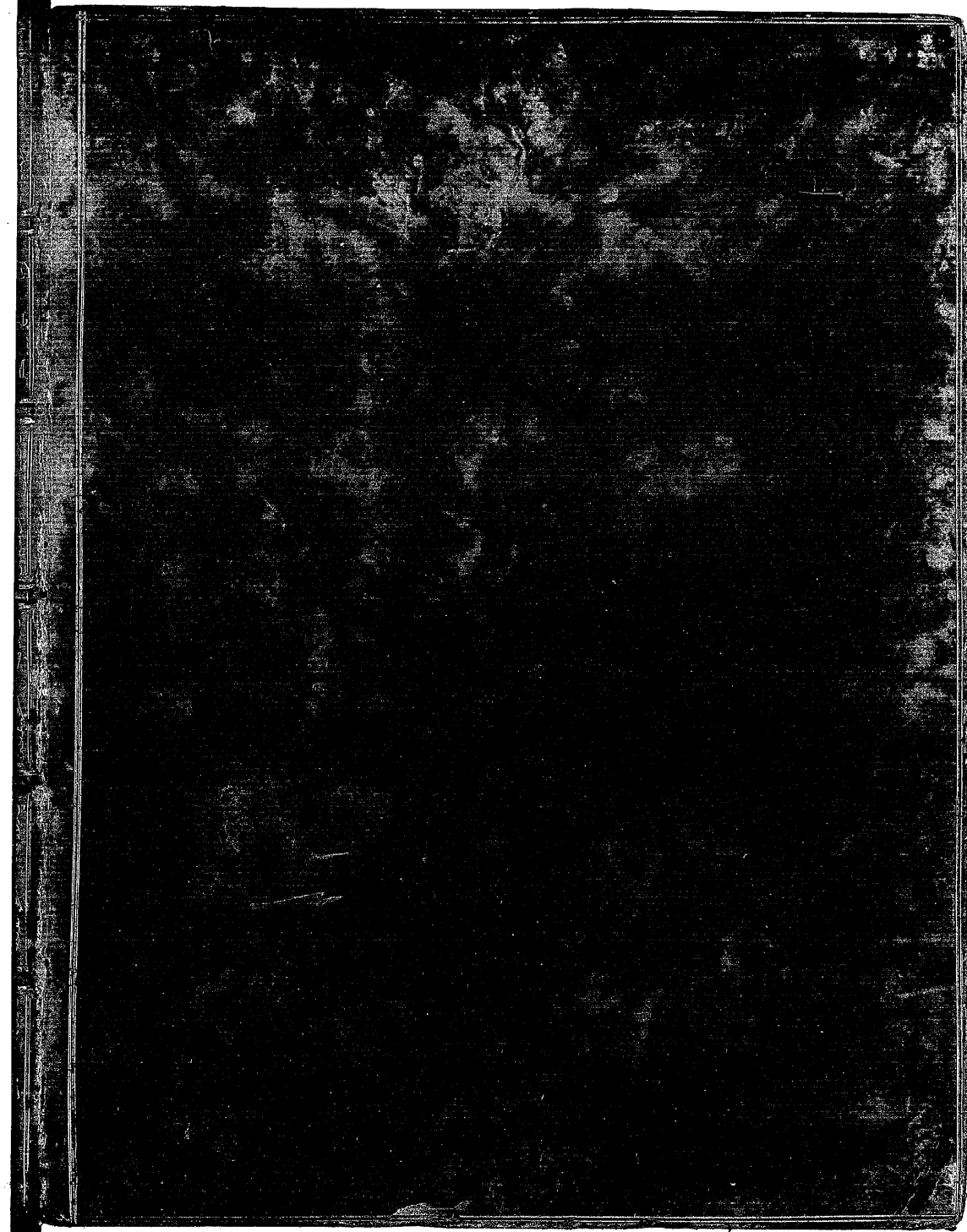


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A  
COURSE OF LECTURES

ON  
*William Steinhilber*  
ORATORY

AND  
CRITICISM.

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D. F.R.S.

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*Et rerum causas, et quid natura docebat. OVID.*

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LONDON:

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD VISCOUNT

FITZMAURICE.

MY DEAR LORD,

AS your Lordship is now of a proper age to understand many particulars in the following Lectures, and will soon be capable of a regular study and a thorough comprehension of the whole subject, I was ambitious to dedicate the work to you; as a mark of my attachment, and of my earnest wish

#### THE DEDICATION.

wish to contribute whatever may be in my power, towards your improvement in every thing that is useful or ornamental, and thereby to the distinguished figure that, I flatter myself, your Lordship will one day make in this country.

To act an useful and honourable part in the community to which we belong, is an object of laudable ambition to every man, in proportion to the rank which he holds in it; and your Lordship cannot but be fully apprized, that the only foundations for a respectable figure in life, are *good principles* and *good dispositions*, joined to a *cultivated understanding*. Eminence in these respects is what, in strictest right, may be expected of those whom their fellow-citizens, naturally their equals, are, by the constitution of their country, made to look up to, as their superiors. It is a *debt* due for that distinction. For it is universally true, that the *obligation* to do good is of the very same extent with the *power* and *opportunity* of doing it.

This, my young Lord, is an age in which every thing begins to be estimated by its real *use* and *value*.

The

#### THE DEDICATION.

The same maxims of good sense which regulate all other things, will finally new-arrange whatever belongs to the affairs of society and government; and those distinctions which mere *force*, mere *superstition*, or mere *accident* will be found to have established, and to which *public utility* does not give its sanction, will gradually sink into *public disesteem*: and this, long continued, will make part of that *spirit of men*, of *nations*, and of *times*, which must finally bear down every thing that opposes it. Consequently the only method of *perpetuating* any order of men whatever, is to make it truly *respectable* and *useful*: This was the original foundation of honour, and it cannot finally stand upon any other.

I must add, that the world will expect the more from your Lordship, on account of your relation to a nobleman who is eminently distinguished for his *private*, as well as his *public virtues*, and for nothing more than his attention to the *education of his children*, and his liberality of sentiment in the conduct of it.

That

THE DEDICATION.

That your Lordship may, in riper years, fully reward the care and attention that have been bestowed upon you, confirm the hopes which your friends have formed from your present improvements and dispositions, and eminently contribute to support the dignity of the rank to which you were born, by adding to the real *lustre* and *value* of it, is the sincere prayer of,

My LORD,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

Most devoted

Humble Servant,

Nov. 20, 1776.

J. PRIESTLEY.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS Course of Lectures was composed when I was Tutor in the *Languages* and *Belles Lettres* in the Academy at Warrington, and was first delivered in the year 1762. The *plan* is rather more comprehensive than any thing that I have seen upon the subject, the *arrangement* of the materials, as a system, is new, and the *theory*, in several respects, more so.

For this reason I have been frequently urged to make the Lectures public; and having postponed it so long, I have been induced to do it at this time, partly with a view to the illustration of the doctrine of the *association of ideas*, to which there is a constant reference through the whole work (in order to explain facts relating to the influence of Oratory, and the striking effect of Excellencies in Composition, upon the genuine principles of human nature) in consequence of having of late endeavoured to draw

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some degree of attention to those principles, as advanced by Dr. Hartley. Another reason for publishing these Lectures at this time is, for the sake of the young Nobleman to whom they are dedicated, to whose improvement my best services are, on many accounts, due.

Considering the nature of the work, it will not be expected, by the candid and judicious, that every thing in it should be original. It is, on the contrary, the business of a *Lecturer*, to bring into an easy and comprehensive view whatever has been observed by others: and in this respect I hope it will be thought that I have not acquitted myself ill; few works of criticism, of any value, having escaped my attention, at the time that I was engaged in those studies. But I own, that of the later publications of this kind I can give less account than might have been wished; having been generally engaged in pursuits of a different nature. But, notwithstanding there may be some things in common between this work and other publications of the kind, it is probable that many of the observations will be peculiar to myself, because my general theory of human nature is very much so. I have shewn myself willing to contribute what I may  
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be able to the illustration of my subject. If my endeavours have been attended with success, the friends of literature will not be displeas'd; and if, in their opinion, I have contributed nothing to the common stock of useful observations, this work, they will conclude, will not stand long in the way of better.

The most considerable work on the subject of criticism, that was extant at the time of my composing these Lectures, was that of *Lord Kaims*, to whom I am indebted for a very great number of my examples, especially those from the dramatic writers, and sometimes for the observations too; but with respect to this subject, on which so many able men have written, it is hardly possible to say to whom we are *ultimately* obliged for any very valuable remark.

Several of the examples in the first part of this work are borrowed from Dr. *Ward's Oratory*, and some from other works of the same nature; but many of the instances are of my own collecting. I would have been more particular in making my acknowledgments, if I had been better able to recollect them, and had thought it at all necessary. Let my reader consider this work as a succinct and systematical view of the observations of others, interspersed with ori-



ginal ones of my own; and he will not, I hope, think that the perusal of it has been time ill-bestowed.

A considerable part of what I had composed for the use of my pupils in the *first part* of this work, which is, in its own nature, more trite than the rest, I have here omitted; retaining only as much as was necessary to preserve the appearance of an uniform *system* in the whole, and those parts which were the most original.

The last part of the work, relating to *elocution*, I never composed, though I should have done it, if I had continued longer in that employment. The reason of this omission was, that it was my custom (as I believe it is still that of my successors in that department of the academy, and it is certainly a most useful one) to have lectures appropriated solely to the business of elocution, which all the students who were designed for public speakers constantly attended, at least once a week. At these lectures great pains were taken to form the pupils to a habit of just and graceful delivery; and the instructions were given as occasion required; so that the reducing of them to writing was by no means necessary.

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It may be thought by some, that these lectures are much too *short*, and too concisely written, for the purpose of public instruction: but they should be apprized, that it was my custom to write down only the *outlines* of what I delivered in the class; that, for the benefit of my pupils, I used to attend them, provided with more copious *illustrations*, and a greater variety of *examples*; and, besides, always spent a considerable part of the time appropriated to every lecture in examining them on the subject of the preceding lecture, hearing their remarks or objections, and explaining more distinctly what they appeared not to have clearly understood.

Upon this plan (which I found by experience to be a very useful one, and which I mention so particularly here, with a view to recommend it to other tutors) it was not necessary for me to write out more than a short, though connected *text*, from which to discourse *extempore*; a method which engages the attention unspeakably more than formally reading every thing from notes. It was my custom also to leave a fair copy of what I wrote in the lecture-room, that the pupils might have recourse to it, and study it at their leisure, so as to be

better prepared for examination at the ensuing lecture. What I now publish is the *text* above mentioned, with some improvements which have since occurred to me.

The same method I took with respect to every other subject on which I gave lectures; with this difference, that those on the *Theory of Languages* and *Universal Grammar* were printed for the use of the pupils. This work I have promised, in the preface to my *English Grammar*, to revise, and publish at my leisure; and if these should have the good fortune to give satisfaction, I may, in due time, proceed to publish another Course of Lectures, viz. on the *Study of History* and *General Policy*; which, indeed, I have promised to publish, in the preface to my *Essay on the first Principles of Government*. The public may be assured, that, as I have not hitherto, I shall not, in future, obtrude upon them any work, that shall not appear to myself, however mistaken I may be in my judgment, both considerably *original* and *useful*.

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## ERRATA.

Page 8;	l. 9,	<i>for cause</i>	<i>read course;</i>
23;	23,	<i>for pursuing</i>	<i>read pursuing;</i>
30;	20,	<i>for properties</i>	<i>read proprieties.</i>
40;	7,	<i>for the notes</i>	<i>read notes</i>
56;	11,	<i>for process.</i>	<i>At read process; ab-</i>
72;	5,	<i>for attitude</i>	<i>read attitudes</i>
107;	2,	<i>for himself</i>	<i>read to himself.</i>
136;	4,	<i>for transferring</i>	<i>read by transferring.</i>
192;	3,	<i>for whoever</i>	<i>read who.</i>
202;	6,	<i>for terms</i>	<i>read the terms.</i>
205;	18,	<i>for excites;</i>	<i>read excites:</i>
217;	1,	<i>for parody</i>	<i>read a parody</i>
239;	2,	<i>for pelagi.</i>	<i>read pelago</i>
243;	3,	<i>for where</i>	<i>read when</i>
256;	4,	<i>for myrica</i>	<i>read myrica:</i>
261;	9,	<i>for from hence</i>	<i>read hence</i>
262;	6,	<i>for an original</i>	<i>read the original</i>
268;	16,	<i>for pleasures</i>	<i>read pleasure</i>
273;	8,	<i>for short ones</i>	<i>read long ones</i>
292;	9,	<i>for recurring</i>	<i>read or recurring:</i>
292;	20,	<i>for trouble</i>	<i>read any trouble:</i>

LECTURE

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## LECTURE I.

*The INTRODUCTION, and the DISTRIBUTION of  
the Subject.*

**T**HE use of speech is common to all mankind. For we find none of the human race but who are capable of expressing their ideas, sentiments, and intentions to others, in a more or less adequate manner, by words: and this capacity was necessary to that mutual *intercourse*, and free communication, without which beings of our social nature could not be happy.

It is the province of *art* to improve upon *nature*, by adding to her powers and advantages: and, for the exercise of our intellectual and active powers, all the gifts of nature are little more than the bare unwrought materials of those accomplishments, from which result the dignity and refined happiness of social life.

Thus **ORATORY** is the natural faculty of speech improved by art; whereby the use of it is perfected, facilitated, and extended; and consequently its *value* and *influence* greatly increased. And the excellence of this art is the more generally acknowledged, and its effects the more admired, because, language being common to us all, all men can the more easily conceive both

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the importance, and the difficulty of the improvements of which it is capable.

Very few persons ever find themselves at a loss to deliver a single sentence or two at a time; because they are able to see at one view the whole of what they intend to say. But it is not common to find a person able to acquit himself with propriety in a speech of considerable length, even though he prepare himself by digesting beforehand all that he intends to say; because the *order* and *connexion of sentiment*, and variety of *diction*, necessary in a continued speech, are not easily carried in memory: and it requires a very extraordinary invention and recollection to speak long, in a proper and graceful manner, quite *extempore*. Nor can a person, without the assistance of art and instruction, even compose a set discourse upon any subject; because it requires greater exactness in the use of words, more accuracy of method, and variety of transition than persons uninstructed and unused to composition can be masters of. For this reason we see many persons who make a good figure in conversation, by no means able to make a speech, or a composition of any considerable length. It is in this respect, where the powers of nature fail us, in expressing our sentiments to advantage, that we have recourse to the *art of Oratory*.

It may not be amiss, at the entrance upon these Lectures upon Oratory and Criticism, to premise one caution; which is, that we must not expect too much from the *art*; since this can do little for us in comparison of what must be the fruit of our own previous application to *science*. The art of oratory can only consist of rules for the proper use of those materials which must be acquired from various study and observation, of which, there-

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fore, unless a person be possessed, no art of oratory can make him an orator.

In order to speak, or write well upon any subject, it is necessary that that subject be thoroughly understood, that every argument which is to be used be previously collected, and the value of it ascertained. How absurd, for instance, would it be to imagine that a person, who had never studied law, government, and history, should be enabled, by the art of oratory, to make a political harangue, or write a dissertation upon the constitution of a state? With what success would an orator, who had not studied the Law, undertake the defence of a client? or a person wholly unacquainted with morals or theology, attempt to speak from the pulpit? Whatever subject, therefore, any person intends to write or speak upon, he must, by applying to the proper sources, acquire a perfect knowledge of it, before he can expect any assistance from the art of oratory, as such.

Moreover, let a person be ever so perfect a master of his subject, he could not be taught to speak or write about it with propriety and good effect, without being previously instructed in the principles of GRAMMAR, i. e. without a knowledge of the inflection of words, and of the structure of sentences, in the language he makes use of.

It is necessary, likewise, as far as *reasoning* is concerned, that a person be, in some sense, a *logician* before he be an orator; since it is by the rules of LOGIC that we judge of every thing relating to *arguments*, their perspicuity or confusion, their fallacy or their force. More especially is it of consequence to every orator whose business is with *men*, to be well acquainted with *human nature*; that knowing the passions, prejudices, interests,

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and views of those he hath to do with, he may know how to address them accordingly.

But notwithstanding this be treated of in many books written on the subject of oratory, and particularly by Aristotle; there is no more reason why we should encumber a system of oratory with it, than that we crowd into it the elements of any other science, or branch of knowledge, that the orator may have occasion for. Besides, those plain principles of human actions with which the orator hath to do, are obvious to common reflection, and must have occurred to every person before he hath lived to the age in which he has any occasion for the art of oratory. For this part of the furniture of an orator, therefore, let the student have recourse to *Ethical treatises*, as far as they unfold the principles of human nature; let him study authentic histories of human characters and conduct; and let him principally attend to the emotions of his own heart. However, that knowledge of human nature, which is necessary to understand the *rationale* of the ornaments of style will not be excluded a place in these Lectures, but will be explained pretty much at large in the third part of the course.

Supposing a man, therefore, to be perfectly acquainted with the subject on which he proposes to speak or write, that he is not deficient in the knowledge of grammatical propriety, and that by logic, natural or artificial, he can judge of the force or fallacy of any argument that occurs, or is proposed to him; it is asked what assistance he may expect from the art of oratory, in carrying his design into execution in the most advantageous manner. In this case, all that remains to be done is,

First,

First, to assist him in the habit of *recollection*, or to direct him which way to turn his thoughts, in order to find the arguments and illustrations with which his mind is already furnished; and likewise, when a general topic, or head of discourse, is found, in what manner to confirm or illustrate it; in order to have materials for the bulk or body of the discourse. In this manner oratory may assist the *invention*; but it is not in finding things with which the mind was wholly unacquainted, but in readily recollecting, and judiciously selecting, what is proper for his purpose, out of the materials with which the mind was previously furnished.

Secondly, the art of oratory teaches in what *order* to dispose of those topics. It shews what disposition of the materials of a discourse will give them the greatest force, and contribute the most to produce the effect intended by it.

Thirdly, to contribute still farther to the effect of a discourse, the art of oratory teaches what *style*, or manner of expression, will best become, adorn, and recommend it.

Fourthly, if the discourse is to be pronounced, the art of oratory teaches what tone of voice, or what gestures of the body, will best become, and add grace to the delivery of it.

The four great objects, therefore, that fall within the province of the orator are RECOLLECTION, METHOD, STYLE, and ELOCUTION. Of these I shall treat in the order in which they are here mentioned.

LECTURE

## LECTURE II.

*Of the Nature and Use of TOPICS.*

ALL the kinds of composition may be reduced to two, viz. NARRATION and ARGUMENTATION. For either we propose simply to relate *facts*, with a view to communicate information, as in *History*, natural or civil, *Travels*, &c. or we lay down some *proposition*, and endeavour to prove or explain it.

With respect to *Narration* of any kind, it is superfluous to say much about it under the first head of *Recollection*, or *Invention*, except so far as facts are wanted for the purpose of *argumentative discourses*. The chief assistance that those who compose only in the narrative style can expect from the art of oratory, is in *digesting* and *adorning* their compositions; and these articles will be considered in the second and third parts of these lectures.

The whole business, therefore, of artificial recollection must, in a manner, be confined to the use of those who compose *argumentative discourses*, whose minds are previously furnished with every argument and observation proper to be introduced into them; but who may not be able to find them so readily as they could wish. To such persons the following directions and observations may not be unuseful.

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RECOLLECTION comprehends whatever is proper to be said upon any subject; that is, all the thoughts or sentiments that make up the body of a discourse. These, which may be called the nerves and sinews of a composition, may all be considered as *arguments* in proof of what is advanced. Now every argument that can with propriety be brought as a proof of a proposition, should bear some kind of *relation* to both the terms of it. For, according to logicians, every proposition asserts the agreement or disagreement of two ideas, or things, which are called the *subject* and *predicate*, or *attribute* of the proposition. If the agreement or disagreement of these do not appear at first view, we make use of another idea, called a *middle term*, which, being severally applied to them both, will, by informing us of the relation they both bear to it, enable us to judge of the relation they both bear to one another. But unless this third idea bear some relation to both the others, it will be impossible to compare them together by the help of it.

I shall illustrate these observations by the example of the following proposition: *Every good man is a wise man*. It may not be apparent, at first view, that the *subject* and *attribute* of this proposition do really coincide, as is asserted in it. In order to show that, notwithstanding this, they really do agree, I introduce another idea, viz. *The making use of the means of happiness*; and by considering that a good man is one who lives and acts in such a manner as will secure his *greatest happiness*, which is also the object of the truest wisdom; I see that the description of a *good man* intirely agrees with that of a *wise man*, and that they are *the same person*, which the proposition asserts. But I could not have made use of this *intermediate idea*, in order to shew the relation of the terms to one another, unless it had borne some relation

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lation to them both, and had thereby been capable of being compared with them.

In this case, the relation that *means of happiness* bears to *goodness* is that of *effect*; goodness being the source of those actions which tend to produce true happiness; as the relation that the idea of the means of happiness bears to *wisdom* is that of *means*, or *instrument*, which wisdom employs to effect her purpose. And it is not improbable but that if a person had considered the natural *effects* of virtue and goodness, and what cause of actions a wise man would be led to adopt, he would have hit upon this idea, which furnishes so clear an argument in proof of the proposition in question. Or again, the same idea might have occurred to a person who had carefully considered the *definitions* of the terms of his propositions; since he would have found that property of goodness connected with those ideas which form the characteristic of wisdom. So that either the relation of *cause and effect*, that of *means and end*, or the *definition of terms* might have led the mind of the composer to the idea he wanted. These are called COMMON PLACES, TOPICS, or GENERAL HEADS, under which arguments of all kinds may be classed, and an attention to them may suggest the arguments that fall under them.

It belongs to the art of oratory to point out these topics, common places, or general heads to which all arguments may be reduced; that, whenever we undertake to prove any thing, by running over the titles of them in our minds, our thoughts may be directed to what suits our purpose. To make the use of these topics still more intelligible and easy, I shall illustrate each of them by an example or two.

All

All propositions, or things to be proved, metaphysically considered, may be reduced to the same form; as being a declaration of the coincidence of the subject and attribute of them. Thus if I say, that *man is mortal*, I mean that my idea of *man* coincides with my idea of a *mortal being*, or a being *subject to death*; or if I say, *Alexander conquered Darius*, I mean that my idea of Alexander, and of the person who conquered Darius, are the same. We shall, however, find it most convenient, in the business of popular oratory, to quit this general idea, and consider all propositions, or subjects of discourse, as subdivided into two kinds, viz. *universal*, and *particular* propositions.

*Universal propositions* are those which have no relation to particular persons, times, or places, but are at all times, in all places, and with regard to all persons, true or false; as these, *man is mortal*; *virtue makes the happiness of man*; *the three angles of every right-lined triangle are equal to two rectangles*. This head includes all *metaphysical* and *mathematical* subjects.

*Particular propositions* are those which have relation to, and are limited by, particular persons, times, or places; as *Alexander conquered Darius*; *France is larger than England*; *Carthage was founded before Rome*, &c. This head comprehends all historical debates, geographical, and chronological knowledge, consultations about the interest of particular states at particular times, judicial inquiries into the actions of particular persons, and all personal panegyric, or invective.

I divide all subjects of discourse into these two kinds, because the topics of argument suited to each are very considerably distinct; though things which relate to particular persons, times, or places, may often, with propriety, be introduced into a discourse upon a proposition that is universally true, or universally false,

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without respect to any particular person, time, or place; and, since every thing that is *particular* is comprehended in that which is *universal*, arguments relating to particular persons, places, and times, may be fetched from those topics, which are peculiarly adapted to universal propositions.

Convenient topics for universal propositions are the following: *Definition, Adjuncts, Antecedents, Consequents, Means, Analogy, Contrariety, Example* and *Authority*.

Before I explain these topics, I would observe, that it is not very material, with respect to the real use of them, whether the distribution be metaphysically exact; particularly, whether some of them, strictly speaking, be not superfluous, as being comprised under others; as, for example, whether it might not have been sufficient to have comprised *example* under the head of *consequents*. It is sufficient if, by attending to them, the mind be led to proper arguments. The table may be too scanty, but can hardly be too full. Notwithstanding this, a great deal of the redundancy of other tables is retrenched in this.

## LECTURE

## LECTURE III.

## Of UNIVERSAL TOPICS.

## I. Of DEFINITION.

DEFINITION suggests arguments in all cases in which a controversy rests upon ascertaining the precise *meaning of words*. Thus in order to prove a person, whose actions are well known, to be guilty of any particular crime; as *sacrilege, burglary, &c.* we merely define what those particular crimes are. If the definition be allowed, the proof is complete; as it shews that the action in question and the crime are the same.

In a great number of metaphysical, moral, and religious controversies, the disputants appeal to the definition of *terms*; and could these be agreed upon, the controversies would be at an end. The unhappiness is, that, in things of an abstruse nature, few persons affix precisely the same ideas to the same terms: from whence it often happens that they fancy they differ, when, in reality, they are agreed, and all the dispute is, at the bottom, about *words*, and not *things*.

The greatest attention is necessary to be paid to this topic by those who write treatises upon any intire art or science; as *Grammar, Logic, Oratory, &c.* since definition comprehends the

*distribution of things* into their parts, which must be discussed in their order. Thus a person who writes a grammar must consider that grammar consists of *Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, and Prosody*; and discuss what relates to each of them in their order.

II. *Of ADJUNCTS, or the properties of either of the terms of a proposition.*

Divines and moralists argue from this topic when, demonstrating that *man ought to obey GOD*, they urge that man is an *intelligent, dependent, and obliged* creature; that GOD is his *maker, governor, and judge*; and that his *laws are reasonable*, founded on wisdom and goodness: because each of these adjuncts, or properties of the terms of the proposition, suggests an argument for the truth of it.

Moralists likewise argue from this same topic, that *the rich ought to relieve the poor*; because they are both *fellow-creatures*, liable to a reverse of fortune, and that the one hath to spare what the other is in want of.

In a very strict sense, every argument might be referred to the topic of *Adjuncts*; because every argument we can use must be suggested by some property, or adjunct, of one or other of the terms of the proposition. But the examples above given show that the term need not be taken in so strict a sense, and that an attention to this topic in a looser sense, may afford a distinct and useful head of arguments; especially to divines and moralists.

III. *Of*

III. *Of ANTECEDENTS.*

It is of service sometimes to look back into what, in the order of nature, preceded either the subject or attribute of the proposition we are demonstrating.

Thus divines prove that *Christianity is probable*, because the circumstances of mankind previous to the publication of it, were such as made a revelation highly expedient and desirable.

Upon this principle Historians argue that the history of Greece, prior to the times of Cyrus the Great, is not much to be depended upon, because writing and records of any kind were not common in Greece before that time.

In political and civil affairs, a people are more easily persuaded to commit an important trust to a person, when his advocate can show that, in former situations, he behaved with ability and integrity. And political writers argue against any scheme by showing that it was engaged in from bad principles, that the advocates for it had been bribed, and that their particular previous connexions and situations obliged them to enter into it: as it is a great argument in favour of any scheme, that the views with which it was undertaken were upright and honourable.

To this topic is also to be referred whatever is said in praise of a person, on the subject of his birth, family, &c.

This topic also includes all corollaries or inferences from truths before demonstrated: for a proposition must be admitted as true, if it can be shown to be a necessary consequence of another acknowledged truth.

IV. *Of*

## IV. Of CONSEQUENTS.

Moralists argue from this topic when, demonstrating the *excellence of virtue*, they display the many happy consequences of it on a man's *frame, connections and expectations*; or when, asserting the evil of vice and wickedness, they paint the frightful consequences of it, both in this, and a future world.

Divines make use of this topic when they prove the *being and perfections of God from the frame of nature*, and the admirable proportion and uses of its several parts; when they prove that *christianity is true*, from the *miracles* that were wrought to prove it, and from the numbers that were actually thereby converted to the faith of Christ; and who adhered to it under very considerable temporal disadvantages.

In like manner, mathematicians refute a proposition, by showing that the consequences of it are absurd.

On this topic, likewise, we declaim against a *law*, or scheme of policy, by showing the consequences of it to be prejudicial to the state; or plead for it, if the consequences of it be beneficial.

## V. Of MEANS.

As arguments may be suggested by considering what is *antecedent* or *consequent* to things, or the *causes* and *effects* of them, so it is possible that the topic of the *means* whereby causes produce their effects, may be of some use to the same purpose.

Thus a divine, demonstrating the regard that the Supreme Being hath for virtue, might expatiate upon the means he hath used

used to bring men back to the practice of it after they had apostatized from it, in his various interpositions in the state of the world in favour of virtue and religion, in his commission to the prophets to be preachers of righteousness, and in sending Christ to redeem mankind by his precepts, example, and obedience unto death.

In considering the nature and usefulness of any scheme of policy, it is of use to examine the means that must be used to bring it about; and from the nature of the means, arguments may be fetched for or against the scheme proposed.

It is an argument against *popery*, that it is obliged to have recourse to *persecution*, and the horrid inquisition, as the means of bringing men back to the profession of that faith, and of keeping them in it.

## VI. Of ANALOGY.

This head comprises every thing that is *similar* to what is advanced in a proposition.

Writers in defence of christianity make excellent use of this topic when, answering objections against any thing that appears difficult or mysterious in revealed religion, they show that the same difficulty occurs on the subject of natural religion. For example, when it is objected that, in the scriptures, we meet with frequent instances of innocent persons suffering with the guilty, and sometimes on the account of the guilty, they reply, that the like frequently happens in the course of *common providence*; as when children suffer through the extravagance of their parents, who, by more economy, might have made a better provision for them; and when tempests and earthquakes overwhelm, in un-

distinguished

distinguished destruction, persons of all conditions and characters, &c.

In all branches of science it is of the greatest importance to show the *analogy*, or mutual correspondence, of the several propositions; and it is always deemed an argument in favour of a new discovery, if it be analogous to others already made, and if that analogy be wanting, we require much stronger evidence of other kinds.

Lawyers argue from this topic when they urge, in favour of their client, *precedents* of the determination of other causes. Since the uniformity of the proceedings in law, and the *sameness of right* in the same circumstances, require that every person be intitled to the same justice that another had done him, in a case nearly like, or analogous to his own. *Comparisons* also belong to this head.

#### VII. Of CONTRARIES.

It is, upon many subjects, no less useful to consider what things are *contrary*, or *opposite* to the terms of the proposition, than what are connected with them. As when moralists, in order to demonstrate the *advantages of a virtuous life*, describe the fatal effects of vicious courses upon the minds, the bodies, the reputation and fortunes of men; or, on the contrary, in order to set the hatefulnes of vice in a stronger light, they contrast it with a view of the amiableness of virtue. In all such cases as these this argument concludes in a very strong manner: for virtue and vice, being directly opposite to one another, it is very obvious to reflect, that all their effects and influences must be the very reverse of one another.

#### VIII. Of

#### VIII. Of EXAMPLE.

It greatly illustrates and confirms even moral maxims to show them exemplified in real history, in the characters and lives of men. Thus the fatal effects of *ambition* will be made much more sensible, if, after examining the nature and tendency of that passion in general, the writer subjoin the example of *Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Charles of Sweden, &c.*; and the value of *wise and good princes* will be greatly enhanced by a view of the amiable characters, and useful lives of *Titus, Trajan, Antoninus, &c.*; and it is of particular use to divines, to support all their maxims by examples from the scriptures.

It is likewise a happy confirmation of a principle in mechanics, mathematics, and philosophy, if it can be brought to an *experiment*, be subjected to the *senses*, and *reduced to practice*.

#### IX. Of AUTHORITY.

It is a great confirmation of our belief of even universal propositions, which have no connexion with particular persons, places, or times, to have a *testimony* in favour of them from persons whose opinions are generally allowed to be just.

A considerable part of that strong assent which we give to truths of an abstract nature, as to mathematical theorems, and philosophical discoveries, which may be even our own investigating, and much more if they be not, is derived from the authority of others, who concur with us in professing an assent to them; which may help us to account for a seeming paradox,

radox, viz. why the disciples of some Greek masters of philosophy usually, in a course of time, grew more zealously attached to the tenets of their respective schools, than the founders themselves originally were.

Cicero argues from this topic, when, in proof of a future state, he alledges, not only the natural arguments for it; but, what he seems to lay the chief stress upon, the concurrent testimony of all the wise ancients.

Lawyers argue from this, when, in favour of a determination, not fixed by custom and precedent, they alledge the opinions of persons learned in the law, given without any view to the case in hand.

*Argumenta ad hominem*, or those in which we appeal to a man's known principles and profession, belong to this head. If the authority of others have any weight with a man, much more may it be presumed that his own opinion, that is, his own authority, will weigh with him.

## LECTURE

## LECTURE IV.

*Of Particular TOPICS; and Objections to the Use of TOPICS answered.*

**P**ARTICULAR topics are those which furnish arguments for *particular propositions*; or those which relate to particular *persons, times, and places*. Of these I shall do little more than give distinct tables. The tables will, likewise, be very *general*; so that each article may be subdivided again and again, without end. But what is here done is abundantly sufficient for a treatise on the art in general, and it will be very easy for any person to carry the division as far as he pleases for his own use.

Topics of arguments for limited propositions, viz. such as relate to particular **FACTS**. With respect to these we may consider

The Person,  
The Time,  
The Place,  
The Motive,  
The Manner,  
The Instrument,  
The Evidence,  
The Law concerning it,  
&c. &c. &c.

I shall

I shall give an example of the subdivision of one or two of these heads. With respect to *person* we may consider

The Sex,  
 The Age,  
 The personal Qualifications,  
 The Fortune, as rich or poor,  
 The Education,  
 The Capacity or Ability; as Sense, Learning, &c.  
 The Profession, or Employment in Life,  
 The Nation, Tribe, Family, &c.  
 The Offices of public Life,  
 The Relations of private Life,  
 The Connexion, Company, Party, &c.  
 The general Character, &c.

Laws may be considered as to

Their Precision or Ambiguity,  
 Their Intention,  
 Their customary Forms, &c. &c.

It is obvious that it may be convenient to have recourse to these topics in any kind of discourse or composition in which any particular fact or person is introduced; as, whether a fact be *proved*, or *disproved*; whether a person be *accused*, or *defended*; whether a writer make a *panegyric*, or an *invective*; or simply compose a *history*.

To give an idea of the use of a few of these topics, it may be observed, with regard to *sex*, that a *woman* is not so likely to be guilty

guilty of *robbery* as a *man*; but perhaps more likely to be concerned in *poison*. With respect to *age*, that an *old man* would most naturally have recourse to *fraud*, a *young man* to *violence*: with respect to *nation*, that *drunkenness* would not so easily be believed of a *Spaniard*, as of a *German*; and that an *Italian* would more easily be actuated by outrageous *jealousy* than a *Frenchman*. With respect to *fortune or condition* in life, that it is natural to believe that a *rich man* is the most likely to be the aggressor in a quarrel with a *poor man*; and lastly, with respect to *education*, that a person educated at *St. Omer's* would be much more justly suspected of being disaffected to the English government, than a person educated at *Oxford* or *Cambridge*.

But I would refer the person who is desirous of seeing a specimen of the most excellent declamation upon a great variety of these topics, to *Cicero's accusation of Varres*, and *defence of Milo*; also to his *invectives* against *Cataline* and *Antony*, and to *Pliny's panegyric upon the emperor Trajan*.

As materials for discourse may occur to us from considering the general heads to which they may be referred, so it is possible, likewise, that we may take hints of arguments from the *manner* in which they are generally introduced, or the *form* into which they are thrown. One form of argument, for instance, is from *greater to less*, or from *less to greater*. Thus a person will be more easily believed to have committed a *less* infamous action, who is known to have committed a *more* infamous one; as, on the other hand, if a person have never been known to be guilty of a small transgression, it will not easily be believed that he hath, all at once, been guilty of a great and flagrant one.

Matter

Matter for discourse may also occur to a person who considers what may be said by way of *objection* to what he hath advanced, and what *concessions* he may make to his opponent. His invention may also be assisted by considering whether he can, with propriety, introduce any thing in the form of *irony*, of a *question*, of an *exclamation*, and of every other possible form of address. Moreover, what will be advanced in these lectures upon the subject of *method*, will tend greatly to help the invention.

I am aware that this whole business of topics is objected to by some as altogether useless, and what no persons, who are capable of composing at all, ever stand in need of, or have recourse to. To this I reply, that, in fact, no person ever did, or ever can compose at all without having recourse to something of a similar nature. What is *recollection* but the introduction of one idea into the mind by means of another with which it was previously associated? Are not ideas associated by means of their connection with, and relation to one another? And is it not very possible that *particular ideas* may be recollected by means of *general ideas*, which include them?

It is impossible to endeavour to *recollect* (or, as we generally say, *invent*) materials for a discourse, without running over in our minds such general heads of discourse as we have found by experience to assist us in that operation. It is even impossible to conceive in what other manner a *voluntary effort* to invent, or recollect, can be directed. A person may not have recourse to any particular list, or enumeration, of topics; or he may never have heard of the artificial distribution of them by rhetoricians; but if he compose at all, though he may be ignorant of the *name*, he must be possessed of the *thing*. And if a person have any *regular method* in his compositions, he must, moreover, have ar-

ranged those topics in his mind in some kind of order; the several particulars of which, being attended to successively, furnishes him with a *plan for composition*. Now is it not better to fit down to composition provided with a tolerably complete list of those topics, digested with care and precision, than make use of such an one as we casually and without any design form to ourselves from general reading only, or a little practice in composition, which cannot but be very imperfect, and inadequate to the purpose to which it is applied?

After previously running over such a table, a person would be much better able to form an idea of the *extent* of his subject, and might conduct his composition accordingly; or perusing it after reading the composition of another, he might with much greater certainty know whether any thing of importance had been left unsaid upon the subject; or whether, if the discourse were necessarily limited to a few arguments, the writer had selected the best.

I cannot help being of opinion that those persons, in particular, whose profession obliges them frequently to compose *moral essays* and *sermons*, in which the thoughts are not expected to be *original* (in which, therefore, their chief business is merely to *recollect*, and *digest* the most valuable materials upon each subject) would spend a few minutes to good purpose in pursuing a well-digested table of topics, before they sat down to write. By this means they could seldom be at a loss for matter; they would more easily select what was most important; and with less trouble arrange it in the most advantageous manner. For want, or through neglect of this, as well as for other reasons, we often hear noble and copious subjects treated in a jejune and trifling manner, some parts excessively overdone, others of equal importance

portance wholly omitted, and the whole put together in a most perplexed order; which exhibits the appearance rather of random indigested thoughts, than of a composition which was the result of a previous study of the subject, and an acquaintance with the whole extent of it. And this previous acquaintance with the whole extent of a subject can be acquired no other way so easily as by the perusal of a judicious set of rhetorical topics.

If we pay any regard to the practice of the famous orators of antiquity, we cannot but be disposed to think favourably of topics; for it is certain that they made great use of topics, as appears in the writings of Cicero and Quintilian. Too much may be expected from any thing; and an improper use may be made of any thing; but this is no argument against the judicious and proper use of it.

It were absurd for any person slavishly to oblige himself to borrow something from every topic of discourse; much more to set it down in the order in which they may happen to be enumerated; but, having glanced the whole, let him take what is most to his purpose, and omit every thing that would appear far-fetched, or to be introduced for the sake of swelling the bulk of a discourse.

I am very ready, however, to acknowledge, that rhetorical topics are more useful in the composition of *set declamations on trite subjects*, and to *young persons*, than in the communication of original matter, and to persons much used to composition. Original thoughts cannot but suggest themselves, so that all the assistance any person can want in this case, is a proper manner of *arranging* them. And a person much used to composition will have acquired a habit of recollection, without any express attention to topics; just as a person used to the harpsichord, or

any other instrument of music, will be able to perform without an *express attention* to rules, or even to the manner of placing his fingers. His idea of the tune in general, is so closely associated with all the motions of his fingers necessary to the playing of it, and these motions are also so closely associated together, that they follow one another mechanically, in what Dr. Hartley calls a *secondarily automatic manner*, which is almost as certain as a motion *originally* and *properly automatic*.



## LECTURE V.

## Of AMPLIFICATION.

HAVING considered the proper *topics of argument* for the proof of any proposition, it remains that I consider what makes the bulk of a discourse, under the head of *Amplification*.

In general, whatever may with propriety be said upon any topic, should tend to *confirm*, or *illustrate* that topic; and be longer or shorter as the case requires: and, since any particular argument may require *proof* or *confirmation*, it must be considered in every respect as the original proposition itself, and be supported by arguments fetched from the topics which are proper to it. In a regular discourse, the amplification, or enlargement, is nothing more than a collection of such arguments and observations as tend to confirm or illustrate the subject of it; and therefore not a sentence, or a word, should be inserted that doth not improve the sense, and tend to make the apprehension of the reader, or hearer, either more *just*, or more *strong* and lively.

More particularly, the precise nature of amplification, with respect to argumentative discourses, consists either in supplying such *intermediate arguments* as might have been suppressed, or in a more copious *induction of particulars*.

A demon-

A demonstration may be given in such a manner as may be sufficiently full and conclusive to a person who is pretty well versed in the science to which it belongs, or such as are similar to it, and yet may want a great many intermediate steps, and mediums of proof, necessary to make it intelligible to a person who is not so well prepared. When a person writes for the *learned*, it is superfluous to use more words than will enable them to see the force of what he advances, and it is impertinent to mention those intermediate ideas which he knows are quite familiar to their minds. But if this discourse be made intelligible to the *bulk of mankind*, and especially if it must be adapted to the capacities of *children* and *young persons*, it must be *amplified*, by inserting in it those intermediate steps, and mediums of proof, which before were omitted as unnecessary. Because it would be absurd in any writer, and would defeat the purpose of his discourse, to take any thing for granted that his reader was not acquainted with, or to omit any thing that he was not able to supply.

*Newton's Principia* is a remarkable instance to the present purpose. The demonstrations in that treatise are extremely concise, a great number of intermediate steps being omitted; and therefore but few, even of mathematicians, are capable of understanding it without a comment. The commentary *amplifies*, by supplying the steps that were suppressed by the author; and thus the book may be fitted for more general use.

When the proof of a general proposition consists of the *induction of particulars*, it may be sufficient in some cases, to mention only a few of the particulars. In other cases, it may be convenient to amplify, or swell the demonstration by a more copious enumeration.

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A nar-

A *narration* or *description* is concise, when only a few of the most important particulars are mentioned, and amplified and enlarged by a more minute detail. The former is sufficient, where it answers a writer's purpose barely to inform his reader of the *reality* of an event; the latter is necessary, if he be desirous that the reader be *interested* in it, and *affected* with it.

Addison (*Spectator*, No. 519.) observing how full of life are those parts of nature which are subject to our observation, amplifies it in the following beautiful manner: "Every part of matter is peopled, every green leaf swarms with inhabitants. There is scarce a single humour in the body of a man, or of any other animal, in which our glasses do not discover myriads of living creatures. The surface of animals is also covered with other animals, which are, in the same manner, the basis of other animals, that live upon it. Nay, we find in the most solid bodies, as in marble itself, innumerable cells and cavities, that are crowded with such imperceptible inhabitants, as are too little for the naked eye to discover. On the other hand, if we look into the more bulky parts of nature, we see the seas, lakes, and rivers, teeming with numberless kinds of living creatures. We find every mountain and marsh, wilderness and wood, plentifully stocked with birds and beasts; and every part of matter affording proper necessaries and conveniencies for the livelihood of multitudes which inhabit it."

It is likewise usual to amplify narration and description by *observations* or *reflections* intermixed. By this means Polybius greatly swelled the bulk of his history, and for want of this kind of amplification, historical abstracts are generally very dull and insipid. All books of *meditation*, as Mr. Hervey's, contain a mixture of narration and reflection; and the pleasure with

which such books are universally read, demonstrates the propriety and happiness of such a mixture.

These two kinds of amplification are used in the *body of a discourse*; but it is often requisite that, previous to the confirmation of a topic by arguments, it should be explained very minutely, and the parts of which it consists be expressed in more, or plainer terms, and mistakes concerning it be pointed out, and guarded against, to prevent misconstruction. This very usefully enlarges a discourse.

It may happen that the nature and conclusiveness of an argument may not be evident at the first view. In this case, it may answer a very good purpose to amplify, by shewing, either before or after the proof of the proposition, the nature and strength of the arguments brought in support of it, and by stating with some exactness the degree of influence they are intitled to.

Lastly, it contributes to swell a discourse, to point out the *connexion of the sentences* that compose it more particularly than by single conjunctives, in the manner explained in the *Lectures upon Grammar* \*.

These are the principal sources from whence materials for amplification are drawn. It will be to the advantage of a composition that they do not succeed one another in the same order, but that they be introduced with great variety. This will give the discourse the greater appearance of *ease*. It will be more pleasing, and in every respect better adapted to answer the end proposed by it.

All the *faults* which properly belong to amplification, are the following. It is absurd to introduce any thing under any topic

\* This is a work which has been printed for private use, and will in due time be laid before the public.

which has no relation to it, not tending either to confirm or illustrate it. It is, likewise, a fault to attempt to illustrate what is too plain to need any illustration. In this, regard must be had to the hearers or readers: for, to a mixed multitude, or to a set of pupils, a *copious illustration*, a *diversified expression*, or a mere *repetition*, may be proper, which would be absurd before a learned assembly. But it is a greater fault not to advance what is sufficient to confirm or illustrate any argument; since without that, the end of the discourse, which was conviction or persuasion, cannot be attained.

Other faults in the body of a discourse belong to other heads than that of amplification.

It is of some importance to observe, on the subject of amplification, that persons of a very exact judgment are generally the least copious in composition, and notwithstanding they have the greatest knowledge, compose with peculiar difficulty; their nicer discernment, which makes them attend to all the relations and connexions of things, rejecting every thing that doth not in every respect suit their purpose. Whereas those persons who are unattentive to the minuter properties of things, find no difficulty in admitting a great variety of thoughts that offer themselves in composition; a slight association of any ideas with the subject in hand being sufficient to introduce them. In general, the latter are more proper for public speakers, and the former for writers. The want of close connexion, small improprieties, or even inconsistencies, pass unnoticed with most persons when they hear a discourse. Besides, no person can so well depend upon his memory in comparing one part of a discourse that he has only *heard*, with another. But all these little inaccuracies are exposed to observation,

sion, when a good judge of composition hath the whole discourse before him in *writing*.

It may, likewise, be of service to add, that it is very possible a writer may cramp his faculties, and injure his productions, by too great a *scrupulosity* in the first composition. That close attention to a subject which composition requires, unavoidably warms the imagination: then ideas crowd upon us, the mind hastens, as it were, into the midst of things, and is impatient till those strong conceptions be expressed. In such a situation, to reject the first, perhaps loose and incorrect thoughts, is to reject a train of just and valuable thoughts, that would follow by their connexion with them, and to embarrass and impoverish the whole work. Whenever, therefore, we begin to feel the ardour of composition, it is most adviseable to indulge it freely, and leave little proprieties to be adjusted at our leisure.

