

Dédicace d'Orgula

Auteur : Willan, Leonard

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Les folios

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Auteur de la pièce Willan, Leonard

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To the most accomplisht Lady,
the Lady FRANCES WILDEGOSS.

MADAM,



Aving long since renounced all sorts of civill homage, which either Custome hath blindly tenderd, or Arrogance insolently assumed, as the affected rights of Greatness, being but an ostentative 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 publicque 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 Oblique (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 out subject now in Agitation.

In Order to which, the *Nature* thereof is (without all opposition) *Poëse*. 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. *Poësie is a speaking Picture: A Picture is a dumb Poësie.* From which Sence we may extract, that Poësie 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 Erroneous.

Dubious, As how it may fall within compass of humane capacity: to figure to another's 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.

Erroneous, In that the Fancie herein doth assume too vast a Libertie, to figure forms visibly to natural and to civil Rules consonant. As in reference to the *First*, Satyrs, Centaures, transmutation of

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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 sense.

In relation to the *Second*, inserting things *Prophane, Obscene, Fabulous and Propesterous.*

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 metaphysical 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 inferr, that if the indecen't 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 lefs decent parts,

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

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 reservati-
on of their mysteries, to support their Honour and
Advantage : This only and alone, pretending unto
none declare things for such as it delivers them,
Pained, 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 cir-
cumstance. 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 Musitians 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, wantig 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.

From

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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 Prodigie in the civill 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 satisfie our sense, rather than an inseparable impropriety in a civill 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 what ever. 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 miserably solemnize Nuptials with another Man, the most abject of his Domesticks.* Yet such a real precedent we may authenckly collect from the Records of Nero's Infamy.

Having.

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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 fences to disclose their Tract ; whereby our Fortunes, Lives, Liberties and Fames, are timely oftentimes secur'd from secret Trains.

To

Dedicator.

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 chil-drens view, that such a loathsome spectacle might imprint a lasting Detestation of so bruitish a di-stemper.

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 pu-nishment of Vice, deterre from shamefull practises, which are the principall Objects, a well compiled Piece still wiseth at: or, seldom: in the most im-perfect are omitted. First, in regard the minde is here no way subordinate unto a more supream suf-ficiency than her own. Secondly, in that such forms of Institution do pretend unto no servile imposi-tions, the most materiall impediments, why the au-thentick'st guides so seldome meet successe in the Intention of their elaborate prescriptions. Sub-jects 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 magnifcent 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 o'rebusied 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 cherisched with gracefull entertainments in Society,

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which here not limited to particulars, may possibly be dispensed through the civil 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, (oreburdened with the travell of private or publique Negotiations) in a plausible divertisement, whereby become refresht, both may with fuller vigour and Alacrity, reassume the pursuit of their ci-vill Functions.

Nor is the Action of a Theatre lesse usefull in the Education of our YOUTH (a frequent exercise in Foreign Seminaries, Societies and Schools, to in-animate 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 readiness 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 silenc'd, smother'd, o'resway'd by the lesse pertinent clamor of an insisting Impudence.

These are the generall *Objets*, which we but cursorarily have onely pointed at, omitting them to amply 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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dition into the nature of our present Subject, which possibly might appear to rigid Tempers of far less validity, o're-shaddowed with such formalities, as if they were but artificiall Ornaments, no proper or essentiall lustres.

The particular Objects have a vaster influence, which (not to err from our presciption) we will contract to one united couplet to crown the clo-
sure of our Texture, affirming that *Poese* investeth
virtues, Glory with Eternity on Earth: and im-
spiring 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.