURIST, Sir John Falstaff,
Sir Roger De Coverly,
and Don Quixote.

Inscribed to the RIGHT HONORABLE
ROBERT Earl of ORFORD.



By the AUTHOR of a
LETTER from a BY-STANDER.

— *Jacta est Alea.*

LONDON:

Printed for J. ROBERTS, at the Oxford-Arms,
in Warwick-lane; and W. BICKERTON,
in the Temple-Exchange, near the
Inner-Temple-Gate, Fleet-Street.

M DCC XLIV. [Price 2s.]

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION.

An Attempt to *describe* the precise *Limits* of WIT, HUMOUR, RAILLERY, SATIRE and RIDICULE, I am sensible, is no easy or slight Undertaking. To give a *Definition* of WIT, has been declared by Writers of the greatest Renown, to exceed their Reach and Power; and Gentlemen of no less Abilities, and Fame, than *Cowley*, *Barrow*, *Dryden*, *Locke*, *Congreve*, and *Addison*, have tryed their Force upon this Subject, and have all left it free, and unconquered. This, I perceive, will be an Argument with some, for condemning an *Essay* upon this Topic by a young Author, as rash and presumptuous. But, though I desire to pay all proper Respect to these eminent Writers, if a tame Deference to great Names shall become fashionable, and the Imputation of Vanity be laid upon those who examine their Works, all Advancement in Knowledge will be absolutely stopp'd; and *Literary* Merit will be soon placed, in an *humble Stupidity*, and *solemn Faith* in the Wisdom of our Ancestors.

Whereas, if I rightly apprehend, *an Ambition to excell* is the Principle which should animate a Writer, directed by a *Love of Truth*, and a *free Spirit* of *Candour* and *Inquiry*. This is the *Flame* which should warm the rising Members of every Science, not a poor Submission to those who have preceded. For, however it may be with a *Religious* DEVOTION, a *Literary* One is certainly the CHILD of *Ignorance*.

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However, I must acknowledge, that where I have differed from the great Authors before mentioned, it has been with a Diffidence, and after the most serious and particular Examination of what they have delivered. It is from hence, that I have thought it my Duty, to exhibit with the following *Essay*, their several Performances upon the same Subject, that every Variation of mine from their Suffrage, and the Reasons upon which I have grounded it, may clearly appear.

The following *Ode* upon WIT is written by Mr. *Cowley*.

ODE of WIT.

I.

Tell me, oh tell!, what kind of Thing is *WIT*,
Thou who *Master* art of it;
For the *first Matter* loves Variety *less*;
Less *Women* love't, either in *Love* or *Dress*.
A thousand diff'rent Shapes it bears,
Comely in thousand Shapes appears;
Yonder we saw it plain, and here 'tis now,
Like *Spirits* in a Place, we know not *how*.

II.

London, that vents of *false Ware* so much Store,
In no *Ware* deceives us more;
For Men, led by the *Colour*, and the Shape,
Like *Zeuxis' Bird*, fly to the painted Grape.
Some things do through our Judgment pass,
As through a *Multiplying Glass*:
And sometimes, if the *Object* be too far,
We take a *falling Meteor* for a *Star*.

III.

Hence 'tis a *Wit*, that greatest *Word* of Fame,
Grows such a common Name;
And *Wits*, by our *Creation*, they become;
Just so as *Tit'lar Bishops* made at *Rome*.
'Tis not a *Tale*, 'tis not a *Jest*,
Admir'd with *Laughter* at a Feast,
Nor florid *Talk* which can that *Title* gain;
The *Proofs* of *Wit* for ever must remain.



IV.

'Tis not to force some Lifeless *Verses* meet,
With their five gouty Feet.
All ev'ry where, like *Man's*, must be the *Soul*,
And *Reason* the *inferior Pow'rs* controul.
Such were the *Numbers* which could call
The *Stones* into the *Theban* Wall.
Such *Miracles* are ceas'd, and now we see
No *Towns* or *Houses* rais'd by *Poetry*.

V.

Yet 'tis not to adorn, and gild each Part,
That shews more *Cost* than *Art*.
Jewels at *Nose*, and *Lips*, but ill appear;
Rather than *all Things Wit*, let *none* be there.
Several *Lights* will not be seen,
If there be nothing else between.
Men doubt; because they stand so thick i' th' Sky.
If those be *Stars* which paint the *Galaxy*.

VI.

'Tis not when two like Words make up one Noise;
Jests for *Dutch Men*, and *English Boys*.
In which, who finds out *Wit*, the same may see
In *An'grams* and *Acrostiques Poetry*.
Much less can that have any Place,
At which a *Virgin* hides her Face;
Such *Dross* the *Fire* must purge away; 'Tis just
The *Author blush*, there where the *Reader* must.



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VII.

'Tis not such *Lines* as almost crack the *Stage*,
When *Bajazet* begins to rage;
Not a tall *Metaphor* in th' *bombast Way*,
Nor the dry Chips of short-lung'd *Seneca*.
Nor upon all Things to obtrude,
And force some odd *Similitude*.
What is it then, which like the *Pow'r Divine*,
We only can by *Negatives* define?

VIII.

In a true Piece of *Wit*, all Things must be,
Yet all Things there *agree*;
As in the *Ark*, join 'd without Force or Strife,
All *Creatures* dwelt; all *Creatures* that had Life.
Or as the *primitive Forms* of all,
(If we compare great Things with small)
Which without *Discord* or *Confusion* lie,
In the strange *Mirror* of the *Deity*.

IX.

But *Love*, that moulds *one Man* up out of *two*,
Makes me forget, and injure you.
I took *You* for *Myself*, sure when I thought
That *You* in any thing were to be taught.
Correct my Error with thy Pen,
And if any ask me then,
What thing right *Wit*, and Height of *Genius* is,
I'll only shew your *Lines*, and say, 'Tis *this*.

The *Spirit* and *Wit* of this *Ode* are excellent; and yet it is evident, through the whole, that Mr. *Cowley* had no clear Idea of *Wit*, though at the same time it *shines* in most of these Lines: There is little Merit in saying what *WIT is not*, which is the chief Part of this *Ode*. Towards the End, he indeed attempts to describe what *it is*, but is quite vague and perplex'd in his Description; and at last, instead of collecting his scatter'd Rays into a *Focus*, and exhibiting succinctly the clear Essence and Power of *WIT*, he drops the whole with a trite Compliment.

The learned Dr. *Barrow*, in his *Sermon against foolish Talking and Jestings*, gives the following profuse Description of *WIT*.

But first it may be demanded, What the Thing we speak of is? Or what the Facetiousness (or *Wit* as he calls it before) doth import? To which Questions I might reply, as *Democritus* did to him that asked the Definition of a Man, '*Tis that we all see and know*. Any one better apprehends what it is by Acquaintance, than I can inform him by Description. It is indeed a Thing so versatile and multiform, appearing in so many Shapes, so many Postures, so many Garbs, so variously apprehended by several Eyes and Judgments, that it seemeth no less hard to settle a clear and certain Notion thereof, than to make a Portrait of *Proteus*, or to define the Figure of the fleeting Air. Sometimes it lieth in pat Allusion to a known Story, or in seasonable Application of a trivial Saying, or in forging an apposite Tale: Sometimes it playeth in Words and Phrases, taking Advantage from the

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Ambiguity of their Sense, or the Affinity of their Sound: Sometimes it is wrapp'd in a Dress of humorous Expression: Sometimes it lurketh under an odd Similitude: Sometimes it is lodged in a sly Question, in a smart Answer, in a quirkish Reason, in a shrewd Intimation, in cunningly diverting, or cleverly retorting an Objection: Sometimes it is couched in a bold Scheme of Speech, in a tart Irony, in a lusty Hyperbole, in a startling Metaphor, in a plausible Reconciling of Contradictions, or in acute Nonsense; Sometimes a scenical Representation of Persons or Things, a counterfeit Speech, a mimical Look or Gesture passeth for it. Sometimes an affected Simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous Bluntness giveth it Being. Sometimes it riseth from a lucky Hitting upon what is Strange; sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious Matter to the Purpose. Often it' consisteth in one knows not what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how. Its ways are unaccountable, and inexplicable, being answerable to the numberless Rovings of Fancy, and Windings of Language. It is, in short, a Manner of Speaking out of the simple and plain Way (such as Reason teacheth, and proveth Things by) which by a pretty, surprizing Uncouthness in Conceit or Expression, doth affect and amuse the Fancy, stirring in it some Wonder, and breeding some Delight thereto. It raiseth Admiration, as signifying a nimble Sagacity of Apprehension, a special Felicity of Invention, a Vivacity of Spirit, and Reach of Wit, more than vulgar; it seeming to argue a rare Quickness of Parts, that one can fetch in remote Conceits applicable; a notable Skill that he can dextrously accommodate them to the Purpose before him; together with a lively Briskness of Humour, not apt to damp those Sportful Flashes of Imagination. (Whence in *Aristotle* such Persons are termed "epidexioi", dexterous Men, and "eutropoi", Men of facile or versatile Manners, who can easily turn themselves to all Things, or turn all Things to themselves.) It also procureth Delight, by gratifying Curiosity with its Rareness, or Semblance of Difficulty. (As Monsters, not for their Beauty, but their Rarity; as juggling Tricks, not for their Use, but their Abstruseness, are beheld with Pleasure;) by diverting the Mind from its Road of serious Thoughts, by instilling Gaiety, and Airiness of Spirit; by provoking to such Disposition of Spirit in Way of Emulation, or Complaisance; and by seasoning Matters otherwise distasteful or insipid, with an unusual and thence grateful Tange.

This Description, it is easy to perceive, must have cost the Author of it a great deal of Labour. It is a very full Specimen of that Talent of entirely *exhausting* a Subject, for which Dr. *Barrow* was remarkable; and if the *Point* was, to exhibit all the various Forms and Appearances, not of WIT only, but of *Raillery*, *Satire*, *Sarcasms*, and of every Kind of *Poignancy* and *Pleasantry*

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of Sentiment, and Expression, he seems to have perfectly succeeded; there being perhaps no Variety, in all the Extent of these Subjects, which he has not presented to View in this Description.—But he does not pretend to give any *Definition* of WIT, intimating rather that it is quite impossible to be given: And indeed from his Description of it, as a *Proteus*, appearing in numberless various Colours, and Forms; and from his mistaking, and presenting for WIT, other different Mixtures and Substances, it is evident that his Idea of it was quite confused and uncertain: It is true, he has discovered a vast Scope of Fertility of Genius, and an uncommon Power of collecting together a Multitude of Objects upon any Occasion, but he has here absolutely mistaken his work; for instead of exhibiting the Properties of WIT in a clearer Light, and confuting the *false Claims* which are made to it, he has made it his whole Business to perplex it the more, by introducing, from all Corners, a monstrous Troop of new unexpected *Pretenders*.

Dryden, in the Preface to his Opera, entitled, *The State of Innocence, or Fall of Man*, gives the following Decree upon WIT.

The *Definition of WIT*, (which has been so often attempted, and ever unsuccessfully by many Poets) is only this: That it is a *Propriety of Thoughts and Words; or in other Terms, Thoughts and Words elegantly adapted to the Subject*.

If Mr. *Dryden* imagined, that he had succeeded *himself* in this *Definition*, he was extremely mistaken; for nothing can be more distant from the Properties of WIT, than those he describes. He discovers no Idea of the *Surprise*, and *Brilliancy* of WIT, or of the sudden *Light* thrown upon a Subject. Instead of once pointing at these, he only describes the Properties of clear *Reasoning*, which are a *Propriety of Thoughts and Words*;—Whereas WIT, in its sudden *Flashes*, makes no Pretension to *Reasoning*; but is perceived in the pleasant *Surprise* which it starts, and in the *Light* darted upon a Subject, which instantly vanishes again, without abiding a strict Examination.

The other Definition he gives, which is, *Thoughts and Words elegantly adapted to the Subject*, is very different from the former, but equally unhappy.

For *Propriety*, in *Thoughts and Words*, consists in exhibiting *clear, pertinent Ideas*, in *precise and perspicuous Words*.

Whereas ELEGANCE consists in the *compt, well pruned and succinct Turn* of a Subject.

The Object of the *First*, is to be *clear, and perspicuous*; whence it often appears in pursuit of these, not *compt* or *succinct*: Whereas the *Essence* of ELEGANCE is to be *compt* and *succinct*, for the Sake of which Ornaments it often neglect *Perspicuity*, and *Clearness*.—In short, a *Propriety* of Thoughts and Words, may subsist without any

Elegance; as an *Elegance* of Thoughts and Words may appear without a perfect *Propriety*.

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The last *Definition*, as it is thus very different from the former is also equally unhappy: For ELEGANCE is no *essential* Property of WIT. *Pure* WIT resulting solely from the *quick Elucidation* of one Subject, by the sudden *Arrangement*, and *Comparison* of it, with another Subject.—If the two Objects *arranged* together are *elegant*, and *polite*, there will then be superadded to the WIT, an *Elegance* and *Politeness* of Sentiment, which will render the WIT more amiable. But if the Objects are *vulgar*, *obscene*, or *deformed*, provided the *first* be *elucidated*, in a lively Manner, by, the sudden *Arrangement* of it with the *second*, there will be equally WIT; though, the Indelicacy of Sentiment attending it, will render such WIT shocking and abominable.