Besides, if we would wish to communicate to our readers those strong sensations that we feel in the ardour of composition, we must endeavour to express the whole of our sentiments and sensations, in the very *order* and *connexion* in which they actually presented themselves to us at that time. For, such is the similarity of all human minds, that when the same appearances are presented to another person, his mind will, in general, be equally struck and affected with them, and the composition will appear to him to be natural and animated. Whereas, if, in consequence of an ill-judged scrupulosity and delay, we once lose sight of any part of that train of ideas with which our own minds were so warmed and interested, it may be impossible to recover it: and perhaps no other train of ideas, though, separately taken, they may appear to be better adapted to the subject, may have the same power to excite those sensations with which we would wish

the composition might be read. Whatever these sensations be, they will be the same with those with which the composition was written; it being almost impossible to *counterfeit* successfully in such a case as this. As, therefore, we wish to affect and interest the minds of our readers, we should endeavour, without losing time in examining every thing with a minute exactness, to express the *whole state of our own minds* while they are thus affected and interested. Correction will be employed with more advantage afterwards.

P A R T

## P A R T II.

O F

## M E T H O D.

## LECTURE VI.

*Of METHOD in Narrative Discourses.*

THE orator being furnished with proper materials for his discourse, from the topics of argumentation and amplification, explained under the last general head of *recollection*, his next care is to dispose of them to the best advantage, in the most regular and convenient METHOD; the rules of which I now proceed to lay down. This I shall do with respect to both the kinds to which every composition may be reduced, viz. the *Narrative* and *Argumentative*.

If the view of the historian be simply to communicate *information*, and he be desirous to do it in such a manner as to give it the

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easiest

easiest admission into the mind, and leave the most lasting impression upon the memory, his general endeavour must be to give as clear and just an idea as possible of the most striking relations that the ideas he exhibits bear to one another; since it is by means of their *mutual relations* that ideas introduce one another, and *cohere*, as it were, in the mind.

In general, the *order of nature*, or of their *real existence*, will be found to be, at the same time, both the easiest, and, in every respect, the best manner of reciting them, viz. the order of *time* for *events*, and that of *place*, for the subjects of what is called *natural history*.

Thus the chronological succession of events hath generally supplied the writers of civil history, biography, and travels, with the most natural and useful method of communicating information. The *geographer*, having finished one country, naturally thinks of passing into a neighbouring one; and, in natural history, we always expect an intire and unbroken account of some one of the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdoms, before we be led to another.

This is making those transitions which our minds are most accustomed to, and therefore make with the most ease. It is taking advantage of the strongest associations by which the ideas of things cohere in our minds; on account of which every particular of the narration both gains the easiest admission into our minds, and is best retained when admitted: whereas the mind is greatly disgusted with unusual, and consequently unexpected, and, to us, unnatural connexions of things. Such connexions not being analogous to any other pre-existing and established in the mind, the things so connected will not coalesce, and recal one another, so as to be remembered in their order.

How-

However, these very same reasons, drawn from the nature of things, and the state of the human mind, to which these relations are addressed, will often dictate particular deviations from the general order of narration; will admonish the historian to quit the order of time for a while, and the geographer that of proximity of situation. The relations of events to one another, by way of *cause and effect*, will sometimes unavoidably, and very justifiably, oblige an historian to trace an important event back to the *causes* that gave birth to it; and again to pursue it through its distant *consequences*, far beyond the æra in which it commenced. In *biography*, the consideration of the effects of education, the influence of a ruling passion, the consequences of an extraordinary and critical incident, and the like, may render an occasional transition from a man's birth to his death, or from his death to his birth, to be by no means a disagreeable or unprofitable digression. And if the relation of similarity, or even of contrariety, in natural productions, customs, climates, &c. give occasion to it, we willingly follow the geographer and natural historian in their most sudden and rapid excursions, to parts of the world the most distant from those they are professedly describing.

In all these and the like cases, a writer can never be blamed if he dispose the materials of his composition by an attention to the strongest and most usual *associations of ideas* in the human mind. We are not fond of pursuing any uniform track long without interruption: so that the natural connexions of ideas not quite foreign to the subject, with others which occur in the course of a narration, may, in the hands of a judicious historian, give occasion to *digressions* from his principal subject, which shall greatly relieve the attention, please the imagination, refresh and assist the memory.

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The danger is, lest these excursions from the principal subject, which are so inviting to a writer, and often agreeable to the reader, should lead them too far: since it is very possible to pursue a natural and proper digression, till we find ourselves at a loss for transitions equally easy and natural, by which to return to the principal subject: and no digression can be said to be unexceptionable, that doth not connect equally well at both ends with the piece in which it is introduced.

If a digression be continued till we quite lose sight of the principal subject, the uniformity of the whole piece is broken, and at the end of such digression the reader hath, as it were, to begin again; and he may be under a necessity of looking a considerable way back, before he can recover the train of ideas he had lost, and without which he cannot proceed with the work. For no chain of events can be understood, unless they be seen in their connexion with others on which they depend. Every writer, therefore, should, by all means, take care, if possible, so to dispose of his materials, as that nothing interrupt or keep out of sight, any train of ideas, till the perception of them be of little or no consequence to any thing that is to follow. If such digressions, however, be unavoidable, it is absolutely necessary that, after such digression, the writer *repeat*, or recapitulate, which is by no means graceful.

I shall exemplify these observations on the excellencies and faults of methodical narration, by an account of the manner of some of the most considerable writers in that way, ancient and modern.

The generality of historians, with *Xenophon*, *Livy*, *Sallust*, *Tacitus*, and some others, aim at the most agreeable method of writing history, viz. by observing the order of *time* in general; but

but by no means suffering a regard to it to interrupt the account of any *intire transaction*, or prevent their looking either backward or forward for an incident that would throw light upon any character or event.

This method all writers of *fiction* and *romance*, without exception, aim at, as the most agreeable and perfect: and such writers are the more at liberty to follow it, as they are under no constraint from such a variety of considerations as the writers of true history must attend to, and which do not always leave them the masters of their own choice. If the matter, or manner, of a true historian do not please us, it may be the *subject* that is in fault; if a romance do not please us, we justly blame either the invention, or judgment of the *writer*.

*Thucydides*, out of his extreme regard to truth, hath adhered too scrupulously to chronological order; so as frequently to pass, in a very abrupt and displeasing manner, from the midst of an important and interesting transaction, to a very distant and trivial one; and he never begins or completes any transaction but in its proper year. Being the first among the Greeks who paid much attention to *exactness in chronology*, he is the more excusable in following it so closely as he did; since he could have no example of any inconvenience attending it.

*Herodotus* rambles from his subject much more frequently than *Thucydides*, but on a very different, and less justifiable account: for his digressions from an interesting narration are so far from being intended to keep us nearer to chronological order, that they throw us farther from it; when frequently, upon barely naming a person or nation, in the midst of an event, of which we are impatient to know the issue, he stops to give an account of, perhaps, the whole history of that nation or person, or some particular:

cular relating to them quite foreign to the action that is depending, and without the least regard to the time in which what he thus digresses to relate happened. But to the *father of history*, and an *old man*, every indulgence ought to be made. With all his defects of method, there are few historians more pleasing upon the whole.

*Xenophon*, though, in general, an excellent historian, yet in his *expedition of the ten thousand*, when he comes to relate the death of *Cyrus*, in the battle with his brother, goes back to relate at large the intire history of his private life, manners, and schemes, &c. leaving the minds of his readers in a state of the most anxious suspense, to know what was the fate of the *Greeks*, who were the proper heroes of his history. The only inducement that one could imagine a writer could have to make such digressions as these, must have been to give the history of the same person in the same place, though at the expence both of the *order of time*, and of the *unity of action*.

The digressions of *Tacitus*, to give an account of the origin, and early history of any people or country, immediately before an account of the wars the Romans had with them, have the best effect; as they both tend to interest us in the progress and event of the war, and, considering the subject of his history, contribute to relieve the mind, in the most agreeable manner, from an attention to a scene which was in itself too uniform and disgusting. The subject of the *Annals of Tacitus* was of such a nature as to occasion little or no inconvenience from strict chronological order; the unity of action being no where broken in upon by it, as it is by the annals of *Thucydides*.

The writer of a *single history* hath no embarrassment in comparison of a person who undertakes to give an account of two or

more nations, whose histories are intermixed with one another. The former is at liberty to take as much of any foreign history as he hath occasion for to illustrate his own; the other is in a manner under a necessity, either of making repetitions, or of leaving chasms in one or other of the histories. The former expedient is tedious and ungraceful, the latter makes one of the histories very imperfect and uninteresting.

The writers of the *Universal History* found themselves in this dilemma, and their very valuable work bears too many marks of it. To avoid *repetitions*, they have left almost all the histories imperfect, which obliges a reader to look into several, before he can find a perfect account of any. They have likewise made the modern history of the *Arabians* and *Turks*, in particular, unnecessarily and excessively tedious, by inserting in the text several different accounts of the same event; when it would have occasioned no more trouble to the writer, and have been vastly more agreeable to the reader, to have retained only the most approved account of any event in the *text*, and have left the other accounts to the *notes*.

By the use of *notes* the moderns have a considerable advantage over the ancients, who had no idea of such a convenience. By the help of notes a history may go on without interruption, and yet a great variety of *incidental things*, worth recording, and which cannot be introduced with ease into the body of a work, may have a place assigned to them, where they may be attended to at the reader's leisure.

*Bayle* hath made the greatest use of notes of any of the moderns. Indeed, the text of his *Biographical Dictionary* seems to have been composed for the sake of the notes; which were such *miscellaneous remarks* upon men and opinions, as could not have been

been incorporated into any regular work, or have been published conveniently in any other form.

What Bayle did, in a manner, through necessity, some others (and particularly *Harris*) have adopted through choice; and have thereby made their works nothing more than *unconnected anecdotes*, to which the text only serves as an index. Whereas the most proper use of the notes in biographical writings, is to serve as a repository for the more *minute particulars* of a person's life, which, though of great use to illustrate the character, are yet too inconsiderable to make a figure in the body of the work.

The lives of *Suetonius* consist, chiefly, of such curious and useful particulars as tend to give us an idea of the real *characters* of the *Twelve Cæsars*, and were by no means designed to be a complete history of their lives and actions.

*Tacitus's life of Agricola*, and *Quintus Curtius's life of Alexander the Great*, are works of a very different nature, being regular histories of the actions of those great men. *Plutarch's lives* are a most judicious mixture both of private characteristic incidents, and of public transactions.

*Tacitus's tract concerning the manners of the Germans* is an excellent model for that kind of narrative; giving a most distinct account both of the general policy and particular institutions of that people.

All *didactic treatises* belong chiefly to this head of narration; the writer having little to do with argumentation, and being concerned chiefly to give as intelligible and distinct an account as possible of all the *precepts of the art*, or of every thing that is requisite to be done in order to succeed in it.

Whether

Whether a writer discourse of the *mechanic*, or the *liberal arts*, such as *grammar*, *oratory*, &c. the nature of the thing will direct him, in general, to divide the subject into its proper distinct parts, and to give an account of what is most essential in the first place, and what is only ornamental afterwards.



## LECTURE VII.

Of METHOD in Argumentative *discourses*; of ANALYSIS and SYNTHESIS; and of GEOMETRICAL DEMONSTRATION.

THE greatest difficulty, in point of method, is found in properly arranging the parts of an *argument*, so as to give them the most weight, and encrease the degree of evidence resulting from the whole, by the aptness of their order and connexion.

Logicians speak of two kinds of method in argumentative discourses, the *analytic* and the *synthetic*; and the distribution is complete and accurate. For, in all science, we either proceed from particular observations to more general conclusions, which is *analysis*; or, beginning with more general and comprehensive propositions, we descend to the particular propositions which are contained in them, which is *synthesis*.

In the former method we are obliged to proceed in our *investigation of truth*: for it is only by comparing a number of particular observations which are self-evident, that we perceive any analogy in effects, which leads us to apprehend an uniformity in their cause, in the knowledge of which all science consists. In the latter method it is generally more convenient to explain a system of science to others. For, in general, those truths which

were the result of our own inquiry, may be made as intelligible to others as those by which we arrived at the knowledge of them; and it is easier to show how one general principle comprehends the particulars comprized under it, than to trace all those particulars to one that comprehends them all.

On the other hand, the analytic method is properly to communicate truth to others in the very manner in which it was discovered; and first discoveries are generally the result of such a laborious and minute examination, as is, in its own nature, a slow and tedious procedure. Is it not much readier to take the right key at first, and open a number of locks, than begin with examining the locks, and after trying several keys that will open one or two of them only, at last to produce that which will open them all?

Notwithstanding this, in theories not perfectly ascertained, or with regard to sentiments not generally admitted, it may be advisable to inform others in the method of analysis; because then, beginning with no principles or positions but what are common, and universally allowed, we may lead others insensibly, and without shocking their prejudices, to the right conclusion. It is as if the persons we are instructing did themselves make all the observations, and, after trying every hypothesis, find that none would answer except that which we point out to them. This method is more tedious, but perhaps more sure. Before we admit any hypothesis, we naturally consider whether it will agree with every observation previously made, and every proposition previously admitted; and therefore in a method of communication borrowed from that cautious method of inquiry, we are of course led distinctly to consider, and very particularly to obviate all kinds of objections.

In fact, almost every branch of science (except some parts of pure mathematics, capable of the strictest demonstration) hath been delivered at first by the investigators of it in this method of analysis; and it hath not been till after some time that the patrons of it have digested it into a synthetic, or systematic form.

This latter method, however, is absolutely necessary when any branch of science is introduced into *schools*, where there is occasion for the most concise and compendious methods of instruction. It is only the elements of science that can be learned in schools, and it would take up too much of the little time that youth can give to their studies, to lead them through all the slow processes of analysis in every thing they learn. Analytical discourses are, therefore, more properly addressed to those persons who have gone through their preparatory studies, and who have leisure for *new speculations*.

These two methods are seldom used absolutely unmixed in any work of considerable length, except by mathematicians; and for the greater variety, in *long discourses*, a method sometimes partaking more of the analytic, and sometimes leaning more to the synthetic, is adopted, as best suits the taste of the writer.

A method the most properly analytic is pursued by mathematicians in all kinds of algebraic investigations, in approximations, and in experimental philosophy: whereas the geometric method of proposition and demonstration is of the synthetic kind.

A great variety of modern treatises upon moral subjects, in which mankind are far from being agreed, have lately been written in the analytic method, as best suited to the infant state of the science. The science of theology hath been, perhaps, too precipitately handled in the method of synthesis, or systematically;  
and

and several ingenious persons, being aware of it, have gone back, and have begun again in the more cautious method of analytical inquiry.

Having thus given a general idea of the nature of the methods of synthesis and analysis, and of the proper use of both, I proceed to consider them separately and more particularly.

Since the subject of every synthetic discourse is some *proposition*, or *theorem*, which is to be proved, and the bulk of the discourse a kind of *demonstration*, it may be of considerable service to a composer to have in view the methods of demonstration used by mathematicians.

Truth, whether geometrical, metaphysical, moral, or theological, is of the same nature, and the evidence of it is perceived in a similar manner by the same human minds. Now it is universally allowed that the form in which evidence is presented by *Euclid*, and other geometricians of reputation, is that in which it gains the readiest and most irresistible admission into the mind; and their method of conducting a demonstration, and disposing of every thing preceding it, and subsequent to it, hath been so generally approved, that it is established and invariable. Such a successful method of procedure with respect to mathematical truth, certainly deserves the attention and imitation of all who are desirous to promote the interests of any kind of truth.

In order, therefore, to give the most perfect rules of synthetic demonstration, I shall explain the method of geometricians, and endeavour to show how far it may be adopted, or imitated with advantage, by writers in general, and particularly by divines and moralists.

Every

Every proposition is, by geometers, demonstrated either from *axioms*, that is, self-evident truths; or such as have been elsewhere demonstrated from those which are self-evident.

In like manner, whatever we propose to demonstrate, the last appeal lies to *self-evident truths*; in moral subjects, to consciousness, or internal feelings; and in matters of revelation, to the plain sense of scripture: and it is very expedient and adviseable, in discourses upon important subjects of any kind, after the manner of geometers, to premise these self-evident truths, beyond which no appeal can be admitted.

Moreover, lest there should be any disagreement or dispute about the use of the words employed in the argument, it is, likewise, convenient that, after their manner, these axioms be preceded by *definitions* explaining the sense in which all the important words which represent complex ideas are used. When, in this manner, it is determined in what sense words are to be used, and what are the allowed uncontroverted principles we are to go upon, they may be applied with great ease and certainty in the remainder of the discourse; and the demonstration in which they are introduced, will be freed from that confusion and embarrassment which would otherwise attend it.

Besides, this method is, in a manner, the very *touchstone of truth*; and therefore, if our views really be to promote the interest of *truth* (and sooner would I teach the art of poisoning than that of *sophistry*) this method hath another great advantage to recommend it. For if these definitions and axioms be laid down with due accuracy and circumspection, they not only introduce the easiest, the most natural, and cogent method of demonstrating any proposition, but lead to an easy method of examining the strength or weakness of the ensuing arguments. If the

the argument in such a methodical discourse be not conclusive, it contains within itself the principles of its own confutation. Such a discourse must be evidently *inconsistent with itself*. On the other hand, if the definitions and axioms be admitted, the propositions that are demonstrated from them, by the simple rules of reasoning, must be next to self-evident, and carry the strongest possible conviction along with them.

I am not, in these and the following observations, pleading for the geometrical *TERMS*, *axiom* and *definition*, or for the very exact and precise method in which geometers place them. It is not the *name*, but the *thing* that I recommend; and only so far as reason directs to similar methods in similar cases. A regard to *perspicuity* would direct us (if we would be understood) to explain distinctly the meaning of every word we use, that is of the least doubtful signification, and to introduce the definitions, if not formally, at the entrance of a discourse, yet as soon as they become necessary. It is manifestly convenient likewise, upon several occasions, to refer expressly to maxims which are universally allowed or self-evident, in order to show distinctly upon what foundation an argument rests. The more distinct we keep our own propositions, or those which, in any discourse, we profess to maintain, from those, by the help or medium of which, we prove them, the better. We can much more easily examine any sentiments when we see in what place to begin, and are shown their mutual connexion, and the dependance that one part hath upon another.

## LECTURE VIII.

*Of the several parts of a proper DEMONSTRATION.*

**A**FTER these useful preliminaries, viz. ascertaining the use of terms, and premising what is universally known, or taken for granted, with respect to a subject, the geometrician proceeds to his *proposition*, in which he lays down, in the plainest terms, what he hath farther to advance. This either constitutes a single proposition, or is resolvable into several heads, each of which are distinct propositions, and must be demonstrated separately. Moreover, the principal proposition is sometimes preceded by one, or several others, which are called *lemmas*, and are designed to prepare the way for the principal proposition, by proving the truth of such other propositions as may be made use of to demonstrate it.

In like manner, if, when we have taken a view of the whole of a subject, in all its extent, and have considered every argument which we intend to bring in proof of it, we suspect that any of the intermediate propositions, upon which the demonstration principally depends, may themselves want proof, or illustration, it may be extremely convenient to dispatch it in the introduction, previous to our naming the principal proposition; because it may prevent its occasioning any interruption in the course

of the demonstration. Such doubtful positions must otherwise be proposed by way of answering *objections*, after the demonstration, which may not always be quite convenient; because the difficulty may have occurred to the mind of the hearer, or reader, from the first; and his keeping it in view through the whole of the demonstration, may have prevented the arguments from being heard with that attention, and freedom from prejudice, with which they would have been heard, if that objection had been obviated by way of lemma, in the introduction. The geometrician wisely anticipates all *objection*.

In some cases, indeed, it may be impossible to anticipate all objections; as they may be of such a nature as that they could not be *understood* till the demonstration had been heard. In that case the objections not only may come after the demonstration (as of necessity they must, if they be mentioned at all) but also may do so without any inconvenience. Because if the objection could not be understood before the demonstration, it could not have occurred to the hearer or reader before, so as to lay any bias upon his mind in the course of it.

Objections being thus, as far as possible, anticipated, and the truth of every intermediate proposition that we shall have occasion for, proved, the way is properly cleared for the *principal proposition*, which must be proposed without any ornament, in the most intelligible terms. If the proposition be complex, the whole extent of it must be shown in the most commodious division of it into its proper parts: also the order in which each part will be discussed must be pointed out distinctly, that the whole process of the demonstration may lie with the greatest clearness before the minds of those to whom it is addressed; and that, in the progress of the discourse, they may perceive the connexion of all the

parts, and may see all along what progress the speaker or writer hath made in his argument.

In cases relating to matters of *fact*, it may require a long and circumstantial *narration* before the point to be proved can be understood. Whatever narration, therefore, is requisite to set a question in dispute in a clear light, belongs to this part of a discourse, and is properly referred to the proposition.

The geometrician, when he hath laid down his proposition, proceeds, by a series of steps which terminate in a single proof, to show the agreement or coincidence of the terms of it: and as one demonstration, in subjects that will admit of it, is decisive, a multiplicity and redundancy of proofs is seldom affected by mathematicians. But in this the moralist and divine must content themselves with following them at a great and very humble distance. As the subjects they treat of are not always capable of strict *demonstration*, they are obliged to have recourse to a variety of arguments, each of which may add something to *probability*, (which in its own nature admits of degrees) till the united strength of them all be sufficient to determine the assent.

In this case, it is of some consequence that attention be paid to the *order of the proofs*, supposing them to be of different natures, and different degrees of strength. Arguments of a similar nature, that is, drawn from similar considerations, as from reason or scripture, observation or experience, &c. should be ranged together; because in that position they confirm, and throw light upon one another. And though arguments which have no weight ought by no means to be used at all, and one that hath but little weight had better be spared, where there are a sufficient number of substantial and striking arguments, yet in some cases it may  
be

be requisite to take notice of every circumstance that may tend to throw light and evidence upon a doubtful speculation.

In such an enumeration of arguments, it is not adviseable to place a slight probability in the same rank with arguments which are much stronger and more conclusive. Rather, since there are so many ways in which, with a little address, it may be introduced to more advantage, in an *indirect manner*, let it be hinted at in some other place. Very often an argument, disguised in the form of an epithet, a metaphor, a comparison or illustration, &c. is more pleasing, looks more like a redundancy of argument, and in every respect hath a better effect, than if it were placed in an equal rank with arguments of more weight. Indeed, in such a situation, it might be construed to look like a diffidence of our cause, and a solicitude to make the most of every argument favourable to it.

If the arguments be nearly equal in weight, no order drawn from their *comparative strength* is to be preferred to that *natural order* which is suggested by the subjects from which they are derived.

After the demonstration of the proposition, the geometrician, if there be occasion, makes miscellaneous remarks, serving to throw light upon the subject, under the name of *scholia*. And such like observations, particularly such as illustrate the nature and force of the evidence, or point out similar processes in other subjects, throw an agreeable variety into a composition, and tend, in an indirect manner, to strengthen the preceding arguments.

Lastly, in the form of *Corollaries*, the geometrician deduces from his proposition, now fully proved, other truths which flow from it, if the dependence be so strict that it would have appeared trifling to make them formal propositions.

In like manner, when there is no danger of too greatly multiplying the objects of attention, it may have a good effect to show the extensive and happy influence of the principle we have been maintaining, by tracing its beneficial consequences, and showing the connexion it hath with other acknowledged truths; particularly when those consequences, and those connexions with other truths, are of such a nature, that they could not conveniently be introduced into the body of the discourse, by way of arguments in favour of the proposition we maintain.

Having explained pretty much at large how all the proper parts of an argumentative discourse, calculated to inform the understanding, should be disposed, in order to produce their proper effect, I shall subjoin the following brief summary of the process.

The meaning of the terms of the proposition should be accurately fixed, principles made use of in the demonstration distinctly noted, and, if there be occasion, proved; the question stated in the most intelligible manner, with a circumstantial relation of every fact that may contribute to set it in the clearest point of light, and the subject divided into the distinct parts of which it consists. The order of nature must chiefly be consulted in arranging the arguments brought to support each of them, and slight probabilities should be introduced in an indirect manner. Observations relating to the nature of the proof that is made use of, with the connexion and mutual influence of the several arguments, and other miscellaneous remarks that may naturally occur, come next; and the whole discourse closes with a view of the extent of the doctrine, in all the valuable inferences and uses that may be drawn from it.

The

The principal *faults* in the several parts of this kind of disposition, may be seen in the following brief enumeration of them.

As it is highly requisite to define strictly every term in the proposition, when the meaning of it is in danger of being mistaken; so it is affected and trifling to define those that, it is morally certain, will not be misunderstood.

We cannot be too cautious what principles we take for granted in order to argue from. These *axioms* are the foundation of our whole superstructure. We ought, therefore, very rarely, and not without the most urgent necessity, to have recourse to *argumenta ad hominem*; being sensible that though such arguments may lead some particular persons into a right way of thinking, the connexion between *truth* and *falsehood* cannot be natural, and promises but ill to be lasting; and that whenever such persons begin to be aware that the principles from which you argued with them were false, they of course give up the sentiments which were deduced from them.

Distribution is the most faulty when the parts are not of the same nature and order, and not sufficiently distinct; and by no means should any one of them comprehend any of the rest. Rather subdivide the principal heads of a discourse into subordinate ones.

It is a capital fault in the disposition of an argumentative discourse, to divide the subject in such a manner, as that the writer shall have occasion for the same amplification in different parts of it. This is the consequence of making the heads of discourse too much similar to one another. It is more advisable to make fewer heads, and those more distinct.

In

In a discourse, in which a great variety of arguments are used, it hath a good effect both to give a general view of them before they be separately enlarged upon, and to give a distinct recapitulation of them after the amplification; as it makes the evidence more intelligible, and unites the force of all the arguments.

Introductions to discourses admit of great variety, according to the nature of the subject, the circumstances of the speaker, and of the persons he addresses. Since the end that is proposed by every thing that is said, previous to our entering upon any subject, is to procure us a more favourable hearing, and thereby prepare the way for the arguments that we intend to advance, we may, with advantage, introduce a subject by a variety of general remarks concerning it, particularly such as tend to show the *use* and *importance* of it; or by shewing the propriety of treating it at that particular time, in that particular place, in that particular manner, &c. It may also be very expedient to introduce an obnoxious subject, by removing preconceived prejudices, and answering popular objections.

Introductions may likewise be suggested by a variety of temporary circumstances, impossible to be described beforehand, but which naturally occur to a speaker, or writer, in the circumstances proper for them. See Cicero's introductions to his philosophical and rhetorical discourses, and also those to his orations. In the latter there is generally the greatest propriety; but the former have no peculiar relation to the pieces to which they are prefixed. Indeed, he acknowledges that they were composed before he knew what use he should make of them. The introductions to the two histories of Sallust are justly to be found fault with on the same account.

LECTURE

## LECTURE IX.

*Of the ANALYTIC METHOD. Of Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, and Hutcheson's Moral Philosophy.*

**T**HE regular and unmixed synthesis is best adapted (as was observed above) to subjects, the theories of which are ascertained, or systems for the use of learners; who, in general, have occasion to be taught in the most expeditious manner. In fact, we find very few treatises drawn up in this method, except *elementary* ones, for the use of students, and particularly in pure mathematics and philosophy.

The generality of writers deliver their sentiments to the public upon subjects of speculation in a looser and very different method. Far from always laying down propositions, and then entering upon the proof of them, they as frequently begin with observations or experiments, and show how they lead to the principles they intend to establish: or, in a treatise of a considerable extent, they use sometimes the one, and sometimes the other method, naming the proposition before the proof, or the proof before the proposition, as they imagine the one or the other will introduce their sentiments with the most advantage, and make their performance the most agreeable to their readers.

As

As the *analytic* method of communicating any truth is, properly speaking, nothing more than a copy of the method of its *investigation*, the more minute delineation of this process is best referred to logic, which treats professedly of the nature of those investigations. Little, therefore, needs to be added here to what was said in the comparison of the two methods, and the cases in which they are each of them best applied. A few observations in this place shall suffice.

Notwithstanding the analytic method of communicating truth be properly a copy of the method of investigation, it is manifestly superfluous to relate every step of any *actual process*. As it could not but happen that, in the course of every inquiry, a variety of observations must have occurred which were foreign to the purpose, and many hypotheses have suggested themselves which subsequent observations obliged us to reject. These abortive notions, contributing nothing to the illustration of the subject, it is most adviseable, in general, to omit; unless, in consequence of considerable stress having been previously laid upon them, it be requisite to show that such stress was unreasonable; that particular facts and observations, which had been urged in treating upon that subject, had no relation to it, and that particular hypotheses, advanced and contended for by others, were ill founded. Much more, therefore, may often, with advantage, be introduced into an analytic inquiry, which is made after other unsuccessful inquiries, and particularly when popular prejudices have been adopted upon any subject, than would be necessary or proper, in a discussion intirely new, and with respect to which there were, consequently, few prejudices to obviate, and few objections to answer.

In

In this latter case, that set of observations is the best chosen which leads most directly to that only hypothesis which we have in view, and intend to establish; and the most pleasing, as well as the most satisfactory method of conducting such an inquiry is, that which is as near an imitation as possible of the method of *approximation*, in several of the mathematical sciences. Let the final discovery be opened by degrees, by advancing, in the first place, such observations as make our hypothesis only probable, or which conclude equally in favour of it and some others. Let the probability grow stronger by degrees, by subsequent observations excluding, in their turns, more and more of the remaining hypotheses; and let the *experimenta crucis*, which absolutely exclude all others whatever, be reserved for the last.

When writers do not dispose their arguments in this manner, "they lose," as Dr. Hartley well observes, "much of their clearness and force. *Sir Isaac Newton's Optics, Chronology*, and *Comment on Daniel*," he says, "abound with instances to this purpose; and it is probable that his great abilities and practice in algebraic investigations led him to it insensibly."

Since *example* contributes as much to instruction as precept, I shall, for the farther illustration of these rules, subjoin an account of the method in which some of our most celebrated and approved writers have conducted their argumentative discourses upon some important subjects.

I shall only premise one general observation, which is, that treatises written professedly upon the *whole* of any branch of science, and which are not taken up with the discussion of any single question, are necessarily of a very mixed nature, with respect to their method. For, according to the received divisions of science, they must, generally, consist of parts that are of a nature

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very



very different from one another, and which, therefore, require to be discussed in a very different manner. Sometimes a regular demonstration is used; in other places the analysis is preferred, and the practical parts of the science are explained in the method of didactic narration, intermixed with the reasons (borrowed from the scientific parts of the subject) on which the precepts are founded.

MR. LOCKE, proposing, in his excellent *Treatise on the Human Understanding*, to inquire into the origin, certainty, and extent of human knowledge, together with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and assent; considers, in the first place, all the properties and distinctions of *ideas*, as the elements of all our knowledge, and traces the sources from which, and the channels by which, they are conveyed to our minds. He then considers in what manner, and with what degrees of accuracy, *words* are made to represent all these varieties of ideas, with what relates to the proper use and abuse of words; and, lastly, from these preliminaries, as so many certain facts and *data*, he draws the conclusions he had in view, concerning the nature and bounds of that knowledge, which results from the perception of the properties and relations of these ideas, and the imperfection attending the communication of this knowledge by words. All, therefore, that he advances upon the subject of *ideas* and *words* must be considered as *definitions*, *axioms*, or *lemmas*, to be used in the demonstration of the proposition he lays down in the remaining part of the treatise.

In examining the properties of some classes of ideas, he is led into large disquisitions concerning some particular ideas; as those of *power*, *identity*, &c. but whether his opinions concerning these

these ideas be just or not, it by no means affects the truth or usefulness of the bulk of his observations and conclusions.

His manner of amplification is very diffuse, and his method in the former part, didactic and narrative; relating a series of observations on the properties of ideas, with a tacit appeal to every man's consciousness of the truth of what he advances.

In MR. HUTCHESON'S *Treatise of Moral Philosophy*, we are first presented with a narrative delineation of the several powers and principles of human nature, the justness of which human experience and human actions are supposed to avouch. Having delineated the internal frame of man, he describes the various uses to which these powers may be applied, and the various pleasures and enjoyments we receive by their means. The nature of each of these species of pleasure he examines separately, in order to determine which of them contributes most to human happiness, and thereby constitutes the chief good of man.

The result of this analytical inquiry is, that the chief good of man consists in the gratification of those affections which have the happiness of our fellow-creatures for their object, or are connected with it; which affections are termed virtuous.

Virtue, thus explained, he branches out into its several kinds, and particularly shews the extent of it, as respecting God, mankind, and ourselves. Lastly, he demonstrates, more particularly, the various obligations of virtue, in the principal cases that may occur in a state of nature, and likewise those which occur in a state of civil society; the *right*, and the *lawful*, in every case being determined by the tendency any action hath to promote the good of mankind in general, or of any particular society whose interest is consistent with it.

## LECTURE X.

*Of the METHOD of Mr. Hume's Inquiry into the Principles of Morals, Hartley's Observations on Man, Harris's Hermes, that of Sermons, and of Miscellaneous Writings.*

THE plan of the most valuable part of Mr. HUME's *inquiry concerning the principles of morals*, is nearly the same with that part of Mr. Hutcheson's *Moral Philosophy*, which corresponds to it, and may most properly be termed *analytical*. For, in order to determine *the foundation of virtue*, he considers particularly every thing that is acknowledged to gain the esteem of mankind; examining upon what common property it is that their encomiums turn, and in what measure their approbation is bestowed; and having found that nothing is the object of esteem but what is *useful to society*, and, moreover, that the several virtues are classed in the first or second rank of importance, according as they are more or less essential to the well-being of society, he concludes, that *public utility* is the foundation of all virtue.

This ingenious writer greatly excels in his method of conducting argumentative discourses, and, particularly, we see clearly in his writings the advantage of proposing singular opinions in the method of analysis. The greater part of his discourses are so

exact

exact a copy of the easiest and most perfect method of investigation, that we imagine we see, in every step of the process, the very manner in which he himself was led to conceive the sentiments he recommends. To obviate objections, he carefully conceals the result of some of his inquiries, till his reader be prepared for it, by such a happy gradation of previous observations and inferences, that he cannot tell how to avoid it; and if, at that time, he should wish to refuse his assent, and hesitate about it, as he has, before he was aware, assented to all the premises, he is at a loss where to found his objection. This writer ought, therefore, to be read with very great caution.

DR. HARTLEY, proposing a new hypothesis of the principles of the human mind, examines very particularly every thing relating to, or dependent upon the mind of man, viz. sensations, ideas, muscular motion, the external senses, affections, memory, imagination, reasoning, dreams, &c. and endeavours to show that none of the phenomena of any of them contradict his hypothesis; that many of them admit a peculiarly easy and complete illustration by it; and that the most difficult cases are not rendered more difficult, but rather easier by the help of it. And lest this hypothesis concerning the principles of the human mind should be suspected to bear an unfavourable aspect upon a plan of human duty, and human expectations, he considers the whole of both systematically; showing, whenever he hath opportunity, that the evidences of religion, natural and revealed, with the rule of life drawn from it, receive additional light and evidence from it; and, lastly, that it hath a happy influence both upon our conduct in this life, and upon our expectations after death.

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This is the general plan of that immense work. The particular method of it is strictly geometrical, and synthetical. The author begins with definitions and axioms, lays down formal propositions, and advances such proof as the nature of the case will admit. He deduces formal corollaries from almost every proposition, and in the *scholia* he explains the nature of his proofs, and shows in what manner evidence is reflected from one part to another. Interpersed through the whole of this work is a vast variety of curious and useful knowledge.

This method may not, at first sight, seem so well adapted to a theory so much *original* as that of Dr. Hartley; and it must certainly have been a work of great labour and difficulty to digest a set of sentiments, so intirely new, into so regular and systematical a form; because in a synthetic discourse every thing that is advanced must have one particular place, and no other: whereas in the analytic method there is much greater latitude. For that method is a copy of the method of investigation, and the same thought may occur to the mind in a variety of connexions. Nevertheless, so *extensive* a theory could not easily have been delivered without confusion in any other method. Besides, it was enough to recommend this method to Dr. Hartley, that, of all others, it is the *fairest*, and shows the greatest impartiality; as a treatise in this form is the most commodious for examination, and suggests the easiest method of showing the fallacy of it, if it be false. A person would be much more at a loss how to answer Mr. Hume, than Dr. Hartley.

Mr. HARRIS, proposing in his *Hermes* to trace the first principles of speech, and to show, by an analytical process, in what manner they may be investigated, first examines intire *senten-*

*ces,*

*ces*, and considers what differences, in the forms of expressions, correspond to the differences in their meaning. Having thus discovered the properties of different sentences; he considers the particular *words* that compose sentences, and thus having, by degrees, arrived at the simplest elements of speech, and discovered how many differences there are in words, or the number of general heads to which they may be reduced, he hath completely accomplished his scheme of analysis.

It may not be unuseful to observe, in order to illustrate the variety of method, that another person, intending to draw up a synthetic or systematic treatise upon the same subject, for the use of learners, would most naturally take a method the very reverse of Mr. Harris's. For example, he would, in the first place, enumerate the several classes into which *words* may be distributed, and show the modifications that each of them admit. After this he would show in what manner these words, according to their different species, form *sentences*, and how these sentences are combined into *periods*. This is the method of the General Grammar of *Messieurs de Port Royal*, and others.

Divines conduct their inquiries into the sense of the sacred writers upon any controverted subject in a method nearly analytical. For, in order to give their readers intire satisfaction with regard to their impartiality, they produce all the texts of scripture relating to the question in debate, ranging them under such proper heads as the nature of the undertaking requires, and ascertaining the meaning of every passage they quote with all possible accuracy; and they deduce the doctrine they contend for as an inference fairly drawn from the texts thus collected and compared.

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It makes no material difference in the method of these inquiries, if the opinion of the writer be advanced in the entrance of the work, and the texts be afterwards produced as proofs of what he advances. All such propositions require to be proved by an *induction of particulars*; and it is a capital thing, in the conduct of these inquiries, that the induction be as complete as possible.

Our best SERMONS, with respect to the method of their composition, are of two kinds. Some are intended to be a demonstration of some doctrine of religion, or a discourse upon some religious duty, with proper inferences, in the regular synthetic method. Others are usually called *textual*, because the writers, assuming some text of scripture, endeavour to extract from it all the useful information and direction it contains. They accordingly, in this latter method, divide their subject into as many parts as their text contains distinct articles, and treat of each separately, according to its nature. The method of this kind of sermons admits of endless variety, but the text cannot be changed.

To the former the text serves only as a *motto*, and may be changed at pleasure; the method being suggested by the *subject*, and not at all by the *text*. It follows, likewise, from the account given in the preceding lectures of the best method of conducting a demonstration, that there must be a great uniformity in the plan of these discourses, and that each will exhaust the whole subject.

To remedy this inconvenience, it is usual, and it introduces an agreeable variety into this kind of sermons, to take only some part of such a scheme of synthesis into one discourse. Some inire discourses, for instance, are usefully taken up in *definition* only, or in determining the sense of terms of considerable consequence; such as *faith*, *grace*, &c. and, where wrong senses

have been affixed to such terms, it hath a good effect, in giving the sense of them, to do it, as it is usually termed, both *negatively* and *positively*; that is, to explain, in the first place, what the sense is *not*, and then what it *is*. But let every interpretation that is distinctly refuted and rejected be such as either actually *is*, *hath been*, or very probably *may be* adopted. Otherwise the negative definition is superfluous and ridiculous. Indeed, in many circumstances, to take notice of several that do fall within the above-mentioned limitations would be trifling and useless.

Besides, in order to avoid unnecessarily opposing popular prejudices, it is generally advisable to define important words justly, without taking the least notice of other senses that have long been affixed to them. The very mention of them, though with a view to refute them, will very often only tend to strengthen the mechanical association by which the words and the wrong sense have been connected. These strong associations are like *habits*, which require to be treated with great caution, and must not be combated by bringing the ideas belonging to them frequently before the mind. Opposite ideas must be introduced, and they be suffered to disappear, as it were, gradually, and of themselves.

Other discourses present us with the proof only of any doctrine or duty with one distinct set of arguments, or even illustrate one particular proof. Others are employed in answering objections, or only some particular objections. In others again, after a brief explication, we are shewn the *effects* of a doctrine, duty, or habit of mind in speculative or practical *inferences*.

In short, as either a single part, or any combination of the parts of a complete synthesis may be usefully employed to form a discourse, the variety that may be introduced in those discourses, which are not confined to any particular *text*, but which

relate to the *subject*, is prodigious. And, in general, it will be found to be much more agreeable to an auditory to hear a subject treated in a variety of discourses, from different texts, and at different times; each of which, by this method of distribution, may appear to be *complete of itself*, than to have their minister make use of the same text, and the same heads of discourse, till the whole subject is exhausted.

The above processes, of *synthesis* and *analysis*, are calculated either to demonstrate truth unknown to others, or to set one that is known in the strongest point of light; and when a person proposes to treat a subject fully, with either of these views, he cannot do better than to take one or other of those methods, according as the nature of the case will direct. But supposing the subject a person writes upon be familiar, and his sentiments be so generally received, that he need be under no concern about the *proof* of them; he may, for the sake of an agreeable variety, adopt almost whatever method he pleases. In such a case there is no part of a discourse, and no sentiment belonging to it, but what may, by the address of the composer, be introduced in almost any place whatever, and the rest of the discourse be so adjusted, as to occasion no sensible confusion or disorder. To see this executed in the happiest manner, consult the *Spectator*, and other celebrated familiar essays.

To illustrate this in one instance. Mr. ADDISON's beautiful essay on *omens*, *Spectator*, No. 7, is introduced by a very diverting account of some incidents that happened in a visit which he made. These occasion a reflection on the folly of adding to the real evils of life by such superstitious fears and supernumerary duties. To confirm this he recites a variety of other instances similar to those that occurred to him upon his visit. These intro-

duce other observations on the folly of that kind of superstition; and the essay closes with the proper method of fortifying the mind against those terrors, and an account of his own temper and practice with respect to them.

The method of this kind of essays is admired in proportion as the turn and succession of thought in them appears easy and natural. Consequently, the only thing to be attended to, with regard to it, is the *transition* from sentiment to sentiment. Let the train be such as that it may be conceived probable that the thoughts would naturally suggest one another in the order in which they are put down; and whatever the piece consists of, whether observations, reflections, arguments, &c. (provided they be in themselves just and striking) the essay will appear natural, easy, and agreeable.

The Ode, and most other poems, which may be analysed into a mixture of narration and reflection, must be allowed the same latitude. Some bounds, however, must be set to the licentiousness of the human imagination, particularly that of poets, which otherwise would ramble from one subject to another by very slight transitions, such as may be forgotten the moment they have been made use of, and consequently wholly omitted in the composition: so that, though a real train of connected ideas transmitted the thoughts of the poet from one subject to another, there remain no traces of that medium of transition, and the reader can perceive no connexion at all between the parts of it.

Something of *unity* ought, undoubtedly, to be preserved through the whole of every intire piece, whether in prose or verse; and to this general design of the whole, every part, wherever situated, ought to bear some relation. As in a piece of music, not-

withstanding the seeming wild excursion of the notes, they are all chords to that which is called the key-note.

A want of sufficient connection is manifest in many of the odes of Horace; the episode of Eurydice in the last book of the Georgics, seems to have been introduced rather on account of its own beauty than its relation to the subject of the book; and it has exercised the utmost ingenuity of critics to show the propriety of several parts of Pindar's poems. In general, the moderns pay more attention to regularity than the ancients.

I would observe, at the conclusion of this part of the course; that the whole use of topics and of the disposition of them, hitherto explained, hath for its object and end the *informing of the judgment*, and *influencing the practice*, and that this is the only direct and proper, at least the ultimate end of oratory. The pleasure that a discourse may give to the *imagination*, or the emotion it may raise in the *passions*, are things that are brought about more indirectly, being effected by the *manner* in which things that tend ultimately to *convince* and *persuade* are expressed. The orator may, indeed, intend to please or affect his hearers; but, if he understands himself, he only means to influence their *judgments*, or *resolutions*, by the medium of the imagination or the passions.

In these two preceding parts of this course, therefore, those things have been considered which are more peculiarly the proper objects of an orator, and *essential* to his views. In what remains will be explained what is, though very greatly, yet indirectly of service to him, and an *advantage* rather than a necessary part of his art. This thought, by the way, suggests an important advice, with which I shall conclude this part.

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Let the first, and principal view of every orator, whether in writing or speaking, be to *inform the judgment*, and thereby *direct the practice*; and let him only attempt to *please*, or *affect*, when it is subservient to that design; when the occasion itself, in a manner, prompts to it, and the bent of his own genius leads him to comply with such an invitation.

PART

P A R T III.  
OF  
S T Y L E.

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## LECTURE XI.

*Of TASTE, and the Nature of FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.*

THE third part into which the art of oratory is distributed, comprehends whatever is *ornamental* in a discourse or composition. The bare materials, and even the disposition of them in a discourse, are adapted to do little more than make an impression upon those persons who, of themselves, and from a regard to the nature and importance of the subject, will give their attention to it; whereas the subject of this last part is calculated to attract and engage the attention, by the grace and harmony of the style, the turn of thought, or the striking or pleasing manner

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in which sentiments are introduced and expressed. We have hitherto examined what we may call the bones, muscles, and nerves of a composition; we now come to the covering of this body, to describe the external lineaments, the colour, the complexion, and graceful attitude of it.

In treating of this part of my subject, I shall endeavour to lay open the sources of all the pleasures we receive from this most refined art, explaining what are the properties, or principles, in our frame which lay the mind open to its influences, as well as describe the various forms of expression which are found, by experience, to affect our minds in so agreeable a manner, and give examples of such forms of expression.

Whatever contributes to adorn a discourse, must either give life and beauty to the *sentiment*, or harmony to the *diction*. I shall consider each of these in their order. By ornament of *thoughts*, I mean that manner of introducing and presenting them to the mind which will give them the most favourable appearance. This, therefore, comprehends all the pleasures which may be said to be perceived by the *mind*; whereas, when I treat of the ornament of *diction*, I shall consider the language as affecting the *ear* only.

Whatever it be, in the sentiment or ideas, that makes a discourse to be read with pleasure, must either be *interesting*, by exciting those gross and more sensible feelings we call *passions*, or must awaken those more delicate sensations, which are generally called the *pleasures of the imagination*. Each of these kinds of feelings are, by some philosophers, referred to so many distinct *reflex*, or *internal senses*, as they call those faculties of the mind by which we perceive them; whereas, according to Dr. Hartley's theory, those sensations consist of nothing more than a congeries

or combination of ideas and sensations, separately indistinguishable, but which were formerly associated either with the idea itself that excites them, or with some other idea, or circumstance, attending the introduction of them. It is this latter hypothesis that I adopt, and, by the help of it, I hope to be able to throw some new light on this curious subject.

An enumeration of the *stronger passions* of the human mind, which are roused by the powers of oratory, and the art of composition, I regard as foreign to my undertaking to attempt: but it may, with reason, be expected that I should describe those *finer feelings* which constitute the *pleasures of the imagination*, and which are seldom attended to in any delineations of human nature; as also some *critical situations of mind* respecting the passions and emotions in general, the knowledge of which is essential to criticism upon works of genius and imagination; and explain those *forms of address* which are *adapted to gain assent*. But, previous to this, I shall give some account of *Taste*, and of the difference between *plain* and *figurative language*.

An exquisite feeling of the finer sensations abovementioned, may be said to constitute a *fine taste*: but no person can be a complete *judge* of the merit of a composition unless he perfectly understand the subject of it, so as both clearly to distinguish the character of the *design*; as whether it be great or mean, new or common, &c. and also to judge how far the execution is adapted to the undertaking.

The well-known story of the shoemaker viewing the Venus of Apelles, may assist us to distinguish our ideas in this case. This artisan discovered no strong sense of pleasure upon the sight of so extraordinary an effect of human genius, and therefore could



not be said to have *taste*, but he certainly was a very good judge of the proportions of the foot and of the shoe.

