

their diction. The only one among his Latin Poems that has the appearance of being *Virgilian* is the *Epitaphium Damonis*, and this may be looked on as much an Imitation of Theocritus as of Virgil. What should debar him from having recourse to the Fountain-head? But what among the antients is there superior, rather what is there equal to his *Mansus*? Happy old Man! That hast thy name immortalized by two as great Poets (1) as any age ever produced, and art distinguished as the most illustrious Patron of Letters of all who have lived—

Post Galli cineres & mæcenatis Etrusci!

As these Poems were mostly wrote before their Author was twenty, *Milton* might with much justice have said, as *Lucan* did, of himself:

Est mihi, crede, meis animus constantior annis,  
Quamvis nunc juvenile decus mihi pingere malas  
Cæperit & nondum vicesima venerit ætas (2).

Come we now to his marks of derived expression, and his first observation under this head is—“ An Identity of expression, especially if carried on through an intire sentence, is the most certain proof of Imitation.” It is a much surer proof of borrowing, and this is something very different from Imitation: for this last, to speak in general, is formed upon the manner only in which any work, or particular

(1) Tasso and Milton.

(2) Panegyricus ad Calphurnium Pisonem, p. 121. Epigram. & Poem. Vet. Paris 1590.

passage is wrote. Thus for instance, we have in *Dodley's* Miscellanies several professed Imitations of *Spenser*: but in these we find his model only made use of, not Stanzas or even lines inserted from him. So in Mr. *Mason's* elegant, and notwithstanding his Imitations, let me add very original Poem of *Museus*, the polite author has exactly imitated the styles and manner of the several Poets he introduces speaking: but he does not appear to have borrowed so much as a verse from either of the bards he is imitating. From Poetry let us turn our Thoughts to the siller art of painting; and suppose a young performer choosing for his model the works of *Buonaroti*, *Tintoret*, or any other eminent artist, should he give us copies of their works as the real produce of his own invention, we might in this instance stigmatize him as a borrower or plagiarist, as much as the Poet who makes use of another's lines: but should he copy their manner only, either in his colourings, or in the choice of similar subjects, and not servilely steal particular objects from them, in this case nothing hinders but that he might be supposed as much an original as those whose works he intended to form himself upon. There is this difference then between the Imitator and the borrower: the former writes on another's plan, or perhaps detached passages only; whereas the latter contents himself with substituting another's very words (and sentiments of course) with little or no variation into his own work. *Waller* affords us several Instances of the truth of this Observation, and that this line of his is borrowed

rowed *literatim*, except in the first word, from *Spenser*, is indisputable

*When* lavish Nature in her best attire :

*There* lavish Nature in her best attire (3).

Nor is this the only one which this Poet has borrowed: here is another, which with the same Variation as the last, is taken from *Fairfax*.

And *since* he could not save her with her dy'd (4).

And *for* her could not (5), &c. —

In another place he does but barely allude to, or at most adopt a single phrase from him, as in these lines :

There publick care and private passion fought  
A doubtful combat in his noble thought.

Which doubtless are imitated from these in *Fairfax* :

For in the secret of her troubled thought  
A doubtful combat love and honour fought.

To make the resemblance appear the stronger, as it should seem, the Letter-writer tells us, that publick Care is the Periphrasis of honour and private Passion of love. That by private passion is meant the King's love will admit of no doubt: but that publick care is the periphrasis of honour cannot so readily be granted. The meaning of this whole passage is very obvious. Publick care signifies nothing more than that concern which the King, as father of his people, ought to have had for the publick, and it is opposed to his

(3) *Spenser Muipotmos*. See other Instances in Mr. *Fenton's* elegant *Observations on Waller*, p. 113. 115. where the Poet, it is evident, has made use of the Translator's words, and appropriated them to his own purpose.

(4) *Waller*.

(5) *Fairfax*.

own private passion, or love.—Poets will often assert more than they know: how else could *Waller* have said this of the King's thoughts? But let us take for granted what is here asserted, and suppose the Poet turned Historian, and as such delivering plain matter of fact, the natural Inference from hence is, that the King's *care* for the *publick* at once gave way to the gratification of his own private passion, or he had never engaged in a match that proved such a fruitful source of misery to himself and people. But to resume the subject in hand. We have seen the Poet in this last instance alluding to or at most borrowing a single phrase from *Fairfax*. There is an instance of his imitating *Tasso* or *Fairfax* without so much as borrowing a Letter from either (6). Imitation then, it is evident, is different from borrowing. To proceed. His fourth mark is as follows. *An Imitation is discoverable, says the Letter-writer, when there is but the least particle of the original expression, by a peculiar and no very natural arrangement of words.* I fairly own I know not what to make of this mark: however, he has thought proper to insert from the Faithful Shepherdes of *Fletcher* these lines.—

————— In thy Face  
Shines more awful Majesty,  
Than dull weak Mortality  
Dare with misty eyes behold,  
And live:—

(6) Observ. on Waller, p. xc. But this is altogether uncertain, the same simile occurs in the First Book of Lucan. V. 206.

