

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

EDMUND BURKE
A PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY



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EDMUND BURKE (1729–97) was born in Dublin, the son of a Protestant Irish father who was an attorney, and an Irish Catholic mother. He took a BA degree at Trinity College, Dublin (1744–9) and went to London in 1750 to read for the bar, but abandoned his legal studies in 1755, establishing himself in literary London with two publications, *A Vindication of Natural Society* (1756) and the *Philosophical Enquiry* (1757).

Burke began his political career in 1759 as Private Secretary to William Hamilton who, as Irish Chief Secretary, employed Burke twice in Ireland (1761–2, 1763–4). Breaking with Hamilton in 1765, Burke became Private Secretary to the Whig Marquis of Rockingham, and became MP for Wendover. In 1770 he published his important pamphlet *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*. He became MP for Bristol in 1774 and allied himself with Fox to oppose Lord North's administration. In 1780 he lost his Bristol seat, and when Rockingham gained office in 1782 he was not a member of the cabinet. During this period he was committed to exposing the injustice of British administration in India, culminating in the impeachment of Warren Hastings (1788). Events in France prompted his greatest writing, the *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Burke's passionate denunciation of the Revolution led to a final breach with Fox in 1791, the year in which he published his fine *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*.

In 1794 Burke retired from Parliament and his seat was given to his son Richard, who died in the same year. In his overwhelming grief at the end of his life he published the *Letter to a Noble Lord* (1796) and the *Letters on a Regicide Peace* (1796–7). Disturbed by the victories of revolutionary France and the tragedies in Ireland, he died in 1797.

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EDMUND BURKE

*A Philosophical Enquiry
into the
Origin of our Ideas of the
Sublime and Beautiful*



Edited with an Introduction and Notes by

ADAM PHILLIPS

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A
PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY
INTO THE ORIGIN
OF OUR IDEAS
OF THE SUBLIME
AND BEAUTIFUL

Part Two

SECTION I

Of the passion caused by the SUBLIME

THE passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*, when those causes operate most powerfully, is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror.¹ In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force. Astonishment, as I have said, is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree; the inferior effects are admiration, reverence and respect.

SECTION II

TERROR

No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear. ²For fear being an apprehension of pain or death, it operates in a manner that resembles actual pain. Whatever therefore is terrible, with regard to sight, is sublime too, whether this cause of terror, be endued with greatness of dimensions or not; for it is impossible to look on any thing as trifling, or contemptible, that may be dangerous. There are many animals, who though far from being large, are yet capable of raising ideas of the sublime, because they are considered as objects of terror. As serpents and poisonous animals of almost all kinds. And to things of great dimensions, if we annex an adventitious idea of terror, they become without comparison greater. A level plain of a vast extent on land, is certainly no mean idea; the prospect of such a plain may be as extensive as a prospect of the ocean; but can it ever fill the mind with any thing so great as the ocean itself? This is owing

¹ Part 1, sections 3, 4, 7.

² Part 4, sections 3, 4, 5, 6.

to several causes, but it is owing to none more than this, that the ocean is an object of no small terror. Indeed terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently the ruling principle of the sublime. Several languages bear a strong testimony to the affinity of these ideas. They frequently use the same word, to signify indifferently the modes of astonishment or admiration and those of terror. *Θάμβος* is in greek, either fear or wonder; *δεινός* is terrible or respectable; *αἰδέω*, to reverence or to fear. *Vereor* in latin, is what *αἰδέω* is in greek. The Romans used the verb *stupeo*, a term which strongly marks the state of an astonished mind, to express the effect either of simple fear, or of astonishment; the word *attonitus*, (thunder-struck) is equally expressive of the alliance of these ideas; and do not the french *étonnement*, and the english *astonishment* and *amazement*, point out as clearly the kindred emotions which attend fear and wonder? They who have a more general knowledge of languages, could produce, I make no doubt, many other and equally striking examples.