Judgment is universally acknowledged to be altogether acquired, and that *taste*, too, or the capacity of perceiving the pleasures of imagination, may also be acquired, to a very great degree, is evident from the actual acquirement of a variety of similar tastes, even late in life. Instances of this may be given in a taste for flowers, for gardening, and for architecture, which are hardly ever acquired very early in life.

It is hardly possible that any person who never attempted to sketch out an object himself, should have a high relish for the beauties of painting; but let any person be instructed in drawing, let him be much employed in viewing and examining a great variety of pictures, let him be led to converse much with painters, and other connoisseurs in that art; and I think one might pronounce, without any great apprehension of being mistaken, that he would, infallibly, not only acquire *judgment* in the productions of that art, and be able to distinguish a fine design and execution, but that he would have a *relish* for it, that what he approved he would *admire*, and that the view of it would affect him with a sensible pleasure. The same may be said with respect to music, poetry, and all the other fine arts.

Besides, it will appear very clearly, in our progress through this subject, that all the *principles of taste* in works of genius, the very sources from which all these fine pleasures are derived, are within the reach of all persons whatsoever; and that scarce any person can pass his life in cultivated society, where the fine arts flourish, without acquiring, in a greater or a less degree, a taste for some or other of them.

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In fact, since all emotions excited by works of genius consist of such ideas and sensations as are capable of being associated with the perception of such works, nothing can be requisite to the acquisition of taste, but exposing the mind to a situation in which those associated ideas will be frequently presented to it. A great deal, however, depends upon the time of life, and other circumstances, in which such impressions are made upon the mind. Youth, especially, which is favourable to all impressions, is peculiarly favourable to these. But this circumstance makes a difference in *degree* only, and not in the nature of the thing. Some persons may also have acquired a dislike to these, as well as other studies; but as this dislike was produced by an early association of ideas, so it may be overcome by opposite associations. It must not be forgotten, also, that as our bodies in general differ with respect to their *sensibility to impressions*, so the texture of the brain, on which the mental faculties depend, must be subject to a similar difference.

I proposed in this place to shew in what figurative and ornamented style consists. In plain unadorned style every thing is called by its proper name, no more words are used than are apparently sufficient to express the sense, and the form and order of every part of the sentence are such as exactly express the real state of mind of him that uses it; not a question, for instance, being asked when the person who makes it is able to supply the answer. It is not enough to say, that plain unadorned style is that mode of expression which is the most *natural*: for style the most highly ornamented, and enlivened with the strongest figures, is as natural as the plain style, and occurs as naturally, without the precepts of art, and even without design, in proper circumstances.

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Style may be said to be figurative when the literal interpretation, according to the usual sense of words, and the construction of them, would lead a person to mistake the sense; as, for instance, when any thing is signified by a term which was not originally affixed to it; when the terms which are used to express any thing would, if interpreted literally, lead a person to imagine it was greater or less than it is; and when the form of the sentence is such as, when explained by the rules of grammar only, doth not truly express the state of mind of him that uses it.

Notwithstanding this, style that is merely figurative and ornamented, is far from being calculated to deceive. For whenever it is used, no other language, or mode of speech, could give so true an idea of the state of the speaker's mind, though it is confessed to be by no means *literally* expressive of that state. For instance, when *Virgil* calls the two *Scipios, the Thunderbolts of War*, he makes use of an ornamented and highly-figurative expression, not corresponding to his real sentiments; for he would never have replied in the affirmative, if he had been asked seriously whether he really imagined they were two thunderbolts; and yet no plainer terms, though more expressive of their true character, would have given his readers so clear an idea of the *force* and *impetuosity* which he meant to ascribe to those heroes.

Again, when the same excellent and correct poet says that mount *Ætna* threw its fires as high as the stars, nobody taxes him with a designed falsehood; though his expressions be not literally true, and we are sure he could not but have been sensible of it himself at the time that he made use of them: but nothing short of an hyperbole could have given us a true image of the effort of his imagination, to express his idea of the very great height of those flames.

Lastly,

Lastly, when *Æneas*, in the same poet, in the midst of the relation of his adventures, comes to mention *Sicily*, instead of saying, in so many words, that *his father died there*, addresses himself directly to his father, and exclaims, *Hic me, pater optime, fessum deseris*; do any of his readers imagine he really conceived his father to be within hearing? But no simple narration could sufficiently have expressed that strong regret, and tender affection, which the revival of his father's memory awakened in his mind. We naturally *personify* every thing that causes us much pleasure or pain, and a vivid recollection makes every thing seem present. Thus this direct address to the dead *Anchises*, though, strictly speaking, without the least foundation, gives us the truest idea of the unfeigned grief of *Æneas*, and of the affecting sense he had of his loss, and therefore lets us into the true state of his mind; not, indeed, by a direct interpretation of his words, but in a more certain, though an indirect manner, by means of those *circumstances* which always accompany that state of mind.

Figurative speech, therefore, is indicative of a person's real feelings and state of mind, not by means of the words it consists of, considered as *signs of separate ideas*, and interpreted according to their common acceptation; but as *circumstances* naturally attending those feelings which compose any state of mind. Those figurative expressions, therefore, are scarce considered and attended to as *words*, but are viewed in the same light as *attitudes, gestures, and looks*, which are infinitely more expressive of *sentiments and feelings* than words can possibly be.

Since, however, the literal impropriety of figurative expressions is excused only on account of their being considered as indications of those feelings and sentiments which no words, literally interpreted, could describe, they should never be used but

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when the situation of the person who uses them is such as will render those feelings and sentiments natural. Otherwise, there being nothing left to excuse and cover the impropriety of the figure, the words present nothing but the *naked absurdity*, and the writer is detected, either in pretending to feelings that could have no existence, or in asserting what is apparently false and contradictory. This observation may be applied to every figure of speech; and as it is an observation of considerable consequence, it will be frequently repeated, and applied to the particular figures, when they come to be separately explained and illustrated.

## LECTURE

## LECTURE XII.

*The Division of this Part of the Work into what affects the  
PASSIONS, JUDGMENT, and IMAGINATION.*

*Of the Effect of VIVID REPRESENTATION, the Use of the PRE-  
SENT TENSE in describing past Scenes, and of PARTICULAR  
NAMES and CIRCUMSTANCES.*

HAVING considered the nature of taste, and of figurative language in general, I proceed to consider distinctly the several objects that offer themselves to our attention respecting the *ornament* that sentiment admits of. These, as they were before pointed out, are either some of the more remarkable and general affections of the stronger *passions*; those forms of address which are adapted to engage *assent*, or those finer feelings which constitute the *pleasures of the imagination*. Each of these three objects will engage our attention in the order in which they are here mentioned.

The first observation I shall make on *the general affections of the passions*, is, that they are engaged, and we feel ourselves interested, in proportion to the *vividness of our ideas* of those objects and circumstances which contribute to excite them. The genuine  
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and proper use of the passions undoubtedly is to rouse men to just and vigorous action upon every emergency, without the slow intervention of reason. It is, therefore, wisely provided, that they should be raised by the immediate view and apprehension of the circumstances proper for their exertion. Being, therefore, blind and mechanical principles, they can only be connected with the view of suitable circumstances; so that, whenever these are presented, whether the passion would, in fact, be useful or not, it cannot fail to be excited, and to rise to its usual height.

This observation supplies us with a reason why our minds are as sensibly affected with scenes of *past*, or even of *ideal distress*, as with a mere relation of what is *present* and *real*. All the advantage that the latter circumstances united have, is, that they engage us to think more intensely of the case, which will consequently make the ideas more vivid, and the scene more interesting. But that scenes of *ideal distress* have as much power over the imagination as scenes of distress that are *past*, cannot but be allowed, when we consider, that even reason can plead nothing more in favour of the one than of the other; since the passion is equally *unavailing* in both cases. Why may I not, with reason, be as much interested in the adventures of Æneas or Telemachus, as in those of Themistocles, Xenophon, or any of the heroes of Greece or Rome? If the one never had any existence, neither have the other any at present, which, with respect to the *final causes* of our passions, is the same thing.

The faithful historian, and the writer of romances, having the same access to the springs of the human passions, it is no wonder that the latter generally moves them more forcibly, since he hath the choice of every circumstance that contributes to raise them; whereas the former hath nothing in his power but the *disposition*  
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of them, and is restricted even in that. I fancy, however, that no person of reading and observation can doubt of the fact, that more tears have been shed, and more intense joy hath been expressed in the perusal of novels, romances, and feigned tragedies, than in reading all the true histories in the world. Who ever, upon any occurrence in real history, ever felt what he must feel in reading Clarissa, George Barnwell, Eloisa, and many other well-contrived fictions. It is to no purpose to say to ourselves, "This is all a fiction, why am I thus affected?" if we read, and form an *idea* of the scenes there exhibited, we must *feel* in spite of ourselves. The thought of its being a fiction enables us to make but a feeble and ineffectual effort to repress our feelings, when the ideas which excite them are very strong and vivid. Some persons, however, may have acquired such an aversion to all works of fiction, that they cannot be prevailed upon to give that unprejudiced attention to them which this experiment requires.

The use of the *present tense* in the narration of past events, contributes greatly to heighten the ideal presence of any scene. This form of narration is introduced with the most advantage when a preceding lively and animated description hath already, as it were, transported the reader into the scene of action. In that situation of mind, he is so far from being sensible of the real impropriety of that style, that it appears to him the most natural; and indeed no other would correspond to his feelings: and too precipitate a return to the proper style of narration would have a very bad effect, as it would put an end to the pleasing *illusion*, which makes the scene so interesting, and which can continue no longer than while the reader conceives himself present with the  
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objects

objects that are presented to his imagination. In the following poetical description of a battle, we have an example of a very *natural*, and therefore (for the reason given above) *unperceived* transition from the preter to the present time.

And now with shouts the shocking armies closed,  
To lances lances, shields to shields opposed;  
Host against host the shadowy legions drew,  
The founding darts an iron tempest flew;  
Victors and vanquish'd *join* promiscuous cries,  
Triumphing shouts and dying groans *arise*.  
With streaming blood the slipp'ry field *is dy'd*,  
And slaughter'd heroes *swell* the dreadful tide.

In the following descriptions we cannot but feel the ill effect of too precipitate a return to the proper style of narration, and of the still worse effect of passing from time past to the present, and from the present to the past, as it were alternately in the same scene.

Here all the terrors of grim war *appear*,  
Here *rages* force, here *tremble* flight and fear;  
Here *form'd* contention, and here fury *frown'd*,  
And the dire orb portentous gorgon *crown'd*.

ILIAD V. 914.

Then died Scamandrius, expert in the chase,  
In woods and wilds to wound the savage race:  
Diana taught him all her sylvan arts,  
To bend the bow, and aim unerring darts:  
But vainly here Diana's arts he *tries*,  
The fatal lance *arrests* him as he flies;

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From Menelaus' arm the weapon sent  
Thro' his broad back and heaving bosom *went*:  
Down sinks the warrior with a thund'ring sound,  
His brazen armour *rings* against the ground.

ILIAD V. 65.

Since no form of expression can appear natural, unless it correspond to the feelings of the person who uses it, let no writer adopt the present tense in describing a past transaction, unless the scene be so interesting, that the reader can hardly help realizing it, and fancying that he actually sees and hears every thing that is represented; otherwise the affectation becomes sensible, and cannot fail to give disgust.

It is a very extravagant stretch of this figure when a public speaker represents a scene that is past or future as present in the very place of audience; for it requires an illusion capable not only of affecting the imagination, but of imposing upon the bodily senses too, to cover the absurdity of such language. Let this observation be applied to some preachers when they describe the day of judgment.

These observations relating to the vivid representation of objects, show us the importance of a discreet use of fiction, and works of imagination, for the cultivation of the human heart. The heart is instructed chiefly by its own feelings. It is of consequence, therefore, how they are directed, and it cannot be a matter of indifference what tales and novels are put into the hands of children and youth. When once persons are of an age to form ideas of such descriptions, and feel the sensations resulting from them, reading a romance is nearly the same thing as their seeing so much of the world, and of mankind. Whatever, there-

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fore, we should think improper for them to *see*, it is improper for them to *read* or *bear*; for they have like sensations, and retain similar impressions from both.

In the second place, I would observe, with regard to the conduct of the passions, that to represent things to the life, in order thoroughly to affect and interest a reader in the perusal of a composition, it is of singular advantage to be very *circumstantial*, and to introduce as many *sensible images* as possible.

The powers of art have no other means of exciting our passions than by presenting such scenes as are found to excite them in real life. Now in nature, and real life, we see nothing but *particulars*, and to these ideas alone are the strongest sensations and emotions annexed. General and abstract names are only substitutes for the particular, and are therefore farther removed from their connexion with real objects; inasmuch, that when general and abstract terms are used, the imagination must be employed to reduce them to particulars, before any real scene can be imagined, or any passion raised. Now since general terms do not, without an effort of the imagination, suggest those determinate ideas which alone have the power of exciting the passions, and the very exertion of such an effort must, in some measure, prevent that temporary illusion, which is requisite to the ideal presence of objects, it is proper that the writer, who would thoroughly affect and interest his reader, should, as much as possible, make that effort unnecessary, by avoiding general and abstract terms, and introducing the proper names of persons and things, which have a more immediate connection with scenes of real life.

Every body must have experienced, in relating any thing that really happened, how difficult it is to avoid mentioning those circumstances

circumstances of *time*, *place*, and *person*, which were originally associated with the particulars of the story; and it is evident (notwithstanding it be generally esteemed a mark of greater judgment to *generalize* stories, and omit those particulars) that stories told with all those circumstances, provided they be not so many as to distract the mind of the hearer, and too much retard the relation of the principal incidents, are generally heard with more attention. In fact, it cannot be but that these circumstances excite more determinate and precise ideas; and the more precise and vivid are our ideas, with the greater strength do they excite all the emotions and passions that depend upon them. The mention of these particulars makes a relation to resemble real and active life.

So important is this observation, and so far is it from having been thoroughly attended to, that it may almost furnish a criterion to distinguish true history from fable and romance. Even the best of our modern romances, which are a much more perfect copy of human life than any of the fictions of the ancients, if they be compared with true history, will be found to fall greatly short of it in their detail of such particulars as, because they have a kind of *arbitrary*, and, as it were, *variable* connexion with real facts, do not easily suggest themselves to those persons who attend only to the connexion and subordination of the incidents they have invented, and who, therefore, never introduce more persons or things than are necessary to fill them up: whereas a *redundancy of particulars*, which are not necessarily connected, will crowd into a relation of real facts.

It may not be improper to add, in this place, that the mention of so many particular persons, places, and times, in the books

of scripture affords, to the curious observers of nature and probability, no small evidence of their genuineness and truth.

The advice I would found upon these observations is, that a writer who would copy nature, and command the passions which are peculiar to the several scenes of it, should, in all narration or description, wherever the circumstances of a discourse will admit of it, prefer a more particular to a more general term; as *father, mother, brother, sister*, &c. instead of *relation*; *justice, temperance, veracity*, &c. and *cruelty, covetousness, deceit*, &c. as the case requires, instead of the more indefinite terms *virtue*, and *vice*; and universally, the proper names of persons, places, and things, rather than more comprehensive terms which are applicable to other ideas besides those that are intended to be conveyed.

Shakespeare interests his readers more than most other dramatic poets, because he copies nature and real life in this respect more closely than most others. It will, perhaps, not appear improbable that Shakespeare's frequent use of particular terms, and his attention to the choice of them, contributed not a little to his peculiar excellence in distinguishing the passions and characters of human nature; whereas dealing much in general terms, leads writers to confound all characters, and not to make those distinctions which nature doth. If it should be rather thought that Shakespeare's happiness in distinguishing characters led him to be so particular and circumstantial in his descriptions, it may be allowed, without contradicting the converse of this hypothesis; and it equally confirms the supposition of the connection that is here suggested to subsist between the distinguishing particular characters, and the use of particular terms. Homer abounds more in the minute details of circumstances than Virgil, and his characters are better distinguished. Virgil uses more general terms

upon all occasions, and the sameness of his characters is remarkable.

To exemplify this observation, I shall subjoin a description from Shakespeare, of the manner in which a prodigy was talked of among the common people, as being particularly excellent in its kind.

Old men, and beldams in the streets  
Do prophecy upon it dangerously.  
Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths;  
And when they talk of him, they shake their heads,  
And whisper one another in the ear,  
And he that speaks doth grasp the hearer's wrist,  
Whilst he that hears makes fearful action,  
With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.  
I saw a smith stand with his hammer thus,  
The while his iron did on th' anvil cool,  
With open mouth swallowing a taylor's news,  
Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,  
Standing on slippers, which his nimble haste  
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,  
Told of a many thousand warlike French  
That were embattled, and rank'd in Kent.  
Another lean, unwash'd artificer  
Cuts off his tale, and talks of Arthur's death.

KING JOHN, Act IV. Scene 4.

The sacred writings abound with the most lively and animating descriptions, which derive their excellence from the notice that is taken of particular circumstances. See, among other passages, Isaiah xxxix. 4. to 15. and Jer. xiv. 15. to the end.

One reason why philosophers seldom succeed in poetry, may be, that *abstract ideas* are too familiar to their minds. Philosophers are perpetually employed in reducing particular to general propositions, a turn of thinking very unfavourable to poetry. One reason, likewise, why poetry is generally sooner brought to perfection than any other branch of polite literature, may be, that, in early ages, the state of language is most favourable to poetry; as it then contains fewer abstract terms. On this account, a poet in an early age has the advantage of a later poet, who has equal strength of imagination. It may be said that, to counterbalance this, the greater progress which the art of criticism will have made in a more refined age, will be an advantage to a later poet. But perhaps refinement in criticism may rather be unfavourable to the genuine spirit of poetry, as an attention to rules tends to deaden and dissipate the fire of imagination.

LECTURE

## LECTURE XIII.

*Of the Tendency of strong Emotions to produce BELIEF, and the transferring of Passions from one Object to another.*

THE tendency of strong emotions and passions to generate belief may help to throw light upon several things which occur upon the subject of criticism, and works of taste and genius. And that we should be prone to conclude, that very vivid ideas, and strong emotions of mind, are derived from external objects, and circumstances really existing, can be no matter of surprize, when we reflect that objects really existing do generally excite such ideas and emotions. *Vivid ideas* and *strong emotions*, therefore, having been, through life, associated with *reality*, it is easy to imagine that, upon the perception of the proper feelings, the associated idea of reality will likewise recur, and adhere to it as usual; unless the emotion be combined with such other ideas and circumstances as have had as strong an association with *fiction*. In this case the absurdity and impossibility of the scene precludes assent; and at the same time, by taking away the associated circumstance, it greatly weakens the original impression. But while the impressions remain vivid, and no certain marks of fiction appear, the idea of reality will occur; that is, the mind will find itself strongly inclined to believe the scene to be real.

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This may help us to account for the satisfaction that is received, and particularly by youth, and all persons of little knowledge and experience, in reading the history of such beings and powers as far exceed every thing human, and which never could have had any existence; as of *fairies* in European countries, *genies* in the East; the *beatben gods and goddesses* in the ancient classical ages, and *knights-errant* and *necromancers* in modern story.

It may, likewise, suggest a reason why these stories are read with less pleasure by persons more advanced in years. In youth the vivid and magnified ideas presented by such stories, and the emotions consequent upon them, have a stronger association with *truth* than any improbable circumstances attending them have yet acquired with *falsehood*. In reading them, therefore, there is nothing to prevent the object from being conceived to be *ideally present*, and their unexperienced passions are excited mechanically, as by the presence of the like real objects. Whereas the association which such strange powers and properties have acquired with the ideas of *impossibility*, *falsehood*, and *absurdity*, in the minds of persons of considerable age and reflection, often makes it impossible for them, even in imagination, to conceive such things really to exist.

If, however, the fiction be consistent with itself, and be natural upon any uniform principles, or suppositions, so that it shall require only one single effort of the imagination to conceive the existence of the imaginary beings and powers, and the ideas of inconsistency and contradiction do not frequently occur through the course of the narration, to destroy the illusion; a reader of a lively turn of mind, though of good discernment, may enter into the scene, and receive great pleasure from the performance. But still, in consequence of a thousand reiterated associations, all present-

presentations of things not founded on *nature* and *truth* will grow less and less interesting as men advance in life. Even those fictions which most nearly resemble truth, have but little power of amusing persons of great age and reflection. And that stories in which are introduced such imaginary beings as the heathen gods, fairies, genies, necromancers, and the like, retain their power of amusing persons of reading and taste so long as they do, may be ascribed to the impressions made by them upon such persons in their very early years; by means of which the scenes in which they are exhibited are rendered much more vivid, and consequently have stronger associations with *reality* than they would have had, if those persons had not been made acquainted with them, till they had been capable of perceiving their absurdity.

Our proneness to verify strong sensations may be seen, in the pleasure we receive from arguments intended to prove that there is some foundation in true history for those stories which affected us strongly when we were young; for instance, the fabulous history and mythology of the Greeks; the possibility of Æneas and Dido having been cotemporaries; the favourable hearing which arguments in proof of the reality of apparitions and witches have met with from many persons of sense and experience; and from the pleasure which all persons of taste have lately received from the attempt to shew the real correspondence there is with nature and truth in the manners, customs, ceremonies, and extravagancies of chivalry. May I not, likewise, appeal to all persons of reading and imagination, if it would not give them a most sensible pleasure to receive certain information, that all the adventures of such persons as *Robinson Crusoe*, and others whose fictitious stories they have read with delight,

were literally true? And whatever we should receive pleasure from believing, we should certainly be *inclined* to believe.

This connexion of vivid ideas and emotions with reality, will easily furnish the mind with pretences for justifying the extravagance of such passions as love, gratitude, anger, revenge, and envy. If these passions be raised, though ever so unreasonably, they are often able, by this means, to adjust the object to their gratification. Besides, since, in consequence of almost constant joint impressions, all ideas are associated with other ideas similar to themselves, these passions, while the mind is under their influence, and as it were wholly occupied by them, will excite, in abundance, all such ideas as conspire with themselves, and preclude all attention to objects and circumstances connected with, and which would tend to introduce, an opposite state of mind.

In the eye of the captivated lover, the object of his affections appears with more charms than first excited his passion: and how apt are we to take offence at those persons who endeavour to give us an ill opinion of those who have shown us kindness or respect? On the other hand, how little merit can any body allow the man that hath affronted him? and how mean and contemptible a figure do those persons sometimes make in our imagination, whose superiority at first excited our envy?

An attention to these affections of our minds will show us the admirable propriety of innumerable fine touches of passion in our inimitable Shakespeare. How naturally doth he represent Cassius, full of envy at the greatness of Cæsar, whose equal he had been, dwelling upon every little circumstance which shows the natural weakness of him whom fortune had made his master. Speaking of their swimming together across the Tiber, he says,

But

But ere we could arrive the point proposed,  
Cæsar cry'd, Help me, Cassius, or I sink.  
I, as Æneas our great ancestor,  
Did from the flames of Troy, upon his shoulder,  
The old Anchises bear; so from the waves of Tiber  
Did I the tired Cæsar.

Again, in the same speech,

He had a fever when he was in Spain,  
And when the fit was on him, I did mark  
How he did shake. 'Tis true this god did shake.  
————— I did hear him groan,  
Ay, and that tongue of his ———  
Alas! it cried, Give me some drink, *Titinius*;  
As a sick girl. ——— JULIUS CÆSAR, Act. I. Scene 3.

In the same author, King Lear, exposed to a violent tempest, with his mind full of the ingratitude of his daughters, to justify his vexation and impatience, conceives them to have taken part with his daughters.

————— Here I stand your brave,  
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man.  
But yet I call you servile ministers,  
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd;  
Your high-enger'd battles, 'gainst a head  
So old, and white as this. Oh! Oh! 'tis foul.

Act. III. Scene 2.

This is perfectly natural, provided we can suppose his mind to have been so violently agitated as to personify, and feel real indignation.

nation against things inanimate, which (as will be explained shortly) is perhaps oftener the real case than is commonly imagined.

With equal regard to nature doth he represent Hamlet as shortening the time that intervened between the death of his father and the marriage of his mother with his uncle, because that circumstance heightened and gratified his indignation. At first he says,

————— That it should come to this!  
But two months dead; nay, not so much, not two.

Presently after, in the same soliloquy,

————— Yet within a month.

Afterwards he calls it a little month;—and, at last,

Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing of her galled eyes,  
She married—Oh most wicked speed, to post  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets.

Act I. Scene 1.

Nearly allied to this last observation is the following, that all strong passions and emotions are liable to be transferred to indifferent objects, either related to the proper object, or those whose ideas are accidentally present to the mind, at the time that it is under the influence of such emotion or passion. This is nothing more than the simplest case of the association of ideas, but the effects of it are well worthy of our attention. Brute creatures, and even inanimate things, are not exempted from being, in this indirect manner, the objects of such human passions, as it were the greatest absurdity to suppose them the *just* objects of.

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Do not all poets and writers of romance represent enamoured lovers in raptures with every thing belonging to the object of their affections, and taking uncommon pleasure in the groves, and every place where they have had their delightful interviews. Pious David envied even the swallows which had built their nests and laid their young in the House of God. Aware of this, do not all persons dread to communicate disagreeable information, and are they not eager to be the messengers of good news? In the former case, the messenger becomes the object of aversion; in the latter case, he is regarded with good-will and friendship.

The loss or absence of a friend may give so much uneasiness, that our impatience for the want of him, shall produce a kind of indignation, which may, for a moment, fall even upon the object of our affection himself. This delicate circumstance, as Lord Kaimes observes, hath not escaped the notice of Shakespeare, who hath given an exact idea of it, in the last words of the following passage:

————— He is drown'd  
Whom thus we stray to find, and the sea mocks  
Our frustrate search on land. Well, let him go.

TEMPEST, Act III. Scene 3.

It is possible, however, that the poet might have had nothing more in view than simply to express *acquiescence in the event*. For the words, *Well, let him go*, will not express any thing of *indignation*, without a particular tone, and manner, in the pronunciation of them.

With as true a hand hath he copied these finer touches of nature in representing King *Richard* as expressing his indignation against

against a horse which had formerly been his, but which his enemy had got possession of, and then rode.

That jade had eat bread from my royal hand;  
This hand hath made him proud with clapping him.  
Would he not stumble? Would he not fall down?  
(Since pride must have a fall) and break the neck  
Of that proud man that did usurp his back.

RICHARD II. Act V. Scene 11.

In the same master of the human feelings we see the mind of *Othello*, when thrown into a violent perturbation by the first suspicion of jealousy against his wife, described as expressing its first resentment in terms of the utmost impatience against the informer.

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore!  
Be sure of it, &c.

OTHELLO, Act III. Scene 8.

That these seeming irregular sallies of passion are, however, *natural*, may easily be conceived from considering, that in our infancy we never look farther than the nearest cause of our disquiet on which to fix our resentment; that few persons, upon sudden provocation, can forbear expressing their resentment in the same indiscriminate manner; and that there are many well-attested instances of the greatest imaginable extravagancies of this kind in persons of strong passions and little reflection. Are we not credibly informed by Herodotus, that Xerxes, in great wrath and earnestness, insulted the Hellespont, both by words and actions, when he found the bridge he had laid over it broken to pieces. Nay, did not the Athenians institute a process at law against

against all instruments of murder, by which clubs, axes, swords, and the like, were strictly tried, and, if found guilty, expelled the territories of Attica? Nothing like any of these instances could ever have occurred, nor could any passion ever have been expressed, or gratified, in so absurd a manner, if the mind had not been under a *temporary illusion*, during which it actually conceived those things, which were no moral agents, to be the proper objects of passion.

Let it be observed, that the personification of brute creatures and inanimate things is taken notice of in this place, as it accounts for their becoming the objects of the *passions* properly so called. This subject will be considered in a future lecture in quite another light, as contributing to excite those *finer feelings*, which have been before spoken of, as constituting the pleasures of the imagination.

## LECTURE XIV.

*Of the Influence of the Passions on each other, and other Circumstances relating to strong Emotions of Mind.*

ANOTHER observation relating to the passions, and of considerable use in criticism, is that they are excited with more or less ease according to the *state of mind previous to them*; and that when several of them are in joint possession of the mind, they are liable to be greatly affected by their *mutual influences* upon one another.

Those passions, the emotions belonging to which are similar, easily introduce, and, as it were, pass into one another. As Mr. Hume well expresses it, "All resembling impressions are connected: together; and no sooner one arises, than the rest naturally follow. Grief and disappointment give rise to anger, anger to envy, envy to malice, and malice to grief again. In like manner our temper, when elevated with joy, naturally throws itself into love, generosity, courage, pride, and other resembling affections." *Hume's dissertation on the passions.*

On the other hand, when emotions of a very opposite nature, which consist of contrary feelings, are, from independent causes, excited in the mind at the same time, the opposition, or contrast, serves to heighten both. Their difference being hereby rendered

rendered very sensible, each of them is more strongly felt than either of them would have been, if they had been impressed singly.

The former of these observations admits of the easiest illustration from the *kindred passions*, as they may be called, of love and pity. These, having the same languid tone, the same situation of mind is favourable to the introduction of both; and the mind, after having been under the influence of one, is more easily susceptible of impressions from the other.

This is finely illustrated in the speech of Othello in Shakespeare, the following lines of which close the account he gives of his courtship of Desdemona.

——— On this hint I spoke:  
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,  
And I loved her that she did pity them.

OTHELLO, Act I. Scene 3.

It must, however, be acknowledged that, in this case, a relation of perilous adventures, in which a person hath acquitted himself bravely, begets a great *esteem* for the adventurer, which is a considerable ingredient in the passion of love.

To be sensible of the effect of the *contrariety* of emotions, let any one but think how impatient of *mirth* must a person be who is oppressed with *sorrow*! how much every appearance of joy heightens his distress! Hence the sentiments which Milton ascribes to Satan in Paradise:

With what delight could I have walk'd the round!

——— But I in none of these  
Find place or refuge, and the more I see

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Pleasures

Pleasures about me, so much the more I feel  
Torments within me.

PARADISE LOST, Book IX.

When two states of mind are wholly opposite to one another, it is pleasant to observe the *fluctuation of mind* occasioned by the alternate prevalence of each of them. If a *resolution* must succeed it, as is the case of Meleager's mother debating with herself whether to destroy her son, or revenge her brother; the preponderating of the mind to one side in some measure gratifies that passion, which necessarily abates its violence, and gives a momentary advantage to the contrary inclination. This circumstance may prolong the state of suspense, in which, in this situation, the mind is necessarily kept a considerable time.

If no resolution be depending, as in the mere impression made upon the mind by good and bad news, the stronger emotion will at length overpower the less; and the mind, after having been subject to the influence of both, will settle in a state which is the result of their joint impressions. We see a strong conflict of opposite sensations in Osmyn in chains on hearing some unexpected good news. *Mourning Bride, Act III. Scene 2.*

These observations relating to the opposition of emotions and passions is of great importance, even in the conduct of life. In no other respect doth men's happiness so much depend upon the regulation of their passions. Since it is obvious that the sense we have of our happiness may be increased by comparison with the misery of others; and our meanness and wretchedness may, for the same reason, be made sensible and intolerable, by reflection upon the happiness we do not partake. The passion of envy hath no other source for its venom; and hence the delightful

ful sentiments of gratitude, and the calm emotions of contentment derive all their pleasures.

In order to raise a very lively and tender sentiment, it is of advantage to describe the circumstances which raise it, in as *few words* as possible. The less time is lost in transition, the nearer is any sentiment brought in contrast with the preceding state of mind, and consequently the more sensibly it is perceived. Besides, when few words are sufficient to present a moving scene to the mind, it approaches nearly to giving a view of the *scene itself*, without description. The writer disappears, and the scene itself is before us: and to apply a general maxim to this particular case, if the principal and leading circumstances in any scene be expressed, the more negligent a writer seems to be to unfold all the particulars connected with them, the more will the reader *imagine*; and instead of his perceiving the effect of every circumstance of the scene separately, they will all crowd upon his mind in one *complex sensation*, and affect him with all their powers united.

The following is a moving image in Virgil's description of the return of Eurydice to the infernal regions.

Invalidas tibi tendens, *heu non tua*, palmas.

GEORG. Lib. IV.

The reader conceives a more lively sensation of a variety of undistinguished emotions from that short parenthesis, *heu non tua*, than if the poet had expatiated upon all the circumstances of the difference of Eurydice's present relation to Orpheus, and that in which they had stood to one another, and which, but the moment before, they had both fondly imagined was going to revive.

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The same author gives his readers a more exquisite sensation, by means of a single epithet, in the following passage, in which he describes the attempt that Dædalus made to describe the misfortune of his son, than he could have conveyed in more words, though ever so proper.

Bis conatus erat casus effingere in auro,  
Bis *patria* cecidère manus. ÆNEID, Lib. VII.

When, under any affection of mind, strong sensations have been associated with *particular words*, it is natural for a person under the influence of the corresponding passion to repeat such words. In these cases, single words present to the mind in tire scenes with all their moving circumstances.

Inimitably expressive of tenderness is the repetition of the name of *Eurydice*, in the affecting history of Orpheus, both in Virgil and Ovid, thus happily imitated by Mr. Pope.

Yet e'en in death Eurydice he sung,  
Eurydice still trembled on his tongue:  
Eurydice the woods,  
Eurydice the floods,  
Eurydice the rocks and hollow mountains rung.

ODE ON CÆCILIA'S DAY.

In all strong passions, some one idea being present to the mind more eminently than others, persons under the influence of them naturally express that idea the first, even though it obliges them to throw the sentence in which it is introduced into disorder. Thus Nisus, in Virgil, exposing himself to death for Eurialus,

Me me adsum, qui feci; in me convertite ferrum.  
Oh Rutuli, mea fraus omnis. ÆNEID, Lib. IX.

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Perolla,

Perolla, in Livy, full of horror and astonishment at the intention of his son to murder Hannibal, begins his speech to him in the utmost disorder, with the most solemn form of adjuration; "Per, ego, te, fili," &c.

It is a direct consequence of the association of ideas, that, when a person hath suffered greatly on any account, he connects the idea of the same cause with any great distress. This shews with what propriety Shakespeare makes King Lear, whose sufferings were owing to his daughters, speak to Edgar, disguised like a lunatic, in the following manner:

What, have his *daughters* brought him to this pass?  
Could'st thou save nothing? Did'st thou give them all?

KING LEAR.

And Macduff,

————— He hath no children.

MACBETH.

Writers not really feeling the passions they describe, and not being masters of the natural expression of them, are apt, without their being aware of it, to make persons under the influence of a strong emotion or passion, speak in a manner that is very unfuitable to it. Sometimes, for instance, they seem rather to be describing the *passion of another*, than expressing their own. Sometimes the language of persons, in interesting circumstances, shews such an excursion of mind from the principal object, as demonstrates that their minds were not sufficiently engrossed with it. And sometimes, aiming to strike and astonish, they make their heroes use such language as is expressive of no passion whatever, but is quite extravagant and absurd.

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The French dramatic writers are most commonly guilty of the first impropriety. Seldom conceiving the force of a real passion, they declaim upon the subject in such a style as an *observer* might possibly use, but which would never occur to a person really interested. In Corneille there are few instances of a just expression of passion. The generality of readers, being little interested in such representations, are not apt to attend to the impropriety; but every person, upon reflection, would be sensible that no person, really agitated with passion, would express himself as Voltaire hath made Titus do.

O de ma passion fureur desespérée. Act III. Scene 6.

Even our Shakespeare himself, though no writer whatever hath succeeded so well in the language of the passions, is sometimes deserving of censure in this respect; as when Constance, in King John, says to the messenger that brought her a piece of disagreeable news,

Fellow, be gone, I cannot brook thy sight:  
This news hath made thee a most ugly man.

The sentiment and expression in the former line is perfectly natural, but that in the latter resembles too much the comment of a cool observer. Of the same kind, but much more extravagant, is the following passage, which is part of the speech of Constance, giving her reasons why she indulged her grief for the loss of her son.

Grief fills the room up of my absent child,  
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,  
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,

Remembers

Remembers me of all his gracious parts,  
Stuffs out his vacant garment with his form:  
Then I have reason to be fond of grief.

KING JOHN, Act IV. Scene 1.

Shakespeare's talent for wit and humour, and the genius of the times in which he wrote, have, upon many occasions, betrayed him into the second impropriety, which is, to make persons under strong emotions speak, as if their minds were not sufficiently engrossed with the principal object of their concern. Would even a child, apprehensive of having his eyes instantly burned out, speak as he hath represented young Arthur to have spoken, in order to persuade his executioner to desist from his purpose?

In good sooth the fire is dead with grief.  
Being create for comfort, to be used  
In undeserved extremes. See else yourself,  
There is no malice in this burning coal.  
The breath of heav'n hath blown its spirit out,  
And strew'd repentant ashes on its head.

KING JOHN, Act IV. Scene 1.

More improbable still is it that King John, in the agonies of death, and with his stomach and bowels inflamed with intense heat, would pun and quibble in the manner that Shakespeare represents him to have done; and that, when he was not able to procure any thing to cool his inward heat, he should say,

I beg *cold comfort*, and you are so strait,  
And so ungrateful, you deny me that.

Act V. Scene 9.

If we censure those writers who represent persons as speaking in a manner unsuitable to their situation, with much more rea-

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son may we censure those who represent persons as thinking and speaking in a manner unsuitable to *any character*, or any circumstances whatever? Among these unnatural sentiments we may rank the avowing, or open undisguised proposal, of wicked purposes: because human nature is so constituted, that direct vice and wickedness is universally shocking. For this reason men seldom entertain the thought of it in their own minds, much less propose it to others, but either under the appearance of virtue, or of some great advantage, and with some *salvo* for the immorality of it.

With admirable propriety doth King John hint to Hubert how much he would oblige him if he would remove prince Arthur out of his way. But the following soliloquy of the Bastard Falconbridge, in the same play, is certainly unnatural.

Well, while I am a beggar I will fail,  
And say there is no sin but to be rich:  
And being rich, my virtue then shall be  
To say there is no vice but beggary.  
Since kings break faith upon commodity,  
Gain be my lord, for I will worship thee.

KING JOHN, Act II. Scene 6.

In a much more unnatural and extravagant manner is Lady Macbeth represented talking to herself when she is projecting the death of the king. *Macbeth*, Act I. Scene 7.

Instances of the most absurd rant, and such extravagance as is incompatible with every character, and with every passion, abound in Dryden's plays, particularly in the part of Almanzor in the Conquest of Granada.

It is impossible not to smile when Moliere makes Harpagus (when he is about to examine upon the rack all his family, ser-

vants,

vants, sons, and daughters) say he would apply the torture himself, "et a moi aussi."

Very extravagant likewise is the following speech, which Shakespear puts into the mouth of Ligarius:

——— Now bid me run,  
And I will strive with things impossible,  
And get the better of them.

JULIUS CÆSAR, Act II. Scene 3.

## LECTURE XV.

*Of Forms of Address adapted to gain BELIEF; and, first, of those that imply PRESENT THOUGHT, and an UNPREMEDITATED EXPRESSION.*

HAVING observed what I think most important relating to the *passions*, I proceed to consider what relates to the *judgment*, in assenting to what is proposed to it.

Independent of the power of *arguments*, there are several *forms of address adapted to engage belief*, which abound in the works of orators. These it is in the power of every speaker to adopt at pleasure, as they are, each of them, nothing more than a different manner in which arguments may be introduced and expressed. Since, however, they do contribute greatly to the success of an orator, I shall enumerate the principal and most striking of them, and endeavour to shew the cause of the influence which they have upon our minds.

Every art of persuasion founded upon nature, and really tending to engage belief, must consist of such forms of address as are natural to a person who is himself strongly convinced of the truth and importance of what he contends for; who is conscious that he is perfectly master of his subject, and acquainted with every thing that can be advanced for or against the question in  
debate;

debate; who is possessed even of a redundancy of proof for what he advances; and who is, moreover, perfectly candid and unprejudiced, willing to allow all the weight he can to the pleas of his adversaries.

From the principle of *sympathy*, which is natural to the human mind, we universally feel ourselves disposed to conform to the feelings, the sentiments, and every thing belonging to the situation of those we converse with, and particularly of all those persons who engage much of our attention. If, therefore, no prejudice intervene, we always feel ourselves more or less disposed to adopt the opinions of those persons with whom we have frequent intercourse. Consequently, we are, in all cases, more disposed to give our assent to any proposition, if we perceive that the person who contends for it is really in earnest, and believes it himself. Indeed, prior to our hearing any arguments, we are naturally inclined to suppose, that a strong conviction and persuasion in other persons could not be produced without a *sufficient cause*; from being sensible that a like strong persuasion is founded upon sufficient reasons in ourselves. The ideas of *strong persuasion* and of *truth being*, on this account, intimately associated together, the one will introduce the other, so that whatever manner of address tends to demonstrate that the advocate for any opinion is really convinced of it himself, tends to propagate that conviction.

A person shews that he is fully persuaded of the truth of what he contends for, and his confidence in the goodness of his cause, when he is willing to appeal to the judgment and conscience of other persons, and particularly when he dare appeal to his adversary himself. For no person would seriously make such an appeal, who did not believe his cause to be so clear that all the  
world,

world, if they considered it, would concur with him in it. This formal appeal, therefore, to a person's judges, his hearers, and his adversary, is a figure of the first rank in oratory, and greatly conducive to the purpose of persuasion.

It hath still a stronger effect of the same kind when an orator breaks out into an *exclamation*, expressing his wonder, astonishment, and indignation, that his opinion should be controverted, or his cause opposed; and a stronger still, when not only visible but invisible powers, when not only rational beings, but things inanimate are invoked, to attest the truth of what is advanced. All passions are communicative, and are universally propagated by the genuine expressions of them.

Many happy instances of these forms of address are found in the orations of Cicero, particularly in his invectives against Verres, Catiline, and Antony. The very first words of his first oration against Catiline, which was delivered in the senate, when Catiline himself was present, consist of a very vehement exclamation and expostulation. "How long, O Catiline, will you abuse our patience? &c." In a speech ascribed to Furius Capitolinus, in which he expostulates with the plebeians upon the encroachments they were perpetually making upon the privileges of the patricians, is the following noble and spirited appeal: "In the name of the immortal gods, what is it, Romans, you would have? You desired tribunes; for the sake of peace we granted them. You were eager to have decemvirs; we consented to their creation: you grew weary of these decemvirs, we obliged them to abdicate, &c."

In Cicero's oration for Milo, he exclaims, "O that happy country which shall receive this man! Ungrateful this if it banish him! miserable if it lose him!" Declaiming in praise

of Pompey, he invokes countries, seas, havens, and islands, as witnesses of his courage, humanity, and wisdom.

There is something peculiarly solemn and awful in the following apostrophes in the scriptures: "Hear, oh heavens, and give ear, oh earth, for the Lord hath spoken, Isaiah l. 2. Be astonished, oh ye heavens; at this, Jer. ii. 12."

Whatever, likewise, hath the appearance of *present thought*, and *extempore* unprepared address, contributes not a little to make a person seem to be in earnest. He then seems to speak from his *real feelings*, without having recourse to artificial helps. In this view it hath often a good effect to check one's self, and retract what we were saying, or even to reject a second, and recur to a first supposition; to stop suddenly, and make an imperfect sense, as if something just then conceived had checked the course of the sentence, which was intended to have been delivered without interruption. Objections which the orator thinks proper to reply to, he may make to appear as if they occurred to his mind only the moment he mentions them; in which case the answer, not appearing to be premeditated, will be heard with the utmost advantage. It hath, likewise, the appearance of pursuing a sudden start of thought, and hath sometimes a very good effect, when opportunity is taken, as if undesignedly, to make *parentheses* in sentences, and to *digress* from the principal subject or argument, and return to it again.

I think it needless to give examples of all these varieties of address which derive their power from the resemblance they bear to *unpremeditated discourse*, in which the sentiments are supposed to be natural and sincere, proceeding directly from the heart; and shall only mention one from Tillotson, in which, with a very

good effect, he retracts a single word. "What is it then can give men the heart and courage (but I recall that word, because it is not true courage, but fool-hardiness) to out-brave the judgments of God."

Such forms as these are most natural in great agitation of mind, when the succession of ideas is uncommonly rapid, and when, consequently, it may be expected that some thoughts should interfere with others, and occasion frequent breaks in sentences, and interruptions in a chain of reasoning. St. Paul's epistles abound with these abruptnesses; and as they have not the least appearance of *design* in them, they show that he wrote from his heart; and dictated his real thoughts and sentiments at the time of their composition. They likewise throw considerable light upon the *natural temper* of that great apostle. We see that he was a warm man, of a quick apprehension, of great ardour and vehemence in whatever he engaged in, and that he was inclined to be haughty.

The perfection of speaking is, certainly, to speak extempore. All men must, in a greater or less degree, have tried their talent this way, and have found the difficulty of succeeding in it. Hence people listen with a continued *wonder* while a person is delivering himself fluently without notes, and their admiration concurs with the forementioned causes to attach them to the speaker, to his sentiments and views. Can we imagine it possible that the primitive christians, the first reformers, and, I may add, the founders of our modern sects, such as the Independants, Quakers, and Methodists, could ever have attained to so great a degree of popularity, without the talent of haranguing extempore? Can we then wonder at the success of a judicious and happy imitation of those extempore forms of address?

As a caution against making too free with these very bold forms of address, which are adapted to show that a man is in earnest, and confident of the goodness of his cause, I would advise that no one appeal to another, unless it be morally certain that the person he appeals to, and boldly expostulates with, will really take his part, or, at least, that it will be generally allowed that he *ought* to do it. Otherwise he exposes his own vain confidence, and betrays the cause he espouses.

Let no person venture to exclaim and apostrophize, unless the *importance*, as well as the goodness of his cause will justify it. These strong natural emotions are not to be counterfeited. To these *arcana of nature* it is hardly possible that *artifice* should have access: and if the circumstances and occasions of the address will not justify such vehemence of style, a man makes himself ridiculous by attempting the imposition. Besides, direct exclamations and apostrophes to persons not present, or to things inanimate, though ever so just, ought to be used very sparingly; since, if they produce their natural and full effect, they raise the attention to such a degree as cannot be kept up long.

It is, likewise, proper that all Englishmen in particular should be informed, that a person of a liberal education in this country can hardly ever be in such a situation, as will not render the imitation of some of the boldest, the most successful, and admired strokes of Roman, not to say Grecian eloquence, extremely improper and ridiculous. The English pulpit, the English bar, and the English senate, require an eloquence more addressed to the reason, and less directly to the passions, than the harangues of a Roman pleader, or the speech of a Roman senator. Our hearers have generally more good sense and just discernment,

cernment, at least they are naturally more *cool* and phlegmatic; both which qualities check a propensity to strong emotions: and marks of great vehemence must appear absurd in a speaker, when the audience is unmoved, and sees nothing to occasion such emotion.

An audience, indeed, that is wholly *illiterate*, may have all their passions actuated by means of admiration, or astonishment, and *mechanical communication*; but then there are few English audiences composed wholly of persons of so little reading and reflection as makes that practicable. And it is hardly possible that a person whose reading has lain among modern English books, or has conversed with persons of a liberal education, should not have acquired more *delicacy of taste*, than to be taken with that gross and direct address to the passions, which Cicero adopted with applause. The refinement of modern times requires that we speak, upon all occasions, with more temper, and use more address in raising the passions.