And

And to observe as follows. The writer glanced, he tells us, but very improperly on such an occasion, at Deut. iv. 33. "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire as thou hast heard, *and live?*" *The writer glanc'd—at Deut. iv. 33.]* How does the Letter-writer know this? Has he met with any secret history relating to *Fletcher* which the world is unacquainted with? If he has, why did he not communicate it? or did he think the world would believe him implicitly because he said this in print? Had he been amanuensis, and handed the Bible to *Fletcher*, our Author could not have spoke more peremptory. But sure I am there is not a glimpse of probability in this assertion. There is equal certainty that, if this brief expression is not to be allowed him as the genuine product of his own Invention, that he derived it from the Absolution, or Exhortation to the sick in our Liturgy, in both which places this expression occurs. I am well nigh tired with the drudgery of transcribing the marks, but this I submit to in order to shew their entire futility, and with this view proceed to the *fifth* (7). An uncommon *construction* of words not identical, especially if the subject be the same, or the Ideas similar, will look like Imitation. *Milton*, says our Author, says finely of the Swan,

————— The Swan with arched neck  
Between her white wings mantling proudly  
Rows her State.—

(7) Letter, p. 65.

I should

I should think, continues he, he might probably have that line of *Fletcher* in his head,

How like a Swan she swims her pace!

Our author, we cannot but conclude here, is not very fortunate in his parallelisms. The expression *rows her State* is very different from *swims her pace*. So that I may reverse his words and tell his learned friend—The expression, you see, is NOT very like. Swimming is the natural pace of the Swan in the water; but to row her state is a metaphor appropriated to her from human action. 'Tis true he goes on to say, the Image in *Milton* is much nobler. It is taken from a barge of State in a publick procession. It is well we are told the barge must be in a publick procession, we should else be inclined to think she moved with equal state when single and unaccompanied. But this elegant piece of Information is exactly in the style of the critick he is so ambitious of copying, who minutely tells his readers in his notes from whence every metaphor is taken (8). But is there any thing of certainty, any thing that has the least air of probability (and if there is not, to what purpose do such ridiculous surmises as these are serve?) that *Milton* describing here the Swan, (to use the modern Phrase?) had his eye on a publick procession of Barges of State? It is somewhat amazing that neither the original, nor the Copier, in their profound remarks on *Milton*, have taken any notice of

(8) Vide the Canons of Criticism, Can. 20. Ex. 14.

the metaphor used in the passage quoted in this page of the *long levelled rule of light*. The former should have said—Metaphor taken from a Carpenter's rule and level — The follower should have said—It is taken from the long level used by Masons in carrying on a great building, he might have done this as well as he has told us, that *Milton* took the Image of a Swan's rowing her state from a barge of state in a publick procession. If there is any use to Literature in general in such vague, strange observations as these are, gentle reader — *candidus imperti*. Proceed we to the sixth Mark. We may even pronounce that a *single word* is taken, when it is new and uncommon. — To what purpose does it serve to pronounce this without producing some proof for what is here said? If as we have shewn (9) in part already, and shall farther shew, it be no impeachment of the originality of an Author that he sometimes makes use of a remarkable Phrase which occurs in a former work, (1) what certainty can there be in what is here asserted? What has *Euripides's* ἡλίε Κανω σαφης visible rule of the Sun to do with the long levelled rule of light streaming *from* a rush candle in *Milton*? When we examine the two Poets minutely, it is visible that there is scarcely a resemblance, much less an Imitation, or what the author seems so sure of a translation. This deserving small credit, we shall find what he makes an eighth Mark of imitated expression to deserve still less. —

(9) P. 5.

“ Where

“Where the word or phrase is *foreign*, there is if possible still less doubt.” Though he makes no doubt, yet true it is there is nothing that looks like certainty. He has here this quotation from *Milton*,

————— At last his sail-broad vans  
He spreads for flight. —

Most certainly, says he, from *Tasso's*,

Spiega al grand volo i vanni. ix.

He who is solely actuated by a love of truth will not positively assert more than he knows to be true. Can this be the Letter-writer's case in this Instance? Has he any absolute proof that *Milton* did borrow this Phrase from this very passage of *Tasso*? There is really no certainty that he did; so far from it, that, notwithstanding he was a favourite author with him, there is no manner of probability that he copied him in this place. To consider the two Poets. *Milton* is speaking of the Devil—*Tasso* of the Archangel *Michael*: The two passages then are as diametrically opposite as light and darkness. But *Tasso* actually gives to the Devils the same—

Tosto, spiegando in vari lati i vanni  
Si furon queste per lo mondo sparti. C. 4.