SECTION III

OBSCURITY

To make any thing very terrible, obscurity¹ seems in general to be necessary. When we know the full extent of any danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of the apprehension vanishes. Every one will be sensible of this, who considers how greatly night adds to our dread, in all cases of danger, and how much the notions of ghosts and goblins, of which none can form clear ideas, affect minds, which give credit to the popular tales concerning such sorts of beings. Those despotic governments, which are founded on the passions of men, and principally upon the passion of fear, keep their chief as much as may be from the public eye. The policy has been the same in many cases of religion. Almost all the heathen temples were dark. Even in the barbarous temples of the

¹ Part 4, sections 14, 15, 16.

OBSCURITY

Americans at this day, they keep their idol in a dark part of the hut, which is consecrated to his worship. For this purpose too the druids performed all their ceremonies in the bosom of the darkest woods, and in the shade of the oldest and most spreading oaks. No person seems better to have understood the secret of heightening, or of setting terrible things, if I may use the expression, in their strongest light by the force of a judicious obscurity, than Milton. His description of Death in the second book is admirably studied; it is astonishing with what a gloomy pomp, with what a significant and expressive uncertainty of strokes and colouring he has finished the portrait of the king of terrors.

*The other shape,
If shape it might be called that shape had none
Distinguishable, in member, joint, or limb;
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
For each seemed either; black he stood as night;
Fierce as ten furies; terrible as hell;
And shook a deadly dart. What seemed his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.**

In this description all is dark, uncertain, confused, terrible, and sublime to the last degree.

SECTION IV

Of the difference between CLEARNESS and
OBSCURITY with regard to the passions

It is one thing to make an idea clear, and another to make it *affecting* to the imagination. If I make a drawing of a palace, or a temple, or a landscape, I present a very clear idea of those objects; but then (allowing for the effect of imitation which is something) my picture can at most affect only as the palace, temple, or landscape would have affected in the reality. On the other hand, the most lively and spirited verbal description I can give, raises a very obscure and imperfect *idea* of such objects; but then it is in my power to raise a stronger *emotion* by the description than I could do by the best painting. This

experience constantly evinces. The proper manner of conveying the *affections* of the mind from one to another, is by words; there is a great insufficiency in all other methods of communication; and so far is a clearness of imagery from being absolutely necessary to an influence upon the passions, that they may be considerably operated upon without presenting any image at all, by certain sounds adapted to that purpose; of which we have a sufficient proof in the acknowledged and powerful effects of instrumental music. In reality a great clearness helps but little towards affecting the passions, as it is in some sort an enemy to all enthusiasms whatsoever.

SECTION [IV]

The same subject continued

There are two verses in Horace's art of poetry that seem to contradict this opinion, for which reason I shall take a little more pains in clearing it up. The verses are,

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.**

On this the abbe du Bos founds a criticism,* wherein he gives painting the preference to poetry in the article of moving the passions; principally on account of the greater *clearness* of the ideas it represents. I believe this excellent judge was led into this mistake (if it be a mistake) by his system, to which he found it more conformable than I imagine it will be found to experience. I know several who admire and love painting, and yet who regard the objects of their admiration in that art, with coolness enough, in comparison of that warmth with which they are animated by affecting pieces of poetry or rhetoric. Among the common sort of people, I never could perceive that painting had much influence on their passions. It is true that the best sorts of painting, as well as the best sorts of poetry, are not much understood in that sphere. But it is most certain, that their passions are very strongly roused by a fanatic preacher, or by the ballads of Chevy-chase,* or the children in the wood, and by other little popular poems and tales that are current

in that rank of life. I do not know of any paintings, bad or good, that produce the same effect. So that poetry with all its obscurity, has a more general as well as a more powerful dominion over the passions than the other art. And I think there are reasons in nature why the obscure idea, when properly conveyed, should be more affecting than the clear. It is our ignorance of things that causes all our admiration, and chiefly excites our passions. Knowledge and acquaintance make the most striking causes affect but little. It is thus with the vulgar, and all men are as the vulgar in what they do not understand. The ideas of eternity, and infinity, are among the most affecting we have, and yet perhaps there is nothing of which we really understand so little, as of infinity and eternity. We do not anywhere meet a more sublime description than this justly celebrated one of Milton, wherein he gives the portrait of Satan with a dignity so suitable to the subject.