It is with the highest Respect for the great Mr. *Locke*, that I deliver his Sentiments upon this Subject.

And hence, perhaps, may be given some Reason of that common Observation, that Men who have a great deal of *Wit*, and prompt Memories, have not always the clearest Judgment or deepest Reason: For *Wit* lying most in the Assemblage of *Ideas*, and putting those together with Quickness and Variety, wherein can be found any Assemblance or Congruity, thereby to make up pleasant Pictures, and agreeable Visions in the Fancy. *Judgment*, on the contrary, lies quite on the other side; in separating carefully one from another, *Ideas*, wherein can be found the least Difference, thereby to avoid being missed by Similitude, and by Affinity to take one thing for another. This is a Way of proceeding quite contrary to Metaphor and Allusion; wherein for the most Part lies that Entertainment and Pleasantry of *Wit*, which strikes so lively on the Fancy, and therefore is acceptable to all People, because its Beauty appears at first Sight, and there is required no Labour of Thoughts to examine what Truth, or Reason, there is in it. The Mind, without looking any further, rests satisfied with the Agreeableness of the Picture, and the Gaiety of the Fancy. And it is a kind of an Affront to go about to examine it by the severe Rules of Truth, and good Reason, whereby it appears, that it conflicts in something that is not perfectly conformable to them.

It is to be observed that Mr. *Locke* has here only occasionally, and passantly, delivered his Sentiments upon this Subject; but yet he has very happily explained the chief Properties of WIT. It was *his* Remark *First*, that it lies for the most *Part* in *assembling* together with *Quickness* and *Variety* Objects, which possess an *Affinity*, or *Congruity*, with each other; which was the *first* just Information obtained by the literary World, upon this Subject.

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As to what he adds, That the Intention, and Effects, of this *Assemblage* of *similar* Objects, is *to make up pleasant Pictures, and agreeable Visions in the Fancy*, it is, as I humbly apprehend, not quite perfect: For the Business of this *Assemblage* is not merely to raise pleasant Pictures in the Fancy, but also to *enlighten* thereby the *original* Subject.—This is evident; because in such *Assemblages*, the only Foundation upon which the *new Subject* is suddenly introduced, is the *Affinity*, and consequently the *Illustration*, it bears to the *first* Subject.—The Introduction of pleasant Pictures and Visions, which present not a new *Illustration*, and *Light*, to the *original* Subjects, being rather wild Sallies of *Vivacity*, than well-aimed, apposite Strokes of WIT.

It is Mr. *Locke's* Conclusion, at last, That WIT *consists in something that is not perfectly conformable to Truth, and good Reason*.—This is a *Problem* of some Curiosity; and I apprehend Mr. *Locke's* Determination upon it to be right:—For the *Direction* of WIT is absolutely different from the *Direction* of TRUTH and GOOD REASON; It being the Aim of WIT to strike the *Imagination*; of TRUTH and GOOD REASON, to convince the *Judgment*: From thence they can never be perfectly coincident.

It is however true, that there may be Instances of WIT, wherein the *Agreement* between the two Objects shall be absolutely *just*, and perceived to be such at the first Glance. Such Instances of WIT, will be then also *Self-evident* TRUTHS. They will *both* agree in their obvious, and quick *Perspicuity*; but will be still different in this, that the Effort of the *One* is to strike the *Fancy*, whereas the *Other* is wholly exerted in gratifying the *Judgment*.

The Sentiments of Mr. *Addison* upon WIT, are professedly delivered in the *Spectator* No. 62. annexed to the following *Essay*. He has there justly commended Mr. *Locke's* Description of WIT; but what he adds, by Way of Explanation to it, that the *Assemblage* of Ideas must be such as shall give *Delight*, and *Surprize*, is not true, in regard to the Former, *Delight* being no *essential* Property of WIT; for if the *original* Subject be unpleasant, or deformed, the sudden unexpected *Arrangement* of a *similar* Object with it, may give us *Surprize*, and be indisputably WIT, and yet be far from creating any *Delight*.

This Gentleman has also given the following Example, in order to illustrate the Necessity there is, that *Surprize* should be always an Attendant upon WIT.

“When a Poet tells us, the Bosom of his Mistress is as white as Snow, there is no *Wit* in the Comparison; but when he adds, with a Sigh, that it as cold too, it then grows to Wit.”

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—To compare a Girl's *Bosom* to *Snow* for its *Whiteness* I apprehend to be WIT, notwithstanding the Authority of so great a Writer to the contrary. For there is a *Lustre* resulting from the *natural* and *splendid Agreement* between these Objects, which will *always* produce WIT; such, as cannot be destroyed, though it will quickly be rendered *trite*, by frequent Repetition.

This *Problem*, *How far SURPRIZE is, or is not, necessary to WIT*, I humbly apprehend, may be thus solved.—In Subjects which have a *natural* and *splendid Agreement*, there will always be WIT upon their *Arrangement* together; though when it becomes *trite*, and not accompanied with *Surprize*, the *Lustre* will be much faded;—But where the *Agreement* is *forced* and *strained*, *Novelty* and *Surprize* are absolutely necessary to usher it in; An unexpected *Assemblage* of this Sort, striking our Fancy, and being gaily admitted at first to be WIT; which upon frequent Repetition, the *Judgment* will have examined, and rise up against it wherever it appears;—So that in short, in Instances where the *Agreement* is *strained* and *defective*, which indeed are abundantly the most general, *Surprize* is a necessary *Passport* to WIT; but *Surprize* is not necessary to WIT, where the *Agreement* between the two Subjects is *natural* and *splendid*; though in these Instances it greatly heightens the *Brillancy*.

The subsequent Remark of Mr. *Addison*, *That the Poet, after saying his Mistress's Bosom is as white as Snow, should add, with a Sigh, that it is as cold too, in order that it may grow to WIT*, is I fear, very incorrect. For as to the *Sigh*, it avails not a Rush; and this Addition will be found to be only a *new Stroke* of WIT, equally *trite*, and less perfect, and natural, than the former Comparison.

It may also be observed, That Mr. *Addison* has omitted the *Elucidation* of the *original* Subject, which is the grand Excellence of WIT. Nor has he prescribed any *Limits* to the Subjects, which are to be arranged together; without which the Result will be frequently the SUBLIME or BURLESQUE; In which, it is true, WIT often appears, but taking their whole Compositions together, they are different Substances, and usually ranked in different *Classes*.

All that Mr. *Congreve* has delivered upon WIT, as far as I know, appears in his *Essay* upon HUMOUR, annexed to this Treatise. He there says,

To define HUMOUR, perhaps, were as difficult, as to define WIT; for, like that, it is of infinite Variety.

—Again, he afterwards adds,

But though we cannot certainly tell what WIT is, or what HUMOUR is, yet we may *go near* to shew something, which is not WIT, or

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not HUMOUR, and yet often mistaken for both.

—In this *Essay*, wherein he particularly considers HUMOUR, and the Difference between *this*, and WIT, he may be expected to have delivered his best Sentiments upon both: But these Words, which I have quoted, seem to be as important and precise, as any which he has offered upon the Subject of WIT. As such, I present them, without any Remarks, to my Reader, who, if he only *goes near* to be *edified* by them, will discover a great Share of *Sagacity*.

The Sentiments of these eminent Writers upon WIT, having thus been exhibited, I come next to the Subject of HUMOUR. This has been *defined* by some, in the following Manner, with great *Perspicuity*. —HUMOUR is the genuine WIT of *Comedies*,—which has afforded vast Satisfaction to many *Connoisseurs* in the *Belles Lettres*; especially as WIT has been supposed to be incapable of any *Definition*.

This Subject has also been particularly considered by the *Spectator* No. 35. inserted at the End of the following *Essay*. Mr. *Addison* therein *gravely* remarks, that

It is indeed much easier to describe what is not HUMOUR, than what it is;

which, I humbly apprehend, is no very *important* Piece of Information.—He adds,

And very difficult to define it otherwise, than as *Cowley* has done WIT, by Negatives.

This Notion of *defining* a Subject by *Negatives*, is a favourite *Crotchet*, and may perhaps be assumed upon other Occasions by future Writers: I hope therefore I shall be pardoned, if I offer a proper Explanation of so good a *Conceit*;—To declare then, *That a Subject is only to be DEFINED by NEGATIVES*, is to cloath it in a *respectable* Dress of *Darkness*. And about as much as to say, That it is a *Knight of tenebrose Virtues*; or a *serene Prince*, of the *Blood of Occult Qualities*.

Mr. *Addison* proceeds,

Were I to give my own Notions of HUMOUR, I should deliver them after *Plato's* Manner, in a Kind of Allegory; and by supposing HUMOUR to be a Person, deduce to him, all his Qualifications, according to the following Genealogy: TRUTH was the Founder of the Family, and the Father of GOOD SENSE; GOOD SENSE was the Father of WIT, who married a Lady of a collateral Line called



MIRTH, by whom he had Issue HUMOUR.

—It is very unfortunate for this *Allegorical* Description, that there is not one Word of it just: For TRUTH, GOOD SENSE, WIT, and MIRTH, represented to be the immediate *Ancestors* of HUMOUR; whereas HUMOUR is derived from the *Foibles*, and whimsical *Oddities* of *Persons* in real Life, which flow rather from their *Inconsistencies*, and *Weakness*, than

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from TRUTH and GOOD SENSE;

Nor is WIT any *Ancestor* of HUMOUR, but of a quite different *Family*; it being notorious that much HUMOUR may be drawn from the Manners of *Dutchmen*, and of the most formal and dull Persons, who are yet never guilty of WIT. Again, MIRTH is not so properly the *Parent* of HUMOUR, as the *Offspring*.—In short, this whole *Genealogy* is a *nubious* Piece of Conceit, instead of being any *Elucidation* of HUMOUR. It is a formal Method of trifling, introduced under a deep Ostentation of Learning, which deserves the severest Rebuke.—But I restrain my Pen, recollecting the *Visions* of MIRZA, and heartily profess my high Veneration for their admirable Author.

The *Essay* upon HUMOUR, at the End of this Treatise, written by Mr. *Congreve*, is next to be considered. It appears, that at first he professes his absolute Uncertainty in regard to this Subject; and says, “*We cannot certainly tell what WIT is, or what HUMOUR is.*” But yet, through his whole Piece, he neglects the Subject of HUMOUR in general, and only discourses upon the HUMOUR, by which he means barely the *Disposition*, of Persons: This may particularly appear from the following Words.

A Man may change his Opinion, but I believe he will find it a Difficulty to part with his HUMOUR; and there is nothing more provoking than the being made sensible of that Difficulty. Sometimes we shall meet with those, who perhaps indifferently enough, but at the same time impertinently, will ask the Question, WHY ARE YOU NOT MERRY? WHY ARE YOU NOT GAY, PLEASANT, AND CHEARFUL? Then instead of answering, could I ask such a Person, WHY ARE YOU NOT HANDSOME? WHY HAVE YOU NOT BLACK EYES, AND A BETTER COMPLEXION? Nature abhors to be forced.

The two famous Philosophers of *Ephesus* and *Abdera*, have their different Sects at this Day. Some weep, and others laugh at one and the same Thing.

I don’t doubt but you have observed several Men laugh when they are angry; others, who are silent; some that are loud; yet I cannot suppose that it is the Passion of ANGER, which is in itself different, or more or less in one than t’other, but that it is the HUMOUR of the Man that is predominant, and urges him to express it in that Manner. Demonstrations of PLEASURE, are as various: One Man has a HUMOUR of retiring from all Company, when any thing has happened to please him beyond Expectation; he hugs himself alone, and thinks it an Addition to the Pleasure to keep it a Secret, &c.

All which, I apprehend, is no more than saying; That there are different *Dispositions* in different *Persons*.

In another Place, he seems to understand by *Humour*, not only the *Disposition*, but the *Tone* of the *Nerves*, of a Person, thus,

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“Suppose MOROSE to be a Man naturally splenetic, and melancholy; is there any thing more offensive to one of such a DISPOSITION (where he uses the Word instead of *Humour*) than Noise and Clamour? Let any Man that has the Spleen (and there are enough in England) be Judge. We see common Examples of this HUMOUR in little every Day. 'Tis ten to one, but three Parts in four of the Company you dine with, are discomposed, and started at the cutting of a Cork, or scratching of a Plate with a Knife; it is a Proportion of the same HUMOUR, that makes such, or any other Noise, offensive to the Person that hears it; for there are others who will not be disturbed at all by it.

At this Rate every *Weakness of Nerves, or Particularity of Constitution*, is HUMOUR.

It is true, he justly points out in another Place the different Sentiments, which ought to be adapted to different *Characters in Comedy*, according to their different *Dispositions*, or, as he phrases it, *Humours*: As for Instance, he very rightly observes,

That a Character of a splenetic and peevish HUMOUR, Should have a satirical WIT. A jolly and sanguine HUMOUR should have a facetious WIT.