If a person adopt any of the forms of address which derive their beauty, force, and efficacy, from their seeming to be extemporary, as well as those which express great earnestness and vehemence; all his gestures, the air of his countenance; and his whole manner, should correspond to them; because certain gestures and motions of the countenance universally accompany natural vehemence, and genuine extemporary expression. When these things, which have so strong a connection in nature, are not united, the whole must appear extremely unnatural, the *imperfect artifice* will be easily seen through, and the impostor be deservedly exposed.

If a person never attempt these forms of speech but when his temper really corresponds to and dictates them, he will seldom

fail:

fail in point of propriety; because the state of mind being strongly associated with those correspondent motions, they are excited mechanically and justly. No *attention* can supply the place of this. The external expressions of passion, with all their variations, corresponding to the different degrees of their emotions, are too complex for any person in the circumstances of a public speaker to be able to attend to them. Or, were it possible, the difference between a *genuine automatic* and a *voluntary* motion, is sufficiently apparent. All motions that are automatic have a quickness and vigour which are lost when they become voluntary; witness *sighing*, *laughing*, the gestures peculiar to *anger*, &c. and the same when imitated. The difference is too apparent to escape any person's observation.

If these observations be sufficiently attended to, they will deter any prudent and considerate person from attempting phrases and modes of address, expressive of *earnestness*, when they do not really feel those emotions, which will of themselves suggest the proper attitudes and gestures corresponding to them.

These cautions are given in this place, because they peculiarly relate to those forms of address which express earnestness, extreme confidence in the goodness of one's cause, and that quick conception and animated delivery natural to *extemporary* speaking, which have now been explained. They are, indeed, applicable, but not in the same degree, to the remaining forms of address which are adapted to gain belief.

## LECTURE XVI.

Of OBJECTIONS, SUPPRESSION of *what might be said*, and  
Marks of CANDOUR.

WE more easily give our assent to any proposition when the person who contends for it appears, by his manner of delivering himself, to have a perfect knowledge of the subject of it, so as to be apprized beforehand of every thing that can be objected to it, and especially if he seem to be master of more arguments than he chuses to produce. For we naturally presume that a person thus furnished hath *studied* the question in debate, that he cannot but have weighed the arguments that appear to be so familiar to him; and therefore that he hath determined justly concerning it. These forms of address, as well as those which are natural to a person who is greatly in earnest, have been observed, and the advantage attending them may be had by those persons who adopt, or imitate them, with judgment.

Thus an able orator will sometimes disarm his antagonists, and gain his hearers, by *anticipating* all they can alledge for themselves, and by obviating their cavils before they have had any opportunity to start them; by which means his argument proceeds without interruption.

The

The chief art of an orator in answering objections consists in introducing them at a proper time, just when it may be supposed they may have occurred to his hearers; before they could have had time to influence their minds, and lessen the weight of his arguments. By this means an orator seems to read the very thoughts of his audience; and a proof of such a perfect acquaintance with his subject, and even with the sentiments of his hearers, and of his adversaries, about it, cannot fail to operate powerfully in his favour.

In an oration ascribed to Junius Brutus, exhorting the Romans to throw off the yoke of the Tarquins, we have an example of an objection anticipated in a very happy, masterly, and spirited manner. After demonstrating to the people the power they were possessed of to redress their grievances, the urgent necessity, and peculiarly-favourable opportunity for exerting it; he makes a sudden pause, as if he had just perceived some signs of diffidence in the countenances of his audience, and had discerned the very thoughts which occasioned them; and says, "Some of you are, perhaps, intimidated by the *army* which Tarquin now commands. The soldiers, you imagine, will take the part of their general. Banish so groundless a fear. The love of liberty is natural to all men. Your fellow-citizens in the camp feel the weight of oppression with as quick a sense as you that are in Rome. They will as easily seize the occasion of throwing off the yoke. But let us grant there may be some among them who, through baseness of spirit, or a bad education, will be disposed to favour the tyrant. The number of these can be but small, and we have means sufficient in our hands to reduce them to reason. They have left us hostages more dear to them than life. Their wives, their children, their

“ their fathers, their mothers, are here in the city. Courage, Romans, the gods are for us,” &c.

An example of the same nature we have in St. Paul, discoursing about the resurrection. “ But some will say, How are the dead raised? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die,” &c. 1 Cor. xv. 35, 36.

If it be not convenient to speak at large to an objection just at the time when it may most probably be supposed to occur to the audience, when yet it might be attended with some inconvenience, and it would not be prudent, wholly to overlook it; it may, in some measure, take off the force of it, if, at that time, the orator only hint his being aware of it, and promise to discuss it more particularly afterwards. In this case the hearer is engaged to drop his attention to it, and to defer the consideration of it till the speaker himself take notice of it.

Sometimes there may be an appearance of impropriety in the very *circumstances* of the oration, which must be taken notice of before any argument can be entered upon. As when Demosthenes rose up to speak first in the assembly, when he was not of a sufficient age to assume that privilege, and when Cicero engaged in the accusation of Verres, when he had never appeared at the bar before, but in the defence of his clients. In both these cases those accomplished orators endeavoured to satisfy their audiences with respect to these unexpected circumstances, before they entered upon any article of the subject in debate.

It is a capital stroke of eloquence, when an orator is able to retort the objection of his adversary upon himself; and, allowing the truth of what is objected against him, to show that, in reality, it is so far from making against him, that it makes greatly for

him, and, in fact, helps to confute his opponent. Thus St. Paul frankly acknowledges the *heresy* with which his adversaries charged him; but at the same time intimates that his was such a heresy as was perfectly consistent with, and even required by the law which they were then endeavouring to prove he had violated, insulted, and apostatized from. “ But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law, and the prophets; and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” Acts xxiv. 14, 15.

Cicero, though not with the strictest regard to truth, endeavours to give a favourable turn of this kind to the objection which was made to his conduct in leaving Rome, during the prevalence of the Clodian faction. “ My departure,” he says, “ is objected to me; which charge I cannot answer without commending myself. For what must I say? That I fled from a consciousness of guilt? But what is charged upon me as a crime was so far from being a fault, that it is the most glorious action since the memory of man. That I feared to be called to account by the people? That was never talked of; and if it had been done, I should have come off with double honour. That I wanted the support of good and honest men? That is false. That I was afraid of death? That is a calumny. I must therefore say, what I would not unless compelled to it, that I withdrew to preserve the city.”

In such cases as these, the pleasing surprize of the audience, from seeing a thing in a light so different from what they expected, and in which it had been represented, and the conviction of the extreme weakness of the adversary, in laying hold.

hold of arguments which really made against him, operate greatly in the orator's favour.

Any thing in an oration which is introduced in this form of *objection* and *answer*, or any thing similar to it, falls properly under the consideration of *artificial address*; since nothing of that kind is absolutely necessary in argumentation. In strict synthetical demonstration there is no part of the whole process which bears that name, or any thing equivalent to it. Every demonstration is built upon self-evident truths. If a person thoroughly understand the process as he goes along, no objection will ever occur. If any do occur, it shows that he hath not sufficiently attended to something or other that went before, and he hath nothing to do but revise the steps he hath gone over, for his complete satisfaction.

Facts and circumstances, on which the orator doth not intend to lay the chief stress of his argument, are often employed to good advantage, when they are mentioned only in a slight and incidental manner. By this artifice an orator insinuates, that it was in his power to have said a great deal more upon a subject than he hath done; and while he seems, out of a redundancy of proof, to select only a few of the most important arguments, the imagination of the hearer is apt to give more than their just weight to those which he affects to pass over in silence. Besides, it often happens that there is one point of light in which a fact, or a circumstance, may for a moment be shewn to advantage; whereas, if the speaker dwelt longer upon it, a closer attention would exhibit views of it unfavourable to his purpose.

By this art, circumstances which would have made no figure in a detail, and have even given an idea of the poorness of a cause

in which they were minutely insisted on, may contribute very considerably to the success of an oration. They are hereby seen in their most favourable light, and exposed to view no longer than they will bear it.

Thus Demosthenes, in recounting the victories of Philip, says, "I say nothing of his expeditions against the Illyrians, and Pannonians, against Arymbas, and others, with which every body is acquainted." Thus also Cicero, in one of his invectives, "I do not mention my adversary's scandalous gluttony and drunkenness, I take no notice of his brutal lusts, I say not a syllable of his treachery, malice, and cruelty." And, in his defence of Sextius, "I might say many things of his liberality, kindness to his domestics, his command in the army, and moderation during his office in the province; but the honour of the state presents itself to my view, and, calling me to it, advises me to omit these lesser matters."

When an orator speaks of himself, this slight mention or pretended omission of many particulars hath another advantage, that it carries the appearance of *modesty*, and on that account contributes not a little to recommend the speaker to the favourable opinion of his audience.

This slight mention of circumstances hath an uncommonly fine effect when, out of a delicacy of sentiment, and a tenderness to those he is addressing, a person declines insisting upon what are, in reality, his strongest arguments. Was it possible for Philemon to insist upon Onesimus's paying what he owed him, after reading the following delicate and moving passage in Saint Paul's letter to him. "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that to mine account. I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it. Albeit I do not say to thee, how



“ thou owest unto me, even thine own self besides.” Phil. xviii. 19.

The same Saint Paul, speaking of himself and the churches of his planting, hath the following exquisite passage, in his epistle to the Corinthians, who had listened to some unfavourable accounts of him. “ In nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you, in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not ‘burdenfome’ to you? Forgive me this wrong.” 1 Cor. xii. 11, 12, 13.

It is easy to conceive how, upon many occasions, it may be of advantage not to say, or at least to seem not to say, all we might upon a subject, but leave part to be supplied by the hearer or reader. This employs his faculties, and sets his imagination strongly and effectually at work. When an orator expresses himself in such a manner as to make his hearers believe he could say more, and when his known situation makes it probable that he might have sufficient reason for pushing his argument no farther than he doth (as when a person speaks or writes in defence of new and obnoxious opinions) in this case, the imagination of the hearer will never suggest too little. That suppression, joined with our concern to see a person, of whom we have conceived a favourable opinion, in a situation which obliges him to conceal the truth, inflames the passions more than any thing that could have been said, though ever so convincing and satisfactory, upon the subject.

The circumstances in which Marc Antony delivered Cæsar’s funeral oration, were peculiarly favourable to his views of exciting

ing compassion and resentment. Broken hints and silence would have a greater effect in his situation, than speaking openly could have had in any other. For the same reason it would, no doubt, be for the advantage of christianity, if unbelievers had nothing to fear from proposing all their objections to it in the most open and public manner. In our present circumstances, infidelity is often successfully propagated by insinuations, obscure hints, and affected sneers; whereas, if all pretence for these artifices were cut off, by an unrestrained indulgence of free inquiry and debate, no other method could be found by which it could be so conveniently propagated. In common life, is it not well known that scandal is always most effectually propagated by hints and whispers?

Let it, however, be remembered, as a caution against the improper use of this method of promoting any cause, that silence is ridiculous when no reason can be imagined, either from fear, modesty, tenderness, or any other cause, why a person should not speak out.

Lastly, nothing more effectually conduces to gain belief, than the appearance of *candour* and *impartiality* in the orator, and his willingness to be convinced if he have fallen into an error. An opinion maintained with so much modesty, by a person so diffident of his own judgment, and who appears to have no motive to bias him in favour of falsehood, is sure to be attended to without prejudice. We cannot help sympathizing with such a speaker, and assuming his impartiality and candid disposition.

We show our candour when we appear to be in *doubt*, and discuss our own doubts; when we freely allow as much weight as possible to the objections of our adversaries; and particularly when we frankly retract what we acknowledge we had too hastily

advanced; also when, seeming to forget our own particular situation, as advocates for one side of a question, we consult with our hearers, our judge, or our adversaries, as if persons on all sides were equally impartial, and intent upon finding out the truth. This is paying a compliment to our audience, and to our adversaries, which is generally returned with advantage. A decision of a question, after such a candid and impartial discussion, hath the appearance of being the unanimous determination of all parties. It is no longer one party only that we are attending to, but we almost fancy such a candid opinion to be the result of the consultation of all persons concerned.

In this case, the determination should be indeed impartial, and what every person, who hears it, will think it right that all parties should adopt.

We have a fine picture of doubt in Cicero's defence of Cluentius. "I know not which way to turn myself," &c.; and a good example of an impartial and fair appeal to an adversary, in his accusation of Verres, "Now I desire your opinion," &c.; and again, in his defence of Rabirius, "What could you have done in such a case?" &c.

## LECTURE

## LECTURE XVII.

*Of the PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION in general, and of the Standard of GOOD TASTE.*

HAVING considered a variety of the most important circumstances relating to the stronger *passions* and emotions, the knowledge of which more eminently contributes to form a critic in works of taste and genius, and also those *forms of address* which are peculiarly adapted to gain *assent*; I come in the third place, according to the method I proposed, to enumerate those finer feelings which constitute the *pleasures of the imagination*, in order to ascertain the nature and kind of those refined pleasures: but, previous to this, I shall make a few general observations relating to the whole of this part of our subject.

The first circumstance I shall take notice of with regard to those exquisite feelings is, that the only inlets to them are, as Lord Kaimes observes, the *eye* and the *ear*, and that the other senses have nothing to do with them. Colours and sounds, it is remarkable, are transmitted to the mind, or sensorium, without any sensible intervention of the corporeal organs by which they are transmitted. The eye and the ear, when they are in a sound and healthy state, are so little affected by the impression of light, and the vibrations of the air, that were it not for internal evidence, we should not know that we had any such organs.

We

We find that when our eye-lids are closed, we cannot see at all, and that we are obliged to turn our eyes towards any object before we can perceive it, or we should not readily discover what it is on which vision depends. In like manner, it is easy to conceive that a rational being, coming into the world with the perfect use of the sense of hearing, would not be able, without some experiment of the same nature, to find out what part of his corporeal system was the medium of those sensations: whereas we cannot feel, taste, or even smell, without being at the same time sensible that some part of the surface of our bodies is affected in the first of these cases, and the tongue and nose in the two last.

For these reasons, feeling, tasting, and smelling are considered as sensations of a grosser kind, and seeing and hearing as something of a much more refined and spiritual nature. The former we cannot perceive without having at the same time an idea of the corporeal instruments by which they are conveyed to us; whereas we contemplate ideas of the latter kind, as if we were wholly abstracted from the body. Hence, among other reasons, there is a kind of shame annexed to the gratification of the grosser senses. Persons of a refined taste affect an indifference to their pleasures, and dissemble the satisfaction they receive from them; as in eating, drinking, and the like: whereas we are very differently affected towards the pleasures of harmony, which we perceive by the ear, and the beauty of colours and proportion, which we perceive by the eye.

Another observation which may throw considerable light upon various affections of the mind, in the perception of those pleasures which we refer to the imagination, is, that since the mind perceives, and is conscious of nothing, but the ideas that are present

present to it, it must, as it were, *conform* itself to them; and even the idea it hath of its own extent, (if we may use that expression) must enlarge or contract with its field of view. By this means also, a person, for the time, enters into, adopts, and is actuated by, the sentiments that are presented to his mind.

This takes place so instantaneously and mechanically, that no person whatever hath reflection, and presence of mind enough, to be upon his guard against some of the most useless and ridiculous effects of it. What person, if he saw another upon a precipice and in danger of falling, could help starting back, and throwing himself into the same posture as he would do if he himself were going to fall? At least he would have a strong propensity to do it. And what is more common than to see persons in playing at bowls, lean their own bodies, and writhe them into every possible attitude, according to the course they would have their bowl to take? It is true, that all men are not equally affected by this remarkable propensity. The more vivid are a man's ideas, and the greater is his general sensibility, the more intirely, and with the greater facility, doth he adapt himself to the situations he is viewing.

From this principle, conversing with mean and low objects gives the mind an idea of the meanness and narrowness of its own powers; and ideas of our own greatness, dignity, and importance, are the result of our contemplating large and grand objects. This will be conspicuous when we consider the sublime in composition.

Hence the passions, sentiments, and views of those persons whose history is written so as to engage our attention, become for a time (if they be not extremely opposite to our own general state of mind) our own passions, sentiments, and views; and particu-

particularly, the accounts of the magnanimity, generosity, courage, clemency, &c. in our heroes, are read with a secret complacency and self-applause, arising from our indulging the same temper and disposition.

Hence, in part, arises the difficulty of reading the history of any two rival states, or personages, with absolute indifference and impartiality. Before we were aware, we find we have entered into the sentiments, passions, and interests of the one or the other of them; and afterwards find it difficult to *change sides*, as it were; notwithstanding, in the progress of the history, we may see reason enough to be disgusted with the party we at first adopted. We absurdly continue to wish success to those we first attached ourselves to, though the reasons which attached us to them no longer exist. The failings on one side are regarded with tenderness and compassion, as the failings of a friend; and the excellencies which discover themselves on the opposite side, are apt to be looked upon with envy and dislike, as an advantage in the possession of an enemy.

What reader, who has once been interested in the fortune of Athens, by reading the first book of the Peloponnesian war, written by Thucydides, is not distressed to the last degree with the miscarriage of the flagrantly ambitious and unjust invasion of Sicily, and the siege of Syracuse? If any striking instance of generosity, or mere courage, once interest us in favour of a buccaneer, a highwayman, or even a dextrous cheat, how apt are we to read with pleasure of the success of the desperate adventures of the former, and of the ingenious but base artifices of the latter? It is possible that persons of age, experience, and reflection, may, in a great measure, have corrected this mechanical propensity; but it will ever retain a sensible influence over the generality

nerality of mankind; and these are almost the only people we have to do with in the business of the passions and imagination.

This observation shows us how cautious all writers should be not to engage the attention of their readers too much to vicious characters; since, when once they have, by this means, engaged our interest in their favour, we are very backward to withdraw our good wishes; and the interest we take in the character and schemes of a bad man, cannot but leave upon the mind an impression unfavourable to virtue. A natural love for virtue is a very insufficient security against this influence, especially in young minds. No writer, who hath at heart the interest of virtue, and the happiness of his fellow-creatures, ought to trust to it. Even the prudent and virtuous Mr. Richardson hath interested his reader so much in the character of *Lovelace*, in *Clarissa*, that, I believe, there are few of his readers who would be displeas'd with the success of his base designs upon any other woman than *Clarissa* herself, in whose favour we have been beforehand more strongly interested.

In the third place, let it be noted, that when each of the pleasures of the imagination are referred to some *one source*, I only mean, that ideas and sensations of that kind are the *principal* ones that enter into its composition. For, in fact, none of our intellectual pleasures are so simple as to be derived from one single source only. They are all of so complex a nature, and are so connected with one another, that, it is probable, there is not one sentiment of pleasure or pain that can be called *intellectual* (not being a direct impression upon some of the external senses) but what is more or less compounded of almost all the other intellectual pleasures and pains too. The principle of association is predominant in every thing relating to our intellectual faculties:

and, in a situation so exposed as ours is to *joint impressions*, from a variety of independent objects, our sensations cannot fail to be so commixed and combined together, that it must be extremely difficult, if not impossible, completely to resolve any one of them into all their separate, component parts. All that can be done, is, to place each pleasing object, that occurs in works of taste and genius, under that species of pleasure which originally, or most eminently, entered into the composition of it; and, at the same time, not wholly to omit taking notice of other sources from which it borrows any thing considerable.

Montesquieu, in his *Essay on Taste*, very ingeniously enumerates a variety of causes which contribute to excite the single feeling or sensation which the mind perceives upon the view of a regular garden. And Dr. Gerard, in his treatise upon the same subject, has illustrated the same observation by analyzing the complex sensation of pleasure we perceive from a view of a fine human face.

It will answer my purpose better, and more eminently contribute to throw light upon several other important particulars relating to Taste, to consider the pleasures we receive from the prospect of a fine *country landscape*, and consequently from the description of *rural scenes* in pastorals, and books of romance. This will, likewise, illustrate the doctrine of ASSOCIATION, and the very probable opinion of Dr. Hartley, who supposed that it is the only mental principle employed in the formation, growth, and declension of all our intellectual pleasures and pains.

There is no person, who hath passed much of his time in the country, but must have connected with the idea of it a variety of  
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distinct pleasures, which are now separately indistinguishable; though the traces of them, still remaining in the mind, contribute to swell the complex sensation of pleasure which he feels upon the view of it. Among the principal ingredients in this complex sensation, we may mention the pleasures with which our external senses have a thousand times been affected in the country; the sweet smells and the fine colours of flowers, the agreeable taste of fruits, the melody of birds, and the pleasure we have received from rural sports and pastimes. These, if we be advanced in life, we may have no great relish for; yet the ideas of the pleasure we may formerly have received from these objects, still adhere to the idea of the scenes in which they were enjoyed, and recur, in a confused sensation of pleasure, whenever those scenes are presented to the mind.

To these we may add the ideas of the healthfulness, and of the comparative innocence of a country life, the apparent usefulness of husbandry; a view of the plenty of the necessaries and conveniences of life which the earth affords; the ideas of novelty, beauty, and grandeur, with which we have, upon innumerable occasions, been struck in viewing the scenes of nature; together with the ideas of the jocundity and happiness which our fellow-creatures must frequently have shared with us in a country life.

All these sources have contributed, in a greater or less degree, to the complex sense of pleasure which a fine country prospect affords; and to these a philosophical and devout observer adds lively ideas of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, the marks of which are so conspicuous in the vegetable and animal world. By him the Deity is seen in all his works; and though, upon the first view of a rural scene, the ideas of the Divine Be-

ing and his providence be not distinctly perceived, they cannot fail greatly to heighten every complex sensation into which they really enter.

From the principle of association we may, likewise, account for the tumultuous pleasurable sensation we feel upon the view of the place where we passed our infancy, the school where we were educated, or any other place, or person, with whom a great number of our ideas and sensations have formerly been associated, though they now form one complex sensation, and are separately indistinguishable. Even painful sensations, as they give no pain upon reflection, unless they have been extremely violent indeed, only contribute to heighten the complex pleasing emotion.

Sometimes it is observable, that, immediately upon feeling a tumultuous sensation of this kind, the idea of some particular affecting circumstance will occur distinctly, it not having perfectly *coalesced* with the general complex sensation; whereas, by degrees, it intirely vanishes into, and makes a part of it, and in its separate state is quite forgotten. Facts of this nature are circumstances extremely favourable to this hypothesis of the mechanical generation of our intellectual pleasures and pains by the principle of association; and there are few persons who attend to their feelings but must have observed them.

It is easy to conceive that complex sensations of this kind are capable of being transferred to objects which are *similar* to those with which they were originally associated, by means of any common property. Thus the complex sensation, connected at first with one particular country scene, will be excited, though in a fainter degree, by the view of any other country scene: and those feelings, which were originally associated with one particular school, will be revived by the sight of any other school, or even of any thing

thing belonging to education. And, universally, objects possessed of properties common to those objects with which any sensations have been firmly associated, acquire, by their analogy to them, a power of exciting the same sensations, and consequently of affecting us in a similar manner with the objects whose properties they possess, in proportion to their resemblance.

For example; the properties of *uniformity*, *variety*, and *proportion*, or a *fitness to some useful end* having been perceived in most of the objects with which pleasurable ideas and sensations have been associated, a complex pleasurable sensation will universally be annexed to the marks of uniformity, variety, and proportion, wherever they are perceived; so that by noting the properties which are common to those objects which affect our imaginations in an agreeable manner, we may be enabled to give an enumeration of all the species of the pleasures of imagination that we are capable of; or of pointing out the different properties, and qualities, in objects which are adapted to give us pleasure, and contribute to our entertainment in works of taste and genius.

Whether it will be allowed that the principle of association is the source of *all* the pleasures which are suggested by objects of taste, or not, it is manifest that it must have a very considerable influence in this affair, and will help us to account for much, if not all, of the variety that is observable in the tastes of different persons.

Had all minds the very same degree of sensibility, that is, were they equally affected by the same impressions, and were we all exposed to the same influences, through the whole course of our lives, there would be no room for the least diversity of taste among mankind. For, in those circumstances, we should all have associated precisely the same ideas and sensations with the same objects,

jects, and the same properties of those objects; and we should feel those sentiments in the same degree. But since our situations in life, and the occurrences of our lives, are so very various, it cannot but have happened, that different persons will have associated different ideas and sensations with the same objects; and, consequently, they will be differently affected upon the perception of them. Moreover, since mens minds are endued with very different degrees of sensibility, some persons will be affected in a stronger, and some in a weaker manner, when their sensations are of the same kind. For the same reasons, likewise, the same person is liable to be affected in a very different manner by the same objects, in different parts of his life, and in different situations and dispositions.

There seems, however, to be so great a similarity in our situations, as is sufficient to afford a foundation for a considerable *similarity in taste*; particularly in persons whose education and manner of life have been nearly the same. But a *standard of taste*, founded upon the similar influences which persons so situated have been subject to, cannot be applied to those persons whose education and manner of life have been very different. It is no wonder that a person accustomed to the refined sentiments of modern times cannot relish some of the compositions of the ancients; that what is deemed a fine taste in the East, should not be deemed equally good in Europe; or even that what is admired in France, should not always meet with the same approbation in England.

This diversity of taste would certainly be much more considerable at present, were it not for the easy intercourse there is between different nations, and different universities, particularly by means of the art of printing; by which they communicate  
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their several feelings, and thereby bring their tastes nearer to a perfect similarity. It confirms this observation, that it is generally thought that something of the strength of the English writers is perceived in some of the later French compositions; and that our modern polite authors in England have acquired the delicacy and correctness of the French. The consequence of a freer intercourse between the eastern and western parts of the world would, certainly, be their profiting by our taste, and our manner of composition, if not our acquiring also something more of theirs. And, from this principle, we may expect that, in consequence of the growing intercourse between all the nations of earth, and all the *literati* of them, an uniform and perfect standard of taste will at length be established over the whole world.

In the mean time, justness of taste will be determined by appealing to the general sense of those who have been the most conversant with the subjects of it. A deviation from this general taste will be reckoned a fault, and a coincidence with it an excellence; and the difficulty there is in ascertaining what is this *medium of opinion* in connoisseurs makes the business of criticism, or the standard of judging in works of genius, so vague and undetermined as it is. Persons who have not been conversant with the subjects of taste are excluded from having any vote in this case, because their minds have not been in a proper situation for receiving the ideas and sensations which are requisite to form a just taste.

## LECTURE XVIII.

*A general Account of the Pleasure we receive from Objects that occasion a moderate Exertion of our Faculties.*

ALL beauties, and admired strokes in composition, derive their excellence and fine effect, either from drawing out and exercising our faculties, by the views they present to our minds; or else transferring from foreign objects, by the principle of association, ideas which tend to improve the sense of a passage. In what cases the effect of composition is heightened by each of these means, and in what manner it is done, will be the subject of the following Lectures to explain.

One property essential to every thing that gives us pleasure is, that it occasions a *moderate exercise of our faculties*. Pleasure consists of sensations moderately vigorous. It is, therefore, capable of existing in any degree between the two extremes of perfect languor and tranquillity of mind on the one hand, and actual pain and uneasiness on the other. It is observable, likewise, that the more moderate any pleasure is, the longer continuance it is capable of; and that the more intense any pleasurable sensation is, or the more nearly it approaches to a state of pain, the less capable it is of a long duration. Immoderate pleasure, as it were, oppresses, fatigues, and exhausts the mind.

Nothing

Nothing can be more evident than the truth of these principles, when applied to our external or corporeal senses. Warmth, for instance, is a sensation increasing in pleasure in all its gradations, from the torpid and benumbed state of the body, till it become actually hot and painful. Likewise a moderate and barely sensible degree of warmth is agreeable through the whole course of our lives; but we soon grow impatient of greater degrees of warmth, though for a time they may produce a more grateful sensation. In like manner, the limits of the pleasures of taste are, the insipid on the one hand, and the acrid and pungent on the other. Also the moderate pleasure which we receive from our common aliments, is always grateful; whereas viands of a high flavour, abounding with salts, which act forcibly upon the nerves appropriated to the sense of taste, though they yield a more exquisite relish for the time, soon cloy and disgust the palate. The same things may be observed concerning the remaining senses of smelling, seeing, and hearing.

To these affections of the external and corporeal senses, those of the internal and intellectual are strictly analogous. Indeed, it is impossible they should not be so, if the former be the only sources of the latter; that is, if, as was hinted before, all our intellectual pleasures and pains consist of nothing but the simple pleasures and pains of sense, commixed and combined together in infinitely-various degrees and proportions, so as to be separately indistinguishable, and transferred upon foreign objects, by the principle of association.

It is observable, likewise, that a moderate exertion of our active powers is attended with a continued perception of moderate pleasure, both as it quickens the perceptive powers, and exposes us to the influence of objects that are adapted to affect our senses;

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but that a violent exertion is, for similar reasons, attended with pain and uneasiness. That this is equally true with respect both to the powers of our bodies and the faculties of our minds, is too obvious to require illustration. Indeed, it is wisely provided by Divine Providence, that both our minds and bodies are equally impatient of a state of rest and inactivity. Hence we are constantly impelled to exert ourselves with vigour in the station in which we are placed; and we can never be happy, and enjoy our being, unless we fulfil the great ends of it.

All persons, indeed, have not an equal relish for the same exercises, but in all minds there is an appetite for some or other species of it; and when once, by addicting ourselves to any kind of exercise, we have acquired a habit of it, from that time it becomes, in a manner, necessary to our happiness.

That the preceding account of the general affections of the mind with respect to pleasure, and the various degrees and gradations of it, are applicable to those which we receive from the polite arts, cannot but be obvious to all persons of reading, study, and reflection. No mind can long bear a very rapid succession of those scenes which, singly, give it the most exquisite pleasure. A judicious composer, therefore, is sensible that the most exquisite beauties in composition may be thrown away and lost, as it were, when they are placed too near together.

Besides, in a very quick succession of objects, the mind hath not leisure to perceive and attend to all their powers and relations. They lose therefore, of course, a great part of their full effect. Perhaps the finest circumstances belonging to some of the thoughts and expressions in a work of genius, may not be those which present themselves to view at the first hearing or reading. If,

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therefore, the mind be immediately, and without any respite, hurried to other objects equally striking, it can only be affected with the grosser sensations they convey. There could have been no leisure or opportunity for its perceiving those more delicate beauties, which constitute the chief merit of works of taste and imagination. In like manner, the grand and exquisite strokes of expression in music are always preceded by such strains as only prepare the mind for them, and are also followed by such as do not wholly take off the attention from them.

Moreover, all compositions which are intended to engage our attention a considerable time, should correspond pretty nearly to the general and natural course of our own ideas and sensations. A writer may be as witty, or as sublime, as he can, and he may crowd these graces of composition as close as he pleases; his readers cannot follow him but at a certain pace. There is a degree beyond which no person can accelerate the succession of his ideas. If, therefore, a writer wish to take his reader along with him, he must, of necessity, as we may say, slacken his pace.

On these accounts, the more exquisite strokes of genius should either be confined to short compositions, be sparingly introduced into works of length, or be crowded in places where the mind may take an attentive survey of them, without drawing off its attention from objects of more importance. An *epigram* may contain as much wit as the writer can crowd into it, and the *ode* may be as full of the sublime as his imagination is capable of making it, and without any inconvenience; because the whole composition having very moderate bounds, and the attention not being solicited farther, we may attend to any part of it as long as we please, and enjoy it at our leisure: but a great number of what are called the graces and masterly strokes of composition

are lost in a history, in a heroic poem, or an interesting scene in a tragedy.

If these works be composed in a good taste, the attention of the reader is fixed upon the incidents; he is *hastening* to the catastrophe, and will not stop to examine all the beauties of the composition: that were an object quite foreign to the views of a person whose mind was properly engrossed by the *subject* of the work. It is absolutely impossible to be properly impressed with, and to keep in view, the greater sentiments with which the mind is inspired by such works as the Iliad, the Odyssey; and the Æneid; and at the same time give any attention to such minute criticisms as some commentators have descended to, and taken the pains to make upon them. It is a fundamental rule in all kinds of composition, that they ought to be more or less elaborate, according as they are longer or shorter; or, rather, according to the opportunity they give the mind to attend to all the beauties of them.

In these cases, however, regard must be had, if possible, to the persons for whose use any kind of composition is made, and even to the temper of mind in which it is most likely to be perused. For it is certain that the succession of ideas, to which the tenor of a composition should correspond, is very different in different persons, and in different situations of mind. A style adapted to the vulgar, whose minds are wholly uncultivated, whose apprehensions are consequently slow, and whose feelings are strong, would by no means suit persons whose apprehensions have been quickened, and whose sensations have been refined, by education and reflection: nor would that style, which was proper to be perused by persons in a tranquil and composed state of mind, suit the

same person as well when the succession of his ideas was accelerated by passion, or a state of anxious suspense.

An harangue to a multitude should consist of exceedingly strong and bold images, expressed with great plainness and perspicuity, and with considerable intervals of intermediate ideas; whereas the strokes should be both more delicate and more frequently repeated, which are intended to make an impression upon an audience of cultivated understandings and improved taste. And it requires a style extremely animated and concise to suit a person whose mind is in a kind of ferment, when the apprehension is more than usually quick, and the succession of ideas accelerated greatly beyond their usual course.

An attention to this same object, viz. the exercise of our faculties, will direct us to the proper medium between the *concise* and *diffuse* in style. By the concise or diffuse in style, I do not mean one that consists of short or long periods; but by concise I mean that which leaves more, and by diffuse that which leaves less to be supplied by the reader, whether the sentences be long or short. These two kinds of style have each their proper place where they may be used with propriety and advantage.

We cannot go on with a work of length, if every sentence require a considerable exercise of our own faculties. It is too fatiguing, at least to the generality of readers. But all compositions, and particularly those of small length, are insupportably insipid, if the writer have been so unseasonably officious, as to have left nothing to the exercise of the active faculties of his readers, and the whole excite nothing but a train of *passive perceptions*.

For this reason, the style of Livy will be thought, by the generality of readers of history, preferable to that of Tacitus; whereas

whereas the concise style of Marcus Antoninus, and even of Seneca, seems to be happily adapted to philosophical meditations, which are supposed to be read with great deliberation, and with frequent pauses for reflection.

It is no paradox to say, that the same style will suit a person when he is in a situation which renders his apprehension uncommonly quick, and the succession of his ideas rapid, and one which gives him leisure for reflection; though his mind be quite cool in the one case, and violently agitated in the other; because, in both situations, the mind will easily supply what the writer omits. Neither doth this encomium upon the style of Antoninus imply any censure on the very different style of Cicero: for his philosophical writings are *declamations*, and not *meditations*.

There is another method in which a writer may employ the faculties of his readers, but it is giving them a more disagreeable kind of exercise than that which was referred to above, and which is productive of a much lower kind of pleasure: I mean the trouble a writer may give his reader to understand his meaning. If the meaning of a writer be intelligible, the exercise he gives our faculties is employed upon his subject, in taking those views of things and of their relations which were indistinctly pointed out by himself: and, provided these discoveries be not very difficult to make, they yield a very high kind of entertainment. But if all the difficulty of a composition be owing to frequent ellipses, and a disordered construction, and, consequently, terminate when the writer's meaning is perfectly understood; it is a business of *words* only, and can yield but little satisfaction. Is not this the case sometimes with Thucydides, and Lord Clarendon?

Not

Not that a writer is, in all cases, to be condemned when he gives his reader some trouble to understand him. Provided it be not the *chief* exercise he gives our faculties, it may, upon the whole, have a good effect. To this purpose the transposition of words and clauses from their natural order, and occasional parentheses, are sometimes well employed. These, when they are used moderately, occasion no greater pain from suspense, than what is more than counterbalanced by the pleasure we receive, the moment it terminates, in our seeing the sense complete. It is certainly an advantage peculiar to ancient languages, that the words of them may be transposed, for this and other purposes, at pleasure. However, in the generality of compositions, it is indisputable, that the proper medium of excellence is much nearer the extreme of perspicuity than of obscurity.

Persons who have much leisure for reading and speculation may derive great advantage from these observations, concerning the moderate exercise of our faculties, in the conduct of their studies. Intense application to the abstract sciences, to the mathematics, and philosophy, the reading of languages that are rather difficult to us, or the business of composition, is, undoubtedly at first, very fatiguing to all minds. Many persons are soon discouraged from so severe an exercise of their faculties; and it is only habit that can make it easy, and reconcile the mind to it. But then the consequence of a successful application to these severe studies, being attended with a continued consciousness of the *strength of our faculties*, is a very high sense of pleasure, which remains very sensibly a considerable time after the exercise is

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over; whereas the pleasure we receive from the reading of history, romance, familiar essays, and poetry, though it may be very exquisite for a time, yet, if it engross all our leisure hours, it is attended with great languor and indifference; and there is scarce the least trace of pleasure left after our attention to them is over: nay, very often, though we read with pleasure, we give over with disgust, and a secret dissatisfaction with ourselves. The reason is, that, in mere reading of this kind, we are little more than passive. Trains of ideas pass before our minds, but no active powers of the soul are exerted. Life passed in that manner is mere indolence and inaction, to which, whether it be of the body or of the mind, no genuine and lasting happiness was ever annexed.

To have a full enjoyment of a studious life, the severer studies should be intermixed with the perusal of entertaining authors. In this succession, books of entertainment are read with tenfold more avidity and satisfaction. Poetry and works of fiction make a high *entertainment*, when they are made nothing more of; but they make a very poor and insipid *employment*. Infinitely preferable were it to be confined to the study of geometry, algebra, or law, without even having a glimpse of any thing more amusing, than be condemned to pass one's life sleeping over history, romances, poetry, and plays.

Application to true history seems to be the most rational of all these; but unless history be read either with a view to gain a knowledge of mankind, in order to form our own conduct; or with some scientific view, in order to determine some important subject of rational inquiry, it is nothing better than reading romance. By reading history with some farther view, as a *means* to a farther end,

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we make it a *science*. It then engages our active powers. It is a serious business, and is capable of being pursued with continued and increasing ardour. Otherwise, history is no more than an amusement; and, considering what hath ever been the state of the political world, and the general objects of historians, it must exhibit many scenes extremely disagreeable to a reader of humanity and delicacy.

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LECTURE

## LECTURE XIX.

## Of NOVELTY.

**T**O the general account of the pleasures we receive from the exercise of our perceptive and active powers, I shall subjoin a particular account of those properties of objects which derive their power of pleasing from the same source.

To this, in the first place, we must have recourse for the charms of NOVELTY. For the first perception of an object makes a much stronger impression than any subsequent perception of it. This must necessarily be the case if perception depend upon any mechanical laws affecting the brain. Upon whatever principle we account for it, the oftener any sensations are repeated, the less we are affected by them. But the chief source of the charms of novelty is the exercise of our active powers. Both previous to the perception of any new object, if we have any intimation of it, and immediately upon the perception of it, whether it be a new scene in nature, a new train of adventures, or a new system of principles, the mind is full of expectation, and is eagerly employed in surveying it; which keeps the attention strongly awake, and gives the object an opportunity of making a deep impression. Whereas when this first curiosity is gratified, and the object is become familiar, we view it in a more

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curfory and superficial manner; there being then no reason for so close an attention to it, as we expect no new knowledge or information.

This constant appetite, as we may call it, for novelty, seems to be inseparable from beings indued with the faculty of reason and reflection, and whose happiness depends upon the use they make of the advantages attending their situation. Being habitually in quest of happiness, we naturally examine every new object with peculiar attention; but when once we are acquainted with all the properties and powers of it, and know how much it is capable of contributing to our main purpose, our examination is finished, and the motive for our curiosity is at an end. Moreover, to apply a general observation made in a preceding lecture, as the mind conforms itself to the ideas which engage its attention, and it hath no other method of judging of itself but from its situation, the perception of a new train of ideas is like its entering upon a new world, and enjoying a new being, and a new mode of existence.

So loud and incessant is the call for novelty in the pleasures of the imagination, that the generality of readers feel little or no desire to re-peruse a performance which is calculated rather to please than to instruct. If a second perusal do give pleasure, it is either by the discovery of new beauties, or a considerable time after the first perusal, when the subject, or the method of treating it, hath been almost forgotten, and when, consequently, it is in a manner new: for no person, I believe, would throw away his time upon a performance which he was beforehand satisfied could present him with no new ideas, or new views of things.

If the reason why we first engage in any new study, or undertake to read any work of genius, be not explicitly the prospect

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of being entertained with new objects, and new reflections, as is often the case, we, notwithstanding, never cease to be under the influence of that principle during the whole time that we are employed about it. The prospect of advantage in general, or the expectation of receiving instruction and improvement, may have been our first and leading motive to those pursuits; but the ultimate ends of our conduct are not of a nature to be attended to constantly, and to influence particular actions. Whatever motive it was that first put our faculties in motion, it is generally, in these cases, the charms of novelty that keep up the vigour of their exertion. And a happy provision it is in our constitution, that when great and important motives, from the necessary nature of things, intermit their influence, there are a variety of other *subsidiary springs of action* at hand, which are sufficient to carry on the work with vigour, by the help of only occasional reinforcements from the original and first-moving power. Thus a person undertakes a journey with a view to some advantage he expects to derive from it, yet he may soon lose sight of this, and, notwithstanding, continue to travel with pleasure; not propelled by his original impulse, but entertained with a variety of scenes which his change of place continually presents him with.

This craving appetite for novelty hath produced many very whimsical and extravagant effects in works of taste and genius. To this many new schemes of philosophy, new species of composition, and new peculiarities of style, owe their birth. Novelty is the surest and the readiest road to fame, for all the numerous competitors for that exquisite species of satisfaction; the first inquiry concerning any performance in literature always being, Is there any thing *new* in it?

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Nor is the desire of novelty less conspicuous in other objects of taste. What other recommendation have the *Chinese taste*, and the revival of the *Gothic*, in architecture, the pantomime entertainments, with all their varieties, on the theatre, and the new forms in which musical entertainments are daily exhibited? Doth not a regard to novelty influence our choice of the furniture of our houses, interfere in the disposition of a garden, and suggest alterations in the fashion of our cloaths? Why else doth a lady of taste in dress, discover more conscious satisfaction the first time she makes her appearance at an assembly, among the first in a fashionable dress, than she would have done if she had not been seen in the same dress till a month afterwards, when the *convenience*, and other properties of the habit, remain the same?

Even the mere *unexpectedness* of objects is often had recourse to, as a substitute for absolute novelty. A well-known object, occurring in a situation in which it was wholly unlooked for, makes a stronger impression upon the mind than it would have done if it had been expected. In the latter case, the mind is occupied with the idea, at least, of the object, before the actual perception of it; and therefore the difference in the previous and subsequent state of mind, is only the difference between an *idea* and a *sensation*, a difference in degree only. In the former case, the sensation is made at once, without any previous idea, which makes a difference more than in degree only. Besides, in this case, the relations and circumstances, if not the object itself, are new to us. Also the sensible contrast which hence arises between the two states of mind, before and after the perception of an unexpected object, contributes to heighten the sensation.

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By means of this contrast, familiar ideas, occurring in unexpected situations, may occasion a greater agitation of mind, than new ideas of a similar nature. The reason is, that every idea which is become familiar to us, must have acquired a variety of associations. These associated circumstances, occurring to the mind at the same instant with the ideas to which they are connected, immediately strike the mind with the sense of any seeming inconsistency there may be, between them and the new and unexpected situations in which we meet with them. Thus the sudden appearance of a friend, whom we thought to have been in a distant place, affects us more sensibly, than seeing any face that is quite new to us, in the same place and circumstances. With the latter we have connected no ideas of any circumstances which have the least seeming inconsistency with the circumstances in which we find them: with the other, we have connected such ideas.

The sensation which we feel upon the unexpected appearance of a well-known object, is termed *surprize*; whereas an object perfectly new is said to excite our *wonder*.

The gratification which the mind is sure to receive from surprize, may add something to the influence of those other motives which carry some people with so much eagerness to the gaming-table. There the continual expectation of events, on which a great deal is depending, and of which we can, with no degree of certainty, form the least conjecture, keeps the attention awake to an extreme degree; which always prepares the mind for receiving a strong impression. If we be interested in the event, our passions of hope and fear, being gratified in their turn, greatly augment the internal agitation, so as often to carry it beyond the limits of pleasure, and make it terminate in the most painful and tormenting anxiety.

LECTURE

## LECTURE XX.

*Of the* SUBLIME.

**G**REAT objects please us for the same reason that *new* objects do, viz. by the exercise they give to our faculties. The mind, as was observed before, conforming and adapting itself to the objects to which its attention is engaged, must, as it were, enlarge itself, to conceive a great object. This requires a considerable *effort of the imagination*, which is also attended with a pleasing, though perhaps not a distinct and explicit consciousness of the strength and extent of our own powers.

As the ideas of *great* and *little* are confessedly relative, and have no existence but what they derive from a comparison with other ideas; hence, in all sublime conceptions, there is a kind of secret retrospect to preceding ideas and states of mind. The sublime, therefore, of all the species of excellence in composition, requires the most to be intermixed with ideas of an intermediate nature; as these contribute not a little, by their contrast, to raise and aggrandize ideas which are of a rank superior to themselves. Whenever any object, how great soever, becomes familiar to the mind, and its relations to other objects is no longer attended to, the sublime vanishes. Milton's battle of the angels, after the prelude to the engagement, would have been read with no greater emotions

emotions than are excited by the history of a common battle, had not the poet perpetually reinforced his sublime, as it were, by introducing frequent comparisons of those superior beings, and their actions, with human combatants and human efforts. It is plainly by means of comparison that Horace gives us so sublime an idea of the unconquerable firmness of Cato :

Et cuncta terrarum subacta,  
Preter atrocem animum Catonis:

For the same reason a well-conducted *climax* is extremely favourable to the sublime. In this form of a sentence, each subsequent idea is compared with the preceding; so that if the former have been represented as large, the latter, which exceeds it, must appear exceedingly large. The effect of this we see in that sublime passage of Shakespeare, inscribed upon his monument in Westminster Abbey :

The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
And all which it inherit, shall dissolve,  
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,  
Shall leave no wreck behind.

The intermediate ideas which are introduced to increase the sublime, by means of comparison with the object whose grandeur is to be enhanced by them, ought to be of a *similar* nature; because there is no comparison of things dissimilar. The difference between them should be nothing more than that of greater and less: and even in this case, it often happens that the contrast of things between which there is a very great disparity (as will be explained hereafter) produces the *burllesque*, a sentiment of a quite

oppo-

opposite nature to the sublime. It is not improbable but that many of Mr. Pope's readers may affix ludicrous ideas to the following lines, which, in his own conception, and that of his more philosophical readers, were very sublime.

Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,  
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall;  
Atoms, or systems, into ruin hurl'd;  
And now a bubble bursts, and now a world.

ESSAY ON MAN. Ep. I.

*Sparrows, atoms, and bubbles*, do not make the same figure in the eye of the generality of mankind, that they do in that of a philosopher.

It follows from these principles, that no conception can be sublime which is not *simple*. If any scene present a crowd of separate objects, the mind views them in *succession*, though in a very quick and rapid one, and exerts no extraordinary effort to conceive and comprehend any of them. However, an idea that doth consist of parts may appear sublime, if the parts of which it consists be not attended to, but the aggregate of them all be perceived as one idea. This is easily illustrated by the ideas of *numbers*. Very large numbers, as a *thousand, ten thousand, and a hundred thousand*, present great and sublime ideas upon the first naming of them, which continue so long as we endeavour to survey the whole of them at once, without attempting to resolve them into their component parts; but the arithmetician, who is used to compose and decompose the largest numbers, is conscious of no sublime idea, even when he is performing the operations of *addition and multiplication* upon them.