*He above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a tower; his form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruin'd, and th' excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new ris'n
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon
In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations; and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs.**

Here is a very noble picture; and in what does this poetical picture consist? in images of a tower, an archangel, the sun rising through mists, or in an eclipse, the ruin of monarchs, and the revolutions of kingdoms. The mind is hurried out of itself, by a croud of great and confused images; which affect because they are crouded and confused. For separate them, and you lose much of the greatness, and join them, and you infallibly lose the clearness. The images raised by poetry are always of this obscure kind; though in general the effects of poetry, are by no means to be attributed to the images it raises; which point we shall examine more at large hereafter.¹ But painting,

¹ Part 5.

when we have allowed for the pleasure of imitation, can only affect simply by the images it presents; and even in painting a judicious obscurity in some things contributes to the effect of the picture; because the images in painting are exactly similar to those in nature; and in nature dark, confused, uncertain images have a greater power on the fancy to form the grander passions than those have which are more clear and determinate. But where and when this observation may be applied to practice, and how far it shall be extended, will be better deduced from the nature of the subject, and from the occasion, than from any rules that can be given.

I am sensible that this idea has met with opposition, and is likely still to be rejected by several.* But let it be considered that hardly any thing can strike the mind with its greatness, which does not make some sort of approach towards infinity; which nothing can do whilst we are able to perceive its bounds; but to see an object distinctly, and to perceive its bounds, is one and the same thing. A clear idea is therefore another name for a little idea. There is a passage in the book of Job amazingly sublime, and this sublimity is principally due to the terrible uncertainty of the thing described. *In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face. The hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes; there was silence; and I heard a voice,—Shall mortal man be more just than God?** We are first prepared with the utmost solemnity for the vision; we are first terrified, before we are let even into the obscure cause of our emotion; but when this grand cause of terror makes its appearance, what is it? is it not, wrapt up in the shades of its own incomprehensible darkness, more awful, more striking, more terrible, than the liveliest description, than the clearest painting could possibly represent it? When painters have attempted to give us clear representations of these very fanciful and terrible ideas, they have I think almost always failed; insomuch that I have been at a loss, in all the pictures I have seen of hell, whether the painter did not intend something ludicrous. Several painters have handled a subject of this kind, with a view of assembling as many horrid phantoms as their

POWER

imagination could suggest; but all the designs I have chanced to meet of the temptations of St. Anthony,* were rather a sort of odd wild grotesques, than any thing capable of producing a serious passion. In all these subjects poetry is very happy. Its apparitions, its chimeras, its harpies, its allegorical figures, are grand and affecting; and though Virgil's Fame,* and Homer's Discord,* are obscure, they are magnificent figures. These figures in painting would be clear enough, but I fear they might become ridiculous.

SECTION V

POWER

Besides these things which *directly* suggest the idea of danger, and those which produce a similar effect from a mechanical cause, I know of nothing sublime which is not some modification of power. And this branch rises as naturally as the other two branches, from terror, the common stock of every thing that is sublime. The idea of power at first view, seems of the class of these indifferent ones, which may equally belong to pain or to pleasure. But in reality, the affection arising from the idea of vast power, is extremely remote from that neutral character. For first, we must remember,¹ that the idea of pain, in its highest degree, is much stronger than the highest degree of pleasure; and that it preserves the same superiority through all the subordinate gradations. From hence it is, that where the chances for equal degrees of suffering or enjoyment are in any sort equal, the idea of the suffering must always be prevalent. And indeed the ideas of pain, and above all of death, are so very affecting, that whilst we remain in the presence of whatever is supposed to have the power of inflicting either, it is impossible to be perfectly free from terror. Again, we know by experience, that for the enjoyment of pleasure, no great efforts of power are at all necessary; nay we know, that such efforts