—But still this is no Description of what is well felt, and known, by the general Name of HUMOUR.

However, as what I have already quoted, may appear to be only his looser Explanations, it will be necessary to deliver his more closed and collected Sentiments upon this Subject. These he gives in the following Words,

I should be unwilling to venture, even in a bare *Description of Humour*, much more to make a *Definition* of it; but now my Hand is in, I will tell you what serves me instead of either. I take it to be, *A singular and unavoidable Manner of doing or saying any thing, peculiar and natural to one Man only, by which his Speech and Actions are distinguished from those of other Men.*”

—*This Description is very little applicable to HUMOUR, but tolerably well adapted to other Subjects.*—Thus, a Person, who is happy in a particular Grace_, which accompanies all his Actions, may be said to possess a *singular and unavoidable Manner of doing or saying any thing, peculiar and natural to him only, by which his Speech and Actions are distinguished from those of other Men.* And the same may be said of a Person of a peculiar *Vivacity, Heaviness, or Awkwardness.*—In short, this Description is suited to any *Particularity* of a Person in general, instead of being adapted to the *Foibles* and *whimsical Oddities* of Persons, which alone constitute HUMOUR.

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These are the only Pieces upon WIT, and HUMOUR, which have fallen within my Knowledge; I have here fairly delivered them at length; and from the Respect which is due to such eminent Writers, have distinctly and deliberately examined the Merit of each.—As to my own *Performance*, which is now submitted to the Public, I have to wish, that it may gain a candid and strict Examination. It has been my Endeavour to give *Definitions* of the Subjects, upon which I have treated; A *Plan* the most difficult of all others to be executed by an Author; But such an one, as I apprehend, deserves to be more generally introduced, and established. If once it was expected by the Public, that *Authors* should strictly *define* their Subjects, it would instantly check an Inundation of Scribbling. The *desultory* Manner of Writing would be absolutely exploded; and *Accuracy* and *Precision* would be necessarily introduced upon every Subject.

This is the *Method* pursued in Subjects of *Philosophy*; Without clear and precise *Definitions* such noble Advances could never have been made in those Sciences; And it is by the Assistance of *these* only, that Subjects of *Polite Literature*, can ever be enlightened and embellished with just Ornaments. If *Definitions* had been constantly exacted from Authors there would not have appeared *one hundredth* Part of the present Books, and yet every Subject had been better ascertained.—Nor will this Method, as some may imagine, be encumbered with Stiffness; On the contrary, in *illustrating* the Truth of *Definitions* there is a full Scope of the utmost Genius, Imagination, and Spirit of a Writer; and a Work upon this *Plan* is adorned with the highest Charms appearing with *Propriety*, *Clearness*, and *Conviction*, as well as Beauty.

It is true, that the Difficulties, which attend an able Execution of this *Method*, are not open to a careless Eye; And it is some Mortification to an *Author* upon this *Plan*, that his greatest *Merit* is likely to lie concealed; A *Definition*, or *Distinction*, which after much Attention and Time he has happily delivered with *Brevity* and *Clearness*, appearing hereby quite obvious, to others, and what they cannot imagine could require Pains to discover.

As to the *Examples*, by which I have illustrated the *Definition* of *Wit*, they are *common* and *trite*; but are the best, which I could find upon deliberate Enquiry. Many Modern instances of *Wit*, which left very lively Impressions upon me, when I heard them, appearing upon Re-examination to be quite strained and defective. These, which I have given, as they are thus *trite*, are not designed in themselves for any Entertainment to the Reader; but being various, and distant from each other, they very properly serve to explain the Truth, and Extent of the *Definition*.

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The Character of an HUMOURIST, I expect, will be strange to most of my Readers; and if no Gentleman is acquainted with a *Person* of this *Cast*, it must pass for a *Monster* of my own Creation;—As to the Character of *Sir John Falstaff*, it is chiefly extracted from *Shakespear*, in his 1st Part of *King Henry the IVth*; But so far as *Sir John* in *Shakspear's* Description, sinks into a *Cheat* or a *Scoundrel*, upon any Occasion, he is different from that *Falstaff*, who is designed in the following *Essay*, and is entirely an amiable Character.

It is obvious, that the Appearance, which *Falstaff* makes, in the unfinished Play of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, is in general greatly below his true Character. His Imprisonment and Death in the latter Part of *King Henry the IVth*, seem also to have been written by *Shakespear* in Compliance with the *Austerity* of the Times; and in order to avoid the Imputation of encouraging *Idleness* and mirthful *Riot* by too amiable and happy an Example.

The Criticism, which I have made, upon *Horace's* Narrative of his *Adventure* with an *Impertinent Fellow*, I offer with Respect; And beg leave to observe that the chief Part which I object to, is the *Propriety* of his introducing himself in so *ridiculous a Plight*;

—Dum sudor ad imos

Manaret Talos;

And

Demitto Auriculas, ut iniquae mentis Acellus

Cum gravius dorso subiit onus.

And other Representations of the same sort, seem to place *Horace* in a very mean and ludicrous Light; which it is probable he never apprehended in the full Course of exposing his Companion;—Besides, the Conduct of his Adversary is in several Places, excessively, and, as it may be construed, *designedly*, insolent and contemptuous; and as no Merit or Importance belongs to this Person, there appears no Reason why *Horace* should endure such Treatment; or, if the other was too *powerful* for him, it is not an *Adventure of Honour*; or what *Horace* should chuse to expose to the World in this manner, with all the Particulars of his own despicable Distress.

However, the *Mirth* which results from this Narrative, as it now stands, is perhaps rather the stronger at first, by the full *Ridicule* which lies against *Horace*, and his Adversary;—But, upon Reflection, there arises a Disgust, at the Impropiety of *Horace's* exposing his own *Meanness*, as well as at the nauseous *Impudence* of his Companion.

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As to *uncommon* Words, if any such appear in this *Introduction*, or in the following *Essay*, I hope they want neither *Propriety*, *Clearness*, nor *Strength*;—And if the *Length* of this Piece to an *Essay* so *short* shall happen at first to *disturb* any *Critic*, I beg leave to inform him, that all, which can be fairly collected from it, is only, that it may have cost *me* the more Trouble;—But upon mentioning the *Length* of this Piece, what behoves me the most, is, to return my Thanks to two *Gentlemen*, who suffered me to read to them the whole, as it was gradually written; And by whose *judicious* and *friendly Instructions* in the Course of it, my own *Imagination* was often prevented from running into *Riots*.

However, I am far from imagining, that I have always been reduced within just Bounds; And now feel a sufficient Share of *Concern* and *Anxiety*, for the *Fate* of this Work;—Yet, I humbly apprehend, that *this* must freely be allowed me, that I have not been a *Plagiarist*; But have constantly delivered my own *original* Sentiments, without *purloining* or *disfiguring* the Thoughts of others; An *Honesty*, which, I hope, is laudable in an *Author*; And as I have not *stolen*, neither have I *concealed*, the *Merit* of other Writers.

It will also be found, as I humbly apprehend, that I have never *shunned* the Subject: I mention this particularly, because it is the Practice of many eminent Writers, after much *curvetting* and *prauncing*, suddenly to wheel, and retire, when they are expected to make their most full Attack.—These Gentlemen, it is true, very happily avoid *Danger*, and advance and retreat in *excellent Order*: But, with their Leave, I must observe that they never do any *Execution*; For Subjects, which have not been surveyed, and laid open, are like *fortified Places*; and it is the Business of a *Writer*, as well as of a *Soldier*, to make an Attack;—This has been the Conduct I have held in the following *Essay*; and however I may be *shattered* upon any Occasion, I hope it will appear (if I may be allowed the Expression) that I have fairly *charged* the Subjects.

Having offered these Circumstances in my Favour, I must frankly acknowledge, that I am not able to plead any *Hurry* or *Precipitancy* in the publishing of this Work, in Excuse of its Errors; Though I clearly understand, that by making this Discovery, I absolutely deprive myself of the most *genteel* and *fashionable Screen* now used by Authors;—But I imagined, that it became me to spare no Labour or Attention upon a Work, which I should presume to offer to the World; Happening to esteem this *Care* and *Concern*, a *Respect* due to the *Public*, and the proper Species of *Humility* and *Modesty* in an *Author*.

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An
ESSAY
on
Wit, Humour, Raillery, & c.

WIT is the LUSTRE resulting from the quick ELUCIDATION of one Subject, by a *just* and unexpected ARRANGEMENT of it with another Subject.

This *Definition* of WIT will more clearly appear by a short Explanation.

It is the Province of WIT to *elucidate*, or *enlighten* a Subject, not by reasoning upon that Subject, but by a just and unexpected Introduction of another *similar*, or *opposite* Subject; whereby, upon their *Arrangement* together, the *original* Subject may be *set off*, and more clearly *enlighten'd*, by their obvious Comparison.

It may be proper, for the sake of Distinction, to call the Subject, which is the Basis and Ground-work, the *original* Subject; and that which is introduced, in order to *elucidate* it, the *auxiliary* Subject.

That there be always an apparent Chain or Connexion, or else an obvious Agreement or Contrast, between the two Subjects, is absolutely requir'd, in order that the *Auxiliary* one may be *justly* introduced; otherwise, instead of WIT, there will only appear a rambling *Vivacity*, in wild, unprovoked Sallies.

And yet *every just* or *natural* Introduction of an *auxiliary* Subject will not produce WIT, unless a new *Lustre* is reflected from thence upon the *original* Subject.

It is further to be observed, that the Introduction of the *auxiliary* Subject ought not only to be *just*, but also *unexpected*, which are entirely consistent together; For as every Subject bears various Relations and Oppositions to other Subjects, it is evident that each of these Relations and Oppositions upon being exhibited, will be *unexpected* to the Persons, who did not perceive them before; and yet they are *just* by Supposition.

It is upon such *unexpected* Introductions of *auxiliary* Subjects, that we are struck with a *Surprise*; from whence the high *Brilliancy* and *Sparkling* of WIT, result.

Whereas *Auxiliary* Subjects, introduced upon such Occasions, as they have been frequently exhibited before, are apt to fall dull, and heavy upon the Fancy; and unless they possess great natural Spirit, will excite no sprightly Sensation.

It is also necessary to observe, that, in WIT, the Subjects concern'd must be *ordinary* and *level*; By which are intended, not such as are *common*, but such as have no



extraordinarily exalted, or enlarged, Qualities; and are not unsizeable in the particular Circumstances in which they are compared to each other;—otherwise it is easy to perceive, that the Result of their Arrangement will not be so properly WIT, as either the SUBLIME, or BURLESQUE.

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To all this is to be added, that either *Gallantry, Raillery, Humour, Satire, Ridicule, Sarcasms*, or other Subjects, are generally blended with WIT; It has been for want of this Discovery, and of a proper Separation of these Subjects, that the Attempts which have hitherto been made to *define* WIT, have been all involv'd and overwhelm'd in Perplexity; For the different Mixtures of these foreign Ingredients with WIT, have discover'd such various and opposite *Colours and Substances*, as were impossible to be comprehended in one certain steady *Definition*;—Whereas *pure* WIT alone, constantly appears in *one uniform* Manner; which is, *In the quick Elucidation_* of one Subject, by *unexpectedly* exhibiting its *Agreement or Contrast* with another Subject_.

It is proper in this Place, to distinguish between WIT, SIMILES, and METAPHORS. SIMILES, though they *illustrate* one Subject, by *arranging* it with another Subject, are yet different from WIT, as they want its *sudden and quick Elucidation*.

Again; In WIT, the *Elucidation* is thrown only upon *one* Point of a Subject; or if more Points be *elucidated*, they are so many different Strokes of WIT;—Whereas every SIMILE touches the Subject it *illustrates* in *several Points*.

It is from hence, that the *Elucidation*, as before mention'd, arising from a SIMILE, is *slower* than from WIT; But then is generally more *accurate and compleat*;—In short, WIT, from its *Quickness*, exhibits more *Brilliancy*, But SIMILES possess greater *Perfection*.

A METAPHOR, is the *Arrayment* of one Subject, with the *Dress, or Colour, or any Attributes*, of another Subject.

In WIT, the two Subjects are suddenly confronted with each other, and upon their joint View, the *original* one is *elucidated* by the obvious *Agreement or Contrast* of the *auxiliary* Subject.

But METAPHOR goes further, and not content with *arranging* the two Subjects together, and exhibiting from thence their *Agreement or Contrast*, it actually snatches the Properties of the *auxiliary* one, and fits them at once upon the *original* Subject.

It is evident from hence, that there may be WIT without any METAPHOR; But in every just METAPHOR there is WIT; The *Agreement* of the two Subjects being in a METAPHOR more strictly and sensibly presented.

There is also this Difference between WIT and METAPHOR, that in WIT the *original* Subject is *enlighten'd*, without altering its *Dress*; whereas in METAPHOR the *original* Subject is cloathed in a *new Dress*, and struts forwards at once with a different *Air*, and with strange *unexpected Ornaments*.

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It is from hence, that by METAPHOR a more masculine Air and Vigour is given to a Subject, than by WIT; But it too often happens, that the METAPHOR is carried so far, as instead of *elucidating*, to obscure and disfigure, the *original* Subject.