Where now is the very great certainty that this is from this first-quoted passage of *Tasso*? It is in Fact a non-entity: add to this; if the malevolent  
Spirit

Spirit of *Lauder* has so far diffused itself that *Milton* must on no accounts be allowed to have been Ο ΠΟΙΗΤΗΣ, a Maker, yet if he could derive it from another quarter, and there is no direct proof that he had it hence, this very great certainty must of course cease at once. What shall we say then to this Description of the Devil in *Marino*: it is true he says nothing of the *vanni*, but he mentions his sail-like wings for flight—

———— Per volar dibatte l'ali

Ch'en guis a ha pur didue gran vele aperte (1).

We may suppose *Milton*, from his particular intimacy with *Manzò* the illustrious Patron and Friend of these Poets, to have perused the writings of both, and can it be determined with certainty which of the two, or rather is there any certainty he made either of them the object of his imitation? I believe that must always remain unfetled. Now though there is no proof that *Milton* adopted his *Vans* from the Italian, yet possibly this same stanza of *Tasso's* was of some use to him: of the Archangel Michael he thus speaks, B. 11.

He kingly from his seat

*Inclin'd* not.

*Tasso* says the same Thing of the same person,

———— Duce de'guerrieri alati

*S'inchinó* riverente al divin piede (2).

Which *Fairfax* renders,

———— The winged warrior low *inclinde*

At his Creator's Feet with reverence due.

(1) *Strage de gli Innocenti* L. 1. St. 18.

(2) *Gier. Lib. 9. 60.*

How far this may be probable the reader will judge when he is informed that it occurs likewise in *Dante*, who, (being the Hero of his own Poem) is directed by *Virgil* his guide to make himself easy and to *incline* to an Angel, they meet in their excursions,

——— *Quei se segno*

*Chi stessi queto, & inchinassi adesso.* Inf. 6. 9.

*Landino's* comment on this passage will serve as well for *Milton* as *Dante*. *Chi inchina*, says he, fa riverentia; & significa *lo'inchinare* cedere al superiore & esset pronto a sottometerfi & a ubbedire. So Lot, as *Diodati* renders the passage, Gen xix. 1. upon seeing the Angels—*Si levo per audar loro incontro: e S'inchino verso terra.* But the absolute uncertainty of asserting with truth that any particular word or phrase is borrowed from such a writer, or, what is more, from any particular Language, will appear from what follows. Mr. *Thyer*, whose notes on *Milton* every reader cannot but in the whole admire, observes on this passage—

The morning Sun warmly smote the open field.

That it is plainly borrowed from the Italian Poets, and in confirmation of it quotes two lines from *Ariccio* where it occurs: to which let me add this from *Petrarch*, Canz. 7.

*Neve non percossa dal sol.*

Now notwithstanding this expression be frequent in  
the

the Italian Poets, and it be admitted *Milton* was a reader of these, yet still we want historical Evidence to prove that he actually borrowed it from them. In *Valerius Flaccus* we meet with—*percussa que sole—scuta virum* (1). This Phrase then is originally classical (2): and was *Milton* unacquainted with the writings of the Antients? Again. Whence had he this Line—

And fresh-blown roses washt in dew?

From *Shakespear* certainly.

——— She looks as clear

As morning roses newly washed with dew (3).

How easy is it to assert! how difficult to prove! He has not told us that he did not take it hence—

Her lips like roses over-washt with dew (4).

Or from another quarter—such as

——— Ci suole una rosa

*Bagnata di rugiada piu piacere* (5).

This instance, with such as follow next, will serve to shew the great uncertainty of Imitation in general. And this will appear still more clear when we come to reflect on the impossibility of determining from what quarter a writer may derive his knowledge of any

(1) L. 1. 496. 7.

(2) This expression is scriptural also. See Isaiah xlix. 10.

(3) *Taming of the Shrew*, Act 2.  
p. 398.

(4) *England's Parnassus*,

(5) *Orlando Inamorato da Berni*, L. 1. C. 4.

historical Fact. If this cannot be settled, how can Imitation be fixed? To illustrate this remark. In *Paradise Lost*, B. 1. we have mention made of the Sea-Beast Leviathan—

Him hap'ly flumbring on the Norway foam  
The Pilot of some small night-founder'd skiff,  
Deeming some island, oft, as Seamen tell,  
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind  
Moors by his side, under the lee, &c.

Mr. *Warton* tells us (6) it is likely that *Milton* derived this circumstance of the mistaking the whale for an Island from *Ariosto*, where certain persons on sight of the monstrous fish *Balæna*, were of opinion it was a little isle,

Ch'ella sia una Isoletta ci credemo'.

This line he has printed in Capitals, and it must be acknowledged that it very nearly corresponds to *Milton's* words *Deeming some Island*. *Harington's* translation is—we thought it was an Isle. Let us admit the resemblance betwixt the two Poets to be as strong as can be desired, yet still the Imitation is not proved; Historick Evidence, which is absolutely necessary to shew that our Poet copy'd the Italian, being wanting, the whole of this observation can be deemed nothing more than unsupported conjecture: what shall we say to the observation of the learned Mr. *Upton* on this passage?

