

portions the Beauty of Architecture; as *true Measures* that of Harmony and Musick. In Poetry, which is all Fable, *Truth* still is the Perfection. And whoever is Scholar enough to read the antient Philosopher, or his modern Copists, upon the nature of a Dramatick and Epick Poem, will easily understand this account of *Truth*.

A Painter, if he have any Genius, understands the *Truth* and Unity of Design; and knows he is even then unnatural, when he follows Nature too close, and strictly copys *Life*. For his Art allows him not to bring *All Nature* into his Piece, but a *Part* only. However, his Piece, if it be beautiful, and carries *Truth*, must be a *Whole*, by it self, compleat, independent, and withal as *great* and comprehensive as he can make it. So that Particulars, on this occasion, must yield to the general Design; and all Things be subser-

Objects of Nature, and not from a particular one, that those Genius's form the Idea of their Work. Thus the best Artists are said to have been indefatigable in studying the best Statues: as knowing them a better Rule, than the perfectest Human Bodies cou'd afford. And thus some considerable Wits have recommended the best Poems; as preferable to the best of Historys; and better teaching the *Truth* of Characters, and Nature of Mankind.

Nor can this Criticism be thought high-strain'd. Tho' Few confine themselves to these Rules; Few are insensible of 'em. Whatever Quarter we may give to our vicious Poets, or other Composers of irregular and short-liv'd Works; we know very well that the standing Pieces of good Artists must be form'd after a more uniform way. Every just Work of theirs comes under those natural Rules of Proportion, and *Truth*. The Crea-
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ture of their Brain must be like one of Nature's Formation. It must have a Body and Parts proportionable: or the very Vulgar will not fail to criticize the Work, when it has neither *Head nor Tail*. For so common Sense (according to just Philosophy) judges of those Works which want the Justness of a *Whole*, and shew their Author, however curious and exact in Particulars, to be in the main a very Bungler:

Infelix operis summâ, quia ponere Totum Nescit.

Such is *Poetical*, and such (if I may so call it) *Graphical*, or *Plastick Truth*. *Narrative*, or *Historical Truth*, must needs be highly estimable; especially when we consider how Mankind, who are become so deeply interested in it, have suffer'd by the want of it. 'Tis it self a part of *Moral Truth*. To be a Judg in *one*, requires a Judgment in *the other*. The *Morals*, the *Character*,

racter, and Genius of an Author, must be thorowly consider'd: And the Historian or Relater of Things important to Mankind, must, whoever he be, approve himself many ways to us; both in respect of his Judgment, Candour, and Disinterestedness; e'er we are bound to take any thing on his Authority. And as for *critical Truth*; or the Judgment and Determination of what Commentators, Translators, Paraphrasts, Gramarians, and others have, on this occasion, deliver'd to us; in the midst of such Variety of Stile, such different Readings, such Interpolations, and Corruptions in the Originals; such Mistakes of Copists, Transcribers, Editors, and a hundred such Accidents, to which antient Books are subject; it becomes, upon the whole, a *Matter of nice Speculation*: considering, withal, that the Reader, tho' an able Linguist, must be supported by so many other Helps from Chronology,

gy, Natural Philosophy, Geography, and other Sciences.

And thus many previous *Truths* are to be examin'd, and understood, in order to judg rightly of *Historical Truth*, and of the past Actions and Circumstances of Mankind, as deliver'd down to us by antient Authors of different Nations, different Times, and different in their Characters and Interests. Some *Moral and Philosophical Truths* there are withal so evident in themselves, that 'twou'd be easier to imagine half Mankind to have run mad, and join'd in one and the same Species of Folly, than to admit any thing as *Truth*, which shou'd be advanc'd against such *natural Knowledg, fundamental Reason, and common Sense*.

And this I have mention'd the rather, because some modern Zealots appear to have no better knowledg of *TRUTH*, nor better manner of judging it, than by *counting Noses*.
By

By this Rule, if they can poll an indifferent Number out of a Mob; if they can but produce a Set of *Lancashire Noddles*, remote provincial Head-Pieces, or visionary Assemblers, to attest a Story of a *Witch upon a Broom-Stick*, and a *Flight in the Air*; they triumph in the solid Proof of their new Prodigy, and cry, *Magna est Veritas & praevalabit!*

Religion, no doubt, is much indebted to these Men of Prodigy; who, in such a discerning Age, wou'd set her on the foot of popular Tradition; and venture her on the same bottom with *Parish-Tales*, and *Gossiping Storys of Imps, Goblins, and Demoniacal Pranks*, invented to fright Children, or make Practice for common Exorcists, and *Cunning-Men*. For by that Name, you know, Country People are us'd to call those Dealers in Mystery, who are thought to conjure in an honest way, and foil the Devil at his own Weapon.

But

But now (my Friend!) 'tis time to put an End to these Reflections; lest by endeavouring to expound things any further, I shou'd be drawn from my way of *Humour*, to harangue profoundly on these Subjects. But shou'd you find I had moraliz'd in any tolerable manner, according to *common Sense*, and without *Canting*; I cou'd be satisfy'd with my Performance, such as it is, without fearing what Disturbance I might possibly give to some formal *Censors* of the Age; whose Discourses and Writings are of another strain. I have taken the Liberty, you see, to *laugh*, upon some Occasions; And if I have either laugh'd wrong, or been impertinently serious; I can be content to be *laugh'd at*, in my Turn. If I am rail'd at, I can *laugh* still, as before; and with fresh Advantage to my Cause. For tho, in truth, there cou'd be nothing less a laughing Matter, than the provok'd Rage, Ill-Will, and Fury of certain zealous Gentlemen,

men, were they arm'd as of late days they have been known; yet as the Magistrate has since taken care to pare their Talons, there is nothing very terrible in their Encounter. On the contrary, there is something comical in the Case. It brings to one's mind the Fancy of those Grotesque Figures, and Dragon-Faces, which are seen often in the Frontispiece, and on the Corner Stones of old Buildings. They seem plac'd there, as the *Defenders* and *Supporters* of the Edifice; but with all their Grimace, are as harmless to People without, as they are useless to the Building within. Great Efforts of Anger to little purpose, serve for Pleasantry and Farce. Exceeding *Fierceness*, with perfect *Inability* and *Impotence*, makes the highest Ridicule. 12 MR 39

I am,

Dear Friend,

Affectionately Yours.

F I N I S.