

Dédicace d'*Orgula*

Auteur : Willan, Leonard

Les folios

En passant la souris sur une vignette, le titre de l'image apparaît.

10 Fichier(s)

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Auteur de la pièceWillan, Leonard

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To the most accomplisht Lady,
the Lady FRANCES WILDEGOSS.

MADAM,



Having long since renounced all sorts of civill homage, which either Custom hath blindly tenderd, or Arrogance insolently assumed, as the affected rights of Greatness, being but an ostentive Coloss, nor accessible nor communicable.

I now can figure to my thoughts no nobler Object of Respect than a clear, high and regular Intellect, whose Endowments may challenge a more Plausible and Legitimate Acquisition in such publique addresses of Honour, as may sometime reach to a more remote Posterity; in pursuit of which consequence, *Madam*, judging the Dignity of your Minde the most perfect Model of so equal a Designe, I have presumed (from the obscurity of many years) to tender this piece to your view. The nature whereof, though vilified with vulgar Obloquie (the unrestrained Fury of whose Ignorance, hath not of late left the most high and Sacred Mysteries unimpeachable) can gain no further access on your Inclinations, than what a clear and solid Argument impartially may produce, which to unfold, it will be requisite to distinguish the Nature, and the Use of this our subject now in Agitation.

In Order to which, the Nature thereof is (without all opposition) *Poesie*. What that is, cannot in my Apprehension be more Elegantly and perspicu-

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ously delineated than the agreeable Philosopher hath formed it in his convertible definition. *Poesie is a speaking Picture: A Picture is a dumb Poesie.* From which Sence we may extract, that Poesie only is an Art of lively representation of bodies Natural, Simply, without reference to other, or Compositively with circumstance to their mutual communities, either Natural or Civil. Real in respect of their precedent, present, or future condition: or Imaginary in relation to their possibility. In the extent of which Exposition some particulars may probably at first Appearance seem Dubious, some Erronious.

Dubious, As how it may fall within compass of humane capacity: to figure to anothers sence what falls not under the dimension of our own; our purpose is not here to search into the causes of so high an illumination, it is sufficient proof to our Position, to affirm such an inspection evident in its Nature, as may be instanc'd from the sacred Raptures of the Judahack-Prophets & the Gentique-Sybills, whom though we seem improperly to include with the tractators of our *Subject*, inspired by a nobler Object; yet in reference to the Analogy of form in their Discourses, preceding Ages have indifferently implied the intimation of their Nature under one and the same Denomination. **Vates*, To which usage we have extended this our Exposition.

Erronious, In that the Fancie herein doth assume too vast a Libertie, to figure forms are visibly to natural and to civil Rules in consonant. As in reference to the *First*, Satyrs, Centaures, transmutation
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of Forms and the like. In answer whereto although it be not difficult to prove, that ev'n herein the *Art* doth only Nature imitate, who oftentimes from the Inaptitude of matter doth err from her intention in the Form; and in her Ministry doth frequently produce a Prodegie. Yet these inventions may by mean capacities be distinguished, to be but Metaphors to a Moral sence.

In relation to the *second*, inserting things *Prophane, Obscene, Fabulous* and *Propositories*.

Prophane, As the figuration of their Gods invested with our humane Imperfections.

In reply whereto we may alleadge, that in reference to the Civil frame, intended are hereby, the Potentates of the earth, an allusion may be produc'd from Sacred proofs to form it warrantable. In relation to the natural texture, are secretly herein involved Moral, Phisical, or metaphisical Mysteries, perhaps yet undiscovered, which from the vulgar Eye should be conceal'd, as the Adulterers of Philosophy.

Obscene, To clear which charge we might infer, that if the indecent form hereof were figured, it rather would imply an imperfection in our civil Commerce than any Imputation to the Art, whose End is only to expose each Circumstance and accident inherent to the subject, in their most proper and essential Colours, Beauties, or Deformities. Yet will we not so farre insist on the strict Rules of the Art, as not to impute such indiscretion to the Artists Errour. Who may if skilful, nay who ought (according to the true rules of his pattern, Nature) so gracefully to over shadow the less decent parts,

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as might not raise a strain on the most modest Check to view them publicely.