(6) Observations on Spenser, 3c6.

n *Gesner* (says he) pag. 119. and in *Olaus Wormius* there is a print of a monstrous whale, which the Sailors take for an Island, and fix their anchors in his skinny rind. This print *Milton* had in his mind, he tells us, when he wrote the simile in B. 1. 203. Where did Mr. *Upton* learn this Anecdote, of *Milton*, that he had seen this print which is mentioned by these two Authors? If he never saw it, he could hardly have it in his mind. In a word, there seems to be no manner of foundation for what is here asserted. I would not be understood as if I meant in the least to reflect on the veracity of these Gentlemen who have so entirely distinguished themselves in the republick of Letters: I would only shew that very little regard is due to peremptory, positive, unsupported assertions, let them come from any pen or person whatsoever. Had either *Gesner* or *Wormius* mentioned this particular singly, had it escaped the notice of all other writers, and could this too be sufficiently known, we might then be induced to think our Poet might have derived his knowledge of it from this Quarter, but as it occurs in various others that probability vanishes at once. To these then let us have recourse. *Olaus Magnus* has a chapter (7) expressly, *De anchoris dorso ceti impositis*. There he tells us—*Habet cetus super corium suum superficiem tanquam fabulum quod est juxta littus maris: unde plerunque elevato dorso suo super undas, a navigantibus nihil aliud creditur esse quam Insula*. As

(7) Notes on Spenser, p. 504.  
L. 21, Cap. 17.

(8) Gent. Septentrion, Hist.

*Milton* mentions the Norway foam, why may we not suppose him alluding to this writer who has penned the History of the northern world? I do not however assert any thing: we are necessarily enveloped in clouds of uncertainty; but we may be allowed to conjecture that *Milton* had read this work of *O. Magnus*, for these reasons. As he wrote the History of Muscovy, we may safely presume that he was led to any author who had wrote any thing touching this quarter of the globe: and possibly he derived from him his notion of stone cannon, (against which *Bentley* was particularly severe) for such he mentions, B. 9. c. 4. in the work before quoted. But *Milton's* writings, though he was so great a reader, have as original an aspect as *Shakespeare's*, though no doubt he has many Sentiments which are occasionally to be met with in various authors, and here *the Pilots deeming it some Island, as Seamen tell*, is widely different from what we meet with either in *Aristo* or *Olaus Magnus*. A story of this kind could not escape the monkish writers (9). *Gazæus* the Jesuit, who has burlesqued in latin verse several of the legendary stories of the Popish Saints, describes *St. Maclovius* [*Malo*] as celebrating Mass upon a huge Ore in the Sea: *Toto vivendam colletergi se dedit Balæna grandis*—upon discovery of which the surprize of the person upon watch occurs in these words.

Excubitor alto tuitus e carchesio.

Cum voce dextram tollit, insulam, insulam,

(9) In the Golden Legend this same story is told of a St. Stranger.

Illoque flectunt vela; jacitur Anchora  
Hæfura costis belluæ.

This last sentence answers to *Milton's* fixed Anchor in his scaly rind. The monster too is described sleeping—

—— Interim & simul suum  
Balæna dormiendo captat prandium.

And is spoken of in two other places as an island. Some years back on meeting with this work, not having duly attended to this subject of Imitation in general, I made no doubt that I had certainly discovered a writer that had been of signal assistance to our great Poet; but there is not the least certainty at all that *Milton* ever did peruse him; for the whole of this circumstance is adopted by the Jesuit from a prior writer of this Saint's Life, *Surius* perhaps, or some other historian of equal authority. Let us briefly recapitulate what we have been last considering. Here are six Authors, all of whom mention the Sailors mistaking a great fish for an Island: four of these have the same article of fixing the Anchor in his side; after these comes another, who has several particulars to be met with in the preceding writers, but however none strong enough to make one believe he is more indebted to one than the other. It being impossible then to determine from what quarter a writer might derive his knowledge of any certain fact, unless there are real proofs.

proofs to shew the contrary, we shall find this argument to hold good in the affair of Imitation.

To demonstrate still more clearly the necessity of Historical Evidence, and in the want of that to shew the absolute uncertainty of Imitation in general, where there is nothing but bare resemblance, the following instance will serve. *Milton* in his third book ridicules that absurd tenet of popery—that peoples being buried in a Friar's habit were sure of Paradise. Whom does he imitate here? From whom does he borrow? or whence did he derive his knowledge of this? Was it from *Dante*, who places in his *Inferno*, c. 27. a *Conte de Montefeltro* notwithstanding he took the habit of a Franciscan,

———— Fu cordigliero

Credendo si cinto fare amenda?

Or did he learn this from *Wicliffe*, who mentions it in his treatise against the Friars? c. 20. Or from *Erasmus* who laughs at it in his *Πτωχοπλαστοι* and in his 1230th Epistle? Or from *Buchanan* in his imitable *Franciscanus*—

Quos febris, quos vexat dira phrenesis, &c.