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Objects



Objects of the first rank in point of magnitude, and which chiefly constitute the sublime of description, are large rivers, high mountains, and extensive plains; the ocean, the clouds, the heavens, and infinite space; also storms, thunder, lightning, volcanos, and earthquakes, in nature; and palaces, temples, pyramids, cities, &c. in the works of men. See a fine enumeration of those scenes of nature, which contribute the most to the sublime, in Akenfide upon this subject:

Who but rather turns  
To heaven's broad fire his unconstrained view,  
Than to the glimmering of a waxen flame?  
Who that, from Alpine heights, his lab'ring eye  
Shoots round the wide horizon, to survey  
The Nile or Ganges roll his wasteful tide,  
Thro' mountains, plains, thro' empires black with shades,  
And continents of sand, will turn his gaze  
To mark the windings of a scanty rill  
That murmurs at his feet? &c.

PLEASURES OF THE IMAGINATION, Lib. II.

But the account here given of the sublime, by no means confines it to the ideas of objects which have sensible and *corporeal* magnitude. *Sentiments* and *passions* are equally capable of it, if they relate to great objects, suppose extensive views of things, require a great effort of the mind to conceive them, and produce great effects. Fortitude, magnanimity, generosity, patriotism, and universal benevolence, strike the mind with the idea of the sublime. We are conscious that it requires a great effort to exert them; and in all cases when the mind is conscious of a similar exertion of its faculties, it refers its sensations to the same class.

If

If the virtues above mentioned were more common, the idea of them would not be so sublime.

Who that considers the sentiments of Diomedes, when he prays to Jupiter to *give him day, and then destroy him*; the answer of Alexander to Parmenio (who had told him that he would accept the offers of Darius, if he were Alexander) *And so would I, if I were Parmenio*; and much more the prayer of our Saviour upon the cross, in behalf of his persecutors, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*: who, I say, that attends to these sentiments, can entertain a doubt that they produce feelings similar to those which we receive from the view of grand and elevated objects? Or a person need only to read the following passage from Dr. Akenfide, to be convinced that there is a true sublime in sentiment:

Say why was man so eminently raised  
Above the vast creation? Why advanced  
Thro' life and death to dart his piercing eye,  
With thoughts beyond the limits of his frame,  
But that th' Omnipotent might send him forth,  
In sight of mortal and immortal powers,  
As on a boundless theatre, to run  
The great career of justice, to exalt  
His gen'rous aim to all diviner deeds? &c.

There is no surer method of discovering those sensations and ideas, which are apprehended to be analogous by mankind in general, than by observing the analogies of *words* in various languages; for the one will correspond to the other. As mankind, when the bulk of any language was invented, were not in a situation to invent superfluous terms, we may naturally conclude they would content themselves with the same term when there was a

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great

great resemblance in the ideas they represented; but in no other case, if they could avoid so great an inconvenience. If this clue be allowed to be of any use to us, in classing our ideas and sensations, there will remain no doubt but that there are a variety of things, not material, which raise sensations similar to those which are excited by objects which have corporeal magnitude and elevation.

How else came a man of distinguished abilities to be called a *great man*? Why do we say that a benevolent man is of an *open* as well as generous temper? and that a covetous man hath a *narrow soul*? How came the epithets *proud*, *haughty*, and *lofty*, to be synonymous? and how came the terms *superior taste*, *advancement in honour*, *head of the table*, *high note* in music, *ascending series* in numbers, and *high* and *low*, *near* or *distant*, with respect to *time*, to prevail so generally, and to become so familiar, that the figure is perfectly evanescent? Moreover, how came robes of state to be made large and full, and thrones to be lofty, &c.? Whence comes it that largeness of size contributes to make a person look majestic? And how came the Scythian ambassadors to be surprized to find *Alexander the Great* to be a *little man*?

I might mention a great many more terms borrowed from corporeal magnitude, extension and elevation, applied to things which have none of those qualities; but these are sufficient to show that the perception of the sentiments, dispositions, and circumstances, to which they are applied, are attended with a consciousness of a feeling, similar to that which is excited by the view of objects which have the qualities of corporeal magnitude, extension, and elevation; that is, with the sublime.

The

The sublime of science consists in general and comprehensive theorems, which, by means of very great and extensive consequences, present the idea of *vastness* to the mind. A person of true taste may perceive many instances of genuine sublime in geometry, and even in algebra; and the sciences of natural philosophy and astronomy, exhibit the noblest fields of the sublime that the mind of man was ever introduced to. Theorems may also be sublime by their relating to great objects.

For many things which, considered in themselves, and abstracted from every thing that is foreign to them, are incapable of the sublime, inspire that sentiment by their association with others that are capable of it. From this source it is that the ideas of wealth, honour, and power, borrow their sublime. It is the *causes*, the *adjuncts*, or the *effects* of these things, that are contemplated, when they fill and charm the soul. *Wealth* carries with it the idea of a large estate, and abundance of every thing that can contribute to the enjoyment of life. From *honour* we never separate the idea of the strength of body, the capacity of the mind, or the great achievements by which it was procured. With these also we join the number of people among whom a person is renowned, the extent of country through which his fame spreads, and the length of time to which it extends. To the idea of *power* we join ideas of the good or evil it may produce, and of the multitudes which are subject to its controul. In the idea of a *conqueror*, we may clearly distinguish the idea of a great extent of country subdued; and in the idea of *nobility*, that of a long train of illustrious ancestors. A similar analysis would show us the sublime of *friendship*, *patriotism*, and many other abstract ideas.

The

The grandeur of a *palace*, besides what it derives from its exceeding other houses in bulk, is derived from the ideas of the labour, expence, length of time, and number of persons necessary to the erection of it; and from ideas of the wealth, honour, and power of him who inhabits it. Celebrated buildings and cities *in ruins*, along with these ideas, present that of the length of time that hath elapsed since they flourished; and the whole sensation is greatly magnified by a comparison of their former magnificence with their present desolation. The grandeur and peculiar awfulness with which we are struck upon the view of a *temple* is, in a great measure, derived from the ideas we have annexed to it of the power of the Deity to whom it is sacred; as all that is sublime in the idea of a *senate-house*, or other public building, arises from the idea of the *use* to which it is appropriated.

The *contempt* of power, wealth, and grandeur, is more sublime than the *possession* of them; because, after a view of those great objects, it presents us with the view of a *mind* above them. So that it is not true, that "nothing is great the contempt of which is great."

Though, in some cases of this species of *transferred sublimity*, the analysis of a complex idea should present no one idea which, singly taken, could be called sublime; yet, so long as those ideas continue separately indistinguishable, the mind perceives not a number of small objects, but one great one; as in the case before explained of the sublime of numbers.

As most of our emotions are of a complex nature, we are in great danger, unless we be extremely attentive, of making mistakes in the distribution and analysis of them. Hence emotions of *terror* have been often classed with the sublime. But terror

is

is a mixed sensation, composed of the very different sensations of *fear* and *grandeur*, to the latter of which it owes all its sublimity. For, when we are in a situation in which we have nothing to fear, the sight of a monstrous beast, of a giant, or of the sea in a storm, &c. presents little more than the pure sublime, heightened by the secret pleasure we take in the idea of our own security. The pure sublime partakes nothing of fear, or of any other painful emotion.

Moreover, the pure sublime, by strongly engaging, tends to fix the attention, and to keep the mind in a kind of *awful stillness*; whereas it is of the nature of every species of the pathetic to throw it into an *agitation*. Hence the sensations we feel from *darkness* and *profound silence*, resembling the stillness the mind is thrown into when the attention is strongly fixed by a sublime object, partake of the nature of the sublime; as we may perceive in the following excellent passage of Dr. Young.

Night, sable goddess, from her ebon throne,  
In rayless majesty, now stretches forth  
Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumb'ring world.  
Silence how dead! and darkness how profound!  
Nor eye nor list'ning ear an object finds.  
Creation sleeps. 'Tis as the general pulse  
Of life stood still, and Nature made a pause—  
An awful pause, prophetic of her end.  
And let her prophecy be soon fulfill'd:  
Fate, drop the curtain. I can lose no more.

NIGHT-THOUGHTS, I.

Hence also deep and slow notes in music bear a nearer relation to the sublime than shrill and quick sounds.

It

It may be observed, that the account here given of the Sublime confines it to the *sentiment*. However, as the term (which hath been used in a more vague sense than almost any other term in criticism) is frequently applied to *language*, I shall briefly explain how the sublime is affected by language.

Ideas in themselves sublime may intirely lose that quality by being expressed in terms which have connexions with trivial and mean objects, or in metaphors borrowed from such objects. In this case the *secondary associations* which accompany those words are transferred upon the object described by them, and destroy the sublime they would otherwise have. Though, therefore, in general, the *plainest terms* are the most favourable to the sublime, as they exhibit the most just and the strongest idea of the object; yet every term, however plain and intelligible, that hath ever had the least connexion with *mean subjects*, or even which hath been chiefly used by persons of a low and illiberal class of life, should be carefully avoided. What can be more sublime than the following passage in the Psalms? "He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth. He toucheth the hills, and they smoke," But it is greatly lowered by some ludicrous images in the following paraphrase.

The hills forget they're fix'd, and in their fright  
Cast off their weight, and ease themselves for flight.  
The woods, with terror wing'd, outfly the wind,  
And leave the heavy, panting hills behind.

On the other hand, the *mock-heroic* is introduced when words which have generally been annexed to great and important subjects, are used to express mean or trivial things. The opposition of ideas so contrary to one another makes a high burlesque.

Some-

Sometimes a *periphrasis* comes seasonably in aid of the sublime, by giving the mind an opportunity to dwell upon the idea, and see the whole extent of it. Thus the phrase, *Nine times the space that measures day and night to mortal men*, in Milton, suits the following sublime passage in which it is introduced, much better than if he had barely said so many *days*. The former mode of expression, as it were, detains the idea of the *angels rolling in the fiery gulph*, longer in the mind; during which time our wonder and astonishment are continually rising higher and higher.

—— Him th' Almighty Power  
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky,  
With hideous ruin, and combustion, down  
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell  
In adamant chains and penal fire,  
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms:  
Nine times the space that measures day and night  
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew  
Lay vanquish'd, rolling in the fiery gulph,  
Confounded, though immortal.

PARADISE LOST, Book I.

*Proper names* of great objects are often preferable to general terms, as they realize the ideas, and fix the attention to them. Thus, to mention the *Alps*, the *Andes*, or *Teneriffe*, presents a greater idea than saying, *very high mountains*; and to say, the *Nile*, the *Ganges*, or the *La Plata*, is to speak more magnificently than to say, *great rivers* only. Thus, the simple and sublime Ossian affects the imagination of his reader much more strongly by the hill of *Cromla*, the *waves of Inishore*, the reeds of the *lake of Lægo*, than he could have done by the use of any more general and abstract terms. This effect would be more sensible

fible, if we were acquainted with the objects introduced in this manner.

Next to the *pathetic*, of all the excellencies of good composition, the *sublime* promises the most lasting reputation to an author. Compositions which are calculated only to *please* and to *divert*, are beings of a day. Few of them, even by the favour of a very extraordinary coincidence of circumstances, reach posterity, in comparison of those which *shake* and which *elevate* our souls. Let us only look into our own breasts, and we shall find that we are very differently affected to the writer who pleases the imagination, and to the poet or orator who either raises and enlarges our conceptions, or who thoroughly interests our passions. The former we may *admire*, but we may also soon *forget*. Our esteem for the latter rises to *reverence*; and when the pathetic and the sublime are joined (as they are capable of the most intimate union, and are perhaps never found in a very high degree intirely separte) they produce the strongest and the most lasting attachment.

A genius formed for the sublime is a mind which is naturally disposed to take the most extensive views of things, whose attention is turned to view every thing in the grandest and noblest point of light; whereas other minds are more inclined to attend to what is *little* and *beautiful* in the objects they view. And as every thing we are conversant with hath various, and very different properties, every mind hath an opportunity of indulging its own taste, by contemplating those forms of things which afford it the most pleasing gratification.

I cannot conclude this article without observing, that instances of the true sublime abound no where more than in the Scriptures.

Never were grander ideas presented to the human mind, than we find in the representations of the Divine Being in *Isaiah*, particularly chapter *XL.* in the book of *Job*, in several places in the *Psalms*, and in the writings of *Moses*.

The false sublime, or the *bombast*, will be considered when I treat of the *Hyperbole*.

## LECTURE XXI.

*Of the Pleasure we receive from Uniformity, and Variety; and first of Comparisons.*

THE pleasure we receive from the view of objects in which there is a visible mixture of *uniformity and variety*, hath, no doubt, more sources than one: however, as one of its sources is the moderate exercise which such objects give to our faculties, I shall treat of it in this place.

To comprehend an object, the parts of which have no sort of analogy to one another, we must of necessity go over the whole of it; and after this survey, which (from the uniform manner in which our minds are employed when we attend to it) must be very tedious, nothing but the *memory* is exercised, to connect and retain the idea of the whole: whereas the moment we perceive that the parts of any object are analogous to one another, and find, or are informed, what that analogy is, the sight of a part, without any farther investigation, suggests the idea of the whole; and the *judgment* is most agreeably and successfully employed in completing the image.

This is very evident upon the view of a part of any thing the proportions of which are known, as of an animal body, of a regular curve, or polygon, a regular building, a regular

gular garden, or of a consistent set of political, philosophical, or theological principles. With what satisfaction may we often hear persons say, upon seeing part of such an object, or such a scheme, "You need shew me no more: I see the whole." When being shewn so little of an object suffices to comprehend it, it shews considerable experience, and an extensive acquaintance with the forms and properties of things.

To discern the analogy of the things we are conversant with, is to become possessed of the clue of knowledge, by which we are led, with unspeakable ease and satisfaction, through the seeming labyrinths of nature. In this manner, by the help of a few general principles, we become masters of a great extent of valuable science: whereas, without such general principles, which are derived from the knowledge of the analogy or uniformity of things, our speculations present nothing but a scene of confusion and embarrassment.

Moreover, wherever we see analogy in objects, we see the marks of *intelligence and design*; which will be mentioned hereafter as another source of pleasure in works of genius and imagination: and the more complex is the object we view, or the greater the variety we perceive, consistent with strict analogy, the more doth it employ our faculties to comprehend it, and the higher idea do we conceive of the intelligence of the being who formed it. Besides, the *contrast* there is between two properties so different as *uniformity and variety* in the same object, contributes not a little to increase the pleasure resulting from a view of the whole.

But perhaps it is to *association* that we are indebted for the greatest part of the pleasure we receive from the view of uniformity and variety. In fact, almost every pleasing object in nature

nature or art is possessed of it. The human body, all animal bodies, and all vegetable nature, infinitely various as those objects are, have their parts formed with perfect analogy to one another. These properties are, likewise, for reasons of convenience, imitated in our houses, in our gardens, in our furniture, utensils, and, in short, in every thing in which the ingenuity or industry of men are employed. Can it be any wonder then, when every thing around us, that is adapted to give us pleasure, hath these properties, that even the first appearance of them in objects, the uses of which we are wholly unacquainted with, should be pleasing?

The pleasure we receive from what is called the *just proportions* of objects, is borrowed, by association, from the idea of the *uses* to which such proportions are subservient. What is a well-proportioned plough, a well-proportioned house, or a well-proportioned ship, but things, or instruments, of such a form as is found by experience to be the most proper and convenient for the purposes to which they are applied? If proportion be any thing different from this, it must coincide with the idea of uniformity and variety.

From this source of uniformity and variety, is derived the pleasure which *comparisons*, *metaphors*, and *allegories*, in works of genius and imagination, give us. This is a consideration distinct from that of the light they throw upon a subject. Comparisons give us clear ideas of things, by means of the resemblance between the ideas they exhibit and those which a writer hath occasion to introduce; in which it is evident that the property of similarity or uniformity alone is concerned; though we may consider it as heightened by its contrast with those properties in the objects which are not similar. But uniformity alone, however height-

ened, doth not affect the imagination with any sense of pleasure. In order to produce this effect, it is necessary that variety be joined to it.

Let us take for an example the following celebrated simile in Addison's Campaign.

So when an angel, by divine command,  
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,  
(Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past)  
Calm and serene he guides the furious blast;  
And, pleased th' Almighty's orders to perform,  
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.

The light which this simile throws upon the principal object in the poem, can only arise from the *resemblance* there is between the situation of the hero and that of the angel, dispensing death and destruction, at the command of a sovereign, with perfect calmness. These are the only points in which we perceive any considerable resemblance in the two objects. But if there had been no circumstances in which they had *differed*, the simile would never have met with that applause with which it hath almost universally been received. For where would have been the advantage of comparing Marlborough to any other hero in exactly similar circumstances? In this case, there would have been a much nearer resemblance, but no poetical beauty, because no variety. Nay, in reality, in the most striking circumstance in the situation of Marlborough, we perceive no sort of resemblance in that of the angel, viz. in his intrepidity in braving danger; yet, perhaps, this capital difference contributes more to the pleasure which these two views jointly give to the imagination, than any other circumstance

cumstance belonging to either of them. For what could give us a higher idea of the courage of Marlborough, in danger, than to represent him to be as calm as an angel in no danger at all? yet this circumstance would have appeared quite foreign to the purpose, and have given no pleasure at all, if the angel had not been employed in a similar manner, viz. *directing the course of death*.

It is evident, therefore, that it is to the joint influence of those circumstances in which two objects agree, and of those in which they differ, that we must ascribe the power of comparisons to raise pleasing ideas in our minds. In other words, the pleasure we receive from them is of the same nature with that which we receive from a view of those objects in which there is a due mixture of uniformity and variety. Consequently, the chief excellence of a comparison (and, for the same reason, of a metaphor and allegory) must depend upon the proportion there is between the degrees of uniformity and variety, or the points of resemblance and difference, in the principal object, and that to which it is compared.

The following simile of Homer neither illustrates the object he is describing, by exhibiting the same idea in greater strength, nor are the circumstances of the two cases sufficiently different to give any pleasure to the imagination.

This just rebuke inflamed the Lycian crew,  
They join, they thicken, and th' assault renew.  
Unmoved th' embodied Greeks their fury dare,  
And fix'd, support the weight of all the war.  
Nor could the Greeks repel the Lycian powers,  
Nor the bold Lycians force the Grecian towers.

As,

As, on the confines of adjoining grounds,  
Two stubborn swains with blows dispute their bounds;  
They tug, they sweat, but neither gain nor yield  
One foot, one inch of the contended field:  
Thus obstinate to death, they fight, they fall,  
Nor these can keep, nor those can win the wall.

ILIAD XII. 505.

That there can be no merit in a simile in which there is little or no resemblance between the objects compared, is too obvious to require an example. For it is manifest that the primary, the proper, and direct use of a simile, is to give clearer and stronger ideas of a thing than the plain description of it would suggest; and this end is not answered, unless the objects, or the circumstances in which they are placed, be similar. Indeed, if we consider only this primary use of comparisons, separate from the pleasure they give to the imagination (which is all along supposed to be only a secondary and subordinate consideration) in no case whatever would there be any real use of variety in a simile, if uniformity alone would suggest the ideas we want to illuminate (as we may say) more distinct and vivid. For, considering similes as serving the purpose of *illustration*, the use of those circumstances of diversity, which are exhibited in two objects that are compared together, is to heighten, by their contrast, the ideas of those circumstances in which they resemble one another.

Hence, perhaps, it is, that when the object introduced in a comparison presents the idea we want to illustrate in a very full and clear light, writers (perhaps without attending to the reason of it) content themselves with mentioning those circumstances of resemblance; and that they do not distinctly point out the circumstances of diversity, but in cases where the ideas of resemblance

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would



would not be sufficiently vivid without a contrast. Nay, if the resemblance be very strong, it is reckoned superfluous, and often absurd, to proceed beyond a simple *metaphor*, which is a simile contracted to its smallest dimensions.

If we only consider that the primary use of a simile is to give clearer and stronger ideas than we could convey without it, and that an explicit and direct simile supposes an excursion of the mind from the object it is intended to illustrate, we may easily determine both the circumstances in which the use of similes is just and natural, and fix proper bounds for the length of them.

Let a person be in whatever situation he will, if he be in a condition to make use of language at all, he will endeavour to give as clear an idea as he can of every thing that he would present to the mind of another. Though, therefore, a man be in the greatest agitation of mind possible, and wholly occupied with any train of ideas, he will seize upon any circumstance in nature that will help him to give a clear idea of whatever he would wish to communicate to another person. The difference between a person whose mind is wholly ingrossed with any train of ideas, and another whose attention may be easily diverted from it, is, that the former will dwell no longer upon foreign objects than is necessary, in order to their supplying him with proper terms by which to express his own ideas: whereas, in the mind of another person, when once a foreign object is brought into view, some of its attributes, and other circumstances associated with it, may not be prevented from following it (as they naturally tend to do) by the sudden recurrence of the former train of ideas.

For example, a person in extreme pain will naturally cry out to his friend, *Oh, I burn, I am torn to pieces, I am upon the rack, &c.* but then his mind is so wholly and intensely ingrossed

with the sensations of pain, that though the foreign circumstances of *burning, tearing to pieces, and being upon the rack*, do, from their resemblance to his situation, occur to his mind, and suggest to him the strongest language by which to express his own feelings, they have no power of introducing any other circumstances connected with them; and therefore the previous train of ideas and sensations returns instantly. A person in such a situation would never think of the *flame, smoke, and ashes* that attend burning, or think of the *coup de grace* when he mentioned the rack. But a person who is merely describing an interesting scene, or a person who, after his first transports of grief are subsided, is at leisure to contemplate his calamitous situation, when he knows the whole extent of it, can hardly be supposed to have his mind so wholly engrossed with the subject, as not to admit and give some attention to a few circumstances the most closely connected with those images which were introduced to illustrate his ideas.

From the preceding account of similes, viz. that they are used in order to give clearer ideas of things than any terms arising from the subject itself would convey, it follows, that they are superfluous and ridiculous upon trifling occasions, as in common discourse, where the plainest language is quite sufficient; and since direct similes suppose a considerable excursion of the mind from the principal subject of its thoughts, it is manifest, as was hinted before, that they must be very unnatural in the mouth of a person in great *distress*, or any kind of *agitation of mind*. Shakespeare, through the luxuriance of his imagination, frequently errs in the former case; and Dryden, Lee, and most of our other tragedians, in the latter: for which they are finely ridiculed in the *Rehearsal*. This is owing to their not entering sufficiently

into the passions they describe. A person who represents another as under the influence of any passion, should almost forget that he is only describing, and should feel himself: otherwise his mind will be in so different a situation from that of the person he is describing, that it will be absolutely impossible that the same thoughts should occur to him; at least that they should occur in the same order, or engage the attention equally. And, particularly, he will be in danger of giving part of that attention to *foreign* and *incidental circumstances*, which a person really interested gives wholly to his own feelings.

The following passage from Shakespeare may serve for an example of the improper use of similes upon trivial occasions. A gardener says to his servant,

Go, bind thou up yon dangling apricocks,  
Which, like unruly children, make their fire  
Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight.  
Give some supportance to the bending twigs.  
Go thou, and, like an executioner,  
Cut off the heads of too-fast-growing sprays,  
That look too lofty in our commonwealth.  
All must be even in our government.

RICHARD II. Act III. Scene 7.

And in the following passage from the Mourning Bride, we see the unreasonableness of direct similes in great agitation of mind:

Zara. The mute not yet return'd. Ha, 'twas the king.  
The king that parted hence, frowning he went.  
His eyes like meteors roll'd, then darted down  
Their red and angry beams, as if his sight

Would,

Would, like the raging Dog-star, scorch the earth,  
And kindle ruin in its course.

Act V. Scene 3.

On the other hand, who doth not readily excuse, in Offian, the easy extension of the following simile to a closely-connected circumstance, though it be foreign to his immediate purpose, and in the midst of a very interesting scene?

“ Where are the mighty kings? Nor by the stream nor wood  
“ are they. I hear the clanging of arms. Their strife is in the  
“ bosom of that mist. Such is the contention of spirits in a  
“ nightly cloud, when they strive for the wintry wings of the  
“ winds, and the rolling of foam-covered waves.”

TEMORA, Book VIII.

Or who, that considered the situation of Cardinal Wolsey, was ever offended at the following mixture of comparison and metaphor which he useth?

Farewel, a long farewell to all my greatness!  
This is the state of man. To-day he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,  
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him:  
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,  
And when he thinks, good easy man! full surely  
His greatness is a ripening, nips his root;  
And then he falls as I do. I have ventured,  
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,  
These many summers on a sea of glory,  
But far beyond my depth. My high-blown pride  
At length broke under me, and now hath left me,

Weary

Weary and old with service, to the mercy  
Of a rude stream that must for ever hide me.

SHAKESPEARE'S HENRY VIII.

And if, in any circumstances, there be nothing forced and unnatural in a person's making a small excursion from the ideas of his own calamitous situation, or in another person's turning his eye for a moment from the view of an interesting scene, much more natural is it to make those digressions in the description of *still scenes*. And these principles show us the reason why extended similes give universally more satisfaction in the description of a still scene, than in the representation of a very active and busy one. In the former case, the mind is in no haste, as we may say, to return to the principal subject; in the latter, it is often impatient of the least diversion from it. Hence it is, with pleasure, that we hear the following extended simile of Milton, in the description of Paradise:

————— Now gentle gales,  
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense  
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole  
Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail  
Beyond the cape of Hope, and now are past  
Mozambic, off at sea, north-east winds blow  
Sabeian odours from the spicy shore  
Of Araby the blest; with such delay  
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league  
Chear'd with the grateful smell, old ocean smiles.

PARADISE LOST, Book IV.

To

To this I shall add another, of a parallel nature, from Virgil, because the propriety of it hath been disputed.

Regina ad templum forma pulcherrima Dido  
Incessit, magna juvenum stipante caterva.  
Talis in Eurotæ ripis, aut per juga Cynthe,  
Exercet Diana choros, quam mille secutæ  
Hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades. Illa pharetram  
Fert humero, gradiensque deas supereminet omnes.  
Latonæ tacitum pertentant gaudia pectus.  
Talis erat Dido, talem se, læta ferebat  
Per medios. ———

ÆNEID, Lib. I. 496.

In this example the comparison is certainly quite completed before the last circumstance respecting Latona; but it is a circumstance so closely connected with the scene in which it is introduced, and the mind of the reader is, from the nature of the scene, so much at liberty, as to admit it with great ease. The scene in which it is introduced doth not return with so much violence as to make us impatient of that unnecessary circumstance. And when this is the case, these little excursions from the principal subject make an agreeable kind of episodes. The mind, as it was naturally led into them by their connection with the scene introduced in the comparison, can feel no want of connection or propriety in the circumstance, and it returns to the principal subject agreeably refreshed, and with renewed ardour.

Provided the reader feel no impatience at the mentioning of those foreign circumstances, the digression to take notice of them can hardly be pronounced faulty, till the last-mentioned circumstance be so remote from the principal object, that the mind cannot,

not.

not, at one easy glance, see the connection; for then, indeed, the *unity of the whole* is lost. They are two quite different and distinct scenes that we are presented with. It is a still greater fault to make so much of a simile, that the attention of the reader shall be more engrossed by it than by the principal and original figure.

However, to take but little notice of any circumstances that are foreign to the principal design of the composition, though pretty closely connected with objects which are introduced for the sake of giving clearer ideas of it, shows that the mind of the writer was very much intent upon his subject. We may add, that it generally shows more of *nature*; whereas a writer, who frequently pursues trains of such foreign ideas, discovers more attention to *art*, and a fondness for *ornament*.

But this remark is by no means to be extended to those similes in which, though they be long, there is no excursion from the points of resemblance; as the following of Homer;

Fierce they drove on, impatient to destroy,  
Troy charged the first, and Hector first of Troy.  
As from some mountain's craggy forehead torn,  
A rock's round fragment flies, with fury borne,  
(Which from the stubborn stone a torrent rends)  
Precipitate the pond'rous mass descends:  
From steep to steep the rolling ruin bounds,  
At every shock the crackling wood resounds.  
Still gathering force, it smokes, and, urged again,  
Whirls, leaps, and thunders down impetuous to the plain,  
There stops.—So Hector, their whole force he proved,  
Resistless when he raged, and when he stop'd unmoved.

ILIAD, Book XIII. 187.

Neither

Neither can Ossian, in the two following similes, be said to be carried away by his imagination beyond the points of resemblance in the objects with which he presents us. Speaking of a general engagement, to which the armies descended from two opposite hills, he adds;

“ At once they plunge in battle. Steel pours its gleam on  
“ steel. Like the fall of streams shone the field, when they mix  
“ their foam together from two dark-browed rocks.” TEMORA,  
Book V.

Describing a hero in the same field of battle, he says;

“ Through the host are the strides of Foldath; like some dark  
“ ship on the wintry waves, when it issues from between two  
“ hills, to sport on the echoing seas.” *Ibidem*.

Perhaps it may be the most adviseable, that writers should endeavour to express nothing more than the points of resemblance in similes. If the objects be considerably different, points of difference enough, for any useful purpose, will necessarily force themselves into the description.

In considering where similes may be used with propriety, it may, perhaps, be laid down as a maxim, that they are the most complete, and give the most pleasure to the imagination, when the two objects compared have a strict resemblance in those points in which the sense of the passage, in which they are introduced, requires that they should resemble, and are as different as possible in every other. In this case, there will be the strongest contrast produced, and the sense of uniformity will be heightened by the contiguity of the points of diversity.

A a

Hence

Hence the peculiar strength of the similes of *Osſian*, who almoſt always illuſtrates human actions by the appearances of inanimate nature. His *woods*, his *beadlong torrents*, his *mists*, his *clouds*, and his *tempeſts*, make a greater figure, and impreſs the mind much more ſtrongly than any ſimilar alluſions to any thing in the brute creation. In what ſituations can we imagine any thing approaching nearer to human life, could, with advantage, take the place of the *ſun* and the *clouds*, in the following paſſage, by which he illuſtrates the manner in which Cathmor ſilences the anger and contention of two of his chiefs?

“ They ſunk from the king on either ſide, like two columns  
“ of morning-miſt, when the ſun riſeth between them on his  
“ glittering rock. Dark is their rolling on either ſide, each  
“ towards its reedy pool.” TEMORA, Book IV.

I am aware of but one exception to this maxim, which is, that an object may be compared to another, which, by the principle of aſſociation, will transfer upon it ideas that ought by no means to be connected with it. Thus, when a very great object is compared to a very trifling and mean one, though they may reſemble in the circumſtances in which the purport of the paſſage, in which the ſimile is introduced, requires them to reſemble; yet, beſides that the deſcent, as it were, of the mind from a great to a mean object, is diſagreeable; thoſe ideas of meaneſs and littleneſs in the object to which the great object is compared, will adhere, in ſome meaſure, to the great object itſelf. Whoſe ideas of the Greeks are not leſſened by the following compariſon, though very juſt, if we conſider the principal deſign of it?

Mean

Mean while the troops, beneath Patroclus' care,  
Invade the Trojans, and commence the war.  
As waſps, provok'd by children in their play,  
Pour from their manſions by the broad high-way,  
In ſwarms the guiltleſs traveller engage,  
Whet all their ſtings, and call forth all their rage:  
All riſe in arms, and with a gen'ral cry  
Aſſert their waxen domes, and buzzing progeny.  
Thus from the tents the fervent legion ſwarms,  
So loud their clamours, and ſo keen their arms.

ILIAD, Book XVI. 312.

For the ſame reaſon, if we intend to give an agreeable representation of any object, we ſhould carefully avoid comparing it to any thing diſagreeable or diſguſting.

It is, therefore, an uſeful general rule, that no object ſhould be compared to any thing but what is, in point of greatneſs or dignity, of nearly equal rank with itſelf; and that, in grave and ſerious compoſition, all compariſons ſhould be rather *above* than *below* the rank of the object to be illuſtrated. To compare a grand object to a low one, as will be obſerved hereafter, makes the *burleſque*; and to compare a low object to a grand one, makes the *mock-heroic*.

It hardly needs be mentioned, in this place, that in no ſimile ſhould any object be introduced that is not *well known*: for if the alluſion be obſcure, how is the ſubject illuſtrated by it?

As the uſe of compariſons is to give ſtrength and colour to ideas, compariſons that are merely *verbal* are certainly abſurd in all ſerious compoſitions. To try whether any be ſo, change the terms for others that are ſynonymous to them. By this means we diſcover the following compariſon in Shakeſpeare to be merely verbal.

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bal.

bal. "In breaking oaths he is stronger than Hercules:" because, if we read, In *forfevering* himself he is stronger than Hercules, there is not the least appearance of similitude in the two ideas left.

But the same reason will not lead us to condemn those comparisons which are termed *figurative*: for, if ideas have obtained the same name on account of their *similarity*, the one may really illustrate the other. Of this nature are many comparisons in Virgil, Ovid, and all the ancient classics; as also in Pope, and others the most correct of our modern poets. Thus Galatea, in Virgil, is said to be *sweeter than the honey of Hybla*. In this case, since the object of the passion of love hath obtained the name of *sweet*, from its raising in us sensations similar to those excited by things which affect the external taste with the sense of sweetness, we are certainly assisted to conceive more strongly of the pleasure the speaker took in the object of his love, by his comparing it to the sweetness of honey.

Indeed, comparisons of this kind occur so frequently in the most serious writers, of all nations, and all ages, that from this circumstance only I think we may reasonably conclude there is a foundation for them in nature. The Psalmist David says, that "the law of God was sweeter to him than honey and the honey-comb;" and that "the poison of asps was under the tongue of his enemies."

However, as we probably catch the first hint of these comparisons from the *words*, they may lead an incautious writer into those comparisons which are merely verbal.

## LECTURE

## LECTURE XXII.

*Of the Nature of METAPHORS.*

A Metaphor hath already been defined, to be a simile contracted to its smallest dimensions. Hence, in using metaphors, the mind makes the least sensible excursion from the ideas that engage its attention. So short is the excursion, that when a metaphor is used, the moment the mind hath catch'd the idea of any resemblance to the thing which it is about to express, it immediately transfers the terms belonging to the foreign object to it, as if they were one and the same thing. So that, in fact, using metaphors is nothing more than giving new names to things.

The advantage of using metaphors is, that we can borrow a name from a thing which contains the quality we mean to express in a greater degree than the subject to which we ascribe it; and by this means can often suggest a stronger idea of a quality than any terms originally appropriated to our subject could convey. Besides, along with the name, other ideas, as of dignity or meanness, agreeableness or disagreeableness, and the like, will be transferred to the object to which it is applied. So that, by means of the complex ideas which accompany the names of things,

things, we can give just what size and colour we please to any thing we are describing.

Moreover, as metaphors are most naturally taken from sensible things, and particularly from visible objects, in perusing a discourse abounding with well-chosen metaphors, the mind is entertained with a succession of agreeably-varied *views* and *landscapes*. And though these prospects be extremely transient, they cannot fail to contribute considerably to a reader's entertainment.

I may add that, though, in some of these respects, a comparison hath the advantage of a metaphor; yet, in one respect, a metaphor gives a more sensible pleasure than a comparison. This arises from the harshness and impropriety there, for a moment, appears to be in the use of a metaphorical instead of a proper term; which increases the satisfaction we instantly receive from approving of the new application of the word. That this contrast between the usual and unusual sense of words is a necessary ingredient in the pleasure we receive from metaphors, is evident; because, when metaphors have, by frequent use, become evanescent, they have no more pleasing effect than the proper names of things; and because, in order to become fully sensible of all the beauty of metaphorical expressions, we must distinctly attend to the original meaning of such terms, at the same time that we perceive their figurative application in the passage before us.

I shall exemplify these observations by that strong and happy metaphor of Virgil, I have mentioned once before, by which he calls the two Scipios *the thunderbolts of war*. This image might have been extended to a long simile; but the situation of the hero did not admit of so great an excursion from his principal

subject. The poet, therefore, having first laid hold of the idea of resemblance as it occurred to his mind, without multiplying the objects of his attention, by expressly comparing his heroes to thunderbolts, calls the heroes themselves the thunderbolts. This was evidently only giving a new name to his heroes, but with this great advantage, that the ideas we conceive of the *rapidity* and *destructive power* belonging to thunderbolts are hereby transferred upon them. At the same time, likewise, the ideas of grandeur accompanying a scene of thunder and lightning, throw a considerable degree of the *sublime* into their characters, and the mind of the reader is entertained with a momentary *prospect* of so solemn and grand a scene in nature. Moreover, along with this, the *opposition* between the two very different senses of the word (which, however harsh it may appear for a moment, we presently see the propriety of) heightens the pleasurable sensation.

Highly ornamental as metaphors are in discourse, it is to *necessity* that we are indebted for the first use of them. It was neither possible, nor convenient, that every different object should have a distinct name. That would have been to multiply words, both to the overburthening of the memory, and the prejudice of science. For it greatly favours the propagation of knowledge to call things that are similar to one another by the same name. Without this there could have been no such thing as general principles, or general knowledge. Now it is one and the same process by which we make general or abstract terms, and by which figurative expressions are invented. The difference is only in degree, not in kind.

Suppose, for instance, we had never seen but one *horse*; unless we give the same name to things that are similar, and even  
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to things that are not in all respects similar, we must have given another name than *horse* to every other animal we should afterwards have met with of the same species: because, not only is it absurd to suppose that any two things are the same, but that any two individuals of the same species should be exactly alike.

If objects differ but little, we give them the same name in what we call a *literal sense*; as, to the *heads*, the *mouths*, the *eyes*, the *hearts*, &c. of men and other animals. To these the same names are so constantly applied, that it is impossible to say to which they originally and properly belonged. In calling these, therefore, by the same names, we say we use no figure; whereas the term *figure* begins to be applied when, however commonly a name may be applied to any thing, it is well known to have been applied to something else originally. For example; it is equally proper and literal to say the *foot of a man*, or the *foot of a beast*, though they differ considerably in form; but the moment we attend to it, we perceive that the *foot of a chair*, or the *foot of a mountain*, is a figurative expression, though it be as common as the other; and we use it a thousand times without being sensible of the figure. In this case the figure is said to be *evanescent*.

When any term is constantly applied to a variety of objects, and it is impossible to say to which of them it belonged originally, though they be considerably different, the definition of that term must be framed so as to comprehend all those ideas. Thus if we define the terms *head*, *mouth*, *eye*, or *foot*, we must express our definition in such a manner, as to be equally applicable to the heads, the mouths, the eyes, or the feet of brute or other animals, as well as to those of men; for the literal meaning of those terms extends to both. But the definition of the  
words

words must not be extended to take in their figurative applications. Thus, it is not necessary that the term *foot* should be defined so as to be applicable to the lower part of a mountain, though the lower part of a mountain be universally called the *foot* of it.

In many cases, however, it will not be easy to determine where the literal sense of a word ends, and where the figurative sense begins; as in the terms *face*, *voice*, *cheeks*, and many others, which have been applied to men and brute animals so promiscuously, that some persons may be inclined to call the application of them to brute animals figurative, while others will contend that it is literal: whereas, in other cases, the analogy is so faint, that the same term cannot, without a sensible harshness, be applied to the different objects; as when trees are called the *hair of mountains*, or the walls of cities their *cheeks*.

This harsh metaphor is by philosophers called *catachresis*. Of this kind we may term that expression of Milton's denoting the passage of Satan from hell to this world, *sails between world and world*.

From this it appears that there is a gradation in metaphors, proceeding from those in which the analogy between two objects is so great, that the figure is evanescent, through all the different degrees of resemblance, till we come to those in which the analogy is scarce perceptible, and consequently the metaphor is harsh and unnatural: and all the rules concerning the use of metaphors must have respect to this gradation.

It is worth while, however, to take notice, how much it is in the power of custom to soften the harshness of metaphors. And in nothing, perhaps, is the authority of custom more arbitrary and capricious. In some cases the application of the same name



to things is quite familiar, where the resemblance is very obscure; and, in other cases, where there is the strongest resemblance between the two things, it would give the greatest offence to an ear formed by custom to hear them called by the same name. Who would not make himself ridiculous by confounding the terms appropriated by use to the voices of different animals; as the *lowing of the ox*, the *bleating of sheep*, and the *barking of the dog*? And yet who ever calls a part of the sea running up into the land by any other name than that of *an arm of the sea*, though the resemblance it bears in shape, or use, to the human arm is extremely faint? In like manner, have we any other name for the two extremities of an army than the figurative one of *wings*, though they resemble wings no more than they do *horns*, by which, indeed, the Greeks and Romans most frequently expressed them?

In arranging figures, therefore, according to their several degrees, between the extremes of what hath been termed evanescence on the one hand, and what is called bold and harsh on the other, we must by no means be governed by a regard to the *analogy of things* only; but must, along with this, consider the arbitrary decisions of *custom*, in the idioms of particular languages. Thus we must say, that such expressions as *an arm of the sea*, and the *wings of an army*, are nearly literal, and scarce deserve the name of figures, though the resemblance be very small; as well as the *wings of the flying fish*, and the *horns of an altar*, where the resemblance is very great; but that such phrases as the *wings of the wind*, and the *bosom of the sea*, are highly figurative, though they have a much better foundation in the analogy of nature. The case is, that the former are used so frequently, that, whether the resemblance be greater or less, they

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are little more than common names of things, and when we use them, we never think whence they were borrowed; whereas the latter are seldom used, and never without our perceiving whence they were borrowed. And it was observed before, that it is essential to the pleasure we receive from a metaphor, that we, at the same time, perceive distinctly the two different applications of the same term.

## LECTURE XXIII.

*Rules for the Use of METAPHORS; and of ALLEGORIES.*

HAVING explained the nature of metaphors, and traced the sources of the pleasure we receive from them, I proceed to lay down rules for the proper *use* of them. These will be easily deduced from the preceding account of their nature and end.

Since metaphors are used to give strength and colour, as it were, to ideas, we naturally use them when our own ideas are peculiarly *vivid*, and when, consequently, we wish to communicate the same ideas, in the same strength, to the minds of others. They are, therefore, very properly put into the mouth of a person under any emotion of mind; and the stronger are his emotions, the bolder figures he naturally uses. The truth of this observation may be verified every day: for, if we take notice, we shall find that we never hear any man either speak with vehemence, or converse when his mind is in a gay and lively humour, without using frequent metaphors. When our own ideas are very vivid, they naturally, by association, suggest ideas of objects in which they exist in greater strength; and these we instantly transfer upon the objects we are describing, in order to give ideas of them to others more similar and adequate to our own. Thus some kinds of *pain* will often suggest the similar idea of *burning*,  
and

and we instantly cry out, *we burn*. In such a situation of mind, terms appropriated to the objects we are describing, would not suggest our ideas of them to another person in sufficient strength. Without looking abroad, it is curious to observe in what different manners we feel ourselves disposed to say things according to the humour we are in; in what plain terms we speak when our minds are languid, and how metaphorically when we have a flow of spirits.

Metaphors must, for this reason, be absurd, when a man's ideas and sensations are not peculiarly vivid. For a man to use figures then, would be to endeavour to convey stronger (which is, in fact, *other*) ideas to the minds of the persons he is speaking to, than he conceives himself. Of this we have some diverting examples in the *Treatise on the Balbos*. It will, likewise, be found exemplified in the passage which was quoted to show a like improper use of comparisons.

The most important rule respecting the choice of metaphors, where they are proper, is, that different metaphors should not be confounded together in the same sentence: because, in this case, the sense, if it be realized in the imagination, will appear to imply an *absurdity*. And, since every new application of a word that hath the effect of a metaphor, doth raise an idea of the object to which it was primarily affixed, for the same reason that every scene presented to the mind of the reader should be, at least, *possible*, and consistent, these pieces of scenery, though ever so transient, should be so too; and when there is a manifest inconsistency in such little pictures, a reader of taste is justly offended. Out of the numberless examples I might produce of this fault in writers, I shall select the following from Shakespeare, in which the marriage of King John with Constance is referred to.

For

For by this knot thou shalt so surely tie  
Thy now unfured assurance to the crown,  
That yon green boy shall have no sun to ripe  
The bloom that promises a mighty fruit.

KING JOHN.

Here it may justly be asked, how can the *tying a knot* prevent the sun's *ripening fruit*? The King's marriage with Constance is certainly very properly expressed by tying a knot; and, as that event would cut off the reasonable hopes that Arthur might otherwise entertain of succeeding to the throne, this is likewise beautifully described by saying he would then have *no sun to ripen the bloom which promised a mighty fruit*. But though these metaphors, when viewed asunder, appear proper and beautiful, when they are joined, the result is a manifest absurdity.

Not only should writers avoid the near union of different terms which are highly metaphorical, they should also favour the imagery which metaphors raise in the mind, by intermixing no plain and natural expressions with them. Thus, in the passage quoted above, the *boy* should have been kept out of sight, and the *tree* or *plant* have been substituted in its place for the *sun* to act upon. In this view, likewise, the author of the *Bathos* justly censures the following lines of Blackmore:

A waving sea of heads around them spread,  
And still fresh streams the gazing deluge fed.

For when a *crowd of people* are, by the power of figure, metamorphosed into a *deluge*, it is destroying the agreeable illusion too soon, and raises an inconsistency in our ideas, to give *eyes* to it; though the objects that composed this metaphorical deluge really had eyes.

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And.

And yet, to show how delicate this affair is, and what extreme attention it requires wholly to avoid this fault, we may observe, that this same hypercritical writer, even while he is upon the subject, falls into it himself.

“ Thus an ingenious artist, painting the spring, talks of a “ snow of blossoms, and thereby raises an unexpected picture of “ winter.”—But how can a *picture be raised* by a person's *talking* of any thing while he is painting?

Indeed, the frequency of inaccuracies of this kind, where the figure is not strong, and the little notice that is, notwithstanding, taken of them by the generality of readers, show that they are of very little consequence. The case is, that the images which such metaphors present, are seen but for a moment, and then very obscurely; so that, though there may be some little inconsistency in them, in such a transient view they easily pass unnoticed. It is only when we expressly *attend* to these faint metaphors, and by a direct effort of the mind draw out the scene at large, and thereby, as we may say, raise and heighten all the colours of it, that the impropriety is observed. But how few do this? and, are critics so minutely employed worthy the notice of a writer?

When a figure is become absolutely evanescent, and long use hath made the metaphorical term more familiar than the proper name of the thing, or circumstance denoted by it, it is pains employed to very little purpose to trace out the long-forgotten allusion, in order to show its *latent inconsistency* with any thing it is connected with. Who can expect that such phrases as these, *fallen into an error*, to *spend time* upon a thing, to be *incensed at* a person, &c. should be used with any regard to the latent figure they contain.

contain. It is impossible however for any person to construct many sentences without exposing himself to the same censure; terms which are ultimately figurative abound so much in all languages. All our intellectual ideas are expressed in terms borrowed from sensible things; but who, in using them, attends to the sensible images they may suggest? Or, whoever attends to ideas of *local position*, which every *preposition* implies?

I may add, that the persons who are the most liable to these inaccuracies, are those who are the most perfectly acquainted with a language, and to whom the terms and idioms of it are the most familiar. For, by frequent use, the latent figurative sense of a word is wholly overlooked, and such a figurative expression suggests nothing but the idea of the object intended to be illustrated by it. However, nothing in criticism requires less judgment and ability than to discover these little inaccuracies, if a man will look so low. Such minute critics are finely exposed in a paper of the Tatler.

So remote are the two extremes in the vividness of metaphors, that the evanescent require no attention at all to their connection with other ideas; whereas the boldest and strongest require so much, that not only do they introduce confusion when they are *intermixed*, but they even give pain and disgust when they *succeed* one another at very short intervals. When metaphors raise very vivid and distinct ideas of foreign scenes, to change them very fast, is like hurrying us from one part of the creation to another, with a rapidity that gives us pain.