To exhibit some Examples of WIT.

1.

Henry the IVth of *France*, intimating to the *Spanish* Ambassador the Rapidity, with which he was able to over-run *Italy*, told him, that *if once he mounted on Horseback, he should breakfast at Milan, and dine at Naples*; To which the Ambassador added, *Since your Majesty travels at this rate, you may be at Vespers in Sicily*.

The Introduction of the *Vespers* at SICILY is here *natural*, and easy; as it seems only to be carrying on his Majesty's Journey at the same rate, and to compleat the Progress of the Day; But it ushers at once into View the *Destruction* of the *French* upon a *similar* Occasion, when they formerly over-ran SICILY, and were all massacred there at the ringing of the Bell for *Vespers*;—The sudden Introduction and *Arrangement* of this Catastrophe, with the Expedition then threaten'd, sets the Issue of such a Conquest in a new *Light*; And very happily exhibits and *elucidates* the Result of such vain and restless Adventures.

It may be observed, that the *quick* Introduction and *Arrangement* of any former Conquest of *Italy* by the *French*, with the Expedition then threaten'd, would have exhibited WIT; whatever the Issue had been of such former Conquest; But in this Instance, there sits couched under the WIT, a very severe *Rebuke* upon the *French* Monarch.

2.

Alexander the VIth was very busily questioning the Ambassador of *Venice*, Of whom his Masters held their Customs and Prerogatives of the Sea? To which the Ambassador readily answer'd; *If your HOLINESS will only please to examine your Charter of St. PETER's Patrimony, you will find upon the Back of it, the Grant made to the VENETIANS of the ADRIATIC*.

The Authority of the *Grant* to the *Venetians* is in this Instance the *original* Subject, which is thus suddenly *elucidated* to the *Pope*, by *arranging*, and connecting it with the holy *Charter* of St. *Peter's* Patrimony; There is a peculiar Happiness in the Address of this Answer to the *Pope*, as he was obliged to receive it as a satisfactory Account of the Truth of the *Grant*, and a clear *Elucidation* of its sacred Authority.

In this Instance, besides the WIT which shines forth, the *Pope* is severely expos'd to your *Raillery*, from the Scrape into which he has brought the *Charter* of St. *Peter's*

Patrimony, by his Attack of the *Ambassador*; The *fictitious* Existence of both the *Charter* and *Grant* being sarcastically pointed out, under this respectable Air of *Authenticity*.

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3.

Upon the Restoration Mr. *Waller* presented a congratulatory Copy of Verses to King *Charles*; His Majesty, after reading them, said,— *Mr. Waller, these are very good, but not so fine as you made upon the PROTECTOR.*—To which Mr. *Waller* return'd,—*Your Majesty will please to recollect, that we Poets always write best upon FICTIONS.*

The *original* Subject in this Instance is *the superior Excellence of Mr. WALLER's Verses upon Cromwell*; This he most happily excuses, by starting at once, and *arranging* along with them, the Remark, that *Poets have always excell'd upon Fiction*; whereby he unexpectedly exhibits his *more excellent Verses to Cromwell*, as a plain *Elucidation* of the *fictitious* Glory of the Protector; And intimates at the same time, that the *Inferiority* of his present Performance was a natural *Illustration* of his Majesty's *real* Glory;—Never was a deep Reproach averted by a more happy Reply; which comprehends both the highest Compliment to his Majesty, and a very firm poetical Excuse of the different Performances.

4.

Leonidas the *Spartan* General, when he advanced near the *Persian* Army, was told by one of his own Captains, that *their Enemies were so numerous, it was impossible to see the Sun for the Multitude of their Arrows*; To which he gallantly reply'd, *We shall then have the Pleasure of fighting in the Shade.*

The vast Cope of *Persian* Arrows is here the *original* Subject; which instead of being observed by *Leonidas* with Terror, presents to his Fancy the pleasant Idea of a cool *Canopy*. There is an *Agreement* and Affinity between the two Objects, in regard to the *Shelter from the Sun*, which is at once obvious, and *unexpected*; And the Cloud of the Enemies Arrows is thus gaily *elucidated*, by the *Arrangement* and Comparison of it with so desirable an Object as *shady Covering*.

This Saying of the *Spartan* General has been handed through many Ages to the present Time; But the chief Part of the Pleasure it gives us, results not so much from the WIT it contains, as from the *Gallantry*, and *chearful Spirit*, discover'd in Danger, by *Leonidas*.

5.

An Instance of WIT in the *Opposition*, I remember to have read somewhere in the *Spectators*; where Sir *Roger de Coverley* intimating the Splendor which the perverse Widow should have appear'd in, if she had commenced Lady *Coverley*, says:

That he would have given her a Coalpit to have kept her in clean Linnen: And that her Finger should have sparkled with one hundred of his richest Acres.



The joint Introduction of these *opposite* Objects, as a *Coalpit* with *clean Linnen*, and *dirty Acres* with the *Lustre* of a *Jewel*, is *just* in this Instance, as they really produce each other in their Consequences; The *natural Opposition* between them, which is strongly *elucidated* by their *Arrangement* together, and at the same time their *unexpected Connexion* in their Consequences, strike us with a *Surprize*, which exhibits the *Brilliancy* and *Sparkling* of WIT.

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There is also in this Instance, besides the WIT, a Spirit of *Generosity*, and *Magnificence*, discover'd by Sir Roger, from the known Value of a *Coalpit*, and of so many rich *Acres*.

This Kind of WIT, resulting from the sudden *Arrangement* together of two *opposite* Objects, is rarer, than that which is obtained from two *similar* Objects; It abounds with a high *Surprise*, and *Brilliancy*; and also strongly *elucidates* the *original* Object, from the *Contrast* presented between *this*, and the *auxiliary* one; In the same manner as *White* is more clearly set off, by being arranged with *Black*.

It may be proper to observe, that WIT, besides being struck out by *just*, and *direct* Introductions of *auxiliary* Subjects, is also sometimes obtain'd by *Transitions* from one Subject to another, by the Help of an *equivocal Word*; which like a *Bridge*, with two Roads meeting at the End of it, leads to two different Places. *Transitions*, thus made from the right Course, have indeed the Pretence of being *natural*; but they ought always to lead us to something *brilliant* or poignant, in order to justify their *Deviation*; and not to end only at a ridiculous PUN, void of all Spirit and Poignancy.

The WIT, in such Instances, results, as in all others, from the quick *Arrangement* together of two Subjects; But that, which was first intended for the *original* one, is dropped; And a new *original* Subject is started, through the *double Meaning* of a Word, and suddenly *enlighten'd*.

To give a *trite* Instance of this kind of WIT.

A PEER coming out of the House of Lords, and wanting his Servant, called out, *Where's my Fellow?* To which another PEER, who stood by him, returned, *Faith, my Lord, not in England*.

A Transition is here unexpededly made from the Sense intended in the Question to another Point, through the double Meaning of the word *Fellow*; it being obvious, that his Lordship's *Servant* is the Sense of the Word in the Question; and what Person is *like* to his Lordship, the Construction put upon it in the Answer: Thus a new *original* Subject is started, and being suddenly *arranged* with all that appear *similar* to it, is *enlighten'd* thereby, being found to have no *equal* in *England*.

However, though WIT may be *thus* struck out, and also appears in the *Contrast* with great *Brilliancy*, yet the highest and most perfect Instances of it result from the sudden and *direct Arrangement* together of two Objects, which hold a perspicuous and splendid *Agreement* with each other; It is then adorn'd with the Charms of *Propriety*, *Cleanness* and *Illustration*; It dispels the Darkness around an Object, and presents it diftinctly and perfectly to our View; chearing us with its *Lustre*, and at the same time informing us with its *Light*.

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Thus, a Gentleman was observing, that *there was somewhat extremely pleasing in an excellent Understanding, when it appeared in a beautiful Person*; To which another returned, *It is like a fine Jewel well set*; You are here pleased with the Happiness, Propriety, and Splendor of this *new Object*, which finely *elucidates* the original Sentiment;—In short, it is the Excellence of WIT, *to present the first Image again to your mind, with new unexpected Clearness and Advantage*.

It is also proper to add, that there may be WIT in a *Picture, Landscape*, or in any *Prospect*, where a gay unexpected *Assemblage of similar, or opposite Objects*, is presented.

JUDGMENT, is the Faculty of discerning the various *Dimensions*, and *Differences*, of Subjects.

INVENTION is the Faculty of finding out new *Assortments*, and *Combinations*, of *Ideas*.

HUMOUR is any *whimsical Oddity* or *Foible*, appearing in the *Temper* or *Conduct* of a *Person in real Life*.

This *whimsical Oddity* of Conduct, which generally arises from the strange *Cast*, or *Turn* of Mind of a *queer Person*, may also result from *accidental* Mistakes and Embarrassments between other Persons; who being misled by a wrong Information and Suspicion in regard to a Circumstance, shall act towards each other upon this Occasion, in the same *odd whimsical* manner, as *queer Persons*.

If a *Person* in real Life, discovers any odd and remarkable *Features* of Temper or Conduct, I call such a Person in the *Book of Mankind*, a *Character*. So that the chief Subjects of HUMOUR are Persons in real Life, who are *Characters*.

It is easy to be perceived, that HUMOUR, and WIT are extremely different.

HUMOUR appears only in the *Foibles* and *whimsical Conduct* of *Persons* in real Life; WIT appears in *Comparisons*, either between *Persons* in real Life, or between *other Subjects*.

HUMOUR is the *whimsical Oddity*, or *Foible*, which fairly appears in its Subject, of itself; whereas WIT, is the *Lustre* which is thrown upon *one Subject*, by the *sudden Introduction* of another Subject.

To constitute HUMOUR, there need be no more than *one Object* concern'd, and this must be always some *Person in real Life*;— whereas to produce WIT, there must be always *two Objects arranged* together, and either or both of these may be *inanimate*.

However, though HUMOUR and WIT are thus absolutely different in themselves, yet we frequently see them blended together.

Thus if any *Foible* of a *Character* in real Life is *directly* attacked, by pointing out the unexpected and ridiculous *Affinity* it bears to some *inanimate* Circumstances, this *Foible* is then ridiculed with WIT, from the *Comparison* which is made.—At the same time, as the *whimsical Oddity* of a *Character* in real Life is the *Ground* of the whole, there is also *Humour* contain'd in the Attack.

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If instead of referring the *Foible* of a Person to any *inanimate* Circumstance, the *Allusion* had been made to any other ridiculous *Person* in *real Life*; As a *conceited Fellow*, perpetually recommending his own Whims, to a *Quack-Doctor*;—This *Foible* will then be ridiculed with HUMOUR; which is likewise the original *Ground*: At the same Time, from the *Comparison* which is made, there is apparently WIT in the Description.

So that where-ever the *Foible* of a *Character* in real Life is concern'd, there HUMOUR comes in; and wherever a sprightly unexpected *Arrangement* is presented of two *similar*, or *opposite* Subjects, whether animate or inanimate, there WIT is exhibited.

HUMOUR and WIT, as they may thus both be united in the same Subject, may also separately appear without the least Mixture together; that is, there may be HUMOUR without WIT, and WIT without HUMOUR.

Thus, if in order to expose the *Foible* of a *Character*, a *real Person* is introduc'd, abounding in this *Foible*, gravely persisting in it, and valuing himself upon the Merit of it, with great Self-sufficiency, and Disdain of others; this *Foible* is then solely ridiculed with HUMOUR.

Again, if a gay unexpected *Allusion* is made from one *inanimate* Object to another, or from one *Person* in *real Life* to another, without any Reference to their whimsical *Oddities* or *Foibles*; there WIT only appears.—Various Instances of which, independent of HUMOUR, have been already exhibited.

A *Man* of WIT is

he, who is happy in *elucidating* any Subject, *by a just and unexpected Arrangement* and *Comparison* of it with another Subject.

It may be also proper to describe a *Man* of HUMOUR, and an HUMOURIST, which are very different Persons.

A *Man* of HUMOUR is

one, who can happily exhibit a weak and ridiculous *Character* in real Life, either by assuming it himself, or representing another in it, so naturally, that the *whimsical Oddities*, and *Foibles*, of that *Character*, shall be palpably expos'd.

Whereas an HUMOURIST

is a *Person* in real Life, obstinately attached to sensible peculiar *Oddities* of his own genuine Growth, which appear in his Temper and Conduct.

In short, a *Man of Humour* is one, who can happily exhibit and expose the Oddities and Foibles of an *Humourist*, or of other *Characters*.