¹ Part 1, section 7.

would go a great way towards destroying our satisfaction: for pleasure must be stolen, and not forced upon us; pleasure follows the will; and therefore we are generally affected with it by many things of a force greatly inferior to our own. But pain is always inflicted by a power in some way superior, because we never submit to pain willingly. So that strength, violence, pain and terror, are ideas that rush in upon the mind together. Look at a man, or any other animal of prodigious strength, and what is your idea before reflection? Is it that this strength will be subservient to you, to your ease, to your pleasure, to your interest in any sense? No; the emotion you feel is, lest this enormous strength should be employed to the purposes of¹ rapine and destruction. That power derives all its sublimity from the terror with which it is generally accompanied, will appear evidently from its effect in the very few cases, in which it may be possible to strip a considerable degree of strength of its ability to hurt. When you do this, you spoil it of every thing sublime, and it immediately becomes contemptible. An ox is a creature of vast strength; but he is an innocent creature, extremely serviceable, and not at all dangerous; for which reason the idea of an ox is by no means grand. A bull is strong too; but his strength is of another kind; often very destructive, seldom (at least amongst us) of any use in our business; the idea of a bull is therefore great, and it has frequently a place in sublime descriptions, and elevating comparisons. Let us look at another strong animal in the two distinct lights in which we may consider him. The horse in the light of an useful beast, fit for the plough, the road, the draft, in every social useful light the horse has nothing of the sublime; but is it thus that we are affected with him, *whose neck is clothed with thunder, the glory of whose nostrils is terrible, who swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage, neither believeth that it is the sound of the trumpet?*^{*} In this description the useful character of the horse entirely disappears, and the terrible and sublime blaze out together. We have continually about us animals of a strength that is considerable, but not pernicious. Amongst these we never look for the sublime: it comes upon us in the gloomy forest, and in the

¹ Vide Part 3, section 21.

howling wilderness, in the form of the lion, the tiger, the panther, or rhinoceros. Whenever strength is only useful, and employed for our benefit or our pleasure, then it is never sublime; for nothing can act agreeably to us, that does not act in conformity to our will; but to act agreeably to our will, it must be subject to us; and therefore can never be the cause of a grand and commanding conception. The description of the wild ass, in Job, is worked up into no small sublimity, merely by insisting on his freedom, and his setting mankind at defiance; otherwise the description of such an animal could have had nothing noble in it. *Who hath loosed (says he) the bands of the wild ass? whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the voice of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture.* The magnificent description of the unicorn and of leviathan in the same book, is full of the same heightening circumstances. *Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee? canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? wilt thou trust him because his strength is great?—Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?** In short, where-soever we find strength, and in what light soever we look upon power, we shall all along observe the sublime the concomitant of terror, and contempt the attendant on a strength that is subservient and innoxious. The race of dogs in many of their kinds, have generally a competent degree of strength and swiftness; and they exert these, and other valuable qualities which they possess, greatly to our convenience and pleasure. Dogs are indeed the most social, affectionate, and amiable animals of the whole brute creation; but love approaches much nearer to contempt than is commonly imagined; and accordingly, though we caress dogs, we borrow from them an appellation of the most despicable kind, when we employ terms of reproach; and this appellation is the common mark of the last vileness and contempt in every language. Wolves have not more strength than several species of dogs; but on account of their unmanageable fierceness, the idea of a wolf is not despicable; it is not excluded from grand descriptions and similitudes. Thus we are affected by strength, which is *natural*