An easy and good test, in most cases, of the propriety of strong metaphors, is to imagine them reduced to *painting*, and consider how the images would look in that mode of expression. A person of a  
lively

lively imagination naturally doth this, and consequently to him improprieties in metaphors appear much more disgusting than they do to other persons, to whom they suggest the idea of the scene, from which they were borrowed, very faintly. To a person of this lively turn of mind, who easily recurs to the original scenes from which metaphors are drawn, the following string of metaphors, in an exquisite poem of Pope's (though, singly taken, they be uncommonly happy) as they succeed one another without any interval, may possibly have a disagreeable effect:

What is this *absorbs* me quite,  
*Steals* my senses, *shuts* my sight?  
*Drinks* my spirits, *draws* my breath?  
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

Though there should be no inconsistency in imagining the same thing to have the different properties of *absorbing*, *stealing*, *shutting*, *drinking*, and *drawing*; yet the ideas of these several actions can hardly be brought so near one another without confusion, if the images be a little raised by an attention to them.

As metaphors are contracted similes, they must necessarily have many excellencies and defects in common with them. Of this kind are the following. The most striking metaphors, or those which give the most sensible pleasure, are those in which there is perceived at first the greatest difference between the two ideas that are signified by the same word, and afterwards the greatest resemblance. From this source, chiefly, is derived the charm of the following metaphors, a *gay thought*, a *bright expression*, the *wings of the wind*, the *impervious ocean*: though the two first have the additional advantage of being allusions to *objects of sight*, which are always peculiarly distinct and pleasing; and the last gives us, likewise, the idea of

*human sentiments*, which will be mentioned hereafter as a distinct pleasing object. This rule is to be understood with the same exception, as the rule similar to it respecting comparisons.

Shakespeare uses a low and degrading metaphor when he makes King John exhort the people of Angiers to *save unscratched their city's threatened cheeks*; meaning that they should save their walls from being battered.

The allusion is merely verbal, when, in the same play, Constance, lying on the ground, is made to say,

——— For my grief's so great,  
That no support but the huge firm earth  
Can bear it up.

Figures of this sort are nothing more than *puns*; for the sense of the passage depends upon the double-meaning of the word. Grief is said to be supported in a figurative sense, but the earth supports things in a literal sense.

ALLEGORIES are continued metaphors; that is, they are descriptions of certain objects in terms borrowed from others: so that though one set of objects only be named, whenever allegories be used, there must be a constant attention to the similar properties of them both. The following account of the sons of Edward in Shakespeare's *Richard the Second* is allegorical:

Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself art one,  
Were seven fair branches springing from one root.  
Some of these branches by the destinies cut:  
But Thomas, my dear lord, my life, my Glo'ster,  
One flourishing branch of his most royal root,  
Is hacked down, and his summer leaves all faded,  
By Envy's hand, and Murder's bloody axe.

All

All the rules respecting propriety and consistency that are necessary to be observed in metaphors, are equally requisite in allegories! They differ only in this; that allegories, in common with comparisons, imply a considerable excursion of the mind from the principal object of its thoughts; and therefore, though a man in the greatest agitation of mind would not refuse a metaphor, he may easily be supposed to have his thoughts so much engaged as not to be at liberty to attend so particularly to a foreign object, as is necessary in order to note *many points of resemblance*, and make an allegory. Allegories, therefore, as well as comparisons, are the language of men tolerably composed, or only moderately elevated. The following allegorical speech of Calista, in the *Fair Penitent*, is unnatural:

Is it the voice of thunder, or my father?  
Madness! confusion! Let the storm come on;  
Let the tumultuous roar drive all upon me;  
Dash my devoted bark. Ye furies, break it.  
'Tis for my ruin that the tempest rises.  
When I am lost, sunk to the bottom low,  
Peace shall return, and all be calm again,

FAIR PENITENT, ACT IV.

It requires uncommon skill and caution to conduct a long allegory with propriety; because few things are analogous in many respects, at the same time that they are sufficiently different to make the analogy pleasing. Moreover, it is very difficult to make an allusion intelligible, and at the same time never name the thing we mean in direct terms, which we must by all means avoid; as it would introduce the greatest confusion into the metaphor.

C c 2

Bunyan,

Bunyan, whose invention was certainly very fertile, has often forgotten himself, and helped out his wire-drawn allegories by the thing allegorized. Thus, describing the passage of Christian and Hopeful through the river which represents death, he introduces some persons telling them they would find it deeper or shallower "according to their faith in the Lord of the place to which they were going."

Dryden's Hind and Panther contains much of the same absurd mixture of allegory and the thing allegorized. "What relation" (says Lord Halifax in his remarks upon it) "has the Hind to our Saviour? or what notion have we of a Panther's title? If you say he means the Church, how doth the Church feed on lawns, or range in the forest? Let it be always a Church, or always a cloven-footed beast; for we cannot bear this shifting the scene every line."

LECTURE

## LECTURE XXIV.

Of CONTRAST in general, and particularly of Wit, the risible, and the ridiculous.

HAVING considered the pleasure we receive from the exercise of our faculties, and all those pleasures of taste in which it is a principal ingredient, we pass to another medium of pleasure in works of genius and imagination, viz. CONTRAST. And it the more naturally solicits our attention in this place, as we have seen that it hath a considerable share in the pleasure arising from comparisons and metaphors, which were last treated of.

Indeed, I shall have no objection to any person's considering contrast as one particular manner in which our minds are strongly affected.

If two objects, in any respect similar, present themselves to our view at the same time, we naturally expect, and, as it were, wish to find a *complete resemblance* in them; and we are, in some measure, surprized and disappointed to find them different. This disposition to make every thing perfect and *complete in its kind*, will be taken notice of, and farther illustrated, in its proper place hereafter. Here then, as in all other cases of *surprize and disappointment*, our attention is strongly engaged to the circumstances in which the two objects differ, as strongly as it was at first engaged

gaged to those in which they agreed; so that the same principle, by which we are led to make every thing *complete*, now leads us to enlarge and extend the circumstances in which they differ. These, in their turn, will make the circumstances of resemblance appear surprizing. And thus the mind will naturally turn its attention alternately to the circumstances of *resemblance* and those of *difference* with great celerity, and both will have the advantage of being considerably augmented. In all this time, the *surprize*, the quick *succession of thought*, and the *enlargement of our ideas*, cannot fail to introduce a pleasureable state of mind. I may add, that the greater is the resemblance in some things, and the greater the difference in others, the more sensible will the effect be, and the greater the pleasure resulting from it. These observations any person may exemplify to himself, by viewing at the same time even two houses, two gardens, or two trees of the same kind, that are very different in size. In this position they both affect us more sensibly and more pleasurablely than if they had been viewed separately, when their resemblance and their difference had not been so apparent, or so perfectly ascertained.

A familiar example will serve to make us sensible how necessary strong circumstances of resemblance are to make us feel the greatest effect of the circumstances of difference. A *dog* is not considered as diminutive with respect to an *elephant*; though, therefore, they be placed ever so near together, our ideas of the elephant are not raised, nor our ideas of the dog diminished. We did not expect they should be equal. But upon introducing another dog considerably larger than the former, we immediately cry out, What a prodigious large dog! while the other appears to our imagination less than he did before. Our surprize, and,

consequently, the imagined disproportion between the two dogs becomes greater, if we be told, or perceive, that they are of the same kind, as both mastiffs, both greyhounds, &c.; and both these effects are sensibly greater still, if we be told they are of the same litter. The same use may be made of our observation of the differences in the persons, the abilities, the fortunes, and tempers of men of the same nation, the same family, the same parents, the same education, and the same external advantages.

In all these cases, any extraordinary quality of an object is, in a great measure, lost upon us, unless it be perceived in conjunction with a very different degree of the same quality. Indeed, if we only consider that the ideas of *great* and *little* are only relative, and the terms comparative, we might conclude, that they must have their most sensible effect, whatever it is, when they are viewed in circumstances the most favourable for that comparison, and where the relation of which they consist may be perceived with the most advantage.

We see, likewise, that the effects of all kinds of contrasts are the strongest in persons of a lively imagination, and to the same person when his apprehension is the quickest; because, by a lively and vigorous imagination, two different objects are comprehended with the most ease: consequently the ideas of their relation are peculiarly strong, and make the greatest figure.

I shall add another observation or two. Our relish for *novelty* and *surprize* contributes not a little to the pleasure we feel upon perceiving strong resemblances in things that differ, and differences in things that resemble one another. For it is very observable, that every species of contrast affects us much more sensibly the first time we perceive it, than ever it doth afterwards. We are sensible, likewise, that it requires considerable *sagacity* and

and *ingenuity* to discern many of those unexpected *resemblances* and differences, which, in a manner that will be explained hereafter, is another considerable ingredient in the pleasure we receive from those contrasts.

One remarkable consequence of perceiving some species of contrasts, particularly in persons of an irritable constitution, is *laughter*; of which it will be proper, therefore, to give some account in this place. Laughter, when it first appears in children (according to that profound observer of human nature, Dr. Hartley) is a *nascent cry*, raised by pain, or the apprehension of pain, suddenly checked, and repeated at very short intervals. These alternate momentary fears and momentary joys are very observable in the laughter of young children when they are tickled. Afterwards, the same automatic motions and gestures of which laughter consists become associated with less and less *similar causes* perpetually. Then almost any brisk emotion or surprise, suddenly checked, and recurring alternately, will produce it; and at last any strong opposition, or contrast, in things, whether they be personally interested in them or not. When we are advanced in life, a variety of passions, and a regard to decorum, check the propensity to laughter; whereas many idiots continue to laugh upon the slightest occasions imaginable.

This progress is exactly similar to many other processes in human nature, whereby a variety of the same motions and gestures become associated with causes that are slighter and slighter continually, till at last any thing bearing the faintest resemblance to the original cause will be sufficient to excite them. In this case, the extreme celerity with which the attention is reflected from the circumstances of resemblance to those of difference, alternately,

ternately, upon the perception of a contrast, coincides remarkably with the quick successive pulses in a fit of laughter.

The laughter, and all the pleasure arising from the contrast, ceases, when the mind, after vibrating, as it were, between the points of resemblance and difference, at length rests in the medium; and then the inconsistency, which was so striking at the first view, no longer affects us. These effects may, however, be revived after some interval, especially if, by an express effort of our minds, we endeavour to magnify the circumstances of resemblance and difference. But when the bounds of the resemblance and of difference are perfectly known, and every idea belonging to the subject is anticipated by the mind, the moment they are mentioned, the repetition of them produces very languid effects, in comparison of the first sensation. The *surprise* is then over. Hence, books of jests, apophthegms, or any species of mere *wit*, are seldom read a second time. They will only bear to be repeated in *company*, and in fresh company, for a reason that will be mentioned presently.

This *contrast*, the nature and general effects of which have now been explained, human genius hath diversified, and branched out, into a great variety of pleasing scenes, by varying the *subjects* and the *degrees* of it. To this we must not only allow the considerable share that hath been ascribed to it in *metaphors*, and other sources of pleasure in works of genius, that have been or will be mentioned, but must acknowledge that we are principally indebted to it for the pleasure we receive from *antitheses*, from objects that are *risible*, or *ridiculous*, from the *mock-heroic*, *burlesque*, *parody*, *irony*, *repartee*, *wit*, *humour*, *ridles*, and *puns*; with many other entertainments of the same kind, for which we have no distinct name.



Indeed, the terms of criticism do so little correspond to all the varieties of the divisions and subdivisions of this copious subject, and have been used with so little uniformity and precision by critics; that, in order to avoid confusion, I shall generally describe the several feelings and occasions of them, in the first place, and afterwards mention terms by which I apprehend they may be most conveniently denoted. In this case, the terms may be applied differently at pleasure, without controverting the principles advanced in these lectures; which will be laid down, independent of the use of any *words* whatever. And as a great part of what has been written upon this subject has been to fix the use of words, this method will reduce the subject, thus separated from the disputes about words, into a small compass, and we shall have a much clearer and more beautiful view of all the degrees and variations of it.

To make the easier transition to this subject of opposition or contrast, from that of metaphors, which derive a considerable part of their beauty from this source, I shall try the effect of contrast in a single epithet, in which a word is used in a meaning seemingly quite contrary to its usual sense, and yet with sufficient analogy to make it extremely pleasing.

Mr. Spence, in his excellent essay upon the *Odyssey*, speaking of the candour and generosity of the ancient critics, and of the envy, ill-nature, and captiousness of those among the moderns who bear that name, says, *Zoilus was the only modern critic among the ancients*. That the beauty of this expression depends upon the seeming opposition between the usual sense of the word *modern*, and that which must be given to it here, is very evident; for only change the words, and say, "Zoilus was the only cri-

"tic

"tic among the ancients whose temper resembled that of the "moderns;" and though the sense remains the same, the spirit and poignancy of the expression is gone.

If it will assist us to analyze our thoughts and feelings upon this subject, I shall cite a few more thoughts and expressions which have a similar effect. Pliny, in his panegyric addressed to Trajan, says, *Solus omnium pater patriæ esse antequam fieres*. The same author, speaking concerning Trajan's entry into Rome, says, that *some* proclaimed aloud that *they had seen enough after they had seen you*; and others, again, that *they must live longer*. The peculiarly-fine effect of this passage arises from such different sentiments being formed, with equal appearance of reason, from the same event. It is as if the same cause produced opposite effects. To mention only one example more; Cicero says to Cæsar, *You forget nothing but injuries*. We see where the beauty of this thought lies, the moment we reflect that other men forget every thing else sooner than injuries.

In the two former of these examples, there is an opposition both in the *sense* and in the *words*; in the two latter there is nothing verbal. Such oppositions of ideas, or of the different senses of words, may tend to produce a *smile*, but I think not sensibly enough to make them be termed *risible*. If the ingenuity capable of discovering such oppositions as appear in these expressions, will not be termed *wit*, it is because the subject of them is too *serious*, and not diverting enough to entitle them to it.

It is certain, that if the subject be very *serious*, notwithstanding there be the happiest mixture of resemblance and diversity, and the most unexpected in the world, we never *smile* or think

of applying the term *wit* to it. Of this we may make experiment in the following admirable lines of Mr. Pope :

All nature is but art unknown to thee ;  
 All chance, direction which thou can't not see.  
 All discord, harmony not understood ;  
 All partial evil, universal good.

In this passage, the same objects present us, in one view, with the idea of *nature*, in another of *art* ; in one of *chance*, in another of *design* ; in one of *discord*, in another of *harmony* ; in one of *evil*, and in another of *good*. This passage, therefore, by the strong opposition which it exhibits of the properties, not only of similar, but of the same objects, as viewed by different minds ; and in different lights, bears a considerable resemblance to the passages quoted above, in which the same things are called by different names ; but the extreme seriousness of the subject checks every tendency to smile, and with this, I think, the passage will lose the name of *wit*, in the modern use of the word. For it must be noted, that formerly the use of this term was much more extensive, and was applied, without scruple, to every observation which shewed ingenuity, whether diverting or serious.

I shall readily allow the following passage, quoted before from Mr. Pope, to be truly sublime ::

Who sees with equal eye, as God of all ;  
 A hero perish, or a sparrow fall ;  
 Atoms, or systems, into ruin hurl'd ;  
 And now a bubble bursts, and now a world.

I quote it again, in order to show, by comparing it with the following passage, the very different effects of contrasts, similar in every respect, except the *dignity of their subject*.

This day black omens threat the brightest fair,  
 That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care.  
 Some dire disaster, or by force or flight ;  
 But what, or where, the Fates have wrapt in night.  
 Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,  
 Or some frail china jar receive a flaw ;  
 Or stain her honour, or her new brocade ;  
 Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade ;  
 Or lose her heart, or necklace at a ball ;  
 Or whether heav'n has doom'd that Shock must fall ?

RAPE OF THE LOCK, Canto II.

The *opposition of ideas* is equally strong and pointed in both these passages. But, in the former, the tendency to *smile*, which the opposition of ideas simply considered would raise, is overruled by the *sublime*, which the grandeur of the subject excites ; in the latter, which, if I mistake not, will be universally acknowledged to be a specimen of refined *wit* and *humour*, it is not. Moreover, is not the term *humour* applied to it, on account of its being *diverting under the appearance of gravity*, seeming to represent trifles as of the same importance with things of infinitely greater consequence ? as it is termed *wit*, because the subject is *gay*, and easily admits a *smile*.

An object that is purely and simply *risible*, is any thing in which there is perceived a great *incongruity* or *disproportion*, provided the object, at the same time that it is of some consequence, be not capable of exciting a more serious emotion. As a man with

with an immoderate long nose, or a very short one (no nose at all would raise our horror) a rich dress with a dirty rag tied to it, and a group of risible objects, may be seen in the following passages from Hudibras, Canto I.

When of his hose we come to treat,  
The cupboard where he kept his meat,  
His puffed sword unto his side  
Near his undaunted heart was tied,  
With basket-hilt that would hold broth,  
And serve for fight and dinner both.  
When it had stabb'd or broke a head,  
It would scrape trenchers, or chip bread,  
Toast cheese or bacon, though it were  
To bait a mouse-trap, 'twould not care:  
'Twould make clean shoes, and in the earth  
Set leeks and onions, and so forth.

It is needless to point out the opposition between the proper uses of the things here mentioned, and those they are supposed to be put to, which makes a scene so highly diverting. It is said above, that the circumstances which occasion laughter must be of *some consequence*: for we frequently see the greatest inconsistencies in things that are wholly *indifferent* to us, without feeling the least provocation to laugh.

But the most frequent, and the most abundant scenes of mirth and laughter, are incongruities relating to *human sentiments*, which some distinguish by the name of *improprieties*. Such are the blunders and mistakes, the false taste, the absurd speeches and actions of some of our own species. Whenever *design* enters into

any thing that occasions mirth, the person that laughs seems to entertain a slight degree of *contempt* for the object of his mirth, and in that respect feels an agreeable consciousness of his own superiority over him. This circumstance of a degree of contempt consistent with laughter, added to a risible object, seems to intitle it to the character of *ridiculous*.

That a consciousness of *self-esteem* really enters into the feeling of *ridicule*, I think is manifest, from the peculiar pleasure that is universally taken in repeating diverting incidents *in company*. Very often the same person will hardly ever be weary of entertaining different companies with the same diverting stories; and such stories seem to be told with the same kind of satisfaction with which persons obliquely hint their own praises. This supposition is, likewise, favoured by the observation, that persons, who are remarkable for their vanity and love of praise, take the most sensible pleasure in every thing into which ridicule enters; and that men of very great humility, candour, and benevolence, are not easily provoked to laugh at the foibles of their fellow-creatures. And since all valuable *politeness* is founded upon humility and benevolence; hence, directly to ridicule any body is now thought, by persons of the best taste, to be inconsistent with true politeness.

Objects truly ridiculous are such as *pride in rags*, *conceit in ignorance*, and *hypocrisy in gravity*, a violent passion raised by a trifling cause, and great disproportion between the means and the ends of human actions. Hence we laugh at the schemes of the Laputans, to extract sun-beams from cucumbers, to make books by a machine, and to soften marble for pillows and pincushions. Also it is the opposition between words and sense, that raises the laugh at those blunders in speech which are known by the name

of *bulls*; and it is the opposition between the subject and the language, that makes us consider a sublime subject treated in a low style, and a mean subject in a lofty style, as equally ridiculous.

In reality, *men* can hardly be the object of a laugh, that is not more or less a laugh of *derision*, and is excited by the ridiculous strictly so called; because we connect the idea of *design* with every thing belonging to men. Thus a little man wearing a long sword, or a rich coat covering dirty linen, are objects that are rather ridiculous, than merely risible.

Even in a mere *personification*, if but a distant resemblance of the sentiments, actions, and characters of human beings, be perceived in brute creatures, we may have feelings very similar to those excited by *the ridiculous* among our own species. This we may have been sensible of in our observation of the *pride of a turkey-cock*, the *gravity of the owl*, and the *tricks of a monkey*, and of a variety of animals trained up for diversion. To a lively imagination, prone as we are to personification, there may occur objects really ridiculous, even in the inanimate creation. It is, perhaps, owing to our imagination being so prone to personification, that objects risible and ridiculous have been so generally confounded. Or perhaps, rather, we never do laugh (except we be provoked to it mechanically) but when we, secretly at least, personify the object of our laughter, and so the risible and ridiculous may differ only in degree, and not in kind.

It seems to favour this hypothesis, that we view many objects and scenes in which are great incongruities, and which are neither adapted to excite any great or serious emotion, nor can be said to be absolutely of no consequence to us, at which we, notwithstanding, perceive no inclination to laugh; as when a botanist

nist finds a well-known plant in an unexpected place. And, in general, though the attention of the curious be strongly drawn to such objects as we call *lusus naturæ*, and they seem to excite no sentiment capable of stifling a laugh, if it were strongly prompted; yet, though in the eye of a virtuoso, a *lusus naturæ* bears every characteristic that is usually given of a risible object, no inclination to laugh is felt; unless, in a gay humour, we secretly personify such objects, and wonder how the *strangers came there*, and what is their *business*.

If this observation be just, we shall be able to determine what particular kind and degree of consequence an object, in other respects risible, must be of, in order to move laughter; viz. it must produce a *personification*. Then, if any incongruity attend it, and it be not capable of exciting a serious emotion, the tendency to laugh will be inevitable. However, lest this observation should not be found to be universally just, the definition in the former part of the lecture is left to stand in more general terms.

To shew that any serious emotion will destroy the property we call either risible or ridiculous in objects, we may consider the case of *Sancho Panca* fallen into a hole, which he took to be a deep pit, in the dark, and clinging to the sides with his hands and feet, in the utmost dread of being dashed to pieces, and all the while within a foot of the bottom. This, especially considering the character of the man, is certainly an object highly *risible*. Perhaps no person could have refrained from laughing, if he had found him in that situation; yet, if we had seen him in the same posture, and his danger had been real; or, perhaps, if we had found any person for whom we entertained a higher kind of respect, in the same situation, and without danger, we should not

have been disposed to laugh at all. Our *anxiety* and *concern* in the former case, and our *respect* in the latter, would have overpowered it.

We, likewise, see that, in persons of little serious religion, and great levity of mind, nothing will excite more profuse laughter, than the application of passages of Scripture to very foreign and ludicrous purposes; whereas the same thing will strike every serious person, who entertains a profound veneration for the Scriptures, with the greatest horror; or if the greatness and unexpectedness of the contrast should, in spite of himself, as it were, surprize him into a laugh, he will soon recollect himself, and be very uneasy about it. We, likewise, see every day, that the same views provoke only the laughter and ridicule of some persons, and the serious indignation of others.

## LECTURE

## LECTURE XXV.

Of BURLESQUE, PARODY, *the* MOCK-HEROIC, HUMOUR,  
and IRONY.

TO make a sudden transition from a very high to a very low object that is similar to it, though such a transition be in itself disagreeable, yet, by means of the contrast which it produces, it may affect the mind with a lively sense of pleasure. This we may perceive in the following lines of Butler:

The sun had long since in the lap  
Of Thetis taken out his nap;  
And, like a lobster boil'd, the morn  
From black to red began to turn.

Hud. Part II. Cant. II. Ver. 29.

This effect is called *burlesque*; and a great object degraded in this manner, and placed in the same light with a mean and contemptible one, is said to be burlesqued; the meaning of which is, that the ideas of meanness annexed to the lesser object are, by this comparison, transferred to the greater, and adhere to it by association. These transferred ideas, being the reverse of the sublime, destroy the effect of every thing similar to it in the idea

of a great object; and the consequence is, that the great object is afterwards mentioned with less respect and reverence than it was before.

A *Parody*; which is the application of a passage of any author to a foreign, and generally lower purpose, is a kind of burlesque of a grave and serious writer: and consequently parodies have often an unfavourable effect upon the original author. For those foreign allusions will often occur in reading the original passage, and prevent it from having its proper and intended effect.

For this reason, if it be a matter of importance to preserve our reverence for any writings (as, for instance, the scriptures) it is advisable not to listen to such ludicrous applications of them. The unhappy effect of such applications is never wholly lost, till the allusion be forgotten. Should the allusion even miss of its usual effect upon light minds, and raise horror and indignation at the first hearing, it may not find the mind in so favourable a disposition every time that it occurs; or if it do, still, as the sentiments of *indignation* are foreign to the design of the passage, it is desirable that nothing even of that kind come in view when we read it.

Neither art, science, profession, character, nor any thing else, however venerable or respectable, is exempt from the power of ridicule; because there is no setting bounds to those analogies in nature or art which give rise to it. We see the greatest things analogous to the least, and the least to the greatest, without end or limit: inasmuch that it is impossible to name an object in any class of things (let us make the distribution of them as we please) but some other object may be found analogous to it in any other class, even the most remote we can think of. And whenever these

these analogies are brought into view, the result is an alteration in the ideas of both the objects in which the analogy is perceived, occasioned by the reciprocal influences of the one upon the other. They are universally either increased or diminished, raised or depressed, &c. and the effect is more or less permanent, in proportion as the analogy is more or less striking. This effect is the same, whether the objects be brought together in order to be *compared* or *contrasted*, because *analogy* is the foundation of both, and they differ only in this, that when things are compared, the points of *resemblance* are chiefly attended to; whereas, when they are contrasted, the circumstances of *difference* are principally noted. But it is necessary, in order to their producing their respective effects, that the circumstances of difference be attended to in the former case, and those of resemblance in the latter.

Considering how far and how wide analogies extend themselves through all the parts of nature; how possible is it that an object, the most respectable in the world, may be discovered to be so analogous, in some respects, to another, even the most contemptible, that the oddness of the contrast shall produce a laugh? May not the most serious and sensible passage of any author whatever be applied to a purpose so foreign, and yet so similar to its original use, as infallibly to produce the same effect? But should we, notwithstanding this, in our *judgments* (however our *imagination*s might, for a time, be imposed upon) entertain a lower idea either of the object, or of the passage that was thus burlesqued? How then is *ridicule the test of truth*? It requires only an attention to the nature of contrast to refute the fallacy. Ridicule can only discover contrasts capable of producing a laugh; and, considering the levity and irritability of some persons minds,

there:

*And so forth*

there is nothing in nature but what hath connections and analogies which produce contrasts capable of doing it.

The grave and respectable character of Socrates was so effectually turned into ridicule by Aristophanes, that it was not in the power of any of his friends to forbear laughing at his expence. It is even said that he himself could not refrain from smiling: though that might be affected in him, in order to turn off the edge of the ridicule. However, there seems to be no reason why a person, in whom pride or vanity doth not greatly predominate, may not laugh at himself; since it is only the sense of *honour* being wounded that makes us insensible of the pleasures of contrast, when we ourselves are the subject of it.

If nothing affected the sense of ridicule but inconsistencies of *opinions* with *truth*, it would bid fair to be the test of truth. It is true, that such inconsistencies *do* affect that sense, and appear ridiculous; but what makes it indeterminate, and of no use in this case, is, that a variety of analogies, contrasts, and comparisons, which imply no inconsistency with truth, do likewise affect us in a similar manner. For it requires nothing but that two objects, or two parts of the same object, seen at the same time, be very like in some things, and very unlike in others, in order to excite the sense of ridicule. The dress and customs of Asiatics appear ridiculous to Europeans, and those of Europeans to Asiatics; but doth it follow from thence that there is any *real impropriety* in either, any thing contrary to the nature, fitness, and truth of things?

Besides, we see that the same things affect different persons in a very different manner, according to the previous state of their minds: so that, before nothing but *falsehood* could affect the mind with the sense of ridicule, it is necessary that all a person's  
previous

previous notions be just. For it is an inconsistency with what we apprehend to be truth that appears ridiculous to us. Thus, no doubt, the opinion of Copernicus, that the earth had a revolution both about its own axis, and about the sun, would be received with ridicule when it was first published; and if mankind had acquiesced in that test, that certain truth would have been exploded, without farther examination. It is reversing the order of nature to *judge* in consequence of *laughing*. It is evident, we ought rather to forbear laughing till we have employed our judgment, to see whether we have reason to laugh or not.

But though ridicule be not the test of truth, it hath very considerable uses. For as every laugh is made at the expence, and to the prejudice of the thing, or character, that is ridiculed, it makes us solicitous to keep ourselves, and every thing we revere, from the edge of it, which can only be done by separating from every venerable object every thing which, on account of its connections and analogies, would suggest the idea of any thing low and contemptible. The consequence of which is, that such objects are made more of a piece, and more perfect in their kind, at least more agreeable to *common opinions*, and the *prevailing taste*. What a ridiculous mixture of great and low images would every mode of religion, every scheme of philosophy, every species of composition, and every human character present, if the fear of ridicule did not make men solicitous to avoid such incongruous circumstances?

The reverse of passing from a *high* to a *low* object, is to pass from a very *low* to a *high* one. This transition, at the same time that (for a reason which will be given hereafter) it is in itself agreeable, lays the mind open to the same species of pleasure  
(arising

(arising from contrast) with the pleasures of ridicule; with this difference in the effect, that, in this case, the low object being that to which the mind hath been attentive, and consequently that to which it will refer all the related ideas that arise in the scene in which it is introduced, will have an air of grandeur and importance given to it, by being exhibited in the same light with the sublime object. It is true, that, as in the case of ridicule, the sublime object is liable to be degraded by the same means; but not being kept so long in sight, the effect is more transient.

Mr. Pope aggrandizes an altercation between a company of gentlemen and ladies, by the following magnificent comparison:

So when bold Homer makes the gods engage,  
And heavenly breasts with human passions rage;  
'Gainst Pallas, Mars, Latona, Hermes arms,  
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms:  
Jove's thunder roars, heav'n trembles all around,  
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound;  
Earth shakes her nodding tow'rs, the ground gives way,  
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!

RAPE OF THE LOCK, Cant. V. v. 45.

Low images, aggrandized in this manner, by pompous language and sublime comparisons, produce what is called the *mock-heroic*.

The same air of gravity and seriousness is preserved through the whole of what is called *humour*; which differs from the *mock-heroic* in nothing, but that the subject and style of it are lower, and therefore it suits better with the tone of conversation; whereas we never apply the term *mock-heroic* but to compositions, and generally to poetic compositions, because they are generally

nerally intended to be an imitation of, and parody upon, the true *heroic*.

There is a stroke of genuine humour in the following answer of Falstaff to young Harry.

*Harry*. "Ay, a good amendment of life in thee, from praying to purse-stealing."

*Fal*. "Why, 'tis my occupation, Hal; 'tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation."

First Part of HENRY IV. Act I. Scene 2.

The following passage, from Arbuthnot's account of what passed in the city of London when the comet was expected, is, likewise, an excellent stroke of humour, but of that species of it which is called *ironical*.

"If the reverend clergy showed more concern than others, I charitably impute it to their great charge of souls; and what confirmed me in this opinion was, that the degrees of apprehension and terror could be distinguished to be greater or less, according to their ranks and degrees in the church."

I cannot, however, help remarking upon this passage, that the humour of it would be much improved if the word *charitably* were dropped; since that word doth, but too plainly point to a very different construction upon the conduct of the clergy, which ought by all means to have been kept out of view: since, in every instance of true humour, the sense intended to be conveyed, and which makes the contrast with that which is expressed, is always sufficiently obvious, to occur of itself, without the help of any thing in the expression to point to it.



A piece of perfect *irony* is the speech of Elijah to the priests of Baal, in the following passage: 1 Kings xviii. 26, 27.

“ And they called on the name of Baal, from morning until noon, saying, Oh Baal, hear us! But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass, at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey; or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.”

If the above instances of humour and irony be admitted, these two species of wit (at the same time that they must both be allowed to be of the nature of the mock-heroic, but lowered, as we may say, to the tone of conversation) must differ in this respect, that the term *Humour* is applied to every thing that is diverting, under the appearance of gravity; whereas *Irony* is always meant to expose, and turn into ridicule. All irony therefore is humour, but all humour is not irony.

If there were no other signs of our ideas, and indications of states of mind, than *words*, it might justly appear surprizing, that a person should say one thing, and mean another, and yet his real meaning be perfectly understood. But the *tone of voice*, the *gesture*, and a variety of other *circumstances*, may sufficiently indicate a man's real meaning, without regard to words, and even by the help of words of a contrary meaning; because tones, gestures, and other circumstances, have, by use, acquired as fixed associations with *states of mind* as articulate words. Some of these signs of ideas, which are independent of words, are universal; so that any person, using them, may speak ironically, and

and yet be sure of being understood: but there are particular methods which particular persons have adopted, or have fallen into, which is the reason why strangers cannot be so certain when a person speaks ironically, as those who are well acquainted with him, and know his peculiar sentiments and manner. However, if a person who speaks ironically be misunderstood for a time, it is a circumstance that hath often no unfavourable effect, as it often occasions the greater diversion at last. In reality, a new contrast is hereby produced, between our first and our latter apprehensions of the person's meaning. Perhaps, the most complete scene of irony and ridicule is, when a conceited coxcomb in a company shall interpret that to be a compliment, which every body else sees was intended to expose him; which, in this case, it most effectually doth.

Though it appears, by the preceding account of the *burlesque* and the *mock-heroic*, that there is a considerable resemblance between them, the latter hath this great advantage over the former; that, in burlesque, there is an avowed attempt to divert and promote laughter, by odd combinations of ideas; whereas in the mock-heroic, and in strokes of humour, we are presented with the same odd combinations, but the attempt to divert, by means of them, is concealed under an air of gravity and seriousness, which is a high additional contrast. The writer of burlesque is to be understood literally; the author of the mock-heroic, or the writer of humour, says one thing, and means another. The former is like a person who says, “ I will tell you a comical story, that will make you laugh.” The latter says, of the same story, “ It is a serious affair, and not to be laughed at.” Though, therefore, the effect of the mock-heroic and the burlesque differ

only in degree, they are of *so different a character*, that it is a great offence against propriety to confound them.

Notwithstanding this manifest impropriety, there are few writers who aim at the mock-heroic, that can help putting themselves, now and then, in the place of their hearers, and laughing at their own story; so that we have few pieces which are throughout in the style of the genuine mock-heroic. *Cervantes* is universally confessed to be the best model for this species of writing, and he hath been happily imitated by Mr. *Cambridge* in the *Scribleriad*.

Pope's Rape of the Lock, notwithstanding its great merit, is not altogether free from the forementioned inconsistency. Who would imagine that the poet, who affects to be so serious as he doth in the greatest part of his work, even when he speaks in his own person, should introduce it by telling us, almost in so many words, that he will tell us a very ridiculous and diverting story?

What can have a greater appearance of gravity than the following exclamation of the poet, in his own person, upon Belinda's triumphing too soon upon a successful throw of her cards?

Oh thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,  
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate;  
Sudden these honours shall be snatch'd away,  
And curs'd for ever this victorious day.

Cant. III. Ver. 101.

The

The greater part of the poem is in the same serious strain; but how unfuitable to this are the very first verses?

What dire offence from am'rous causes springs,  
What mighty contests rise from *trivial things*,  
I sing.—This verse to C—— much is due;  
This e'en Belinda might vouchsafe to view,  
*Slight* is the subject, but not so the praise,  
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.

How much more propriety is there in the following serious introduction to the *Scribleriad*:

The much-enduring man, whose curious soul  
Bore him with ceaseless toil from pole to pole,  
Insatiate, endless knowledge to obtain,  
Through woes by land, through dangers on the main,  
New woes, new dangers, destin'd to engage,  
By wrathful Saturn's unrelenting rage,  
I sing.

It is hardly necessary to observe, that, both with respect to the mock-heroic, and in every other case in which objects that are very different are contrasted and compared, the resemblance should be as great and as striking as the difference: otherwise the contrast or comparison will not be borne with any pleasure. A want of this seems to render Mr. Pope's attempt to parody that sublime passage of *Moses*, *Let there be light, and there was light*, weak and ineffectual.

The

The skilful nymph reviews her force with care,  
Let Spades be trumps, she said; and trumps they were.

RAPE OF THE LOCK, Cant. III. ver. 45.

Such poor attempts at parody as this affect only the persons who make them. The original passages themselves suffer no injury from them, as they were observed to do from a happy and successful parody.

## LECTURE

## LECTURE XXVI.

Of RIDDLES, PUNS, and the serious ANTITHESIS.

THE pleasure we receive from the solution of *riddles* may not improperly be mentioned under this head of Contrast. The generality of riddles are nothing more than very strong and harsh metaphors, or rather allegories, and the pleasure we receive from them is in proportion to the greatness of the analogy between two things which are very different. Of this nature is the famous riddle of the Sphynx, "What creature is that which walks upon four legs in the morning, upon two at noon, and upon three at night?" Every thing that strikes us in the application of this to a *man*, is to find that *hands* and a *staff* are called *legs*, when, like them, they rest upon the ground, and support a person; that *infancy* is the *morning*, *middle age* the *noon*, and *old age* the *evening* of life.

Some other riddles are of another kind, and particularly that of Samfon; "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." The figure in this riddle is not a metaphor, because a *lion* is not called *the eater*; nor *honey*, *sweetness*, on account of their resemblance to one another; but on account of another relation which will be explained when I treat of the *Metonymy*.

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A contrast of *ideas* is not always necessary to please and to divert: a *verbal contrast*, arising from the different meanings of the same term, is often sufficient. A word used in different senses is called a *pun*, or a play upon words; such is that upon the word *grace*, in the following passage of Shakespeare, who abounds in this species of wit:

*Fal.* "God save thy grace; majesty I should have said, for  
" grace thou wilt have none.

*Henry.* "What none!

*Fal.* "No, by my troth, not so much as will serve to be a  
" prologue to an egg and butter."

First Part of HENRY IV. Act I. Scene 2.

The word *grace* is, in fact, used in three senses in this passage; and it is true that the three ideas signified by it, viz. a *title of honour*, *goodness of heart*, and a *grace before meat*, have no real resemblance, as they agree in nothing but that they happen to be signified by the same term; which is no relation founded in nature, but is merely accidental, and arbitrary. Yet, since the resemblance in expression appears to be, in fact, sufficient to make the difference in sense very striking and diverting, it seems to be enough to intitle it to the name of *wit*, in common with other diverting contrasts, which the ingenuity of men hath hit upon.

Sometimes we meet with a *double contrast*, viz. both in the ideas, and in the words; as in the following passage of Mr. Pope:

Here thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey,  
Dost sometimes counsel *take*, and sometimes tea.

RAPE OF THE LOCK, Cant. III. v. 7.

If

himself was chiefly engaged by them, the performance must appear beautiful to himself, and his judgment be perverted. Whereas, to a reader whose mind was attentive to the subject of the treatise, the same things would appear unnatural and disgusting. And it is certain, that no forms of expression, or the frequent recurrency of any, can stand the test of sound criticism, and the judgment of ages, which are improper with regard to the professed nature and purport of the work in which they are introduced. For, however they may be admired by the authors themselves, or those who read with a view to observe the particular beauties of composition, they can never be generally and long admired.

The admirers of such glittering compositions have narrow views; their attention is withdrawn from the subject, and consequently from the true beauties and proprieties of it. And it is only the most *general views*, those which comprehend the whole of a subject, and every thing that bears any relation to it, that can lead to a right judgment of a work. Whenever, therefore, such compositions are seen in their true point of light, and the general purport of them is compared with the natural effect of their particular parts, their want of propriety must be seen and exposed.

We see here, then, one reason of the great admiration in which the ancient writers of any nation are almost universally held. As they had no beauties of composition to copy after, they have more of nature and true propriety in them. This is remarkably the case with respect to Homer and other very ancient Greek poets, and Ossian the ancient Gallic poet.

But this observation is not applicable to the late revivers of learning in this western part of the world. They had Greek and

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Roman

Roman models of composition to copy after. In fact, we nowhere see stronger instances of *affectedness* than in their writings. Shakespeare himself, notwithstanding the strong bent of his genius to *natural propriety*, abounds with misplaced wit. In some of the gravest passages in his works, we meet with strokes which tend to raise a laugh, instead of corresponding with the more serious emotions that arise from the scene with which he presents us. Perhaps it is this palpably ridiculous extravagance of wit in that age, and more especially still in the succeeding one of Charles the Second, that hath contributed more than any thing else to the establishment of the good taste that seems to prevail at present.

As there is no fault in composition which there is so much danger of falling into, in a pretty advanced state of literature, and especially by young writers, who are apt to be prodigiously struck with every appearance of *ingenuity*, and whose comprehension of mind is not sufficiently large to judge of the propriety of their introduction, I shall select a paragraph or two from the sermons of Dr. South, an admired writer in the age of Charles the Second, which will make the meaning of these observations, and the reason of them, very evident.

Discouraging concerning man in a state of innocence, he says:  
 "As it is reasonable to imagine that there is more of design,  
 "and consequently more of perfection, in the last work, we  
 "have God here giving his last stroke, and summing up all into  
 "man; the whole into a part, the universe into an individual.—  
 "We might well imagine that the great artificer would be more  
 "than ordinarily exact in drawing his own picture.—These were  
 "notions not descending from us, but born with us; not our  
 "offspring, but our brethren; and (as I may so say) such as  
 "were

If the ambiguous word *take* be changed in this passage, the contrast in sense is sufficiently striking: but the use of that word, which happens to be equally applicable to *counsel* and *tea*, though in very different senses, seems to give an additional beauty, of this lower kind, to the passage.

There is a like double contrast in the old inscription,

Beneath this stone my wife doth lie:  
 She's now at rest, and so am I.

The reason why puns have been so much condemned of late, notwithstanding both the *ingenuity* requisite to discover them, and their well-known *effects*, sufficiently prove them to be a species of *wit*, seems to be, that they have been generally misapplied; that is, the pleasure they give us is of a nature unsuitable to the proper effect of the works in which they have often been introduced. To say they are no species of wit, because they will not bear *translating* into another language, is too weak to need any refutation. But when they have occurred in sermons, in tragedies, in a variety of serious compositions, and in conversations upon serious subjects, it is no wonder they have been perceived to have a disagreeable effect, and that the gross abuse of them hath made the use of them to be universally condemned. Indeed, puns accord only with the tone of compositions which abound with the slightest and most trifling contrasts; inasmuch that they have an ill effect when intermixed in many species of wit. They can only please in a peculiarly gay humour, when the mind is uncommonly irritable, and disposed to be diverted with any thing.

Indeed, for the same reason that we condemn the use of puns, we also condemn the use of any species of wit, of any contrasts

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intended to divert; since these, with regard to their effects, differ only in degree, and not in kind. They are universally improper when they do not accord with the rest of the piece in which they are introduced; that is, when the temper of mind which is requisite to relish them is not naturally produced by the general strain of the composition. In all serious compositions, therefore, of whatever kind, they ought carefully to be avoided; as also the frequent use of the grave *antithesis*, when we would appear to be in earnest, and more intent upon the subject than the manner of composition. The strong and pointed antithesis occurs so seldom in real serious life, and hath so remarkable an effect whenever it doth occur, that the frequent use of it never fails to suggest the appearance of *art*, and *studied introduction*. And *affectation*, of all kinds, is universally disgusting. This is the reason why the frequent and unnecessary use of it in compositions hath always been looked upon, by the best writers, as a symptom of the declension of just and natural taste; as when it appeared in the works of Lyfias among the later Greeks, and of Seneca among the later Romans.

In times when writings were not common, as at the dawn of genius and knowledge, no person would think of composing any thing, unless he had something of importance to communicate: consequently his attention would be engrossed by his *subject*, and he would introduce the antithesis, and the other more striking beauties of composition, no oftener than they naturally occurred. But later writers, observing the uncommonly fine effect of these forms of expression, would naturally have their attention divided between their *subject* and those beauties which adorn *composition*; or, rather, they would be apt to suit their subject to those forms of expression. And since the attention of the writer

## LECTURE XXVII.

## Of METONYMY.

WE have seen the extensive influence of *association* in forming all the pleasures of imagination that we have hitherto enumerated, and we have seen the probability of that opinion, which represents all our *intellectual pleasures* as derived originally from *sensible impressions*, variously mixed, combined, and transferred from one object to another, by that principle. Some of these were remote, and perhaps, to persons unused to such speculations, *obscure* effects of that great and universal agent in the affections of the human mind. We shall now take a view of some of the more manifest and immediate effects of it, in transferring ideas belonging to some words upon others related to them.

From hence, in particular, results the striking effect of the rhetorical figures called *metonymy* and *synecdoche*. These terms are applied when, instead of the proper name of any thing or attribute, a name is borrowed from another object, which stands in any other relation to it than that of actual *resemblance*, which is referred to *metaphor*.

It is almost endless to enumerate all the relations of things which afford a foundation for this figure of speech. Some of the principal of them are those of *cause and effect*, in all its varieties,

rieties, *the subject and its attributes*, or circumstances; the *agent and the instrument*; *general and particular, abstract and concrete terms*: and *the whole and its part*, which alone is referred to *synecdoche*. For example, we put the effect for the cause when we say *day arose*, instead of saying *the sun arose*; an attribute, or circumstance, for the subject in *cedant arma togæ*; a particular for a general term, when we say *a Mæcenas* for a *patron of learning*, and *a Nero* for a *tyrant*; an abstract for a concrete term, when we say, *favours conferred upon insensibility*, rather than *upon the insensible*. Examples might easily be given of the converse of all these, and of many others.

The advantage of using such terms, borrowed from related objects, instead of proper terms, is that, at the same time that the new name sufficiently characterises the object we intend to express, so that it is impossible to mistake it, the figurative expression transfers upon it some foreign idea, which will serve to improve the sense of the passage. Moreover, it tends agreeably to engage and exercise the faculties of a reader to take him a little out of the way of common expression. This figure, likewise, greatly assists *personification*, by which a composition is greatly animated, as it exhibits living and thinking objects.

When Virgil says, *Bibet Germania Tigrim*, using the name of a *country* for that of the *inhabitants*, it is impossible the reader should hesitate a moment about the true sense of the passage (for were there the least danger of a mistake the term would have been improper) several ideas, particularly that of *immobility*, necessarily adhering to the name of the country, augment the improbability of the fact, and thereby heighten and improve the expression. A similar effect is produced, and a similar advantage is gained by Herodotus, when he says, *the whole theatre,*

“ were taught without the help of a teacher.—Could any difficulty have been proposed, the resolution would have been as early as the proposal. It could not have had time to settle into doubt. Like a better Archimedes, the issue of all his enquiries was an *επινοια*, an *επινοια*, the offspring of his brain, without the sweat of his brow. Study was not then a duty. Night-watchings were needless. The light of reason wanted not the assistance of a candle. This is the doom of fallen man, to labour in the fire, to seek truth *in profundo*, to exhaust his time and impair his health, and perhaps to spin out his days, and himself, into one pitiful controverted conclusion.—Certainly that must needs have been very glorious, the decays of which are so admirable. He that is comely when old and decrepid, surely was very beautiful when he was young. An Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam, and Athens but the rudiments of paradise.”

It is needless to point out the passages I should particularly object to in these paragraphs. These, and such-like strokes, certainly show ingenuity, and, singly taken, might be thought excellent: The fault is, that they are often misplaced and unseasonable.

The serious Dr. Young is by no means free from this kind of affectation. The pointed antithesis abounds too much in his celebrated poem *the Night-Thoughts*. Some of his antitheses are little more than verbal. The tendency of the following, and a variety of other single strokes, seem to have an effect unfavourable to the design of the whole work, and of the particular places in which they are introduced.