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The *Features* of an HUMOURIST being very remarkable and singular, seem justly to deserve an explicit Description. It is then to be observ'd, that an *Humourist*, at the same time that he is guided in his Manners and Actions by his own genuine original Fancy and Temper, disdains all *Ostentation*; excepting that alone of his *Freedom* and *Independency*, which he is forward of shewing upon every Occasion, without Ceremony; he is quite superior to the *Affectation* of a Virtue or Accomplishment, which he thinks does not belong to him; scorns all *Imitation* of others; and contemns the rest of the World for being servilely obedient to Forms and Customs; disclaiming all such Submission himself, and regulating his Conduct in general by his own *Conviction*,

The *Humourist* is forward upon many Occasions to deliver his Opinion, in a peremptory Manner, and before he is desir'd; but he gives it sincerely, unbiass'd by *Fear* or *Regard*, and then leaves it to the Persons concern'd to determine for themselves; For he is more pleas'd in the Bottom to find his Opinion *slighted*, and to see the Conduct of others agreeable to that System of Folly and Weakness, which he has established with himself, to be the Course of their Actions.—To view a rational Conduct, even in pursuance of his own Advice, would greatly disappoint him; and be a Contradiction to this *System* he has laid down;—Besides it would deprive him of an Occasion of gratifying his Spleen, with the Contempt of that Folly, which he esteems to be natural to the rest of Mankind; For he considers himself in the World, like a *sober* Person in the Company of Men, who are *drunken* or *mad*; He may advise them to be calm, and to avoid hurting themselves, but he does not expect they will regard his Advice; On the contrary, he is more pleas'd with observing their *Freaks* and *Extravagancies*.—It is from hence that he discourages and depreciates all who pretend to *Discretion*; Persons of this Temper not yielding him Sport or Diversion.

It is certain that the *Humourist* is excessively *proud*, and yet without knowing or suspecting it. For from the Liberty which he frankly allows to others, of rejecting his Opinion, he is fully persuaded, that he is free from all *Pride*; But tho' he acts in this Circumstance without over-bearing, it has already appear'd, not to be the Effect of his *Humility*, but of a different Motive; a Pleasure which he takes in observing the Extravagancies of others, rather than their Discretion. But to demonstrate his *Pride*, besides the peremptory Manner in which he delivers his Opinion, and conducts himself upon every Occasion, without any Deference to others, there is this Circumstance against him; that he is the most stung by a Defeat, upon any Topic, of all Men living; And although he disregards Accusations of Roughness and Oddity, and rather esteems them to be meritorious; yet he will never admit, that he has been fairly overthrown in a Debate.

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It is odd to observe how the *Humourist* is affected by *contemptuous* Treatment. An Insult of this Sort, which justly excites the *Resentment* of others, *terrifies* him: It sets him upon *suspecting* himself, and upon doubting whether he be really that Person of superior Sense to the rest of the World, which he has long fancied. The Apprehension, that he actually deserves the Contempt which is put upon him, and that he is no more than one of the common Herd, almost distracts him; And instead of violently depreciating, or attacking again, the Person who has contemn'd him, he will incessantly court his Favour and good Opinion, as a Cordial he wants, though without seeming to do so. This is a very extraordinary Weakness, and such as the *Humourist* would be infinitely uneasy to find ever observ'd.

The *Humourist*, though he quickly espies, and contemns the *Contradictions* of others, is yet wilfully attach'd to several himself, which he will sometimes persue through a long Course of his own Mortification.—It may be often observ'd, that he will avoid the Company he likes, for fear they should think he needs their Support.—At the same time, if he happens to fall into Company, which he tallies not with, instead of avoiding this Company, he will continually haunt them: For he is anxious, lest any Imputation of a Defeat should stand out against him, and extremely solicitous to wipe it away; Besides, he cannot endure it should be thought that he is driven from the Pit. —Thus, in the first Instance, his *Pride* shall persuade him to neglect the Company he likes; and shall force him, in the last, to follow the Company he hates and despises.

It is also observable that the *Humourist*, though he makes it his Point to regulate his Conduct only by his own Conviction, will sometimes run counter to it, merely from his Disdain of all *Imitation*. Thus he will persist in a wrong Course, which he knows to be such, and refuse his Compliance with an Amendment offer'd by others, rather than endure the Appearance of being an *Imitator*. This is a *narrow* Side of the *Humourist*; and whenever he is turn'd upon it, he feels great Uneasiness himself. It strikes a durable Pain into his Breast, like the constant gnawing of a Worm; and is one considerable Source of that Stream of Peevishness incident to *Humourists*.

Upon the same Principle of scorning all *Imitation*, the *Humourist* seldom heartily assents to any speculative Opinion, which is deliver'd by another; for he is above being inform'd or set right in his Judgment by any Person, even by a Brother *Humourist*. If two of this *Cast* happen to meet, instead of uniting together, they are afraid of each other; and you shall observe *one*, in order to court the good Opinion of the *other*, produce a Specimen of his own Perfection as an *Humourist*; by exhibiting some unusual Strain of *sensible Oddity*, or by unexpectedly biting a poor *Inspid*; which the other *Humourist* shall answer again in the same manner, in order to display *his* Talents.

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These are the *Foibles* and *narrow Whims* of a perfect *Humourist*. But, on the other hand, he stands upon a very enlarged Basis; Is a Lover of Reason and Liberty; and scorns to flatter or betray; nor will he falsify his Principles, to court the Favour of the Great. He is not credulous, or fond of Religious or Philosophical Creeds or Creed-makers; But then he never offers himself to forge Articles of Faith for the rest of the World. Abounding in poignant and just Reflections; The Guardian of Freedom, and Scourge of such as do wrong. It is *He* checks the Frauds, and curbs the Usurpations of every Profession. The venal Biass of the assuming Judge, the cruel Pride of the starch'd Priest, the empty Froth of the florid Counsellor, the false Importance of the formal Man of Business, the specious Jargon of the grave Physician, and the creeping Taste of the trifling Connoisseur, are all bare to his Eye, and feel the Lash of his Censure; It is *He* that watches the daring Strides, and secret Mines of the ambitious Prince, and desperate Minister: *He* gives the Alarm, and prevents their Mischief. Others there are who have Sense and Foresight; but *they* are brib'd by Hopes or Fears, or bound by softer Ties; It is *He* only, the *Humourist*, that has the Courage and Honesty to cry out, unmov'd by personal Resentment: He flourishes only in a Land of *Freedom*, and when *that* ceases he dies too, the last and noblest *Weed* of the Soil of *Liberty*.

It is a palpable *Absurdity* to suppose a Person an *Humourist*, without excellent Sense and Abilities; as much as to suppose a *Smith* in his full Business, without his *Hammers* or *Forge*.—But the *Humourist*, as he advances in Years, is apt to grow intolerable to himself and the World; becoming at length, uneasy, and fatigued with the constant View of the same Follies; like a Person who is tir'd with seeing the same Tragi-Comedy continually acted. This sowres his Temper; And unless some favorable Incidents happen to mellow him, he resigns himself wholly to Peevishness.—By which Time he perceives that the World is quite tir'd of *him*.—After which he drags on the Remainder of his Life, in a State of *War* with the rest of Mankind.

The *Humourist* is constitutionally, and also from Reflection, a Man of *Sincerity*.—If he is a *Rogue* upon any Occasion, he is more wilfully one, and puts greater Violence upon himself in being such, than the rest of the World; And though he may generally seem to have little *Benevolence*, which is the common Objection against him, it is only for want of proper Objects; for no Person has certainly a quicker *Feeling*; And there are Instances frequent, of greater Generosity and humane Warmth flowing from an *Humourist*, than are capable of proceeding from a weak *Insidid*, who labours under a continual Flux of Civility.

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Upon the whole, the *Humourist* is perhaps the least of all others, a *despicable* Character. But Imitations, which are frequently seen of this Character, are excessively despicable.—What can be more ridiculous, than a Wretch setting up for an *Humourist*, merely upon the Strength of disrelishing every Thing, without any Principle;—The Servants, Drawers, Victuals, Weather,—and growling without Poignancy of Sense, at every new Circumstance which appears, in public or private. A perfect and compleat *Humourist* is rarely to be found; and when you hear his *Voice*, is a different Creature.—In writing to *Englishmen*, who are generally tinged, deeply or slightly, with the *Dye* of the *Humourist*, it seem'd not improper to insist the longer upon this Character; However, let none be too fond of it; For though an *Humourist* with his Roughness is greatly to be preferr'd to a smooth *Insidid*, yet the Extremes of both are equally wretched: *Ideots* being only the lowest Scale of *Insipids*, as *Madmen* are no other than *Humourists* in Excess.

It may be proper to observe in this place, that though all *Ostentation*, *Affectation*, and *Imitation* are excluded from the Composition of a perfect *Humourist*; yet as they are the obvious *Foibles* of some Persons in Life, they may justly be made the Subject of *Humour*.

For HUMOUR extensively and fully understood, is *any remarkable Oddity or Foible belonging to a Person in real Life; whether this Foible be constitutional, habitual, or only affected; whether partial in one or two Circumstances; or tinging the whole Temper and Conduct of the Person.*

It has from hence been observ'd, that there is more HUMOUR in the *English Comedies* than in others; as we have more various odd *Characters* in real Life, than any other Nation, or perhaps than all other Nations together.

That HUMOUR gives more Delight, and leaves a more pleasurable Impression behind it, than WIT, is universally felt and established; Though the Reasons for this have not yet been assign'd.—I shall therefore beg Leave to submit the following.

1. HUMOUR is more *interesting* than WIT in general, as the *Oddities* and *Foibles* of *Persons in real Life* are more apt to affect our Passions, than any Oppositions or Relations between *inanimate* Objects.
2. HUMOUR is *Nature*, or what really appears in the Subject, without any Embellishments; WIT only a Stroke of *Art*, where the original Subject, being insufficient of itself, is garnished and deck'd with auxiliary Objects.
3. HUMOUR, or the Foible of a *Character* in real Life, is usually insisted upon for some Length of Time. From whence, and from the common Knowledge of the Character, it is universally felt and understood.—Whereas the Strokes of WIT are like sudden *Flashes*,

vanishing in an Instant, and usually flying too fast to be sufficiently marked and pursued by the Audience.

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4. HUMOUR, if the Representation of it be just, is compleat and perfect in its Kind, and entirely fair and unstrain'd.—Whereas in the Allusions of WIT, the Affinity is generally imperfect and defective in one Part or other; and even in those Points where the Affinity may be allow'd to subsist, some Nicety and Strain is usually requir'd to make it appear.

5. HUMOUR generally appears in such Foibles, as each of the Company thinks himself superior to.—Whereas WIT shews the Quickness and Abilities of the Person who discovers it, and places him superior to the rest of the Company.

6. Humour, in the Representation of the *Foibles of Persons in real Life*, frequently exhibits very *generous benevolent* Sentiments of the Heart; And these, tho' exerted in a particular odd Manner, justly command our Fondness and Love.—Whereas in the Allusions of WIT, *Severity, Bitterness, and Satire*, are frequently exhibited.—And where these are avoided, not worthy amiable Sentiments of the *Heart*, but quick unexpected Efforts of the *Fancy*, are presented.

7. The odd Adventures, and Embarrassments, which *Persons in real Life* are drawn into by their *Foibles*, are fit Subjects of *Mirth*. —Whereas in pure WIT, the Allusions are rather *surprising*, than *mirthful*; and the *Agreements or Contrasts* which are started between Objects, without any relation to the *Foibles of Persons in real Life*, are more fit to be *admired* for their *Happiness and Propriety*, than to excite our *Laughter*.—Besides, WIT, in the frequent Repetition of it, tires the Imagination with its precipitate Sallies and Flights; and teizes the Judgment.—Whereas HUMOUR, in the Representation of it, puts no Fatigue upon the *Imagination*, and gives exquisite Pleasure to the *Judgment*.

These seem to me to be the different Powers and Effects of HUMOUR and WIT. However, the most agreeable Representations or Competitions of all others, appear not where they *separately* exist, but where they are *united* together in the same Fabric; where HUMOUR is the *Ground-work* and chief Substance, and WIT happily spread, *quickens* the whole with Embellishments.

This is the Excellency of the *Character* of Sir *John Falstaff*; the *Ground-work* is *Humour*, the Representation and Detection of a bragging and vaunting *Coward in real Life*; However, this alone would only have expos'd the *Knight*, as a meer *Noll Bluff*, to the Derision of the Company; And after they had once been gratify'd with his Chastisement, he would have sunk into Infamy, and become quite odious and intolerable: But here the inimitable *Wit* of Sir *John* comes in to his Support, and gives a new *Rise and Lustre* to his Character; For the sake of his *Wit* you forgive his *Cowardice*; or rather, are fond of his *Cowardice* for the Occasions it gives to his *Wit*. In short, the *Humour* furnishes a Subject and Spur to the *Wit*, and the *Wit* again supports and embellishes the *Humour*.

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At the *first* Entrance of the *Knight*, your good Humour and Tendency to *Mirth* are irresistibly excited by his jolly Appearance and Corpulency; you feel and acknowledge him, to be the fittest Subject imaginable for yielding *Diversion* and *Merriment*; but when you see him immediately set up for *Enterprize* and *Activity*, with his evident *Weight* and *Unweildiness*, your Attention is all call'd forth, and you are eager to watch him to the End of his Adventures; Your Imagination pointing out with a full Scope his future Embarrassments. All the while as you accompany him forwards, he *heightens* your Relish for his future Disasters, by his happy Opinion of his own Sufficiency, and the gay Vaunts which he makes of his Talents and Accomplishments; so that at last when he falls into a Scrape, your Expectation is exquisitely gratify'd, and you have the full Pleasure of seeing all his trumpeted Honour laid in the Dust. When in the midst of his Misfortunes, instead of being utterly demolish'd and sunk, he rises again by the superior Force of his *Wit*, and begins a *new* Course with fresh Spirit and Alacrity; This excites you the more to *renew* the Chace, in full View of his *second* Defeat; out of which he recovers again, and triumphs with new Pretensions and Boastings. After this he immediately starts upon a *third* Race, and so on; continually detected and caught, and yet constantly extricating himself by his inimitable *Wit* and *Invention*; thus yielding a perpetual *Round* of Sport and Diversion.