Or lastly, did he derive it from *Weever* in his discourse of Funeral Monuments, p. 158? By these and by others in this thing mentioned. If there be no Evidence then to inform us that he derived his knowledge from any of these, he cannot be said to have imitated either; for surely there is hardly any such species of Imitation in a writer as may  
be deno-

be denominated casual or undesigned. But though we may have historical Evidence that a later Author had perused the work of a preceding writer, yet it may so happen that it may be impossible even here in the case of very strong resemblance, to constitute an Imitation. *Milton* here too furnishes us with an instance to confirm the reality of this remark. In his *Paradise Regained*, B. 2. a work in which, as Mr. *Fenton* observes, there is a visible falling off, (from almost every other performance he has left us, I may add) as it favours less of his genius, and in fact owes its existence to a most impertinent and silly question of *Elwood's* (2), we have these verses.

Besides, to give a Kingdom hath been thought  
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down,  
Far more magnanimous than to assume. V. 481.

With reverence to his memory be it spoken, the Poet has very improperly put into this speech of our Saviour these notions of his, the result of his own reading and observation. Dr. *Newton* tells us *Diocletian, Charles the Fifth*, and others who have resigned the crown were, no doubt, in our Author's thoughts on this occasion. How far this was the case, who can determine? The sentiment is trite and common: But what is most to our purpose is, that it occurs in two writers whom (we have his

(2) Thou hast said much here of *Paradise Lost*; but what hast thou to say of *Paradise found*? T. *Elwood* to *Milton*. See the *History of the former's Life*, p. 246.

own evidence for what we assert) we know *Milton* had read. And first we may observe this passage is expressed very nearly in the words of Sir *Philip Sidney* and the Conduct of *Musidorus* in the *Arcadia*, is an instance of what is here expressed: “He  
 “ thinking it a greater greatness to give a king-  
 “ dom than to get a Kingdom—did, after having  
 “ received the full power into his own hands, resign  
 “ all to the nobleman (3).” Such also was the Behaviour of our *Atbelstan* upon restoring *Ludwal* King of Wales, and *Constantine* King of the Scots to their respective thrones, who, as the Monk of *Malmesbury* relates it, pronounced it—*gloriosius esse regem facere quam regem esse* (4). That *Milton* had read both these writers appears from various places in his prose works: yet who is there that can determine to which of these he is indebted for the Sentiment? But he might have had it from another Quarter; therefore there is nothing like Certainty that he had it from either. Sir *Thomas More* in his History of *Richard* the Third, of the famous Earl of Warwick, says, that he made Kings and put down Kings almost at his pleasure, and not impossible to have attained it himself, if he had not reckoned it a greater thing to make a King, than to be a King (5). We are now naturally brought back to the consideration of *Stephens’s* argument, which is strongly corroborated by what is here ad-

(3) B. .2. p. 228. Ed. 1725.  
 de gestis Anglorum, L. 2. Cap. 6.  
 English Works, Ed. 1557, p. 60.

(4) W. Malmesburiensis  
 (5) Sir Thomas More’s

vanced.

vanced. There is another place in *Milton*, which I shall consider, and on this and the preceding will rest what was principally proposed to be shewn—the uncertainty of Imitation in general: And that is his address to *wedded Love*. This we are told by a Friend of *Dr. Newton's*, (and the *Dr.* acquiesces in it,) the Poet borrowed from one of *Tasso's* Letters. No two writers I may truly say could possibly treat one subject more differently, than these have done: in the *Italian* there is but little similar, nothing strictly identical with what we meet with in our countryman. *Tasso's* it is true is an *Apostrophe* to Matrimony, and in one part of it he says, *tu ci fai certi de figliuoli, & de' nipoti, ch'altramente incerti sarebbono*. There is one passage which induces the learned Editor to agree with his Friend that *Milton* did imitate this same letter of *Tasso's*, and that is this particular—*la carita del figlinolo & del Padre*. But how little this is to be rely'd on will appear from what has been before observed, p. 52. and from hence. *Ariosto*, whose fifth Satyre *Dimostra esser buona cosa il maritarsi*, speaking of an adulterer says,

*Non sa quel che sia amor, non sa che vaglia  
La Caritate.*

Why might not the Poet derive his word from hence? But of this enough. He has said nothing of *wedded Love* but plain obvious truth, and such as must have occurred to him had he only made use of those senses which God endued him with and  
never

never had recourse to any books whatever: he has only done what a good Poet should do, he has given truth the garb of splendid and ornamental Diction. Among the antients two Poets have Apostrophes to Marriage: one is very express and full, and speaks to the subject in general exactly in our Poet's manner, and he too was a favourite with him, and that is *Sophocles*, whose *Ædipus* thus exclaims—

——— ὦγάμοι, γάμοι  
 Ἐφύσαθ' ἡμᾶς, καὶ φυτεύσαυτες, πάλιν  
 Δειῖτε ταυτὸν σπέρμα, καὶ πεδείζατε  
 Πατέρας, ἀδελφῆς, παῖδας, αἶμα ἔμφυλιον;  
 Νύμφας, γυναῖκας, μητέραςτε (6).