Even silent night proclaims my soul immortal,  
Even silent night proclaims eternal day:

For

For human weal heaven husbands all events,  
Dull sleep instructs, nor sport vain dreams in vain.

NIGHT THE FIRST.

Such strokes as these make the generality of readers admire a writer while they are reading him; but that writer alone will secure the lasting admiration of the judicious, who disappears, and is lost in his subject while we are reading, and occurs only to our reflection afterwards. Those after-reflections, however, will do him ample justice, and more than make him amends for our seeming to have lost sight of him for a time.

LECTURE

*theatre*, instead of the persons in the theatre, *burst into tears*. There is also the same happiness in those familiar expressions, *the eloquence of the bar*, and of *the pulpit*.

When a person is called a *Mæcenas*, ideas of honour and esteem are more readily transferred to him, than if he were called in plainer terms a *promoter of learning*, and a *patron of learned men*. Every pleasing idea of this kind hath been so long and so intimately connected with the name of that favourite of Augustus, that we thereby convey more definite and stronger ideas than we could by any other, though longer form of expression. With the same advantage is a tyrant called a *Nero*, a poet a *second Homer*, and a philosopher a *second Sir Isaac Newton*. There is a kind of *accumulation of meaning* in these expressions, by means of long, extensive, and repeated associations of ideas. In all these cases, likewise, the consciousness a reader hath of his being sensible of the force of these expressions, in consequence of his being acquainted with the characters alluded to, gives no small pleasure.

We see that, in many cases, the name of a *part* of a thing will suggest the idea of the *whole* with greater clearness and strength than the name of the whole itself. For the idea of some principal part may have a closer connection with the idea of the whole, than even the *name of the whole* hath with its own proper corresponding idea. Nor will this appear to be any paradox, if we consider that the name of any thing cannot raise a distinct idea of the whole, without raising that of its several parts. It is evident that these scripture-expressions, *Give us this day our daily bread*; and, *Having food and raiment be therewith content*, suggest a stronger, and, in fact, no less determinate an idea of all that is intended by them, than any more general and comprehen-

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five terms would have done. Also when Æneas, in Virgil, says only, *Hofis habet muros*, though the *walls* were but a part of the *city*, and, in themselves considered, the least valuable part; yet, as they were that part of it in which its *strength* chiefly consisted, to say that the enemy were in possession of them, signifies their being masters of the whole town, more fully than if the whole town had been expressly mentioned.

By the help of this figure, a writer may very happily introduce, and keep in view, those peculiar properties of persons and things which his subject requires him to pay a particular attention to. To do this, he may denominate things from those particular properties or relations which he has in view. Thus Virgil, treating of *corn*, with respect to the cultivation of it, very happily, upon the mention of a shower, says, *boum labores diluit*. An author, after representing his hero in distress by the darkness of the night, might very properly say, at length *the light*, or *the day*, rather than *the sun*, *arose*; and any writer, treating of the eloquence of Cicero, would frequently use the term *orator*, and *our orator*, instead of his proper name. Or if a dialogue were made between any particular philosopher, and any particular soldier, for instance, upon the subject of their several professions, one would naturally, instead of repeating their proper names often, call them *the philosopher* and *the soldier*. With equal propriety the ancients used the term βίη κραλλειη, *the force of Hercules*, the quality he was most remarkable for, instead of the direct proper name *Hercules*; and with equal beauty might a speech of Nestor have been introduced, by saying, Thus spake *the wisdom of Nestor*.

If it require more words than one to denominate an object from its properties or circumstances, the figure is called a *periphrasis*.

*periphrasis*. Thus, *boum labores* is properly a periphrasis to express *corn*. It is with great propriety that Shakespeare makes King John say, when he surrendered his crown, "Thus I yield up into your hand the circle of my glory;" because the *crown* was only valuable as an emblem, or badge of *glory*.

The metonymy, in common with the metaphor (though not generally in so great a degree) may have the advantage of increasing the pleasure that any expression gives us, by bringing in view a short *scene* or *landscapè* relating to an object. Thus, *a well-fought field* suggests a greater and stronger idea than a well-fought *battle*; because, the battle being fought upon the field, the idea of the field introduces the picture of a battle upon it more readily and effectually than the proper term *battle*, which hath a more remote connexion with those particular scenes. The term *battle* must first raise the idea of a *field*, before it can exhibit any thing that passed upon the field.

That metonymy assists *personification*, is not only very evident, when the name of an author is put for his invention, &c.; as, *Ceres* for *bread*, *Bacchus* for *wine*, *Venus* for *love*, in the old adage, *Sine Cerere et Baccho Venus friget*; but it is sufficiently apparent in many other instances, when no actual names of persons are mentioned; as in the following expressions, in which the properties only of thinking beings are attributed to unthinking substances; *jovial wine*, *giddy brink*, *drowsy night*, *musing midnight*, *panting height*, *advent'rous song*, or in this,

Why peep your coward-swords half out their shells?

It is often with peculiar elegance that qualities are personified, instead of the persons possessing them; as when Milton represents Satan saying,

Or have ye chose  
This place, after the toils of battle, to repose  
Your wearied virtue?

PARADISE LOST, Book I.

There is the same happiness in the following expressions, *When youth and beauty shall be laid in dust. Favours are often conferred upon insensibility.* In these expressions the abstract terms, *youth, beauty, and insensibility,* have a much finer effect than the words *young, beautiful, and insensible,* would have had. It is exhibiting an unmixed instead of a mixed character, and that personified. If by the change of the term *insensible* for *insensibility,* for instance, the advantage of personification had been lost, amends could hardly have been made for it by any other circumstance; but as that advantage is not lost, much is gained by the change from an *insensible man* to *insensibility itself in person.* An insensible man, as he is still *a man,* might be made sensible of an obligation, but *insensibility* cannot.

It is pleasing to observe how the sense of an expression improves, by being *concentrated,* as it were, in the change of an attribute, first from the plural to the singular number, and then from the singular number to an abstract idea personified. If, for instance, instead of saying *Old men are venerable;* we say, *An old man is venerable;* our idea becomes less vague, more determinate and clear. And the advantage of personification may be preserved, while the idea is freed from every thing foreign to it, and which might spoil its effect, when we say, *Old age is venerable.*

Epithets are sometimes beautifully transferred from one subject to another by means of this figure, as may have been observed in the examples that were given of this figure's assisting personification.

fiction. It is, likewise, observable in the following expressions, *pale death, a stupid moment motionless they stood:* THOMPSON. *Cæcis erramus in undis:* VIRGIL. The connexion of ideas ought to be very strict, to make this transferring of epithets easy and natural; the impropriety, when these expressions are literally taken, is so great: for nothing can be more evident, than that it is absurd to say, that *death* itself is *pale,* or that the *waters* themselves were *blind.*

As no other relation of ideas affords so easy and natural a foundation for giving new names to things, as that of *resemblance,* more caution is requisite in the use of the metonymy than of the metaphor. Metaphors more often improve upon reflection than metonymies. Even the name of an object for the *sound* of it is barely tolerable in the following line of Thompson:

The sudden waterfall swells in the breeze.

WINTER, Line 738.

And, perhaps, we should not bear so well with the expression last quoted from Virgil, and indeed many other of his metonymies (in which he abounds more than most other writers) if we attended to them a little. It is often particularly harsh to use the name of the *effect* for that of the *cause.* Thus *panting height,* and *astonished thought,* have been justly observed to be strained and uncouth expressions.

Notwithstanding the metonymy be, in its own nature, a harsher figure than the metaphor, it is remarkable what power custom hath to reconcile us to it. Witness these common expressions, *a happy state, a blind way, to drink a glass of wine, or a dish of tea; to keep a good house, or a good table; to write a fine hand,*  
to

to read any author. These, and many other expressions of the same nature, are so familiar, that the figure is absolutely evanescent; so that they hardly deserve to be considered as figures, as it is only by an express attention to them that we discover them to be figurative. However, it can hardly be said of any metonymy, as it may be of some metaphors, that they are so wholly evanescent, that a person may hesitate before he can determine whether an expression contain the figure, or not. To write a good hand, is as common an expression as any that is in use, and the figure it contains approaches as near to evanescence as any I can now recollect; and yet no person can think that the writing can be called the hand, without a figure.

The general rule for the use of the metonymy is plainly this; that in all cases, provided the sense be in no danger of being mistaken, a writer is at liberty to substitute, instead of a proper term, any word which, by its associations, can bring along with it ideas that can serve to heighten and improve the sentiment. But it follows from this observation, that when the sense doth not require to be heightened and improved, as in the ordinary forms of expression in conversation, on which no emphasis is ever laid, the figure is impertinent and useless: as when Prospero, in the Tempest of Shakespeare, speaking to his sister Miranda, says,

The fringed curtains of thine eyes advance,  
And say what seest thou.

To mention the *eye-lids* at all, much more to denominate them by such a figurative periphrasis, was quite superfluous.

This figure is worse than impertinent and useless, when the figurative expression exhibits any idea that is unfavourable to the sentiment; as when Aeneas, in Virgil, says,

Tres

Tres adeo incertos caeca caligine soles

Erramus pelagi.

ÆNEID.

The poet ought by all means, in this place, to have contented himself with saying that they wandered *three days* in darkness. To say that they wandered *three suns* in black darkness, hath too much the air of a contradiction; though, in many other situations, the term *suns* might have a happy effect when put for days.

Periphrases and epithets, as they serve to denominate and characterize objects, come under this general rule, that nothing ought to be put for, or enter into the name of any object, or be used to distinguish it, that hath no relation to those properties of it which we have principally in view. The reason is, that, by this means, a writer would lead his reader from his own views and purpose. Thus it is improper to add the epithet *mortal* to *man*, unless man be considered in the passage in which it is introduced with regard to his mortality, and that idea would give strength to the sentiment. In every epithet a regard ought to be had to the general design or purport of the passage in which it is introduced. For example, when Neptune is spoken of as a *person*, no attribute ought to be ascribed to him which agrees to nothing but *the sea*; as in the following passage of Pope's *Odyssee*:

Hear me, oh Neptune, thou whose arms are hurl'd  
From shore to shore, and gird the solid world.

ODYSSEE, B. IX. v. 617.

In like manner, in prayer, we ought not to invoke the Divine Being by the mention of any attribute, as *almighty*, *infinitely wise*, and *gracious*, promiscuously; but chuse those which there

is

is the greatest propriety in our having a view to, in the subsequent petition.

There is almost a tautology in epithets when they convey no idea that is not expressed, or implied, in some other words in the sentence. This is certainly faulty, as in the following line:

And impious sons their *mangled* fathers wound.

In the following, and perhaps in the preceding, there is an impropriety with respect to the order of time, which is apparent upon a little attention to them:

Submersas obrue puppes. ÆNEID I. 73.

And mighty ruins fall. ILIAD V. 411.

## LECTURE

## LECTURE XXVIII.

*Of the HYPERBOLE, and BOMBAST.*

WHEN any thing that is asserted in a discourse exceeds the truth, an *hyperbole* is said to be used. In fact, in every species of metonymy (and the same may be said of all the other figures) there is a departure from *literal truth*; but, as was explained in the case of Irony, it is in such a manner as that nobody can be imposed upon, or misled by it, and it is attended with advantages to the sense, which could not have been had by a rigorous adherence to truth.

The reason why the hyperbole is, in appearance, a greater violation of truth than most other figures, is only this, that in the hyperbole the untruth lies in the *affirmation itself*; whereas in most other figures it is concealed in an *epithet*, which however (were the sentence resolved into its constituent parts) would also be a direct untruth in the affirmation.

The advantage of using an hyperbole, is, that the idea of one object may be heightened and improved by ideas transferred from other objects, and associated with it. Thus when the Divine Being says to Abraham, "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered," Gen. xiii. 16; the

idea of a number almost infinite is transferred from the dust of the earth to the children, or descendants, of Abraham; and by this means we are enabled to conceive a greater idea of them than we could have done by the help of any plain and literal expression.

This manner of expression, though not strictly agreeable to truth, is extremely natural when the imagination is raised, and a person is labouring for an expression adequate to his ideas. In such a situation of mind, as no expressions literally true sufficiently answer his purpose, a writer is obliged to have recourse to objects which can supply him with such as will do it. The expressions to which these views give rise, are, however, so circumstanced, that we instantly enter, as it were, into the mind of the writer, we feel the difficulty he was under, and see the reason why he made choice of such hyperbolical language; and as we are led into no mistake by such terms, they are, in fact, to us who enter into his situation and feelings, more true and just expressions of those feelings than any plainer terms could have been.

Besides, if we consider that, by reason of the narrowness of our faculties, terms expressing the greatest magnitudes and numbers, yea terms denoting infinities themselves, raise only indeterminate and finite ideas in our minds, we may easily conceive that the *state of mind* produced by an attempt to realize hyperbolical expressions, may not be more than barely adequate to the ideas intended to be conveyed. Let us, for example, endeavour to form an idea of a number equal to that of the *dust of the earth*: the conception may not, in fact, reach to a just idea of the vast numbers of the posterity of Abraham. So that hyperboles, thus properly circumstanced, may, by the appearance of falsehood, lead the mind nearer to the truth than any expressions more literally true. In this case it seems to be very evident, that if the Divine  
Being

Being had only said that the seed of Abraham should be *exceedingly numerous*, or had even assigned the *precise number* of them, the idea excited in the mind of Abraham, by such an expression, would not have been so near the truth, as that which is produced by the attempt to conceive a number equal to that of the *dust of the earth*.

It may perhaps, therefore, be no great paradox, if it be laid down as a maxim, that hyperboles are then only proper where they serve to lead our conceptions nearer to the truth than any other forms of expression; and that they must be condemned, as strained and *unnatural*, when the idea they excite in our minds really exceeds the idea that ought to be excited by the object described by them. The following account of the valour of Henry the Fifth, in Shakespeare, is certainly extravagantly hyperbolical:

England ne'er had a king until his time:  
Virtue he had deserving to command:  
His brandish'd sword did blind men with its beams:  
His arms spread wider than a dragon's wings:  
His sparkling eyes, replete with awful fire,  
More dazzled and drove back his enemies  
Than mid-day sun fierce bent against their faces.  
What should I say, his deeds exceed all speech;  
He never lifted up his hand but conquer'd.

First Part of HENRY VI. Act I. Scene 1.

In many cases the generality of readers may be apt to think an hyperbole overcharged, for want of entering into an author's sentiments and views of things. A person, for instance, who

had seen a storm at sea might not think the following lines in Virgil's description of one much overcharged :

————— Atque imo barathri ter gurgite vastos  
Sorbet in abruptum fluctus rursusque sub auras  
Erigit alternos, et sidera verberat unda.

ÆNEID. lib. III. ver. 421.

Likewise, if we only make proper allowance for the notions which the common people of all countries still entertain of *miracles*, and how much they imagine a particular providence is concerned to detect and punish murderers, we may not, perhaps, be very severe upon the following speech of the Bastard to Hastings, upon his suspecting him to have murdered prince Arthur :

————— If thou didst but consent  
To do this most cruel act, do but despair,  
And if thou want a cord, the smallest thread  
That ever spider twisted from her womb  
Will strangle thee. A rush will be a beam  
To hang thee on. Or would'st thou drown thyself,  
Put but a little water in a basin,  
And it shall be as all the ocean,  
Enough to stifle such a villain up.  
I do suspect thee very grievously.

KING JOHN, Act IV. Scene 7.

The extravagant hyperbole is the common fault of those writers who aim at the sublime, and the style that abounds with it is generally termed the *bombast*. As the hyperbole is a figure that has a very striking effect, and is extremely easy in itself (for what can be easier than to exceed the truth in description?) writers whose

whose aim was to elevate and astonish their readers have often adopted it, without considering how few circumstances there are in which it can be admitted with propriety. They have not always considered whether every thing preceding, and accompanying that figure, would contribute to make it carry along with it a conviction, that no other form of expression could so clearly convey the proper idea. For if it be the *expression*, and not the *idea*, that surprizes a reader, it is a sure mark that the expression was improper; since, when it is proper, it only conveys the idea, and doth not draw any attention upon itself.

Had these things been considered, we should not, perhaps, have seen many hyperboles at the beginning of a composition, introduced in places where the ideas did not require to be elevated or enlarged by any foreign assistance, or put into the mouths of persons who were not under the influence of any strong passion, or a very lively imagination. Of all our late writers of character, Dryden and Lee seem to have been the most intemperate in the use of the hyperbole.

As great a departure as an hyperbole is from truth, and consequently as striking as this figure must be, custom has perfectly reconciled our minds to many very extraordinary instances of it; particularly when the hyperbole flows from a lively imagination, and is not uttered in the vehemence of passion. Any person may amuse himself in seeing this verified, if he only take a turn upon a bowling-green, and observe when a bowl is said, by some persons engaged in the diversion, to be *a mile*, or *a hundred*, or *five hundred miles, from the jack*. Besides, how many familiar expressions, in common conversation, pass without censure, which yet are extravagantly hyperbolic; as when we say, *A man is nothing but skin and bone*, &c.

Persons

Persons of little reading, and consequently gross conceptions, have little feeling of, or relish for, any thing but what is very extravagant. Nothing but the marvellous and supernatural hath any charms for them; but as their taste refines, in consequence of a greater attention to, and more exact knowledge of, human nature and the world, they learn to distinguish and relish the more delicate beauties of composition; they become disgusted with every thing that is extravagant, and can admire nothing that deviates far from strict propriety.

Accordingly, we see that the style of the generality of writers (which must keep pace with the general improvement of taste) approaches nearer to a medium. The books which took with the generality of readers in the last age are little read, and are little capable of pleasing, now. Indeed, something similar to this may be observed in every individual. Few persons, when they are advanced in life, and their judgment ripened, can relish the compositions which charmed them when young. We are told that Milton would read, with the greatest avidity and rapture, all the books of chivalry and romance that he could meet with, when he was young; but we can never imagine that he would have borne with any patience those extravagant fictions, and the bombast style in which they were generally composed at the time that he wrote the Paradise Lost.

## LECTURE

## LECTURE XXIX.

## Of PERSONIFICATION.

ANOTHER source of pleasure in works of genius and imagination, is the views which writers take frequent opportunities of presenting to us of *human sentiments, human passions, and human actions*. As the sentiments and actions of our fellow-creatures are more interesting to us than any thing belonging to inanimate nature, or the actions of brute animals, a much greater variety of sensations and ideas must have been excited by them, and consequently adhere to them by the principle of association. Hence it is of prodigious advantage, in treating of inanimate things, or merely of brute animals, to introduce frequent allusions to human actions and sentiments, where any resemblance will make it natural. This converts every thing we treat of into thinking and acting beings. We see *life, sense, and intelligence*, every where. The effect of this figure is so pleasing, that when there is no kind of deception in the case, if the resemblance be sufficiently strong, and other circumstances favour the figure, the impropriety of the personification gives not the least offence.

In fact, this figure is become so general, that it is almost impossible to discourse about any thing, in the calmest manner in the world,

world, without borrowing some part of our language from the regions of life and sense. Even the most abstruse mathematicians and metaphysicians cannot always so far abstract themselves from human life, as not to retain many terms borrowed from the actions and passions of mankind. The metaphysical terms *agent* and *patient*, always carry along with them ideas which the definitions of them do not include. And, provided the foreign ideas do not affect the proposition formed out of them (as was perhaps the case in the old philosophy) they give some degree of *colour* and *life* to those abstract ideas, without being attended with any inconvenience.

The ideas of *male* and *female* are, in the English language, so strictly confined to objects that have *sex*, and consequently *life* and *sense*, that I question whether any term implying *sex*, to whatever it be applied, do not excite a momentary idea of those qualities. Can the following passage in Milton be read without a mental personification?

First in his East the glorious lamp was seen,  
 Regent of day, and all th' horizon round  
 Invested with bright rays, jocund to run  
 His longitude thro' heaven's high road: the grey  
 Dawn and pleiades before him danced,  
 Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the moon,  
 But opposite, in levell'd West, was set,  
 His mirror, with full face borrowing her light  
 From him, for other **light** she needed none.

PARADISE LOST, Book VII. l. 370.

Perhaps it may not appear quite chimerical to suppose, that the extension of *sex* in most southern languages, to almost all *inanimate* things, may have taken its rise from a lively imagination, personifying almost every thing. The

The slightest personification is that which proceeds no further than a simple metaphor, or metonymy, in which a new name is borrowed from the affections of sensible and thinking beings, and transferred upon those that are insensible; as in such phrases as the following, *imperious ocean, thirsty ground, furious dart, &c.* Such expressions as these are used by persons under no emotion of passion, and with very little elevation of fancy. Yet, even in these cases, the imagination must, for a moment, ascribe sensibility to those insensible objects, or we could never bear the epithets while we were reading them. A personification is, at least, a metaphor derived from the idea of sensible and thinking beings; and every metaphor is something more than a bare comparison. In comparisons (as was observed before) the difference between any two objects is preserved, whereas in metaphors they are confounded, and one of the things is changed as it were, in idea, into the other. The first hint of a personification, like that for a metaphor, may be a comparison; but, by the power of imagination, it ends in something more.

I see no difficulty in the personification of passions, qualities, and other things of an abstract nature, which have no real existence; as of *pleasure* and *revenge*, in the following passage of Shakespeare:

————— For pleasure and revenge  
 Have ears more deaf than adders, to the voice  
 Of any true decision. ———

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA, Act II. Scene 4.

Or of slander:

————— No, 'tis slander,  
 ————— Whose tongue

K k

Out-



Out-venoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath  
Rides on the posting winds.—

CYMBELINE, Act III. Scene 4.

Our ideas, in this case, it is true, are not abstract; but the ideas of *persons* with the characters of the passion or quality described; which are not difficult to form.

Ideas of the properties and affections of thinking beings are so familiar to our minds, and the animate and inanimate parts of nature abound so much in mutual analogies, stronger or weaker, that no person, of the least imagination, can help being frequently struck with those resemblances. The very circumstance of our being obliged to have recourse to sensible ideas, and the terms which express their relations, when we speak of intellectual things, cannot fail greatly to extend those analogies. As intellectual ideas are constantly denoted by terms originally borrowed from sensible things, these terms will carry back with them their new associations, and transfer them upon the objects to which they originally belonged; and as there are few terms which have not been thus applied, we can hardly select a sentence but a lively imagination might find in it some hint for personification.

From this slight and momentary personification, which doth no more than just give a hint for an *epithet*, and will not bear to be extended beyond it, we may perceive, in different examples of this figure, the images transferred from the regions of life and sense growing more and more lively, till at last inanimate things shall be so effectually personified, as to excite very strong *emotions* and *passions* in the human mind; which could not be effected without our previously imagining them to be so far endued with sense and design, as to have become the proper authors of  
I. some.

some good or harm that hath befallen us. It is necessary, likewise, that the inanimate object be viewed for some sensible space of time in this light, if the passion it excites be expressed in words or actions; for those effects are not momentary.

As the relish for this figure must depend upon the liveliness of the imagination, which is extremely various in different persons, and indeed very variable in the same person, it must be impossible for any one person to give rules whereby to judge in what cases any precise degree of it is proper. All that can be done is to note, by a regard to the general state and feelings of the human mind, the circumstances in which we imagine they will be generally judged proper or improper.

One observation, I think, is pretty obvious, that a long-continued personification is more natural when it is supposed to be the work of a lively imagination, than the mechanical effect of a strong and serious passion; and that it is of importance to preserve a distinction between these two kinds of personification. To some it may, perhaps, appear hardly probable, that a man who preserves the use of his senses should be really angry with a *tempest* so long, as was necessary to make the following speech, which Shakespeare hath put into the mouth of King Lear upon that occasion:

Rumble thy belly-full; spit fire, spout rain;  
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters.  
I tax you not, you elements, with unkindness,  
I never gave you kingdoms, call'd you children;  
You owe me no subscription. Then let fall  
Your horrible pleasure.—Here I stand your brave,  
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man.  
But yet I call you servile ministers,

K k 2

That

That have with two pernicious daughters join'd  
Your high-engendered battles 'gainst a head  
So old and white as this. Oh! oh! 'tis foul.

Act II. Scene 3.

It lessens the improbability (if there be any) of a man's being serious all the while, that the tempest, and consequently the provocation, was continued through the whole of it. There is, however, a manifest impropriety in Congreve's representing Almeria, when she was exceedingly exasperated at her father's unkindness, making the following long and serious invocation of the earth:

Oh earth, behold, I kneel upon thy bosom,  
And bend my flowing eyes to stream upon  
Thy face, imploring thee that thou wilt yield.  
Open thy bowels of compassion, take  
Into thy womb the last and most forlorn  
Of all thy race. Hear me, thou common parent,  
—I have no parent else—Be thou a mother,  
And step between me and the curse of him  
Who was—who was, but is no more, a father,  
And brands my innocence with horrid crimes;  
And for the tender names of child and daughter,  
Now calls me murderer and parricide.

MOURNING BRIDE, Act IV. Scene 7.

If we consider, besides, that the earth was no way concerned in her grief, this speech will appear more unnatural, supposing the speaker quite serious; and she was much too serious to make it in the gaiety of her imagination.

Whereas

Whereas the following much longer personification of Sleep, being merely *ideal* (as it may be called, in opposition to the serious and real personification) and put into the mouth of a person whose mind was neither too serious nor too languid for it, is extremely agreeable:

How many thousands of my poorest subjects  
Are at this hour asleep! Oh gentle Sleep,  
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,  
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,  
And steep my senses in forgetfulness!  
Why rather, Sleep, liest thou in smoky huts,  
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,  
And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,  
Than in the perfumed chambers of the great,  
And lull'd with sounds of sweetest melody?  
Oh thou dull god! why liest thou with the vile  
In loathsome beds, and leavest the kingly couch,  
Beneath rich canopies of costly state;  
A watch-caff to a common larum-bell?  
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast  
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains,  
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,  
And in the visitation of the winds,  
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,  
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them  
With deaf'ning clamours in the slippery shrouds,  
That with the hurly death itself awakes.—  
Canst thou, Oh partial Sleep, give thy repose  
To the wet sea-boy, in an hour so rude;  
And, in the calmest and the stillest night,  
With all appliances and means to boot,

Deny

Deny it to a king? Then happy, lowly clown,  
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

Second Part of HENRY IV. Act III. Scene 1.

Such personification as this is the exercise, or rather the *play*, of a mind at ease, which first of all seeing things to be what they really are, is afterwards struck with their resemblance in point of form, situation, cause, effect, &c. to thinking beings, and amuses itself with completing the resemblance, and thus transforms them, as it were, by a voluntary effort of imagination, into real persons. Whereas in the *serious personification* the mind is under a temporary deception, the personification is neither made nor helped out by the speaker, but it obtrudes itself upon him; and, while the illusion continues, the passions are as strongly affected, as if the object of them really had the power of thought. It is impossible we should be affected in this manner by objects that we ourselves personify, and consequently cannot but know that we personify. The effect of a real personification is a real passion; but an ideal, or *rhetorical personification*, presents only the *ideas* of thought, sense, and passion; which are sufficient to enliven a composition, and please the *fancy*, but can never reach the *heart*. Those emotions can hardly be called real passion, which a person works himself into by the force of his own imagination.

For this reason a writer who is greatly in earnest will not use this figure. If he introduces a person greatly agitated with passion, he may put the serious personification into his mouth; but whatever objects he himself personifies, he will do it with more delicacy, and with a view to *enliven*, and never to *move* and *affect*, by a real illusion. No person in the circumstances of a writer can be supposed to be under such an illusion himself. It would  
be

be highly absurd, therefore, to write as if he were. Though we are moved in reading some fine and striking instances of personification in Plato and Cicero, it is not that the objects personified inspire any passion: they only serve to introduce, in a lively manner, sentiments which, on account of their native force and propriety, are adapted to affect us.

It requires a greater strength of imagination, after having given life to inanimate objects, to conceive them to *act* or *speak* in their new characters; and yet it hath been very often done with great success. The imagination, either exhilarated and enlivened, or, as we may say, *attended* with pastoral scenes in particular, easily admits, not only that all the parts of inanimate nature should have life and sense, but likewise that they should act and speak in consequence of it. Do not all pastoral writers, from Theocritus down to the present times, exhibit such scenes as the following of Mr. Pope:

No more the mounting lark, while Daphne sings,  
Shall list'ning in mid air suspend her wings.  
No more the nightingales repeat their lays,  
Or hush'd with wonder, hearken from the sprays:  
No more the streams their murmur shall forbear,  
A sweeter music than their own to hear.  
But tell the reeds, and tell the vocal shore,  
Fair Daphne's dead, and music is no more.

Her fate is whisper'd by the gentle breeze,  
And told in sighs to all the trembling trees.  
The trembling trees, in ev'ry plain and wood,  
Her fate remurmur to the silver flood.  
The silver flood, so lately calm, appears  
Swell'd with new passion, and o'erflows with tears.

The

The winds and trees, and floods, her death deplore,  
Daphne our grief, our glory, now no more.

In the same strain are the following lines of Virgil:

Illum etiam lauri, illum flevēre myriā,  
Pinifer illum etiam, sola sub rupe jacentem,  
Mænalus et gelidi flevērunt saxa Lycæi.

and have not all readers easily adopted and relished such sentiments?

With what success doth Plato give life to the dead, in his celebrated funeral oration, and ascribe a long speech to them. Equally happy was Cicero in introducing Rome as a venerable matron expostulating with Catiline, who was engaged in a conspiracy against his country. And who hath not been charmed with the behaviour and speeches of *virtue* and *vice* personified in the *Choice of Hercules*?

These are all instances of *ideal personification*, which admits of being drawn out to a greater length than that which is serious. The only question, with regard to the propriety of these descriptive personifications, is, whether the nature of the work in which they are introduced will admit of such a play of the imagination. For if any inanimate object affect a writer in so lively a manner, as to suggest to him the appearance of thought and sense, and his subject admit his mind to be at liberty to attend to that resemblance, and to indulge the fiction, it is with as much propriety that he ascribes *actions* and *language* to such objects as that he admitted the first idea of their having *life*. For the very same reason that a person might say, "the pleadings of virtue, with "difficulty, prevented a youth from being allured with the

" charms of vice," he might draw out the scene at full length, with every circumstance and decoration suitable to it, as in the *Choice of Hercules*. In serious personification, indeed, he would not proceed so far, because no illusion of this kind can last so long; but in ideal personification there is no more illusion at the first than in the last part of the allegory. That works of this kind will admit of being drawn out to a very great length is manifest from Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, the *Dunciad*, and many other allegorical works.

It is necessary, indeed, that every object personified should make a figure in the work in which it is introduced, in proportion to the extent of the personification. The *band*, in the following lines of Virgil, is not of importance enough to bear so minute a personification.

Te decisa suum, Lecide, dextera quærit  
Semanimefque micant digiti, ferrumque retractant.

ÆNEID. X. 395.

The *earth* is kept too long in view, and made of too much importance, by the personification in the following lines of Shakespeare:

She shall be dignified with this high honour,  
To bear my lady's train, lest the base earth  
Should from her vesture chance to steal a kiss,  
And, of so great a favour growing proud,  
Disdain to root the summer-swelling shower,  
And make rough winter everlastingly.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA, Act II. Scene 7.

The personification of our *native country* seems to be tedious and disgusting in the following speech of King Richard upon his landing in England, to suppress the rebellion of Bolingbroke :

——— I weep for joy,

To stand upon my kingdom once again,  
 Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,  
 Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs.  
 As a long-parted mother with her child  
 Plays fondly with her tears, and smiles in meeting;  
 So weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth,  
 And do thee favour with my royal hands.  
 Feed not thy sov'reign's foe, thou gentle earth,  
 Nor with thy sweets comfort his ravenous sense;  
 But let thy spiders, that suck up thy venom,  
 And heavy-gaited toads, lie in their way,  
 Doing annoyance to the treach'rous feet,  
 Which with usurping steps do trample thee.  
 Yield stinging-nettles to mine enemies;  
 And when they from thy bosom pluck a flower,  
 Guard it, I pray thee, with a lurking adder,  
 Whose double tongue may, with a mortal touch,  
 Throw death upon thy sov'reign's enemies.  
 Mock not my senseless conjuration; lords.  
 This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones  
 Prove armed foldiers, ere her native king  
 Shall fault under foul rebellious arms.

RICHARD II. Act III. Scene 2.

That this was not intended to be a serious personification, is evident from the address to the lords, which succeeds it. Indeed, if it had, it would have been much too long; and yet, the mind  
 of

of the speaker seems to have been too seriously engaged to be at liberty for so long an *excursion of fancy*.

We are often offended with a personification, when it is not merely the personification that occasions our disgust, but the extravagance of the sentiment conveyed by it. We are not so much offended that the *air* is personified, or that actions are ascribed to it in consequence of the personification, in the following passage; as that the air in the market-place should be in love with Cleopatra, and be restrained from quitting its place to go to her, by the dread of a vacuum.

——— The city cast

Its people out upon her, and Antony  
 Inthroned i' the market-place did sit alone,  
 Whistling to them; which, but for vacancy,  
 Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,  
 And made a gap in nature.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, Act II. Scene 3.

So natural is this figure of speech, that it requires but little elevation of fancy to admit it even very near the beginning of a work. In some compositions it is quite easy in the very first sentence. No person can be supposed to sit down to write or read a poem upon the *Seasons*, with less elevation of fancy than is sufficient to make him relish Thompson's invocation of them at the opening of each:

Come, gentle Spring, ethereal mildness, come,  
 And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,  
 While music wakes around, veil'd in a cloud  
 Of shad'wing roses, on our plains descend.

L I 2

From

From bright'ning fields of ether fair disclosed,  
Child of the sun, refulgent Summer comes.

Crown'd with the fickle and the wheaten sheaf,  
While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plains,  
Comes jovial on, the Doric reed, once more,  
Well-pleas'd, I tune.

See Winter comes to rule the vary'd year,  
Sullen, and sad, with all his rising train,  
Vapours, and clouds, and storms.

I shall only add one remark more on this subject of personification, which is, that no object personified ought to have attributes ascribed to it unsuitable to its nature, considered as not personified. Thus it seems to be absurd in Mr. Pope to represent any persons worshipping the goddesses *Dullness*; since dulness is a thing which all persons, not excepting the dullest, profess a contempt for.

I cannot conclude this article without observing, that the structure of the English language is peculiarly favourable to distinct personification. In languages in which every thing is male or female, there can be no distinction between what hath real sex and what hath none: so that, in such language, it will not appear when a writer means to personify, and when he doth not. Whereas in English, the words *he* or *she*, being appropriated to things which have *sex*, immediately intimate when a writer passes from plain language to the personification of things without life.

## LECTURE

## LECTURE XXX.

*Of IMITATION, and the Satisfaction we receive from the Completeness of things.*

TO the account of the pleasures we receive from the introduction of *human sentiments* into composition, we may conveniently subjoin an account of those we receive from a perception of the effects of the *human understanding*; a species of pleasure nearly related to the former, but something different from it.

The idea we universally conceive of the excellency of reason, of the innumerable advantages of it, and the sense of honour and dignity which from hence attends the consciousness of it, furnish a source of pleasing ideas, which are excited by the perception of the marks of design in human works. Moreover, the greater the design, and the more difficult we imagine the execution of it to be, the greater pleasure we receive from seeing the performance.

This is the principal source of the pleasures we universally receive from *imitations* of all kinds; in all which there is *design* and *execution* manifest. The pleasure we receive from the view of a happy imitation, is clearly distinguishable from the pleasure which the object itself is qualified to give us, notwithstanding it be necessarily

cessarily mixed with it. Were they of the same nature, the pleasure we receive from the original would always exceed, however, it would never fall short of, that we receive from the *copy*, because no copy can do more than exactly resemble the original. But we find that an imitation generally gives a more sensible pleasure to the imagination than an original. The pleasure must, therefore, be of a different kind. It could take from the original no more, nor other qualities than it was itself possessed of. Who is not sensible that a good *picture* gives more exquisite entertainment, particularly to a connoisseur, than the scene from which it was drawn? A fine landscape, particularly when it opens all at once, strikes the mind with a lively sense of pleasure; a good drawing of the same landscape, as far it suggests the same pleasurable sensation, doth the same, but must do it fainter. The reason then why we can take equal pleasure in gazing upon it, is, that amends is more than made for that faintness, by the additional pleasure it suggests, from presenting a view of the *effects of human genius* in executing the imitation.

We may perceive more clearly the nature of this additional pleasure, if we consider how it increases with every circumstance attending the imitation that increases the difficulty of it. All imitations please more upon our being informed that they were executed with inconvenient materials and utensils, by persons who were very young, or who had little or no instruction, &c. Of two pieces of painting, equally good, one said to be done by the master, and the other by the scholar, that done by the scholar would be the most gazed at. What else but ideas derived from these principles could have induced Ketel to throw aside his pencil, and paint with his fingers; and afterwards, thinking that practice too easy, and not sufficiently wonderful, to confine himself to the use of his toes? Though

Though common sense is far from justifying this extravagance, it could not have existed without some foundation in nature. A landscape in needle-work engages the attention more than the same landscape, much better executed, in drawing or painting. It is well known that in music, the difficulty of execution gives a pleasure which often bears away the mind from attending to the excellence of the composition. And the same discourse, delivered *extempore*, will always be heard with more pleasure than if it were pre-composed; or, supposing it to be pre-composed, it will give more pleasure delivered from the memory than from notes. In most of these cases we clearly perceive that it is our admiration of the effects of human genius (which are more wonderful in proportion to the disadvantages it labours under, and the impediments it hath to remove) that gives the pleasure which imitation conveys, additional to what it can derive from the object itself; because this pleasure manifestly increases with the *admiration*.

We may perceive this species of pleasure in the purest kind, and freest from all foreign mixture, in the imitation of objects which are in themselves not in the least pleasing, or even disagreeable, and therefore have no agreeable qualities to communicate, such as are met with in pictures of toads, and various kinds of insects; of scenes in very low life, as persons of a mean appearance; beggars, for instance, clothed in rags, in a sorry house, with wretched furniture, and in every respect so circumstanced and employed, that no person could look upon the scene itself with any pleasure. A picture of such a scene as this, well imagined, and drawn to the life, would be valued. In these cases, the disgust with which the objects themselves would naturally inspire us, is lost in the pleasure we receive from the *powers of imitation*.

The same observation is applicable, in some measure, to pictures of rocks, precipices, monsters, tempests, battles, and the representation of infamous characters and villainies upon the stage. Only there may be a mixture of the *sublime* in some of these views; and perhaps the very high pleasure with which tragic scenes are received, when they are represented upon the stage, and the uncommon avidity with which dramatic writings of the tragic kind are read, preferably to the comic, may be owing, in a great measure, to this, that the strong sensations, excited by scenes of terror and compassion, are so much diminished by a conviction of their being only imaginary, as to fall within the limits of pleasure: since pleasure hath been defined to consist of sensations moderately vigorous, and pain of sensations exceeding that degree. Besides, ideas of difficulties and danger cannot but contribute, in some measure, to give us pleasure, by means of the reflection which, in those circumstances, we unavoidably and every moment make on our own security.

That the pleasure we receive from tragical representations is not wholly owing to the views they give us of the marks of genius and design in the imitation of such scenes, is pretty evident from the resemblance it bears to the pleasure which many people take in cock-fighting, bull-baiting, boxing-matches, horse-races, &c. These spectacles rouse and agitate the mind, but not to a degree exceeding the limits of pleasure.

It may to some appear a paradox, that an imitation may be too perfect to give pleasure; but it is plainly necessary that every imitation bear evident marks of its being an imitation, and not an original, before it can excite, in a sensible manner, those peculiar pleasureable ideas which are annexed to the perception of imitation. A statue coloured, and with the eyes painted, &c. in order

to

to make it more nearly resemble real life, is observed by connoisseurs to be not near so pleasing as if it were of the natural colour of the stone, or other materials, of which it was made. When coloured, it excites an idea which coincides exactly with the idea of a real human person, such as we see every day. Without that colour, which brings it so near to life, it bears evident marks of its being only an imitation, and excites the proper corresponding feelings with vigour. Being told that it is a statue, or even feeling it to be nothing more, is not, in this case, it seems, sufficient. A coloured statue, or a well-executed piece of wax-work, has so much the appearance of life, that we are struck as with a kind of *horror* to find it otherwise, and are affected as we should be at seeing living persons suddenly struck dead and motionless.

On the other hand, a *picture* being generally in a frame, and upon a surface evidently plane, cannot be without marks enough of its not being a reality. A picture, therefore, admits of being coloured, and of every other advantage to make it resemble life as much as possible, without any fear of its not giving us all the pleasure it might give us as an imitation.

It is, perhaps, possible that a tragedy, by being acted to great perfection, may give only the same kind of pleasure that we should receive from the same scene in real life, and the art of the poet and actors be wholly lost upon us for the time. What is it we admire in actors, but that command of their words and gestures, which gives them the appearance of other persons than they really are; that is, in exhibiting an *imitated* and not a natural character: so that if they should, in the course of the performance, really forget themselves (continuing to speak and act in a manner suitable to the character they began with assuming) the reason of our admiration would certainly cease. But if the

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scenes



scenes be such as are in themselves sufficiently agreeable or interesting; and such as did not need, and would be rather hurt by, any foreign ornament, the performance is the more valuable. But in a variety of dialogues, and other things which are exhibited upon the stage, it is manifest that several circumstances, which every moment demonstrate the scene to be no reality, have a good effect. Otherwise *prose* would be universally more agreeable than *verse*, because no person ever speaks seriously in verse.

It is said that when a player was asked by a bishop why *plays* were heard with more attention than *sermons*, he answered, "The reason is, that we speak fiction as if it were a reality, while preachers speak of things real as if they were fiction." But perhaps we may be able, from these principles, to give a more just idea of the comparative difficulty of their respective provinces, and of their different success.

Besides that the theatre, and the subjects of plays, contain a thousand things more engaging to the bulk of spectators than the furniture of a church, or the subjects of the generality of sermons, it is really much more difficult to *preach* well, than to *act* well. To an accomplished actor a mixture of nature and art is requisite, which renders what are called imperfections in acting, which are really deviations from nature, necessary to his success. Should actors behave exactly as the persons whose character they assume would have done, all appearance of their *art*, and all their reputation would vanish. It is not their business, therefore, to exhibit a borrowed character exactly, which would perhaps exceed the abilities of any human being, who retained any idea of his own real character, and did not absolutely forget himself, and is what the professed admirers of players do not sufficiently attend to. They even mistake the cause of their own applause: for when they cry out

out that such a piece of acting is *pure nature*, they only mean nature happily *imitated*, and therefore *seen* to be imitated, that is, *not pure nature*.

On the other hand, all the words and gestures of a preacher must be *nature* unmixed with any appearance of *art*, which it is impossible to conceal from an observer of tolerable discernment. And yet, speaking in earnest is not alone sufficient. In an accomplished preacher we expect a *graceful earnestness*. He must deliver himself as well as if he had prepared every word and gesture, and yet no appearance of *preparation* must appear in either. Besides, he has his *own character* to support, and his own sentiments and language to deliver; while the actor assumes the character, sentiments, and language of *another*; a consideration which must certainly throw a greater weight of solicitude and anxiety upon the former than the latter. And though the former be in itself more easy, it is required to be *perfect in its kind*; whereas in the latter only a certain nearness to perfect imitation must be aimed at. I now proceed to note other effects of the same general cause.

Why is the pleasure we receive from *verse*, in any case, superior to the pleasure we should receive from the same things said in *prose*, but because it is of this kind; namely, that which results from the perception of the marks of human genius? It is more *difficult* to compose in verse than in prose. Why, moreover, is *rhyme* more agreeable, as it confessedly is, in some cases, than blank verse? Undoubtedly, not merely from the chiming of the same sound at the end of the lines, but chiefly because to construct words in this manner is more difficult, and shows greater art and skill: for nothing is more universally disgusting than rhyme, when it is not the effect of art and design.

By this principle it may, perhaps, be no very difficult matter to determine the proper use of *prose*, *blank verse*, and *rhyme*. In considering a serious subject, which wholly engrosses the mind, we are not at liberty to attend to any other ideas than those which the naked scene exhibits. It cannot be supposed, therefore, that any person describing such a scene, and properly impressed with it, should at the same time attend to, and introduce into his description, any other ornaments than those which necessarily belonged to it. In those cases, consequently, plain prose, the only language of real serious emotions and passions, is the only mode of expression that is tolerable. The appearance of *verse* of any kind, which shews a *double-attention*, could not be borne.

On the other hand, if the composition be not intended to raise any very serious emotion, but be of such a nature as that it may easily leave the mind at liberty to attend to, and relish, a variety of different kinds of pleasures, *verse*, and even *rhyme*, giving one of these *foreign species of pleasure*, may give an additional poignancy and relish to it. In works of an intermediate nature, namely, such as moderately elevate and affect the mind, without wholly engrossing it, *blank verse* may be most suitable.

It must be impossible to fix any precise limits in this case, especially in a thing that is relative to the state of the human mind; which is so extremely various, and variable. However, this must be allowed, that the more manifest signs there are of *art* in any composition, the more the mind is drawn off from an attention to the subject of it; if it do at all taste the foreign pleasures which result from an attention to those marks of art and design; and that there are more of those marks of artful composition in blank verse than in prose, and more of them in rhyme than in blank verse.

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In compositions in rhyme there is, likewise, a great variety, in the *degrees* of art and design, according to the number of objects attended to at the same time. That which is usually called *Heroic measure* (that is, the five feet Iambic, in which every other line rhymes to the preceding) approaches the nearest to blank verse; and the various measure of the *Ode*, consisting of stanzas, recedes farther from it. Accordingly, the practice of our poets seems to shew that the rhyming heroic is better suited to serious subjects, such as grave historical narration, than the form of the ode. The measure of Spenser, which was copied from Tasso, is intirely and justly disused in heroic poetry. The stanza is, indeed, generally applied to sublime and serious subjects, treated in the form of hymns and adapted to contemplation; but that is because the regular division of the ode into stanzas is most easily suited to the detached thoughts and sentiments of which hymns and such compositions generally consist; besides that the structure of the ode makes it peculiarly adapted to music. However, intricate stanzas do certainly by no means suit very serious subjects. The pleasure we receive from such complicated marks of genius and design are by no means of the same *tone*, as we may say, with very *serious emotions*, though it may suit extremely well with those which are of a light and moderate nature.

Upon some occasions more complicated marks of design than mere rhyme, and the variation of the length of the verses can furnish, are well relished; as in *acrostics*, and other species of witty versification. But because there are very few occasions which these very artful compositions suit, and they are, therefore, generally ill applied, they are usually ranked among the species of *false wit*.

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It is from the source of pleasure here treated of that *regular bodies* have a more pleasing appearance than those which are irregular. We see marks of design and contrivance in the one, and not in the other. If there be any thing in what some persons talk of the relative *perfection of figures*, it must depend upon the greater or less design that is requisite to form them. Thus, the circle and the square may be considered as exceedingly perfect, because they admit of no variety but of greater and less, and therefore require more exactness and skill to draw them; whereas the parallelogram, the rhombus, &c. admit of greater variety, and therefore require less exactness and skill to draw them. In numbers, a progression in a simple ratio is pleasing; but a more complex ratio, if it be properly comprehended, pleases more, as being the effect of a greater and more comprehensive design. In examining the productions of nature, likewise, the more design we discover in them, that is, the more we see of an intended subserviency of means to an end, the higher doth our pleasure in contemplating them arise.