Again, the genteel *Quality* of Sir *John* is of great Use in supporting his Character; It prevents his *sinking* too low after several of his Misfortunes; Besides, you allow him, in consequence of his *Rank* and *Seniority*, the Privilege to dictate, and take the Lead, and to rebuke others upon many Occasions; By this he is sav'd from appearing too *nauseous* and *impudent*. The good *Sense* which he possesses comes also to his Aid, and saves him from being *despicable*, by forcing your Esteem for his real Abilities.— Again, the *Privilege* you allow him of rebuking and checking others, when he assumes it with proper Firmness and Superiority, helps to *settle* anew, and *compose* his Character after an Embarrassment; And reduces in some measure the *Spirit* of the Company to a proper *Level*, before he sets out again upon a fresh Adventure;—without this, they would be kept continually *strain'd*, and *wound up* to the highest Pitch, without sufficient Relief and Diversity.

It may also deserve to be remark'd of *Falstaff*, that the *Figure* of his *Person* is admirably suited to the *Turn* of his *Mind*; so that there arises before you a perpetual *Allusion* from one to the other, which forms an incessant Series of *Wit*, whether they are in *Contrast* or *Agreement* together.—When he pretends to *Activity*, there is *Wit* in the *Contrast* between his *Mind* and his *Person*, —And *Wit* in their *Agreement*, when he triumphs in *Jollity*.

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To compleat the whole,—you have in this Character of *Falstaff*, not only a free Course of *Humour*, supported and embellish'd with admirable *Wit*; but this *Humour* is of a Species the most *jovial* and *gay* in all Nature.—Sir *John Falstaff* possesses Generosity, Chearfulness, Alacrity, Invention, Frolic and Fancy superior to all other Men;—The *Figure* of his *Person* is the Picture of Jollity, Mirth, and Good-nature, and banishes at once all other Ideas from your Breast; He is happy himself, and makes you happy.—If you examine him further, he has no Fierceness, Reserve, Malice or Peevishness lurking in his Heart; His Intentions are all pointed at innocent Riot and Merriment; Nor has the Knight any inveterate Design, except against *Sack*, and that too he *loves*.—If, besides this, he desires to pass for a Man of *Activity* and *Valour*, you can easily excuse so harmless a *Foible*, which yields you the highest Pleasure in its constant *Detection*.

If you put all these together, it is impossible to *hate* honest *Jack Falstaff*; If you observe them again, it is impossible to avoid *loving* him; He is the gay, the witty, the frolicsome, happy, and fat *Jack Falstaff*, the most delightful *Swaggerer* in all Nature.— You must *love* him for your *own* sake,—At the same time you cannot but *love* him for *his own* Talents; And when you have *enjoy'd* them, you cannot but *love* him in *Gratitude*;—He has nothing to disgust you, and every thing to give you Joy;—His *Sense* and his *Foibles* are equally directed to advance your Pleasure; And it is impossible to be tired or unhappy in his Company.

This *jovial* and *gay* Humour, without any thing *envious*, *malicious*, *mischievous*, or *despicable*, and continually *quicken'd* and adorn'd with *Wit*, yields that peculiar Delight, without any *Alloy*, which we all feel and acknowledge in *Falstaff's* Company.—*Ben Johnson* has *Humour* in his *Characters*, drawn with the most masterly Skill and Judgment; In Accuracy, Depth, Propriety, and Truth, he has no *Superior* or *Equal* amongst *Ancients* or *Moderns*; But the *Characters* he exhibits are of *satirical*, and *deceitful*, or of a *peevish* or *despicable* Species; as *Volpone*, *Subtle*, *Morose*, and *Abel Druggier*; In all of which there is something very justly to be *hated* or *despised*; And you feel the same Sentiments of *Dislike* for every other *Character* of *Johnson's*; so that after you have been *gratify'd* with their *Detention* and *Punishment*, you are quite tired and disgusted with their Company:—Whereas *Shakespeare*, besides the peculiar *Gaiety* in the *Humour* of *Falstaff*, has guarded him from disgusting you with his *forward Advances*, by giving him *Rank* and *Quality*; from being *despicable* by his real good *Sense* and excellent *Abilities*; from being *odious* by his *harmless Plots* and *Designs*; and from being *tiresome* by his inimitable *Wit*, and his new and incessant *Sallies* of highest *Fancy* and *Frolick*.

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This discovers the *Secret* of carrying COMEDY to the highest Pitch of Delight; Which lies

in drawing the Persons exhibited, with such chearful and amiable *Oddities* and *Foibles*, as you would chuse in your own *Companions* in *real Life*;

—otherwise, tho' you may be diverted at first with the Novelty_ of a Character, and with a proper *Detection* and *Ridicule* of it, yet its *Peevishness*, *Meanness*, or *Immorality*, will begin to disgust you after a little Reflection, and become soon *tiresome* and *odious*; It being certain, that

whoever cannot be endured as an *accidental* Companion in *real Life*, will never become, for the very same Reasons, a *favorite comic Character* in the Theatre.

This *Relish* for *generous* and *worthy* Characters alone, which we all feel upon the Theatre, where no Biass of Envy, Malice, or personal Resentment draws us aside, seems to be some Evidence of our *natural* and *genuin* Disposition to *Probity* and *Virtue*; tho' the Minds of most Persons being early and deeply *tinged* with vicious Passions, it is no wonder that *Stains* have been generally mistaken for *original Colours*.

It may be added, that *Humour* is the most exquisite and delightful, when the *Oddities* and *Foibles* introduc'd are not *mischievous* or *sneaking*, but *free*, *jocund*, and *liberal*; and such as result from a generous Flow of Spirits, and a warm universal *Benevolence*.

It is obviously from hence, that the *Character* of Sir Roger de Coverly in the *Spectators* is so extremely agreeable. His *Foibles* are all derived from some amiable Cause.—If he believes that *one Englishman* can conquer *two Frenchmen*, you laugh at his *Foible*, and are fond of a *Weakness* in the Knight, which proceeds from his high Esteem of his *own Country-men*.—If he chuses you should employ a *Waterman* or *Porter* with *one Leg*, you readily excuse the Inconvenience he puts you to, for his worthy regard to the Suffering of a brave *Soldier*.—In short, though he is guilty of continual Absurdities, and has little Understanding or real Abilities, you cannot but *love* and *esteem* him, for his *Honour*, *Hospitality*, and universal *Benevolence*.

It is indeed true, that his *Dignity*, *Age*, and *Rank* in his Country, are of constant Service in *upholding* his Character. These are a perpetual *Guard* to the Knight, and preserve him from *Contempt* upon many Occasions.—All which corresponds entirely with the fore-going *Remark*. For you would be fond of Sir Roger's Acquaintance and Company in *real Life*, as he is a Gentleman of *Quality* and *Virtue*; You love and admire him in the *Spectators* for the *same* Reasons; And for these also he would become, if he was rightly exhibited, a *favorite Character* in the Theatre.

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It may be proper to observe in this Place, that the *Business* of COMEDY is to exhibit the whimsical *unmischievous Oddities*, *Frolics*, and *Foibles* of *Persons* in *real Life*; And also to *expose* and *ridicule* their *real Follies*, *Meanness*, and *Vices*. The *former*, it appears, is more pleasurable to the Audience, but the *latter* has the Merit of being more instructive.

The *Business* of TRAGEDY is to exhibit the *Instability* of *human Grandeur*, and the unexpected *Misfortunes* and *Distresses* incident to the *Innocent* and *Worthy* in all Stations.—And also to shew the terrible *Sallies* and the miserable *Issue* and *Punishment* of ungovern'd *Passions* and *Wickedness*.—The *former* softens the Heart and fills it with *Compassion*, *Humility* and *Benevolence*.—Compositions of this Sort are the highest, most admirable, and useful in all Nature, when they are finish'd with *Propriety* and *Delicacy*, and justly wrought up with the *Sublime* and *Simplicity*.—The *latter* Species of *Tragedy* terrifies and shocks us, in exhibiting both the *Crimes* and the *Punishments*. It threatens us into *Moderation* and *Justice*, by shewing the terrible *Issue* of their *Contraries*. Pieces of this Sort, conducted with *Propriety*, and carrying *Application* to ourselves, can scarcely be desireable; But as they are generally conducted, they amount only to giving us an absurd *Representation* of a *Murder* committed by some furious foaming *Basha*, or *Sultan*.

To return.—*Johnson* in his *COMIC Scenes* has expos'd and ridicul'd *Folly* and *Vice*; *Shakespear* has usher'd in *Joy*, *Frolic* and *Happiness*.—The *Alchymist*, *Volpone* and *Silent Woman* of *Johnson*, are most exquisite *Satires*. The *comic* *Entertainments* of *Shakespear* are the highest *Compositions* of *Raillery*, *Wit* and *Humour*. *Johnson* conveys some *Lesson* in every *Character*. *Shakespear* some new *Species* of *Foible* and *Oddity*. The one pointed his *Satire* with masterly *Skill*; the other was inimitable in touching the *Strings* of *Delight*. With *Johnson* you are confin'd and instructed, with *Shakespear* unbent and dissolv'd in *Joy*. *Johnson* excellently concerts his *Plots*, and all his *Characters* unite in the one *Design*. *Shakespear* is superior to such *Aid* or *Restraint*; His *Characters* continually sallying from one independent *Scene* to another, and charming you in each with fresh *Wit* and *Humour*.

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It may be further remark'd, that *Johnson* by pursuing the most useful Intention of *Comedy*, is in Justice oblig'd to *hunt down* and *demolish* his own Characters. Upon this Plan he must necessarily expose them to your *Hatred*, and of course can never bring out an amiable Person. His *Subtle*, and *Face* are detected at last, and become mean and despicable. Sir *Epicure Mammon* is properly trick'd, and goes off ridiculous and detestable. The *Puritan Elders* suffer for their Lust of Money, and are quite nauseous and abominable; And his *Morose* meets with a severe Punishment, after having sufficiently tir'd you with his Peevishness.—But *Shakespear*, with happier Insight, always supports his Characters in your *Favour*. His Justice *Shallow* withdraws before he is tedious; The *French Doctor*, and *Welch Parson*, go off in full Vigour and Spirit; Ancient *Pistoll* indeed is scurvily treated; however, he keeps up his Spirits, and continues to threaten so well, that you are still desirous of his Company; and it is impossible to be tir'd or dull with the gay unfading Evergreen *Falstaff*.

But in remarking upon the Characters of *Johnson*, it would be unjust to pass *Abel Drugger* without notice; This is a little, mean, sneaking, sordid Citizen, hearkening to a Couple of Sharpers, who promise to make him rich; they can scarcely prevail upon him to resign the least Tittle he possesses, though he is assur'd, it is in order to get more; and your Diversion arises, from seeing him *wrung* between *Greediness* to *get Money*, and *Reluctance* to *part* with any for that Purpose. His Covetousness continually prompts him to follow the Conjuror, and puts him at the same Time upon endeavouring to stop his Fees. All the while he is excellently managed, and spirited on by *Face*. However, this Character upon the whole is *mean* and *despicable*, without any of that free spirituous jocund Humour abounding in *Shakespear*. But having been strangely exhibited upon the Theatre, a few Years ago, with odd Grimaces and extravagant Gestures, it has been raised into more Attention than it justly deserved; It is however to be acknowledg'd, that *Abel* has no Hatred, Malice or Immorality, nor any assuming Arrogance, Pertness or Peevishness; And his eager Desire of getting and saving Money, by Methods he thinks lawful, are excusable in a Person of his Business; He is therefore not odious or detestable, but harmless and inoffensive in private Life; and from thence, correspondent with the Rule already laid down, he is the most capable of any of *Johnson's* Characters, of being a Favourite on the Theatre.

It appears, that in Imagination, Invention, Jollity and gay Humour, *Johnson* had little Power; But *Shakespear* unlimited Dominion. The first was cautious and strict, not daring to sally beyond the Bounds of Regularity. The other bold and impetuous, rejoicing like a Giant to run his Course, through all the Mountains and Wilds of Nature and Fancy.

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It requires an almost painful Attention to mark the Propriety and Accuracy of *Johnson*, and your Satisfaction arises from Reflection and Comparison; But the Fire and Invention of *Shakespear* in an Instant are shot into your Soul, and enlighten and chear the most indolent Mind with their own Spirit and Lustre.—Upon the whole, *Johnson's* Compositions are like finished Cabinets, where every Part is wrought up with the most excellent Skill and Exactness;— *Shakespear's* like magnificent Castles, not perfectly finished or regular, but adorn'd with such bold and magnificent Designs, as at once delight and astonish you with their Beauty and Grandeur.