So also *Catullus* in his *Epithalamium*.

——— Hymen ô Hymenæe  
 - Nulla qui sine te domus  
 Liberos dare, nec Parens  
 Stirpe jungier, at potest  
 Te volente.

Thus I think I have demonstrated the uncertainty of Imitation in general: that it is by no means to be inferred from bare coincidence of sentiment only, but that there ought to be much better proof, which can be no other than that of real evidence, to authenticate an Imitation or borrowing, without which the Originality of any good Author should not be called in question: but what is here ad-

(6) *Ædipus Tyrannus*, v. 1402.

vanced should by no means be construed to serve the purposes of such as are indisputably Copiers, the Imitators and small Poets, whose works carry in themselves genuine marks of the Imbecillity of the genius of their Parents. In this case we may proceed upon much surer grounds, as it is widely different from what we have been last considering: It is more particular, and respects these Individuals only. And here their character may go far towards assisting us in our discovery of their resources. For where versifiers are notoriously defective as to their creative powers, where they are themselves fond of proclaiming their own borrowings, there any party of theirs, which has a real Affinity to any thing to be met with in a preceding Work, is justly liable to the suspicion of being thence derived, consequently of being unoriginal. We have two Poets of this Stamp, who have been very open in their borrowings and Imitations. These are *Ben Johnson* and *Pope*: whom we may look upon as plunderers of Parnassus:

Thieves of Renown, and pilferers of Fame.

If we regard them in this view, though they seem to have been pretty much alike in the furliness of their tempers, and to have valued themselves both upon their learning and scholarship, yet there will however appear some difference between them. *Johnson's* writings are one continued series of Imitation and allusion: where he not only literally translates the antients, many passages from whom are transfused into his performances, and chime

in as regular and as if they were the product of his own invention; but he gleans as freely, and without reserve, from the moderns when they make for his purpose. Thus for instance in his Epithalamion (7), it is plain he has derived the manner and part of the matter also from *Catullus* and *Spenser*, from the latter of whom he has inserted a distick almost *totidem verbis* without having given the least hint of it. Again he is particularly careful—*verbum verbo reddere fidus interpres*, when he pilfers from the antients; we have abundant proof of this in the lines which follow,

—— They say you tax'd

The law, and lawyers; captaines; and the players

By their particular names. *Aut.* it is not so.

I us'd no name. My bookes have still been taught

To spare the persons, and to speak the vices (8).

What an exact translation is the two last lines of these in *Martial*!

Hunc novere modum nostri servare libelli

Parcere personis dicere de vitijs (9).

In a word, such a one was *Johnson*, that he seems to have made it his study to cull out others sentiments, and to place them in his works as from his own mint. This surely is an odd species of improvement from reading, and favours very little of Invention or Genius: It borders nearly upon, if it is not really plagiarism. For according to

(7) *Workes*, Ed. 1616. Fol. p. 923.

(8) *Poetafter*, p. 356.

(9) *L.* 10. 33.

*Thomasius*—Qui fatetur per quem profecerit, reddit mutuum, qui non fatetur fur est (1). The only difference between the borrower and actual plagiarist is but this—the one acknowledges, the other conceals his obligations. In this respect *Johnson's* character and *Pope's* seem to tally: but *Johnson's* is different from his in another respect, and that is in his every where abounding with allusions, which is a genteeler species of borrowing. One or two will serve as a specimen. In the *Alchemist*, Act 1. Sc. 2. *Face* is persuading *Dapper*, at all events, to see the Queen of Faerie:

It will be somewhat hard to compass: but  
 However see her. You are made, believe it,  
 If you can see her. Her Grace is a lone woman  
 And very rich, and if she take a phantysie  
 She will do strange things. See her at any hand.  
 'Slid she may chance to leave you all she has!

He alludes here to a vulgar notion prevalent in his own time, but forgotten now. I have heard it often, says Sir *John Harington* (2), among the simpler sort, that he that can please the Queene of Faeries shall never want while he lives. In the next Scene *Face* says to *Druggier*—no gold about thee?

*Dru.* Yes I have a Portague, I ha' kept this half yeere.