It is hardly necessary to observe, with respect to imitation of every kind, in painting, poetry, or composition in general, that (provided it bear sufficient marks of its being an imitation) its merit is in proportion to its likeness to the original; and that the correctness of our taste in such works of genius must be in proportion to our knowledge of the originals. If a child be drawn with the wrinkles of an old man, or an old man with the plumpness of a child, we say it is absurd; or if a person be represented as speaking in a manner that we have no remembrance or idea of a person of his character and station speaking, we are disgusted with the impropriety; and the more, in proportion to our knowledge of the person's character or station. If we be unacquainted with the originals, the exactness of the imitation

will give us no pleasure, because it is unknown to us; neither will a defect in the imitation disgust, because it is equally unknown.

A regard ought to be had to the known manners, customs, and prevailing sentiments of the times in which any thing is represented to have happened, as well as to the personal propriety and uniformity of character in the speakers themselves. And though such anachronisms as these be no objection to a person's abilities as a writer or a poet, yet they are to his character of a *general scholar*; and no person ought to undertake to describe any scene, unless he be acquainted with every thing essential to it. Shakespeare is frequently guilty of mistakes of this kind. In the life and death of King John, *canons* are perpetually mentioned as used in the times of that monarch. The Bastard gives him the title of *majesty*, which the Kings of England had not then assumed; and the King is represented, in the following speech, as inveighing against the Pope, in such a manner as there is no reason to suppose any prince in christendom, in that age, was capable of talking. The fundamental principles of protestantism were not then so well understood:

What earthly name to interrogatories  
 Can tax the free breath of a sacred King?  
 Thou can't not, Cardinal, devise a name  
 So slight, unworthy, and ridiculous,  
 To charge me to an answer, as the Pope.  
 Tell him this tale, and from the mouth of England  
 Add thus much more, that no Italian priest  
 Shall tithe or toll in our dominions:  
 But as we, under heaven, are supreme head;  
 So under it, that great supremacy

Where

Where we do reign we will alone uphold,  
 Without th' assistance of a mortal hand.  
 So tell the Pope. All reverence set apart  
 To him and his usurp'd authority.

*K. Philip.* Brother of England, you blaspheme in this.

*K. John.* Though you, and all the Kings of Christendom,

Are led so grossly by this meddling priest,  
 Dreading the curse that money may buy out,  
 And by the merit of vile gold, dross, dust,  
 Purchase corrupted pardon of a man,  
 Who in that sale sells pardon from himself;  
 Though you, and all the rest, so grossly led,  
 This juggling witchcraft with revenue cherish,  
 Yet I alone, alone, do me oppose  
 Against the Pope, and count his friends my foes.

Act III. Scene 3.

Examples of other kinds of proprieties and improprieties in imitations have been given upon various occasions in the course of these lectures, so that it is needless to multiply them in this place.

Let any person but recollect his feelings when a musician stops before he has finished his tune; when a bad rhyme, or no rhyme at all, occurs in a poem composed in generally good rhyme; or when a person, who is reading, makes an unexpected pause, and leaves a sentence unfinished, and he will perceive the force of another instance of the association of ideas, similar to the effect of imitation, the observation of which is of considerable use in criticism; namely, that the mind is impatient of the interruption

of a chain of ideas strongly connected, and is pleased to see every thing carried to its proper conclusion, according to the ideas previously formed of it. For this reason, a member of a sentence, unusually long, or unusually short, is heard with a sense of pain and disappointment, and any dissimilarity of style in the same composition offends. A short verse, in the midst of a poem consisting chiefly of long ones, would displease; but a short verse recurring alternately with short ones, as the pentameter among hexameters; recurring at equal intervals, as the adonic verse in the sapphic, doth not displease, because it is *expected*; nay, we should feel the want of it very disagreeably, if it were omitted.

But the satisfaction arising from the coincidence and agreement of things, with the ideas previously existing in our minds, is heightened, if, in some things, it be not perfectly complete; the *dissimilarity* in the one case forming a pleasing contrast with the similarity in the other. For example; though a great interruption in the order of the words that compose a sentence, by parentheses, be disagreeable, yet a small deviation from the natural, usual, and expected order, is agreeable; and though a line that is perfectly prose would have a most disagreeable effect in a poem, yet we find that a little variation in the feet of our heroic verse hath a good effect, as a *trochee* for a *spondee*, in the following line:

Arms and the man I sing, who forc'd by fate,—

Two instruments sounding in unison, please; but two sounds that are chords to one another, please more. Sometimes an imperfect chord is preferred to a perfect one, and sometimes a discord is preferred to both.

The expectation and desire of seeing every thing full and complete, according to our ideas of perfection, extends much farther than to the style of composition. It often directs our hopes and fears in the most important concerns of life, and even contrary to reason and experience. Hence the fears that men formerly had of dying in their grand climacteric; the fear that Iphigenia's brother (according to the account that Aristotle gives of an old play) had of being sacrificed, when he found himself in the same situation in which he believed his sister had been sacrificed. Hence the apprehension of the people of London, that, as they had had an earthquake on the same day of two succeeding months, and the second more violent than the first, they should have a third on the same day of the month following, more fatal than either of the former. Hence many rules that common people have with regard to the weather; as that, if it be fair or rainy on such a particular day, it will be fair or rainy so much longer. And hence the satisfaction they receive from the accomplishment of a prediction. Rather than the event should not answer to it, they would take considerable pains to bring it about. Shakspeare hath noted this weakness in Henry the Fourth.

*K. Henry.* Doth any name particular belong  
Unto that lodging where I first did swoon?

*Warwick.* 'Tis call'd Jerusalem; my noble Lord.

*K. Henry.* Laud be to God! even there my life must end.  
It hath been prophesied to me, many years,  
I should not die but in Jerusalem;  
Which vainly I supposed the Holy Land.  
But bear me to that chamber, there I'll lie:  
In that Jerusalem shall Henry die.

Second Part of HENRY IV. Act IV. Scene last.

## LECTURE XXXI.

Of CLIMAX, and the Order of Words in a Sentence.

**I**N a world constituted as this is, a view of a gradual rise and improvement in things cannot fail to make an agreeable prospect. The continual observation of this furnishes us with a stock of pleasing ideas, which are constantly accumulating, and which are easily transferred, by association, upon every thing, either in composition, or in any other field of view, which presents a similar appearance. How agreeable to all persons is the idea of the days growing longer, of spring advancing, and of children growing up to men!

This is one, but not the only cause of the remarkably striking effect which a well-conducted *climax* hath in composition. When a series of terms rise, by nearly-equal degrees, above one another in greatness and strength, they stand in the fairest situation for being *compared* and *contrasted* to one another; by which means the terms mentioned last in such a succession affect the mind much more strongly than if they had occurred singly. Likewise, together with the preceding terms, they contribute (as was observed before) to form the *sublime*.

Besides, that order of terms which constitutes the happiest climax generally coincides with the *order of time and nature*, in which the things they express really stand related to, or are con-

nected with one another. Consequently, it is agreeable to repeat that coincidence; and it is a painful interruption of a long-established association of ideas, to break that order. This we may perceive in the following climax of Cicero: *In urbe luxuries creatur, ex luxuria existat avaritia necesse est, ex avaritia erumpat audacia, inde omnia scelera ac maleficia nascuntur.* Pro Roscio. In this passage the terms *luxury, avarice, impudence, and licentiousness* rise regularly above one another, both with regard to their heinousness as vices, and their pernicious effects in the state; and they likewise succeed one another in the order of time and of cause and effect, the preceding article being always the cause of the following.

The words *rocks, seas, and skies* stand in a happy climax in the following passage of Pope's Ode on St. Cecilia's day:

So, when the first bold vessel dared the seas,  
High on the stern the Thracian raised his strain  
While Argo saw her kindred trees  
Descend from Pelion to the main.  
Transported demi-gods stood round,  
And men grew heroes at the found,  
Enflamed with glory's charms.  
Each chief his seven-fold shield display'd,  
And half-unsheathed the shining blade  
And rocks, and seas, and skies rebound,  
To arms, to arms, to arms.

The order of climax not only adds to the strength and sublimity of style, it is likewise easily adapted to heighten the poignancy of wit and humour. Of this Cicero, in his treatise de Oratore tells us that Crassus took a happy advantage, in questioning

tioning a witness against his client. "Perhaps," says the orator, "the person from whom you heard this was angry when he spoke it." The witness making no reply; he adds, "Perhaps you did not take him right." The witness still continuing silent; he adds again, "Perhaps you did not hear it at all."

As all things that can be exhibited in the same view, so as to be named together in a sentence, must be related to one another, (because in that situation they must have a like dependence upon something going before, or coming after) and since it is impossible that things which are really different should have the same relations, there must always be a reason for naming some first and others last, and the disposition of them cannot be quite arbitrary. The order of *cause and effect, of time or place, and of worth, dignity, and importance*, are of principal influence in this affair. So habitually do we attend to those relations, that a considerable offence against them, even in common conversation, would be instantly perceived, and give a sensible disgust.

The disgust which this inversion of order occasions is exactly similar to what we feel when the usual order of words in a sentence is altered, or any other grammatical mistake is made. It *hauks*, as it were, *our expectation*; and the sentence thus constructed doth not coincide with our ideas of perfection formed by previous associations of ideas, which was explained before. Besides, if this inversion of order gave no sensible pain, the disposition of things which constitutes a climax is so agreeable, that it is a pity it should be neglected, when it presents itself without our seeking for it.

The order of *time* is observed in the following series from Swift:

"It

“ It is a shame for an English lady not to relish such discourses, not to improve by them, and endeavour, by reading and information, to have her share in those entertainments.”

A regard to relative weight and importance may be observed in the following sentence of the same author :

“ The books read at school and colleges are full of incitements to virtue and discouragements from vice, and drawn from the wisest reasons, the strongest motives, and the most influencing examples.”

The order of *cause and effect* is conspicuous in such phrases as these: *She was in the bloom of youth and beauty; Old age and infirmities came upon him, &c.* Sometimes the effect may precede the cause; but this order is not generally quite so natural. *Joy sitting in every face, content in every heart.* BOLINGBROKE. Though, in description, as in this case, there may be a propriety in mentioning the effect which is visible first, and the cause which is invisible afterwards.

In this sentence of the last-mentioned author—*The genuine effect of esteem, confidence, and affection*, the term *confidence* is misplaced; because confidence is the result of esteem and affection, and therefore ought to be named after them. But the arrangement of the terms in the following sentence is much more faulty :

“ No king, who is not, in the true meaning of the word, a patriot, can govern Britain with ease, security, honour, dignity, or indeed with sufficient power and strength.”

The capital fault in this sentence is, that after a gradual rise in the ideas, from *ease* to *dignity*, the writer goes back to an article

professedly below them all, when he concludes the ascending climax with the words, “ *or indeed with sufficient power and strength.*” Every term introduced as this is, ought to be the last of a descending series. In the next place, *security* ought to have preceded *ease*, for the same reason that he hath made both *security* and *ease* to precede *honour* and *dignity*. Lastly, I do not see a sufficient distinction between *security*, and *sufficient power and strength*.

I have now enumerated the principal sources of pleasure which enter into works of genius and imagination; and, for the sake of illustration, have given, under each head, a select number of examples, from the most celebrated authors, of passages which derive their merit from each of them. I shall now give a view of the whole in a very short compass.

Every thing that hath a striking or pleasing effect in composition, must either *draw out and exercise our faculties*, or else, by the principle of association, must *transfer from foreign objects ideas that tend to improve the sense*; the principal of which are *views of human sentiments*, of the *effects of the human genius*, and of a *rise and improvement* in things.

If it be thought that some other ingredients contribute to render a discourse engaging, I apprehend it will be found, upon reflection, that those advantages belong to the *subject* of a discourse, and are by no means in the choice of a composer: whereas the beauties that have been enumerated and explained in these lectures, are such as depend upon the *composition*, and therefore such as may be neglected and overlooked by a composer. If any person should imagine that the *moral sense*, the *sense of honour*, of *benevolence*, and of *devotion*, ought to have been allowed some influence

influence in works of genius and imagination; it is acknowledged that the subjects of composition may please, by reason of their exhibiting scenes adapted to gratify those senses. But then we ought, for the same reason, not to have excluded the external senses, or any faculty whereby we receive pleasure; because it may be said, with respect to them all, that ideas may be presented in a discourse or composition, which could have had no power to please or to affect us but in consequence of our having such senses. It is in reality, for the reason above mentioned, equally foreign to the business of *criticism*, to take notice of any of them, any farther than they are necessarily connected with the pleasures of the imagination.

## LECTURE

## LECTURE XXXII.

*Of PERSPICUITY in Style.*

IT may not be amiss to conclude this account of what it is that makes style *pleasing*, with a few observations on what tends to make it *perspicuous*; especially as, in fact, this property is the more essential of the two. For, certainly, the first care of a judicious writer will be to make his meaning easily understood, and therefore to keep his style free from ambiguity.

A sentence must be ambiguous when it is impossible to determine, from the structure of it, to which antecedent a relative refers, or to what principal clause of a sentence a circumstance introduced into it belongs. In the following sentence from Middleton, it doth not appear whether *miracles* or *battles* be the antecedent to the relative *which*.

“ They have also many churches and public monuments erected in testimony of such miracles, viz. of saints and angels, fighting for them in their battles, which, though always as ridiculous”—

The construction would direct us to *battles*, but the sense to *miracles*.

The circumstance [with great care and diligence] in the following sentence is not placed where it is apparent, at first sight, to what it belongs.

O o

“ This



“ This morning, when one of Lady Lizard’s daughters was  
 “ looking over some hoods and ribbands, brought by her tire-  
 “ woman, with great care and diligence, I employed no less in  
 “ examining the box which contained them.” GUARDIAN.

These ambiguities will be prevented, if, in a case like the former, the relative be always placed immediately after its proper antecedent; and, in the latter, if the circumstance be immediately subjoined to that clause of a sentence to which it belongs, provided it never be placed between two clauses to which it may equally belong. It is not a sufficient vindication of passages which are left ambiguous for want of attending to these particulars, that the *sense* will determine to which the relative or the circumstance refers: for the structure of a sentence ought to be such, as to leave the hearer or reader no trouble to find out the meaning, by comparing one thing with another.

It favours perspicuity, and procures every member of a sentence the degree of attention that is due to it, when the incidental circumstances of an affirmation are introduced pretty early in a sentence, and the principal ideas are reserved to the last; for were those circumstances placed after the principal idea, they would either have no attention at all paid to them, or they would take from that which is due to the principal idea; and, in either case, a sentence constructed in that manner is flat and languid. The circumstances attending Mr. Woolston’s recantation, are well introduced in the following sentence:

“ At Saint Bride’s church, in Fleet-street, Mr. Woolston (who  
 “ wrote against the miracles of our Saviour) in the utmost terrors,  
 “ of conscience, made a public recantation.”

But

But in the next, the clause [in the sixth book of the *Æneid*] is awkwardly introduced:

“ Virgil, who hath cast the whole system of Platonic philoso-  
 “ phy, so far as it relates to the soul of man, into beautiful al-  
 “ legories, in the sixth book of his *Æneid*, gives us the punish-  
 “ ment,” &c.—

If it be thought proper to crowd a number of circumstances into one sentence, it is advisable not to place them all together, but to intermix them with the principal members of the sentence.

There may be one inconvenience in reserving the principal members of a sentence to the last, that if any thing which precedes it be absolutely unintelligible without it, and pretty remote from it, it will be difficult for the reader to connect in his mind those disjointed members, so as to make the sense easy. The necessity for inversion in blank verse frequently obliges the writers of it to make the reader wait for any sense at all, through the whole of a pretty long sentence; as Milton hath done in the beginning of *Paradise Lost*:

Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit  
 Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
 Brought death into the world and all our woe,  
 With loss of Eden; till one greater man  
 Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,  
 Sing heav’nly muse.—

The name of the person we are speaking to is introduced *with the most respect* in the beginning of the speech, but it is generally introduced in a more *easy and familiar manner* after the first or

second clause of a sentence, or even later. Of both these observations we have a happy example in Milton :

Oh, father, what intends thy hand, she cried,  
Against thy only son? What Fury, oh son,  
Possesses thee, to bend that mortal dart  
Against thy father's head.

PARADISE LOST, Book II. Line 727.

The only objection to this passage is, that the haste the speaker may reasonably be supposed to be in, would more naturally throw her words into too much disorder, to preserve so minute a distinction between the manner of accoling a son and a father.

It is an offence against perspicuity when the construction of different clauses in a sentence is unnecessarily varied. This resembles changing the scene, and placing objects in different points of light, which tends to embarrass a reader. The Greek and Latin classics were too negligent of this, and, indeed, many other helps to perspicuity.

Thus Livy :

“ Id jugum, sicut Apennini dorso Italia dividitur, ita mediã  
“ Greciam deremit.”——

And Cicero :

“ Honos alit artes, omnesque incenduntur ad studia gloriã;  
“ jacentque ea semper quæ apud quosque improbantur.”

Whether a *similarity* or *contrariety* be intended to be exhibited in things, it is of advantage that they should have a *similar situation*.

*tion* in the sentence. For, since the ideas both of similarity and contrariety are relative, and perceived by a comparison, the more obvious and easy is the comparison, the more sensible and striking are the ideas resulting from it. So that if we study perspicuity, we ought to make the greatest uniformity possible in the structure of those members of a sentence that have any correspondence in their meaning. Even negative and affirmative copulatives do not follow one another without some confusion of ideas; as in Horace :

Nec horret iratum mare, forumque vetat.

The term *productions* doth not sufficiently correspond to *ministers* in the following sentence of Swift :

“ I have observed, of late, the style of some great ministers,  
“ very much to exceed that of any other productions.”

Perhaps the latter part of the following sentence from the Spectator had better have been made to tally more nearly with the former :

“ The wise man is happy when he gains his own approba-  
“ tion; the fool, when he recommends himself to the applause  
“ of those about him.”

Very often, indeed, writers plainly study to vary the form of expression in two corresponding members of a sentence. This, certainly, shews a greater command of language, and in short sentences, where every thing else is uniform, may have no bad effect; as in the following of Mr Addison :

I:

“ A

“ A friend exaggerates a man’s virtues, an enemy inflames “ his crimes.”

The omission or redundancy of articles, or copulatives, though it may be made without any material prejudice to the sense, ought not, however, to be made at random; because this circumstance, when conducted with judgment, may contribute to indicate some particulars in the situation of a writer’s mind, which it is of some moment to attend to, as the knowledge of them may make his meaning more obvious. For example; it is convenient to make as little separation, by the article, or other words, as possible between terms, the ideas belonging to which are represented as united; but if they be spoken of as disjointed, the words had better be placed at a greater distance. Speaking of the two supposed constituent parts of human nature as composing one being we should always say, *the soul and body*; treating of their different properties, we should naturally say, *the soul and the body*.

The omission of the copulative, when several things are named in succession, expresses hurry and impetuosity; a redundancy of them, on the other hand, expresses deliberation, and a desire to have each particular of the series of terms carefully attended to. A copulative would have intirely spoiled Cæsar’s laconic account of his expedition to Pontus: *Veni, vidi, vici*; whereas a redundancy of them is of advantage in the following expression of Cicero: *Me præ cæteris et colit, et observat, et diligit*.

Possibly, the reason why the omission of a copulative is lively and animating may be; because the repetition of the members of a sentence in an unconnected manner resembles an interrupted succession of sounds; which, consisting of several changes from one

one state to another, rouses the attention more than an uniform continued sound. Or it may be enough to say, that it produces its effect by surprizing, in consequence of its being unusual and unexpected. The repetition of this copulative before every member of a series of terms draws the attention to each more strongly, because it makes every term appear to be the *last*, for which we always reserve a greater share of our attention.

If we judge of style by the effect it hath upon the mind of the hearer, we shall not always condemn the use of *synonymous words*, or such as are nearly so (perhaps there are none perfectly synonymous) or even the *repetition* of the same word, any more than we should universally condemn a periphrasis. Both may contribute to give a clearer and stronger idea of a person’s meaning than any single words could do. Moreover, we have the example of our most chaste and correct writers for this liberty. Thus Swift:

“ It would be endless to run over the several defects of style among us. I shall therefore say nothing of the *mean* and “ the *paltry* (which are usually attended by the *fustian*); “ much less of the *slovenly* or *indecent*.”

A regard to perspicuity will direct us rather to multiply sentences, than crowd into the same sentence things which have no relation to one another. As Burnet, in giving Lord Sunderland’s character: “ His own notions were always good; but he “ was a man of great expence.”

Every paragraph ought certainly to be independent, in grammatical construction at least, of any other; and yet Mr Lawson, in his Lectures on Oratory, frequently begins a paragraph with a relative, the antecedent of which is in the preceding paragraph;

as at page 276: *Which reasoning, &c.*—This might easily have been rectified by using *This* instead of *Which*.

Sometimes the reader is embarrassed by a sentence which he hastily condemns as ungrammatical, when not the principles of grammar, but an attention to common sense only, can rectify it. Thus when Swift says———*and cleanliness, qualities so opposite to those animals*; the fault is not in the grammar, but the sense: for *qualities* can be opposed only to *qualities*. The following sentence, likewise, of Mr. Sheridan is faulty; not because it is ungrammatical, but because it is absurd to say that the *attempt* was impossible, though the *success* might.

“ This is but a small specimen of the irregularities to be found  
“ in the state of our written language; yet it may serve to shew  
“ how different, nay impossible, the attempt must be to acquire  
“ a knowledge of the true pronunciation of the English; unless  
“ learners be furnished with a proper clue to guide them through  
“ this labyrinth.”

## LECTURE

## LECTURE XXXIII.

*Of the Resemblance between SOUND and SENSE.*

**H**AVING considered words as they serve to convey the *sense*, I come now to consider the properties of them as mere *sounds*, or as they affect the external ear only.

Speech consists of sounds divided by a great variety of *intervals*. All ideas, therefore, either of real sounds, or of intervals, and consequently all ideas analogous to those of sounds and intervals, admit of a natural expression by words: that is, the words may not be mere *arbitrary* signs of such ideas, but bear a *real resemblance* to them; so that a person, without being previously acquainted with the meaning of the words, might be made sensible of it, by the pronunciation only: or, at least, if he could not perceive the *particular ideas* they denoted without an explanation, he might be *affected* by the sound of the words only, in a manner similar to what he would have been by the sentiment.

That mere sounds are capable of this kind of expression, is evident from the well-known power of music, which, according to the different species of it which are employed, is capable of introducing very different states of mind. And indeed, since these states of mind may afterwards, by association, introduce particular ideas, the ideas themselves may, with propriety enough,

be said to be excited by the power of music, that is, of mere sound.

All the properties of sounds, besides those which depend upon their essential differences (as consisting of particular combinations of vowels and consonants) are the greater *ease* or *difficulty* of pronouncing them, and the *longer* or *shorter time* which the distinct pronunciation of them requires; which properties arise from the forementioned radical differences.

Articulate sounds may resemble those which are inarticulate, because the former are often copied from the latter; as the *bleating* of the sheep, the *lowing* of the ox, the *roaring* of the lion, the *clanging* of arms, &c. It is by this advantage that Pope describes the falling of trees, in the following passage, which so happily corresponds to the sense:

— deep-echoing groan the thickets brown,  
Then rustling, crackling, crashing, thunder down.

Milton's description of the sound made by the opening of hell-gates is equally happy, on the same account:

— — — — — On a sudden open fly,  
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,  
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate  
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook  
Of Erebus.

A sentence constructed so as not to be pronounced without difficulty (which, by the way, it requires very little ingenuity to do, in our language) may very naturally represent any effort of labour and difficulty. Thus Milton hath well described Satan struggling through chaos:

So

So he with difficulty and labour hard,  
Mov'd on, with difficulty and labour he.

Mr. Pope hath not been quite so happy in his professed imitation of Ajax's effort to throw a rock, and of the expression of that effort in words:

When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,  
The line too labours, and the words move slow.

The latter of these lines, in particular, is by no means of more difficult pronunciation than the generality of English verses. It runs much smoother, and more easily, than his description of the gentle flow of a current:

And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows.

But this miscarriage is not owing primarily to the poet, but to the language, in which every possible advantage was not taken of all the properties of sound. This is also the case in another particular.

Nothing is more obvious than that short syllables may aptly represent *speed*, and long syllables *slowness*, and that quickness and slowness are analogous to a variety of other mental conceptions, which, by this means, might likewise be expressed by sounds. But, unfortunately, the structure of most languages is such as to take little or no advantage of this property of sound, any more than of the former. In no language, perhaps, are the syllables of the words which express *swiftness*, upon the whole, shorter than those of words which express *slowness*. In Latin, we find the penultima of *velox* and *festino* unnaturally long, while the penultima of *mora* and *piger* is short, as also those of *labor*

and *opus*, which is an unfortunate circumstance for the following often-quoted line of Virgil:

Hic labor, hoc opus est.

On this account Pope's description of Camilla's *swiftness* (which English word, by the way, is far from corresponding to the idea it conveys) is very unfortunate:

Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.

His own success might have taught him that an Alexandrine verse is more proper to express slowness and heaviness than speed:

A needless Alexandrine ends the song,  
Which, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.

However, the universal admiration with which, till very lately, every body read that paragraph of the *Essay on Criticism*, from which these extracts are made, shews us how naturally we transfer the properties of *ideas* upon the *words* which express them. Hence it is easy to *imagine* a resemblance of the sound to the sense in almost every thing. But since this is wholly the work of the reader's imagination, a writer doth not need to give himself trouble about it. Those who understand the language will *imagine* the correspondence, and it will hardly ever be tried by the only fair test, the *ear of a foreigner* (or rather the *eye*, for if it were read, he would be imposed upon) whether the correspondence be any thing more than imaginary.

The *pauses* or *intervals* of sound a writer hath more command of, as they are, in a great measure, independent of the caprice

of language. Indeed, greater advantage may be taken of this property of speech to make the sound an echo to the sense, than of the mere sound of the words themselves. In particular, *intervals* are peculiarly adapted to express a variety of affections of the mind. For it is manifest that the breaks or rests we make in our voice, the length or shortness of our sentences, and the like, vary with the state of the mind with which we deliver ourselves upon any occasion. For instance, when the mind is agitated, the voice is interrupted, and a man expresses himself in short and broken sentences. A soliloquy, also, is expressed in a more disjointed manner than a conversation equally calm. In short, every train of thought, and every circumstance attending it, hath its own peculiar *divisions*; and therefore if the pauses of a sentence be disposed in such a manner as to correspond to the intervals of thought, the sound will be a just echo to the sense, and this independent of the peculiar characters of the words themselves.

By the artful disposition of the pauses of a sentence, Mr. Pope hath described the catching of a butterfly, in a manner which gives us a lively idea of the action:

I saw and started from its vernal bower  
The rising game, and chased from flower to flower.  
It fled, I follow'd; now in hope, now pain.  
It stop'd, I stop'd; it moved, I moved again.  
At last it fix'd. 'Twas on what plant it pleased,  
And where it fix'd the beauteous bird I seized.

DUNCLAD, B. IV. v. 425.

A full.

A full pause in an unusual place very aptly represents the stopping of a stone, after an impetuous course down a hill, in the following passage in Pope's translation of Homer :

From steep to steep the rolling ruin bounds,  
At ev'ry shock the crackling wood rebounds.  
Still gath'ring force, it smokes, and, urged amain,  
Whirls, leaps, and thunders down impetuous to the plain ;  
Then stops. So Hector. Their whole force he proved,  
Resistless when he raged, and when he stopp'd, unmoved.

The whole of this passage, particularly the description of the rolling of the stone down the hill, is a happy example of descriptive imitation.

The frequent pauses of meditation and soliloquy are happily imitated by Shakespeare upon many occasions, and particularly in Hamlet's meditation on death :

To be, or not to be—that is the question.  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The stings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep—  
No more—and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ach, and a thousand nat'ral shocks  
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd—to die, to sleep—  
To sleep—perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub—  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause—

A great variety of just expression of sense by sound, or at least intervals of sound, may be observed in various parts of Pope's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day; particularly at the beginning, where he describes several instruments of music :

Descend, ye Nine, descend and sing,  
The breathing instruments inspire ;  
Wake into voice each silent string,  
And sweep the founding lyre.  
In a sadly pleasing strain  
Let the warbling lute complain ;  
Let the loud trumpet sound,  
Till the roofs all around  
The shrill echoes rebound.  
While in more lengthen'd notes and slow  
The deep, majestic, solemn organs blow.  
Hark the numbers soft and clear  
Gently steal upon the ear ;  
Now louder, and yet louder rise,  
And fill with spreading sounds the skies.  
Exulting in triumph now swell the bold notes,  
In broken air trembling the wild music floats ;  
Till, by degrees, remote and small,  
The strains decay,  
And melt away,  
In a dying, dying fall.

And afterwards, when he describes the death of Orpheus :

But soon, too soon, the lover turns his eyes.  
Again she falls, again she dies, she dies.  
How wilt thou now the fatal sisters move ?  
No crime was thine, if 'twas no crime to love.

Now under hanging mountains,  
Beside the fall of fountains,  
Or where Hebrus wanders,  
Rolling in meanders,  
All alone,  
Unheard, unknown,  
He makes his moan,  
And calls her ghost,  
For ever, ever, ever lost.  
Now with furies furrounded,  
Despairing, confounded,  
He trembles, he glows  
Amidst Rhodope's fnows:

See, wild as the winds, o'er the desert he flies —  
Hark—Hæmus refounds with the Bacchanals cries—  
———Ah fee—he dies.

From reading the former of these passages, in particular, it must be apparent how much it is in the power of *pronunciation* to assist and help out this expression of sense by sound and intervals of sound; and because, if we feel the sentiment, we unavoidably do give the language all the assistance we can from pronunciation, the powers of *written language* have been supposed to be as extensive as those of *language* and *pronunciation* together. The observation of the different manner in which the words *great* and *little* are pronounced, according to the *degree of the quality* we intend to express, may suffice to shew us both how naturally we endeavour to favour the sense by the sound, and also how far we are able to do it. The peculiar beauty, particularly, of the former of the two passages quoted from Pope may be lost by an injudicious pronunciation. Also the words

*fall'n,*

*fall'n, fall'n, fall'n, fall'n,* in Dryden's *Feast of Alexander*, require to be pronounced with a tone of voice growing continually more and more languid, to preserve the beauty of the passage in which they are introduced. Indeed no person, who reads the poem with any feeling and taste, can avoid doing it. There are many ideas and turns of thought which a *speaker* may imitate very successfully, when a *writer* (unless languages had been constructed in a manner very different from what they are) is not able to contribute much to the success of the imitation.



## LECTURE XXXIV.

## Of HARMONY in VERSE.

ALL speech naturally divides itself into *long* and *short syllables*. Whatever language we speak, or whether it be *quantity* or *accent* that we attend to in it, we pronounce some syllables with more rapidity than others; and the art of versification universally consists in the disposition of the long or short syllables, according to some rule. In some kinds of verse, indeed, there is more latitude than in others; but an utter inattention to the length of the syllables would quite destroy the harmony of any versification in the world.

The regular disposition of the long and short syllables necessarily divides every verse into certain distinct portions, or *feet*, and the harmony of a verse is most distinctly perceived when these portions or feet are kept as distinct as possible; because then the regular disposition of the long and short syllables, in which the essence of verse consists, is most apparent. To keep these divisions of verse quite distinct (which the mind, according to an observation lately made, naturally inclines to do, in order to *perfect* the harmony) a momentary pause must be made after each of them, and this pause will be peculiarly easy and natural, if such division, or foot, close with a long syllable.

I

In

In order to have any perception of the harmony of verse, and to feel the pleasure we receive from it, unmixed with that which we receive from other beauties of poetry, we must dispose *unmeaning syllables*, or such as have no other properties than *length* or *shortness*, in metrical order, and observe how we are affected by the pronunciation of them. By this method we shall also perceive the peculiar beauty of the versification in use in any country, independent of any advantages it may derive from the peculiar *properties of the language*, or the *art of the poet*. For the sake of brevity, I shall here apply this method to English heroic verse only, using the syllables that the ingenious Mr. Mason contrived for this purpose; viz. *tum* for the long syllable and *ti* for the short one. The following line then will be the general standard of English Iambic verses:

Titūm | tītūm || tī tūm | tī tūm | tī tūm.

Let any person only pronounce these syllables at his leisure, and he must perceive a disposition to pause a little after every long syllable, and most of all after the second foot, leaving the latter part of the verse longer than the former; by which means it hath the additional beauty of a *climax*. Accordingly, it will be found by experience that those verses, *separately taken*, are the most musical, in which the words are so disposed, that those pauses shall be the most distinctly perceived; that is, where the division made by the words and the sense coincides with the metrical pause. To this, no doubt, is owing, in a great measure, the remarkable harmony of that stanza of Denham's, which Dryden proposes as a paradox to be explained by the wits of his age:

Tho' deep, yet clear; || tho' gentle, yet not dull:  
Strong without rage; || without overflowing, full.

Qq 2

An-

Anciently, I believe, in all nations, mankind were so captivated with the charms of verse, that, in reciting poetry, no regard was paid to any thing but the metrical pause; which made the pronunciation of verse a kind of *singing* or *chanting*: and accordingly, we never read of *poems* being *read*, but always of their being *sung* by them. Nor shall we wonder at this, if we consider that, even in our own age, all persons who have not been instructed in the true art of pronunciation (which is governed wholly by the *sense*) naturally pronounce verse in the same manner, and quite differently from their manner of pronouncing prose; so that it generally requires a good deal of pains to correct that vicious habit. Even among persons of a liberal education, we find some lean more to the pause of the *metre*, and others more to the pause of the *sense*; and there are no persons, not even those who contend the most strenuously that verse ought to be pronounced exactly like prose, but distinguish the metrical pause as much as a regard to the sense will admit. Indeed, if we have a just taste for *harmony*, we shall perceive that a little interruption of the metrical pause by the division of the sense hath no disagreeable effect, *musically considered*, as it contributes to throw an agreeable *variety* into the structure of verse.

If we pay any regard to the sense, we must make no pause in the middle of a word, or between two words which together present only one idea, and separately are of no signification; as between prepositions, or adjectives, and their substantives, which are as inseparable in pronunciation as if they were single words. The greater is the coincidence of the metrical pause with the pause of the sense, and the more distinguishable is verse from prose: and verses grow less and less distinguishable as a regard to the sense throws the pause farther and farther from its natural place.

place. If the metrical pause be excluded intirely, the verse, notwithstanding the regular distribution of the long and short syllables, will not be distinguishable from prose, nor pass for a verse, except among others.

This a judicious ear will be able to observe in a comparison of the following verses in *Pope's Essay on Man*; in which the pauses are very various. I have marked the proper pause to be made in the pronunciation, which is always as near to the metrical pause (namely, after the second long syllable in the line) as a regard to the sense will admit:

All nature is but art || unknown to thee:  
 All chance, || direction, which thou can'st not see;  
 All discord, || harmony not understood;  
 All partial evil, || universal good.  
 And spite of pride, || in erring reason's spite,  
 One truth is clear; || whatever is is right.

In these verses, the pause which falls nearest to the beginning of the verse, is after the second syllable, which is rarely graceful; and that which falls nearest to the end is after the sixth syllable. Sometimes the pause may fall, and not ungracefully, one syllable later, as in the following:

Some place the bliss in action, || some in ease.

If the pause fall earlier or later than these, it has a bad effect upon the harmony of the verse, unless it answer the purpose of making the sound an echo to the sense, as in this:

Celestial voices to the midnight air  
 Sole, || or responsive to each other's note.

The

The following verses, by the close coherence of the words in grammatical construction, admit of no metrical pause, at least none that is sufficiently striking:

Shoots far into the bosom of dim night,  
Oft leaving what is natural and fit.

It is only little more than the *transposition of the words* that gives the next line an air different from that of prose:

The God who darts around the world his rays.

POPE'S HOMER.

If the words be restored to their natural order, though the *measure* of verse will be preserved, the *effect* of it will be wholly lost:

The God who darts his rays around the world.

For this reason *polysyllables* are, for the most part, unhappily refused admittance into the most musical English verses, viz. because they can hardly be situated where they will not occupy the most convenient place for the principal pause; and it is evident they must necessarily occupy the place of an inferior pause, at least. On this account, though these verses may contribute to throw an agreeable variety into a poem, they seldom sound musically when pronounced singly. The following are rather too profane:

A noble superfluity it craves.  
In magnanimity of mind resolved.

But, if polysyllabic words can be so disposed as not to interfere with the principal pause, they have a very good effect, on account  
of

of their accent being so distinguishable. Let the melody of the following lines be attended to:

————— Him th' Almighty Power  
Hurl'd headlong, flaming from th' etherial sky,  
With hideous ruin and combustion, down  
To bottomless perdition; there to dwell  
In adamant chains and penal fire,  
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.

On the other hand, English verses, consisting wholly of *monosyllables*, have seldom a striking effect, because they are not, in general, sufficiently distinguishable into long and short. As it is only the *accent* which determines the length of syllables in our language, the *quantity* of all words which have no accent must be arbitrary; and accordingly we do pronounce them long or short at pleasure. Unless, therefore, there be *accented words* intermixed with monosyllables, there is nothing to direct the pronunciation of them, and without some determinate difference in the length of the syllables, the metre vanishes. The following lines may serve as examples of this observation:

The God that made both air, and earth, and heaven:  
Nor the deep tract of hell. Say first what cause  
To cast him out from heaven with all his host:

Notwithstanding the measure of the greater part of our monosyllables is arbitrary, and therefore they generally do neither good nor harm in a verse; yet some of them are so *easy*, and some so *difficult* to pronounce, that a regard to *quantity*, properly so called, necessarily substitutes itself in the place of accent. Monosyllables, the quantity of which is remarkably different,  
may,

may, when properly disposed, make very musical verses; or, disposed improperly, they may greatly injure the melody. The following are very harmonious verses, though (except the last) they consist wholly of monosyllables:

Arms and the man I sing, who forc'd by fate  
I trust in thee, and know in whom I trust  
For which we bear to live, nor fear to die  
Ask of the learn'd the way; the learn'd are blind;  
This bids to serve, and that to shun mankind.

This next verse has no harmony, because the monosyllable *the*, in the place of a long syllable, is not capable of being pronounced long:

This nymph, to the destruction of mankind

If the pause in the middle of a line cannot be excluded without a loss of the harmony, much less can the still greater pause at the end of a line be excluded without that inconvenience. No two verses, therefore, ought to be so closely connected in grammatical construction, as that a just pronunciation of them shall leave no pause between them. Nevertheless, Milton hath often offended against this rule, as in the following examples:

What thanks sufficient, or what recompence  
Equal have I to render thee, divine  
Historian. Book VIII. l. 5, 6,

————— Unless an age too late, or cold  
Climate, or years damp my intended wing.  
Book IX. l. 44.

Invested

Invested with bright rays, jocund to run  
Her longitude thro' heaven's high-road: the grey  
Dawn, and the pleiades before him danced.

Book VII. l. 373.

Milton, however, had the example of the Greek and Roman poets to mislead him, who often close verses in the middle of a word; and yet the nature of an *hexameter verse* (the close of which hath so remarkably uniform and peculiar a cadence) makes a pause at the end of it much more necessary than in our *Iambic verses*, in which the same disposition of syllables which closes a verse, usually begins the next. English verses, of the length of our heroics, may run into one another, so that it shall hardly be perceived where one ends and another begins, but it may always be perceived where an hexameter ends. Universally, a pause in the sense ought to be made to coincide with the metrical pause, and to be in proportion to the quantity or distinctness of that pause. A regard to this one rule will direct that the sense come nearer to a close at the principal pause than at the inferior pauses of the same verse, at the end of an hexameter than of an iambic verse, at the end of a couplet or rhyme than of blank verse, and at the end of a stanza than of a single couplet; because, in the latter of all these cases, there is a more sensible pause in the metre than in the former: yet, in violation of this rule, we sometimes see no pause made at the end of a couplet, or even of a stanza of English verse; and the liberty of drawing on the sense from one blank verse to another hath been greatly abused.

A very few examples will show the importance of attending to the metrical pause in the disposition of words in Latin as well as

R r

English

English verse. The coincidence of the metrical pause with that of the words, makes the following of Virgil exceedingly harmonious :

Tityre tu patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi  
Ludere quæ vellem calamo permisit agresti  
Eurydicen toto referebant flumine ripæ.

A want of this coincidence makes this next, of Ennius, very unharmonious :

Romæ mænia terruit impiger Hannibal armis.

Who could have imagined that the two following verses could have the same measure, and that the disposition of the pause only could make so great a difference in the harmony :

Ad talos stola demissa, et circumdata palla. HORACE.

Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine cælum. LUCRETIVS.

Sometimes, instead of one principal pause, there may be two equal pauses, at nearly equal distances from the middle of the verse, as in the following of Dr. Young :

From darkneſs | teeming darkneſs | where I lay.

If the principal pause immediately succeed a long syllable, it may be observed to be more *vigorous*; if a short syllable be wanting to finish a word, the effect is more *languid*. If the chief pause at the end of a verse be succeeded by a short syllable, it is wholly unfit to express grandeur and sublimity, and is best adapted to jocular subjects. It is impossible to read a line thus constructed, and not perceive this effect; for instance, the following of Dryden:

Then

Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,  
Besides ten thousand freaks, that died in thinking.

In many of the verses quoted above, it must have been apparent that a trochee at the beginning of a verse hath even a good effect. It is *enlivening*, as in the following of Philips :

Happy the man, who, free from care and strife

For the same reason, a trochee is least disagreeable after the principal pause; because after that we, as it were, begin again. Thus the following verses, though admitting a trochee, as it is after the principal pause, are not wholly void of harmony :

Had they prevail'd || darkneſs had clos'd our days,  
And death and silence had forbid his praise.

Hov'ring on wing || under the cope of hell.

The foot which succeeds the principal pause in the following line of Pope, is rather a trochee than a spondee, and yet doth not, perhaps, contribute to the intended heaviness of the line :

And, like a wounded snake, || drags his slow length along.

Notwithstanding a perfect uniformity in the measure of verse is universally tiresome in a long poem, and variety is generally agreeable; yet, when there is any correspondence in the sense of two lines, the most perfect uniformity in the cadence is the most agreeable, as in these of Mr. Pope :

Bright as the sun, || her eyes the gazers strike;  
And, like the sun, || they gaze on all alike.

R r 2

And

And also in these:

Warms in the sun, || refreshes in the breeze,  
 Glows in the stars, || and blossoms in the trees.  
 Lives thro' all life, || extends thro' all extent,  
 Spreads undivided, || operates unspent.

The chief advantage of blank verse, in point of harmony, is, that, not being divided into couplets, there is no necessity for, or expectation of a pause in the sense at the end of any particular verse; but the sense may be continued, without any interruption, to almost any length that is thought proper. Other differences of blank verse and rhyme were considered upon a former occasion.

LECTURE

LECTURE XXXV.

Of HARMONY in PROSE.

THE harmony of *prose* doth not depend upon any regular return of long or short syllables, for that would constitute it *verse*; but is consistent with any disposition of long and short syllables that is easy to pronounce, and at the same time favours the sense. Very many long syllables coming together make a style rough and heavy; and many short syllables have likewise a disagreeable effect, because there is nothing to support the voice, and for want of that it is apt to hurry on, and embarrass itself. For this reason, people who are inclined to stammer (as I know by experience) find great difficulty in pronouncing many short syllables together. There are too many short syllables together in the following sentence:

“ This doctrine I apprehend to be erroneous, and of a pernicious tendency.”

Those single words are the most agreeable to the ear, in which the long and short syllables are the most remarkably distinguishable, because they contain the greatest variety of sound. This excellence we perceive in many polysyllables, as *rapidity*, *impetuosity*, *independent*, &c.

Pauses

Pauses must be made in reading prose as well as verse; and since the voice must rest, it is convenient that provision be made for its resting at proper intervals. Since neither in verse, or prose, ought those words to be separated by the least interruption of sound, which together present but *one idea*, it is proper that, at least, words so closely connected should not be so many, as that it would be difficult to pronounce them in a breath. Moreover, since the syllables preceding the pause are more distinctly heard, and more attended to than any others, it is peculiarly necessary that their natural and mechanical effect upon the mind should be considered by a composer. A pause preceded by a long syllable is always *vigorous*, and preceded by a short syllable *feeble*. If the long syllable be preceded by other long syllables, it is *solemn*, if by short ones, *lively*. On the other hand, if a short syllable preceding a pause (which is in itself feeble) be itself preceded by a long one, it makes a close easy and graceful. No person, who hath any notion of the analogy there is between intellectual ideas and those of sense (which has been so often mentioned and explained in the course of these lectures) can be at a loss to account for the propriety of these distinctions. However, let facts speak for themselves.

The pauses in our translation of the first verses of the book of Genesis, are chiefly preceded by long syllables, and I appeal to the reader if they are not manly and vigorous:

“ In the beginning | God created | the heavens | and the  
“ earth; || and the earth | was without form | and void; || and  
“ darkness | was upon the face | of the deep ||.”

The last pause of the following sentence of Bolingbroke is weak and bad:

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“ If

“ If the heart of a prince be not corrupt, these truths will find  
“ an easy ingress through the understanding to it.”

BOLINGBROKE.

This next sentence is graceful:

“ Wherever I find a great deal of gratitude in a poor man, | I  
“ take it for granted | there would be as much generosity | if  
“ he were a rich man |.”

And the close of this is solemn:

“ I seldom see a noble building, or any great piece of magni-  
“ ficence and pomp, but I think how little is all this to satisfy  
“ the ambition, or to fill the idea of an immortal soul.”

A sentence is beautifully constructed when there is a climax in the length of the words; and a period, when there is a climax in the length of the clauses that compose it. Something of this beauty may be perceived in the following sentence:

“ Many men have been capable of doing a wise thing, more a  
“ cunning thing, but very few a generous thing.”

When things are either compared or contrasted, it is beautiful to have every thing in the sentence so similar, as that even the names of them should begin with the same letter. Of this take the following example:

“ The peacock, in all his pride, doth not display half the co-  
“ lour that appears in the garments of a British Lady, when she  
“ is dressed either for a *ball* or a *birth-day*.”

SPECTATOR, No. 265.

My

My life's companion and my bosom friend;  
One *faith*, one *fame*, one *fate* shall both attend.

DRYDEN'S TRANSLATION OF THE ÆNEID.

In any other case, however, many words that are near one another cannot begin with the same letter without having a disagreeable effect; and a similar sound in two neighbouring words, which are no otherwise related to one another, is peculiarly offensive; as the following of Maçon:

“ Many things that *deserve* to be *observed* on this subject”—

When a word is found out of its usual place and connection, though the sense be quite obvious, our ears are offended as with a disagreeable sound: but this is rather a part of an observation made upon another occasion. I shall, however, in this place, subjoin a few examples of it:

“ I have, *indeed*, not found among any part of mankind”—

RAMBLER, No. 38.

“ These, therefore, we must principally hunt out, but, above all, preserve a laudable prolixity, presenting the whole and every side *at once* of an image to view.”

ART OF SINKING.

“ A man was obliged to produce all the wealth of his mind to view, and he was rated to the sum he produced: no one could *therefore* pass for rich who was not so.”

SHERIDAN'S LECTURES.

I do not think I can close these observations on the harmony of style in prose and verse, better than with advising, that a *secondary*

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attention

attention only to be paid to them. Let your primary regards be always to the *sense* and to *perspicuity*; and in every competition between harmony and these more valuable objects, if no methods can be found to reconcile them, let the harmony be sacrificed without hesitation. Propriety of sentiment and expression will better cover a defect of harmony, than the harmony will cover a defect of propriety.

F I N I S.

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