RAILLERY is a genteel poignant Attack of a *Person* upon any *slight Foibles*, *Oddities*, or *Embarrassments* of his, in which he is tender, or may be supposed to be tender, and unwilling to come to a free Explanation.

SATIRE is a witty and severe Attack of *mischievous Habits* or *Vices*;

RIDICULE is a free *Attack* of any *Motly Composition*, wherein a real or affected *Excellence* and *Defect* both jointly appear, *glaring* together, and *mocking* each other, in the same *Subject*.

Hence the Aim of *Raillery*, is to please you, by some little *Embarrassment* of a *Person*; Of *Satire*, to scourge *Vice*, and to deliver it up to your just *Detestation*; And of *Ridicule*, to set an Object in a mean ludicrous Light, so as to expose it to your *Derision* and *Contempt*.

It appears therefore that *Raillery* and *Ridicule* differ in several Circumstances.

1. *Raillery* can only be employ'd in relation to *Persons*, but *Ridicule* may be employ'd in what relates either to *Persons*, or other *Objects*.
2. *Raillery* is us'd only upon *slight* Subjects, where no real Abilities or Merit are questioned, in order to avoid degrading the Person you attack, or rendering him contemptible; Whereas *Ridicule* observes no such Decency, but endeavours really to degrade the Person attack'd, and to render him contemptible.
3. *Raillery* may be pointed at a whimsical Circumstance, only because a Person is known to be tender upon it; and your Pleasure will arise from the *Embarrassment* he suffers, in being put to an Explanation;— Thus a young Gentleman may be *rallied* upon his Passion for a Lady;— At the same Time there may be no Ground for *Ridicule* in this Circumstance, as it may no way deserve your *Derision* or *Contempt*.
4. As it thus appears that there are Subjects of *Raillery*, into which *Ridicule* cannot justly be admitted; So there are Subjects of *Ridicule*, wherein your *Derision* and

Contempt are so strongly excited, that they are too gross for *Raillery*;—As a person tossed in a Blanket; or the unfortunate Attack which another has made upon a Windmill.

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5. In short, *Raillery*, if the Adventures it is turn'd upon are too *gross* and *luscious*, becomes *Ridicule*; And therefore, in Comparison together, *Raillery* appears like *Wine* of a thin Body, and delicate poignant Flavour; *Ridicule*, like a *Wine* which is fuller, and more rich, and luscious.

Quixote is a Character, wherein *Humour* and *Ridicule* are finely interwoven;—It is not a Subject of *Satire*, as the Knight is free from all Badness of Heart, and Immorality; Nor properly of *Raillery*, his Adventures in general being too *gross* and *disastrous*;— The *Humour* appears, in the Representation of a Person in real Life, fancying himself to be, under the most solemn Obligations to attempt *hardy* Atchievements; and upon this Whimsy immediately pursuing the most romantic Adventures, with great Gravity, Importance, and Self-sufficiency; To heighten your Mirth, the *hardy* Atchievements to be accomplish'd by this Hero, are wittily contrasted by his own meagre weak Figure, and the *desperate Unfierceness* of his Steed *Rozinante*;—The *Ridicule* appears in the strange Absurdity of the Attempts, upon which the Knight chuses to exercise his Prowess; Its Poignancy is highly quicken'd, and consequently the Pleasure it gives you, by his miserable Disasters, and the doleful Mortifications of all his Importance and Dignity;—But here, after the Knight, by diverting you in this manner, has brought himself down to the lowest Mark, he rises again and forces your Esteem, by his excellent Sense, Learning and Judgment, upon any Subjects which are not ally'd to his Errantry; These continually act for the Advancement of his Character; And with such Supports and Abilities he always obtains your ready Attention, and never becomes heavy or tedious.

To these you are to add the perfect *good Breeding* and *Civility* of the Knight upon every Occasion; which are some Kind of Merit in his Favour, and entitle him to Respect, by the Rules of common Gentility and Decency; At the same time his Courage, his Honour, Generosity, and Humanity, are conspicuous in every Act and Attempt; The *Foibles* which he possesses, besides giving you exquisite Pleasure, are wholly inspir'd by these worthy Principles; Nor is there any thing base, or detestable, in all his Temper or Conduct; It was from hence that the DUKE and the DUTCHESS were extremely delighted with his Visit at their *Castle*; And you yourself, if he existed in real Life, would be fond of his Company at your own Table; which proves him, upon the whole, to be an amiable Character;—It is therefore no wonder that Signior *Don Quixote of la Mancha* has been so courteously receiv'd in every Country of *Europe*.

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Thus delightfully wrought, as this History is, with *Humour* and *Ridicule*, yet *Cervantes*, still fearful of tiring you with too much of the *Errantry*, has introduc'd the most charming Variety of other Adventures; —All along in the pacific Intervals, you are inform'd of the private Occurrences between the Knight and his 'Squire; And from these, where it is least to be expected, you are surpriz'd with the most high and delicious Repast;— Nothing can be more pregnant with Mirth, than the Opposition continually working between the grave Solemnity and Dignity of *Quixote*, and the arch Ribaldry and Meanness of *Sancho*; And the Contrast can never be sufficiently admir'd, between the excellent *fine Sense* of the ONE, and the *dangerous common Sense* of the OTHER.

It is here that the Genius and Power of *Cervantes* is most admirably shewn; He was the greatest Master that ever appear'd, in finely opposing, and contrasting his Characters. It is from hence that you feel a Poignancy and Relish in his Writings, which is not to be met with in any others; The natural Reflexions and Debates of *Quixote* and *Sancho* would have been barren, insipid, and trite, under other Management; But *Cervantes*, by his excellent Skill in the *Contrast*, has from these drawn a Regale, which for high, quick, racy Flavour, and Spirit, has yet never been equall'd.

It may here be enquir'd, What Species of Composition or Character is the most pleasurable, and mirthful, in all Nature?—In *Falstaff*, you have *Humour* embellish'd with *Wit*; In *Quixote*, *Humour* made poignant with *Ridicule*; And it is certain that *Humour* must always be the Ground-work of such Subjects, no Oddities in inanimate Objects being capable of interesting our Passions so strongly, as the Foibles of Persons in real Life;—The chief Substance of *Johnson's* Compositions is *Humour* and *Satire*; upon which Plan, as hath been already observ'd, he is oblig'd to demolish, and render detestable, his own Characters;—*Humour* and *Raillery* are also capable of furnishing a Repast of quick Relish and Flavour; In written Compositions, the Attack of the *Raillery*, as well as the Reception of it, may be happily conducted, which in other accidental Encounters are liable to Hazard; All Peevishness or Offence is thus easily avoided, and the Character attack'd is sav'd from being really contemptible;—But then indeed the Pleasure you are to receive generally depends upon the Confusion of the Person attack'd, without there being in reason a sufficient Cause for this Confusion;—It is for want of this just Foundation, that the Pleasure arising from *Raillery* is apt to come forth with less Freedom, Fulness, and Conviction, though with more Delicacy, than that which is derived from *Wit*, or *Ridicule*;—However, *Humour* and *Raillery* united together, when the *Raillery* is founded upon some *real* Embarrassment in the Circumstance, as well as in the Confusion of the Person attack'd, will furnish a very high Entertainment; which has Pretensions to rival either *Humour* and *Wit*, or *Humour* and *Ridicule*.



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To give an Instance of *Humour* and *Raillery*, I shall insert *Horace's* famous Description of his Embarrassment with an impertinent Fellow. This indeed is entitl'd, in almost all the Editions of *Horace*, a *Satire*, but very improperly, as the Subject is not *Vice* or *Immorality*;

Ibam forte via sacra, sicut meus est mos,
Nescio quid meditans nugarum, at totus in illis:
Accurrit quidam notus mihi nomine tantum;
Arreptaque manu, Quid agis, dulcissime rerum?
Suaviter, ut nunc est, inquam: & cupio omnia quae vis.
Cum affectaretur, Num quid vis? occupo. At ille,
Noris nos, inquit; docti sumus. Hic ego: Pluris
Hoc, inquam, mihi eris. Misere discedere quaerens,
Ire modo ocyus, interdum consistere: in aurem
Dicere nescio quid puero: cum sudor ad imos
Manaret talos. O te, Bollane, cerebri
Felicem: aiebam tacitus! Cum quidlibet ille
Garriret, vicos, urbem laudaret; ut illi
Nil respondebam: Misere cupis, inquit abire.
Jamdudum video: sed nil agis: usque tenebo:
Persequar: hinc quo nunc iter est tibi? Nil opus est te
Circumagi: quemdam volo visere, non tibi notum:
Trans Tiberim longe cubat is, prope Caesaris hortos.
Nil habeo quod agam, & non sum piger: usque sequar te,
Demitto auriculas ut iniquae mentis asellus,
Cum gravius dorso subiit onus. Incipit ille:
Si bene me novi, non Viscum pluris amicum,
Non Varium facies; nam quis me scribere plures
Aut citius possit versus? quis membra movere
Mollius? invideat quod & Hermogenes, ego canto.
Interpellandi locus hic erat: Est tibi mater,
Cognati, queis te salvo est opus? Haud mihi quisquam:
Omnes composui. Felices! nunc ego resto:
Confice: namque instat fatum mihi triste, Sabella
Quod puero cecinit divina mota anus urna,
Hunc neque dira venena, nec hosticus auferret ensis,
Nec laterum dolor, aut tussis, nec tarda podagra;
Garrulus hunc quando consumet cumque loquaces.
Si sapiat, vitet, simul atque adoleverit aetas.
Ventum erat ad Vestae, quarta jam parte diei
Praeterita; & casu tunc respondere vadato
Debebat: quod ni fecisset, perdere litem.
Si me amas, inquit, paulum hic ades. Inteream, si



Aut valeo stare, aut novi civilia jura:
Et propero quo scis. Dubius sum quid faciam, inquit;
Tene relinquam, an rem. Me, sodes. Non faciam, ille;
Et praecedere coepit. Ego, ut contendere durum est
Cum victore, sequor. Mecaenas quomodo tecum?
Hinc repetit. Paucorum hominum, & mentis bene sanae.
Nemo dexterius fortuna est usus. Haberes
Magnum adiutorem, posset qui ferre secundas,
Hunc hominem velles si tradere: dispeream, ni
Summosses omnes. Non isto vivimus illic
Quo tu rere modo, domus hac nec purior ulla est,
Nec magis his aliena malis: nil mi

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officit unquam,

Ditior hic, aut est quia doctior: est locus uni
Cuique suus. Magnum narras, vix credibile. Atqui
Sic habet. Accendis, quare cupiam magis illi
Proximus esse. Veils tantummodo: quae tua virtus,
Expugnabis; & est qui vinci possit: eoque
Difficiles aditus primos habet. Haud mihi deero,
Muneribus servos corrumpam: non, hodie si
Exclusus fuero, desistam: tempera quaeram:
Occurram in triviis: deducam. Nil sine magno
Vita labore dedit mortalibus. Haec dum agit, ecce
Fuscus Aristius occurrit mihi carus, & illum
Qui pulchre nosset. Consistimus. Unde venis? &
Quo tendis? rogat, & respondet. Vellere coepi,
Et prensare manu lentissima brachia, nutans,
Distorquens oculos, ut me eriperet. Male salsus
Ridens dissimulare: mecum jecur urere bilis.
Certe nescio quid secreto velle loqui te
Aiebas mecum. Memini bene; sed meliori
Tempora dicam: hodie tricesima sabbata, vin'tu
Curtis Judaeis oppedere? Nulla mihi, inquam,
Religio est. At mi, sum paulo infirmior; unus
Multorum ignoscas; alias loquar. Hunccine solem
Tam nigrum surrexe mihi: Fugit improbus, ac me
Sub cultro linquit. Casu venit obvius illi
Adversarius; &, Quo tu turpissime! magna
Inclamat voce; &, Licet antestari? Ego vero
Oppono auriculam; rapit in jus. Clamor utrinque
Undique concursus. Sic me servavit *Apollo*.

[Transcriber's Note: See end of *Essay* for translation information.]

The Intention of *Horace* in this Piece, is to expose an *impertinent* Fellow, and to give a ludicrous Detail of his own *Embarrassment*; Your Pleasure arises from the View which he gives you of his own Mortification, whereby he lays himself fairly open to your *Railery*; This is the more poignant, and quick, from the real Distress which you see he endur'd, in this odd Attack; At the same Time the particular Turn of the Fellow, who chose in this Manner to pin himself upon another, is a very odd Species of impertinent *Humour*.—This Piece, as it stands, irresistibly forces your Mirth, and shakes you with Laughter; But to a Person of Discernment, it is chiefly at *Horace's* Expence; Who in receiving and enduring such insolent Treatment, appears in a Light too low and

ridiculous, though he has thought fit himself to exhibit the Scene again for the Diversion of the Public;

The

Misere, cupis, —— abire,
Jamdudum video, sed nil agis, usque tenebo,
Persequar;—

was an absolute Insult; And very unfit to be related by the Person who suffer'd it, as a Matter of Merriment;—Besides this Tameness of *Horace*, the Impudence of the Fellow is excessively nauseous and disgusting at the Bottom, though the whole carries a Froth of *Raillery* and *Humour* upon the Surface.