Fabulous, This subject bears so little weight in an objection, that it might rather infer the ignorance of the Impeacher, than the Impostury of the Artist. All sorts of Arts having some secret Gloss and reservation of their mysteries, to support their Honour and Advantage : This only and alone, pretending unto none declare things for such as it delivers them, Fained or Essential, Imaginary or Historical; though in some textures of the latter kinde may possibly be interwoven certain enlargements and digressions (as graces but peculiar to the Art) not properly consistant with the dignity, weight, use of such a Subject, requireth simple Truth in every circumstance. Yet ev'n herein a clear Intelligence will suddenly distinguish shadows by the position of the Natural light; like perfect ears in Musick still tain the Grounds, Orders, Times of every note, though the Musicians hand, to grace his Harmony, cast various flourishes on the suspended Measures to lend more weight unto the usage of invention in this rejected Art, we shall not need to instance the excellence of the nature thereof to Instruction, to which the choicest of essential similitudes cannot exactly reach, wanting such forms of circumstances as might enlighten the intention of the Deliverer, restrained and obscured in a real Narration. It may suffice to silence opposition, to alledge we find our most authentique precepts couched in such forms of texture, as Allegories or Parables; a winning method to attract the grossest tempers, and infix in All most durable impressions.

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From the freedom of this latter objected subject, issues the objection of the last (*Preposterous*) in that it is suppos'd the unprescribed Fancy, having assumed a liberty to rove; will suddenly contract extravagant mixtures in her compositions, to form a Prodigious in the civil frame; as formerly in the natural. To this conjecture we may make reply: That no Absurdity can be imagined so irregular, which may not meet a parallel in the occurrences of civil Actions. Be it, that we should suppose the most evident Truth condemned for the grossest Errour: That Wisdom should be confuted by Ignorance: Integrity ejected by Hypocrisie, Valour overcome by Lachety, Industry supplanted by Sloth, the Innocent suffer by the Criminal, Justice smothered by Iniquity, Love rewarded with Hate; which without further proof to verify, I only, *Madam*, will appeal to your own observation. If any shall alledge such accidents to be but the effects of our corruption which guides us still to satisfy our sense, rather than an intenable impropriety in a civil usage, which the licentiousness of the Art doth often figure; not to decline the smallest shadow of an objected scruple; we shall in some example devest the action of this pretended object, leaving the occurrence immaterial or void in any consequence whatever. Can humane sense reflect upon a more Preposterous transaction, than *That the Monarch of the world should in the height of all his Glory, and in the Eye of all the world magnificently solemnize Nuptials with another Man; the most abject of his Domesticks.* Yet such a real precedent we may authentickly collect from the Records of Nero's Infamy.

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Having thus briefly (as the capacity of our Preface will give leave) discussed of the Nature of our *Subject*. Order requires that we should next insist upon the use *Thereof*: Whereon depends the real worth of every Piece, in Nature or in Art, which to pursue methodically, we should in course unfold the several kinds thereof, in their particulars; as *Odes*, *Elegies*, *Epigrams*, and the like: But since the nature of our present subject may include them all, as several species under their proper gender, we only will adhere to agitate thereon, raising our introduction from the first view of the whole *Frame*, without distinction of the Parts thereof.

If intercourse in civill commerce may conduce to form the Judgement, compose the mind, or rectify the manners (as none who hath receiv'd impression thereof, can deny) no form of institution humane reason can reflect upon, more suddenly and more perfectly can attain thereto, than can the well composed illustrations of a *Theater*. Where in few hours we may take full view of such variety in circumstance, as many Ages cannot represent; and from the consequence of events collect such rules, may guide our undertakings with successe to their peculiar Objects. Whilst being uninterested Spectators only, are to us distinguished the secret source of each Transactors purposes, whose actions leave so sensible an impression of their Character in our thoughts, that seldom in our own particular community we encounter such an inclination, but that the prepossession of their figure streight illuminates our senses to disclose their Tract; whereby our Fortunes, Lives, Liberties and Fames, are timely oftentimes secur'd from secret Trains. To

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To yeeld a true allay to the distempers of the Soul, no Art can form a fairer methode, than thus to represent the wilde distractions of her irregular motives, transported with licentious fury, to execute the giddy will, with violation to each strict prescription, Outrage to it self, with the disasters frequently ensue so stubborn a revolt from that interior light, should lend her dignity : if the deformity of the figure may reduce the minde to a more happy and decent Regulation of her Faculties. To which pattern was among the *Spartans* introduced a custom to inebriate their Slaves, they might expose their loose Demeanors to their childrens view, that such a loathsome spectacle might imprint a lasting Detestation of so brutish a distemper.