*Holinshed* in his Description of Britaine, mentions the Portague as a Piece very solemnly kept of dy-

(1) De Plagio Literario, S. 66. (2) Orlando Furioso, p. 337.

vers (3). This Custom we are sure from hence continued in his time. But a reader of *Johnson* is continually teized with these. Druggier in this same Scene is said to be—a neat, spruce, honest fellow, and no Goldsmith. A quaint distinction, *and no Goldsmith!*— It means possibly that he had not the *Chrysolperme*, *i. e.* that he had not the Philosopher's stone. It is however by no means obvious that this is the real meaning of this part of his character; and therefore it must remain hardly intelligible to the generality of his readers. Thus much for *Johnson*, considered as a Maker, and who as such has very poor pretensions to the high place he holds among the English Bards, as there is no original manner to distinguish him, and the tedious sameness visible in his plots indicates a defect of Genius. Let us turn our thoughts to Mr. *Pope*, and see if we can hit upon his real Character, by avoiding the Shoals of detraction on one hand, and leaving the loads of adulation and flattery paid to his memory by Sicophants, on the other. From the exalted accounts of some, one might almost be induced to believe him the genius of English Poetry, and that he had carried it to the summit of Perfection. We have been told of the uncommon extent of his genius, that he was as such superior to *Horace*, that he excelled *Swift* in his own way, though the place (4) by the by from which this inference is made is *Swift's* own writing; that he was superior too in expression to *Milton*, (great in-

(3) P. 117. 6.      (4) Works, v. 6. 6 Sat. Horace, v. 125.  
 .. Swift's Works, Dublin Ed. v. 2. 1735, p. 113.

deed!

deed!) and far exceeded all others as writer of Epitaphs: but — *Les louanges des Editeurs sont suspectes* (5). To judge of the Man from his writings, a privilege every reader has a right to, he appears somewhat different from what he has been delivered to us. Perhaps no writer was ever fonder of talking of himself than *Pope*, nor ever expressed more anxiety for future fame. To obtain this, his works are replete with numerous Pharisaical Boasts of his own righteousness. But this may be in some measure attributed to the religion in which he was educated, and to which he seems to have had a bigotted attachment. Hence he soon came to think too highly of himself, and in consequence thereof to boast of his own works, and to despise all who dared in any thing to thwart or contradict him. Hence he could —

Bear like the Turk no brother near the Throne,  
a just idea of him might be learnt from the ill-natured things he has said of others. He has told us

He thought a lie in verse or prose the same?

What honest man ever thought otherwise?  
But then may one ask, why did he suffer that passage concerning *Tibbald*, where he makes him puff his *Edition of Shakespear*, to have a place in a note in the *Dunciad* (6)? It seems he, poor man could

B 3

not

(5) *Idee de la Poésie Angloise* par Yart, T. 1. p. 173.

(6) This *Tibbald*, or *Theobald*, published an Edition of *Shakespear*, of which he was so proud himself as to say, in one of *Mist's Journals*, June 8, That to expose any errors in it was impracticable. and in another, April 27, That whatever care might for the future be taken by any other Editor he would still give above five hundred

not be duncce enough without the aid of Untruth. It is to be feared his benevolent disposition, though it is trumpeted forth by his Editor, and echoed by the follower is altogether chimerical. It is an observation of the French Critick above cited of the *Dunciad*, that *elle est pleine d'applications malignes* (7). There is no part of his works that shews his malevolence more than this, and the injustice of the man appears by comparing the different Editions with one another. There we find lines that had been appropriated to one fitted to another for whom they were not originally designed. Can there be any truth in such Pictures? Did these arise from a love of virtue, or from personal pique? From the latter it is too much to be feared. But to have done with this Part of the Man, which we are told with an air of inquisitorial dictatorship (8), we are

emendations that shall escape them all, *Dunciad*, B. 1. 133. For the word: *by any other Editor* in the first Edition of the *Dunciad*, and particularly that of the year 29, we read--*either by Mr. P. or any other assistants*; and then *Tibbald* spoke this of his *Shakespeare Restored*, if we are to believe Mr. Pope, and not of his Edition of him, which was not published till four years after, as he very well knew. Were words so scarce a commodity with *Tibbald*, that he was obliged to make use of the old ones again? And could he find no Days to repeat them but the same numerical Days that he had done before? This is too gross an absurdity to be admitted. It is plain that Pope in his rage of altering did not religiously stick to truth. *But chief in Tibbald's manner breeding breath*: Here in a note to the above Edition he says--This alludes to the extravagancies of the Farces of that Author. Did it so? With what justice then could it be apply'd to Cibber? I am afraid not with any Poetical, that was not his Talent.

(7) *Yart. T. 3. 50.*  
Edition of Pope.

(8) See the Advertisement to the last

not to meddle with, and to come to that which is the subject of the preceding Enquiry. And here we must make another visit to the *Dunciad*, and view the Hero there amusing himself, as

—O'er his books his eyes began to roll,  
In pleasing memory of all he stole;  
How here he sipp'd, how there he plunder'd snug,  
And suck'd all o'er like an industrious Bug (9).

one would think *Pope* look'd into himself when he wrote this, and loaded his Hero with his own Qualities: for certain it is, his writings are a perfect Cento—*undique collatis membris*, and he generally points out his own Imitations; so that they appear, as as *Butler* expresses it, like a Taylor's cushion of Mosaic work, made up of several scraps sewed together (1): *ubi unus & alter affuitur Pannus*. In confirmation of this see

And you, my Critics! in the chequer'd shade,  
Admire new light thro' holes yourselves have made (2).