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The Truth is, that this Piece, as it stands, would have properly proceeded from another Person, who had intended to expose the Impertinence and Impudence of the Fellow, and freely to *rally* poor *Horace*, with some Mixture of *Ridicule*, upon his unfortunate Embarrassment; upon this Basis it will appear with Propriety; Without which all Compositions of *Wit*, or *Humour*, or *Taste*, tho' at first they may pleasurably strike the Fancy or Sight, are at last disgusting to the Judgment.

Having here occasionally offer'd some Remarks upon this Composition, as it now stands, it may be proper to point out the Manner in which the *Humour* and *Raillery* of such an Embarrassment, might have been carried to the highest Pitch; And the Description of it have been given by *Horace* himself, without any Diminution of his own Gentility or Importance;—Imagine then that he had been join'd in his Walk by a weak, ignorant Person, of Good-nature, and the utmost Civility; one who fancy'd himself possessed of the greatest Talents, and fully persuaded that he gave all he convers'd with a particular Pleasure;— Upon such an Attack, no Resentment or Anger could have been decently shewn by *Horace*, As the Person thus pestering him, was all the while intending the highest Compliment; And must therefore be received, and attended to, with perfect Complaisance; The *Humour* of this Person would have been very entertaining, in the strange Conceit which he held of his own Abilities, and of the particular Pleasure he was granting to *Horace*, in condescending to give him so much of his Company; In these Sentiments he should regard all *Horace's* Excuses, Endeavours, and Struggles to be gone, as Expressions of his Sense of the Honour done him; which should be an Argument with this Person for obstinately persisting to honour him still further; All the while he must be supported by some *real Importance* belonging to him, attended with *good Breeding*, and strengthened by such occasional Instances of *Sense*, as may secure him from being trampled upon, or becoming absolutely contemptible; In such an Adventure the Mortification, and Distress of *Horace*, would be excessively whimsical and severe; especially as he would be depriv'd of all Succour and Relief; being in Decency oblig'd, not only to suppress all Anger or Uneasiness, but, what is exquisitely quick, to receive this whole Treatment with the utmost Complacency; An *Embarrassment* of this sort, finely described, would have yielded the greatest Pleasure to the Reader, and carried the *Raillery* upon *Horace*, without hurting or degrading him, to the highest Degree of *Poignancy*; And from hence may be conceiv'd, what delightful Entertainments are capable of being drawn from *Humour* and *Raillery*.

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It is also easy to apprehend, that the several Subjects of *Wit*, *Humour*, *Raillery*, *Satire*, and *Ridicule*, appear not only *singly* upon many Occasions, or *two* of them combined together, but are also frequently united in other Combinations, which are more *complicate*; An Instance of the Union together of *Humour*, *Raillery*, and *Ridicule*, I remember to have read somewhere in *Voiture's* Letters; He is in *Spain*, and upon the Point of proceeding from thence to some other Place in an *English* Vessel; After he has written this Account of himself to a Lady at *Paris*, he proceeds in his Letter to this Purpose;

“You may perhaps apprehend, that I shall be in some Danger this Voyage, of falling into the Hands of a *Barbary* Corsair; But to relieve you from all such Fears, I shall beg Leave to tell you, what my honest Captain has inform'd me himself, for my own Satisfaction; He suspected, it seems, that I might have some Uneasiness upon this Head; and has therefore privately assured me, that I have no need to be afraid of being taken with him; for that whenever it is likely to come to this, he will infallibly blow up the Ship with his own Hands;—After this, I presume, you will be perfectly easy, that I am in no Danger of going to *Sallee*;

This is exquisitely *rich*; The brave and odd Fancy of the *English* Captain, in finding out for himself, and *privately* communicating to *Voiture*, this Method of Security from Slavery, abounds with the highest *Humour*; At the same time the honest Tar, as a *Projecter*, is excessively open to *Ridicule*, for his Scheme to blow them all up, in order to prevent their being taken Prisoners; There is besides these, a very full *Raillery*, which *Voiture* here opens upon *himself*; For as this Adventure, which he is going to be engaged in, has been attended, as yet, with no Mischief; nor is certain to be so, the whole is to be consider'd, at present, as only a slight Scrape; especially as he exhibits it in this manner himself, and invites you to make it the Object of your Pleasure, and *Raillery*;—It may also be observ'd, that the *Humour* in this Subject, which flows from the *Captain*, is adorn'd with a very peculiar, and pleasing *Propriety*; As it is not barely a *Whim*, or the Result of an *odd Sourness* or *queer Pride*, but the Effect of his *Courage*, and of that Freedom from all Terror at Death, which is perfectly amiable in his Character.

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There are other Combinations of *Wit*, *Humour*, *Raillery*, *Satire*, and *Ridicule*, where *four* of them, or all *five*, are united in one Subject;—Like various *Notes* in *Music*, sounding together, and jointly composing one exquisite Piece of Harmony;—Or like different *Rays* of *Light*, shining together in one *Rainbow*: It is pleasant to *divide* these *Combinations*, and to view as with a *Prism*, the different *Rays* united in each; of which *Humour*, like the *Red*, is eminent for its superior Force and Excellence;—When the Judgment is thus capable of parting, and easily assigning the several Quantities, and Proportions of each, it heightens our Pleasure, and gives us an absolute Command over the Subject; But they are often so intimately mix'd, and blended together, that it is difficult to separate them clearly, tho' they are all certainly felt in the same Piece;—Like the different *Flavours* of rich *Fruits*, which are inseparably mix'd, yet all perfectly tasted, in one *Pine-Apple*.

Raillery, and *Satire*, are extremely different;

1. *Raillery*, is a genteel poignant Attack of *slight* Foibles and Oddities; *Satire* a witty and severe Attack of *mischievous* Habits and Vices.
2. The *Intention* of *Raillery*, is to procure your *Pleasure*, by exposing the little Embarrassment of a Person; But the *Intention* of *Satire*, is to raise your *Detestation*, by exposing the real Deformity of his Vices.
3. If in *Raillery* the Sting be given too deep and severe, it will sink into Malice and Rudeness, And your Pleasure will not be justifiable; But *Satire*, the more deep and severe the Sting of it is, will be the more excellent; Its Intention being entirely to root out and destroy the Vice.
4. It is a just Maxim upon these Subjects, that in *Raillery* a good-natur'd Esteem ought always to appear, without any Resentment or Bitterness; In *Satire* a generous free Indignation, without any sneaking Fear or Tenderness; It being a sort of partaking in the Guilt to keep any Terms with Vices.

It is from hence that *Juvenal*, as a *Satirist*, is greatly superior to *Horace*; But indeed many of the short Compositions of *Horace*, which are indiscriminately ranged together, under the general Name of *Satires*, are not properly such, but Pieces of *Raillery* or *Ridicule*.

As *Raillery*, in order to be decent, can only be exercised upon *slight* Misfortunes and Foibles, attended with no deep Mischief, nor with any Reproach upon real Merit, so it ought only to be used between *Equals* and *Intimates*; It being evidently a Liberty too great to be taken by an *Inferior*; and too inequitable to be taken by a *Superior*, as his Rank shields him from any Return.

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Raillery is the most agreeable, when it is founded on a *slight* Embarrassment or Foible, which upon being unfolded, appears to have arisen from the *real Merit*, or from the *Excess* of any *Virtue*, in the Person attack'd.

But yet this Embarrassment must always be *real*, and attended with the Chagrin or Confusion of the *rally'd* Person, or capable of being fairly suppos'd to have been so; otherwise the Attack will be void of all Poignancy, and Pleasure to the Company; And evaporate either into *indirect Flattery*, or else into the *Insipid*.

Thus, to attack a *fine Lady* upon the Enemies she has made, by the mischievous Effects of her Beauty, will be properly genteel indirect *Flattery*—if it be well conducted, —otherwise, the *Insipid*; But it cannot be deem'd *Raillery*; It being impossible to suppose the Lady *really* chagrin'd by such an imaginary Misfortune, or uneasy at any Explanation upon this Subject;

Raillery ought soon to be ended; For by long keeping the Person attack'd, even in a *slight* Pain, and continuing to dwell upon his Mis-adventures, you become rude and ill-natur'd;—Or if the *Raillery* be only turn'd upon an Embarrassment, arising from the Excess of Merit or Abilities, Yet if it be long confined upon the same Subject, the Person it is pointed at, will either suspect that your Aim is, to leave some *Impression* against him, or else that you are designing him a tedious dark *Compliment*; And accordingly he will either regard you with Hatred or Contempt;—Much less should a Person, who introduces himself as a Subject of *Raillery*, insist long upon it; For either he will be offensive in engrossing all Attention to himself; or if the Company are pleas'd, it must be by his Buffoonery.

The Difference between *Satire*, and *Ridicule*, has been already pointed out;—*Satire* being always concerned with the *Vices* of *Persons*;—Whereas *Ridicule* is justly employ'd, not upon the *Vices*, but the *Foibles* or *Meannesses* of *Persons*, And also upon the *Improprieties* of other Subjects; And is directed, not to raise your *Detestation*, but your *Derision* and *Contempt*;—It being evident that *Immoralities* and *Vice* are too *detestable* for *Ridicule*, and are therefore properly the Subject of *Satire*; Whereas *Foibles* and *Meannesses* are too *harmless* for *Satire*, and deserve only to be treated with *Ridicule*.

The usual Artillery of *Ridicule* is *Wit*; whereby the *Affinity* or *Coincidence* of any Object with others, which are absurd and contemptible, is unexpectedly exhibited;—There is also another, very forcible, Manner in which *Ridicule* may act; And that is by employing *Humour* alone; Thus the Foible or Queerness of any Person will be most fully *ridicul'd*, by naturally dressing yourself, or any other Person in that Foible, and exerting its full Strength and Vigour.

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The POLITENESS of a Subject is the *Freedom* of that Subject from all *Indelicacy*, *Aukardness*_, and *Roughness*.

GOOD BREEDING consists in a *respectful* Carriage to others, accompany'd with *Ease* and *Politeness*.

It appears from hence that GOOD BREEDING and POLITENESS differ in this; that GOOD BREEDING relates only to the Manners of *Persons* in their Commerce together; Whereas Politeness may relate also to *Books*, as well as to *Persons*, or to any Subjects of Taste and Ornament.

So that *Politeness* may subsist in a Subject, as in a *Cornish*, or *Architrave*, where *good Breeding* can't enter; But it is impossible for *good Breeding* to be offer'd without *Politeness*.

At the same time *good Breeding* is not to be understood, as merely the *Politeness* of *Persons*; But as *Respect*, tender'd with *Politeness*, in the Commerce between *Persons*.

It is easy to perceive, that *good Breeding* is a different Behaviour in different Countries, and in the same Countries at different Periods, according to the Manners which are us'd amongst *polite* Persons of those Places and Seasons.

In *England* the chief Point of it *formerly* was plac'd, in carrying a *Respect* in our Manners to all we convers'd with; whence every Omission of the slightest Ceremony, as it might be construed into a want of *Respect*, was particularly to be avoided; So that *good Breeding* became then

a precise Observance and Exercise of all the Motions and Ceremonies, expressive of *Respect*, which might justly be paid to every Person;

—This, as it is easy to imagine, requir'd much Nicety in the Adjustment upon many Occasions, and created immense Trouble and Constraint, and most ridiculous Embarrassments.

However, these Modes of *good Breeding* were not to be abolished, as it was impossible to dispense with the *Respect* annex'd to them, without some further Pretence than of their *Inconvenience* only; which no Person could decently urge, or admit in his own behalf, when it was his Province to pay any Ceremonies to another; In this Difficulty it was at last happily observ'd, for the Advantage of genteel Commerce and Society, that *whatever gives Trouble, is inconsistent with Respect*; Upon which Foundation, all Ceremonies which create Embarrassments or Trouble to either Side, are now justly exploded; And the *Ease* of each other is the Point most peculiarly consulted by *well-bred* Persons.



If this Attention to *Ease* was properly conducted, so that it might always appear to have *Respect* for its Motive; And only to act in Obedience to *that*, as the ruling Principle, it would then comprehend the just Plan of *good Breeding*; But as *this* was formerly encumber'd with Ceremonies and Embarrassments, so the modern *good Breeding* perhaps deviates too far into Negligence and Disregard; —A Fault more unpardonable than the former; As an Inconvenience, evidently proceeding from the *Respect* which is paid to us, may be easily excus'd; But a Freedom, which carries the Air of *Neglect* with it, gives a lasting Offence.

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BEAUTY is the delightful *Effect* which arises from the
joint Order, Proportion, and Harmony of all the Parts
of an *Object*.

And

to have a good TASTE, is to have a just *Relish* of BEAUTY.

* * * * *

[Transcriber's Note:

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[CORBYN MORRIS]

An / Essay / Towards Fixing the / True Standards / of / Wit, Humour,
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