Nor yet to regulate our manners can the most powerfull precepts form the Minde, so willingly susceptible of her intended Object : If intimation of the glory and successe of virtue may inflame the Soul to noble enterprises ; or the Infamy and punishment of Vice, deterre from shamefull practises, which are the principall Objects, a well compiled Piece still viseth at : or, seldom: in the most imperfect are omitted. First, in regard the minde is here no way subordinate unto a more supream sufficiency than her own. Secondly, in that such forms of Institution do pretend unto no servile impositions, the most materiall impediments, why the authentickst guides so seldome meet successe in the Intention of their elaborate prescriptions. Subjects of this nature propounding no other object, but delight, unto the Auditory, the sensuall minde

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is easily inticed to view such spectacles, where left unto the freedome of her proper Inclination, she insensibly assumes a voluntary propension to those forms are represented in the fairest Characters, with an aversion to the impeachable.

These are the essentiall uses of our subject; nor yet are the Collaterall lesse materiall: as, The Community of a Prince unto his people (at whose peculiar charge were formerly erected such magnificent receipts for publique Spectacles, either to ingratiate himself with his subjects in a mutuall participation of delight, as an endearing entertainment from himself, or else to represent the object, by circumstance and issue of some eminent expedition, enterprise or treaty within his proper jurisdiction, or with foreign States transacted by himself or substitutes, unto the illiterate and orebusied multitude: who usually want vacancy or capacity to peruse, conceive, or retain the sence thereof under the tedious, abstruse forms of publique manifests: which figured in such Interludes were even obvious, to their very children. A happy piece of policy to inform with delight the meanest member of the civill frame in what he is concerned. The means to our security becoming once to us a mysterie, may justly by us be suspected for disguised Furbery.

To this advantage herein doth succeed the benefit which ariseth from the Peoples intercourse with one another; not onely in the introduction and pursuit of Commerce or Affairs: but in the initiation and support of mutuall Amities, sprung frequently from civill and unsought abodes, and cherished with gracefull entertainments in Society,

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which here not limited to particulars, may possibly be dispensed through the civill structure to the Composure of a generall Union, the strength and glory of a Commonwealth. From whence also ensues the requisite relaxation of Minde and Body, (o'reburdened with the travell of private or publique Negotiations) in a plausible divertissement, whereby become refresh'd, both may with fuller vigour and Alacrity, reassume the pursuit of their civill Functions.

Nor is the Action of a Theatre lesse usefull in the Education of our Ypouth (a frequent exercise in Foreign Seminaries, Societies and Schools, to inanimate their spirits, render them plyant and susceptible to every form, might either frame them more agreeable in their society, or more successfull in their private Commerce; as also, to lend a more assured gracefull unconstrain'd Demeanour to their persons and in such Habits, to indue them with undaunted Confidence, Facility, and readinesse to communicate in discourse the Image of their Thoughts to an attentive multitude, an acquisition of no little moment, in publique Consultations, Conferences and pleas: In managing whereof, who hath not gained this Dexterity, shall finde the weightiest Reasons in his Argument silenced, smother'd, o'resway'd by the lesse pertinent clamor of an insisting Impudence.

These are the generall *Objects*, which we but cursorarily have onely pointed at, omitting them to amplify or illustrate with the Honour or Example of Antiquity, in due conformity to the quality of our Introduction, and the more clear inspe-

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tion into the nature of our present Subject, which possibly might appear to rigid Tempers of far lesse validity, o're-shaddowed with such formalities, as if they were but artificiall Ornaments, no proper or essentiall lusters.

The particular Objects have a vaster influence, which (not to err from our prescription) we will contract to one united couplet to crown the closure of our Texture, affirming that *Poesie* investeth vertues, Glory with Eternity on Earth: and inspiring life in Harmony, lends Zeal wings to scale the vault of Heaven. If this Essay may in your Honour, Madam, but pretend to the first branch hereof; my next Endeavour shall in your Piety attempt to reach the latter.

Madam,

Your humbly Devoted Servant

L. W:

Act I.