Here is a scrap from *Milton*, and a hint from *Waller*. But there is somewhat singular in *Pope*—while he is parodising one Poet he is alluding to another, as in —

Flow, Welsted, Flow, like thine *Inspirer*, Beer.

But it was not in the *Dunciad* alone. It is hardly to be doubted that he formed this verse in his *Essay on Criticism*,

(9) B. 1. 127. (1) Character of a small Poet: several passages of which are very applicable to Mr. Pope. See also his character of an Imitator. (2). B. 4. 125.

Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.

From what *Drayton* said of *Johnson* (3).

Who had drunk deep of the Pierian spring.

But to hasten to a conclusion. It will be difficult to find in History two literary characters that so nearly resemble each other, as those of *Pope* and of *Arruntius* mentioned by *Seneca* (4). The parallel will be easily discovered by inspecting the original. The Roman was a close copier of *Sallust's* diction. The Englishman in a very early preface tells us, That he served himself all he could by his reading; and this cus-

(3) *Elegies*, Ed. 1627. p. 208.

(4) *Arruntius*, vir raræ frugalitatis, qui historias belli punici, scripsit, fuit Sallustianus, & in illud genus nitens. Est apud Sallustium *exercitum argento fecit*: id est pecunia paravit. Hoc *Arruntius* amare cepit: posuit illud omnibus paginis. Dicit quodam loco: *fugam nostris fecere*. Alio loco, *hierò rex Syracusanorum bellum facit*. Et alio loco: *que audita Panormitanos dedere Romanis fecere*. Gustum tibi dare volui. Totus his contexitur liber. Quæ apud Sallustium rara fuerunt, apud hunc crebra sunt, & pene continua nec sine causa, ille enim in hæc incidebat: at hic illa quærebat. Vides autem quid sequatur, ubi alicui vitium pro exemplo est dixit Sallustius: *aquis bye manibus*. *Arruntius* in primo libro belli punici ait: *repente byemavit tempestas*. Et alio loco, cum dicere vellet frigidum annum fuisse, ait: *totus byemavit annus*. Et alio loco: *Inde sexaginta onerarias, leves præter militem & necessarios nautarum byemante aquilone misit*. Non desinit omnibus locis hoc verbum infulcire. Quodam loco Sallustius dicit: *inter arma civilia æqui boni famas petit*. *Arruntius* non temperavit, quo minus primo statim libro poneret: *ingentes esse famas de regulo*. Hæc erga & hujusmodi vitia, quæ alicui impressit imitatio, non sunt judicia luxuriæ, nec animi corrupti. Propria enim esse debent, & ex ipso nata, ex quibus tu æstimes alicujus affectus, Ep. 114.

tom was rivetted in him. What *Arruntius* did by *Sallust*, *Pope* has done in a very particular manner by *Milton*: there is hardly one composition of his in which there is not a sentence, line, or remarkable expression adopted from him. Thus from—

And bring all Heaven before mine eyes—

*Pope* has—As brings all Brobdignag before your thought,  
And bring all Paradise before your eye (5).

Sometimes he is ingenuous enough to acquaint his readers with his obligations, and sometimes not: but instead of this puts them upon a wrong scent, and directs them to other writers, though it is unquestionable that he has it from him, as in this instance —

As under seas Alpheus' secret sluice  
Bears Pisa's off'rings to his Arethuse (6).

Here in his notes he directs us to *Moschus*, *Idyll*. 8. *Virg. Ecl.* 10, though it will not admit of a doubt that he had it from *Milton's*

Divine Alpheus, who by secret sluice  
Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse (7).

Here the singularity of the Rhime, joined to the known fact of his so frequently borrowing from him, unquestionably ascertains the Theft. But *Pope's* use of *Milton* did not stop, in his own compositions

(5) *Moral Essays*, Ep. 4. 104, 148.

(6) *Dunciad*, B. 2.

341.

(7) *Arcades*.

he is continually bringing of him into his translations too ; and what is moré extraordinary, he did this where the original gave him not the least handle for such Licentiousness (8). But it is not the Province of this work to point out that rank which is due to Mr. *Pope* as a Poet: that will best be seen when that sensible Critic the Author of the Essay on his Writings and Genius, shall have completed his design, and have put the finishing stroke to one of the most candid pieces of criticism extant in our language.

(8) Compare *Odyfsey* xi. v. 414, 15. *Od.* xiii. v. 5. with the original, and *Milton*, B. 8. v. 1, & seq.

F I N I S.

17 JY 60



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# E R R A T A.

Page 28, Line 11, for *thet* read *that*.

p. 33, note 4, for 10, r. 17.

Ib. 2d Quotation, l. 4, for *designed* r. *deign'd*.

p. 37, l. 2, for *there is no other*, r. *there is another*.

p. 38, 2d Quotation, l. 2, dele the 2d *and*.

p. 30, l. 25, for *queste* r. *questi*.

p. 55, l. 13, 14, for *entirely* r. *eminently*.

p. 62, Quotation from Tibullus, l. 2, for *qui* r. *quit*.

17 JY 50