power. The power which arises from institution in kings and commanders, has the same connection with terror. Sovereigns are frequently addressed with the title of *dread majesty*. And it may be observed, that young persons little acquainted with the world, and who have not been used to approach men in power, are commonly struck with an awe which takes away the free use of their faculties. *When I prepared my seat in the street* (says Job) *the young men saw me, and hid themselves*.^{*} Indeed so natural is this timidity with regard to power, and so strongly does it inhere in our constitution, that very few are able to conquer it, but by mixing much in the business of the great world, or by using no small violence to their natural dispositions. I know some people are of opinion, that no awe, no degree of terror, accompanies the idea of power, and have hazarded to affirm, that we can contemplate the idea of God himself without any such emotion.^{*} I purposely avoided when I first considered this subject, to introduce the idea of that great and tremendous being, as an example in an argument so light as this; though it frequently occurred to me, not as an objection to, but as a strong confirmation of my notions in this matter. I hope, in what I am going to say, I shall avoid presumption, where it is almost impossible for any mortal to speak with strict propriety. I say then, that whilst we consider the Godhead merely as he is an object of the understanding, which forms a complex idea of power, wisdom, justice, goodness, all stretched to a degree far exceeding the bounds of our comprehension, whilst we consider the divinity in this refined and abstracted light, the imagination and passions are little or nothing affected. But because we are bound by the condition of our nature to ascend to these pure and intellectual ideas, through the medium of sensible images, and to judge of these divine qualities by their evident acts and exertions, it becomes extremely hard to disentangle our idea of the cause from the effect by which we are led to know it. Thus when we contemplate the Deity, his attributes and their operation coming united on the mind, form a sort of sensible image, and as such are capable of affecting the imagination. Now, though in a just idea of the Deity, perhaps none of his attributes are predominant, yet to our imagination, his power is by far the most striking. Some

reflection, some comparing is necessary to satisfy us of his wisdom, his justice, and his goodness; to be struck with his power, it is only necessary that we should open our eyes. But whilst we contemplate so vast an object, under the arm, as it were, of almighty power, and invested upon every side with omnipresence, we shrink into the minuteness of our own nature, and are, in a manner, annihilated before him. And though a consideration of his other attributes may relieve in some measure our apprehensions; yet no conviction of the justice with which it is exercised, nor the mercy with which it is tempered, can wholly remove the terror that naturally arises from a force which nothing can withstand. If we rejoice, we rejoice with trembling; and even whilst we are receiving benefits, we cannot but shudder at a power which can confer benefits of such mighty importance. When the prophet David contemplated the wonders of wisdom and power, which are displayed in the œconomy of man, he seems to be struck with a sort of divine horror, and cries out, *fearfully and wonderfully am I made!** An heathen poet has a sentiment of a similar nature; Horace looks upon it as the last effort of philosophical fortitude, to behold without terror and amazement, this immense and glorious fabric of the universe.

*Hunc solem, et stellas, et decedentia certis
Tempora momentis, sunt qui formidine nulla
Imbuti spectent.**

Lucretius is a poet not to be suspected of giving way to superstitious terrors; yet when he supposes the whole mechanism of nature laid open by the master of his philosophy, his transport on this magnificent view which he has represented in the colours of such bold and lively poetry, is overcast with a shade of secret dread and horror.

*His tibi me rebus quædam Divina voluptas
Percipit, adque horror, quod sic Natura tua vi
Tam manifesta patet ex omni parte relecta.**

But the scripture alone can supply ideas answerable to the majesty of this subject. In the scripture, wherever God is represented as appearing or speaking, every thing terrible in

nature is called up to heighten the awe and solemnity of the divine presence. The psalms, and the prophetical books, are crowded with instances of this kind. *The earth shook* (says the psalmist) *the heavens also dropped at the presence of the Lord.** And what is remarkable, the painting preserves the same character, not only when he is supposed descending to take vengeance upon the wicked, but even when he exerts the like plenitude of power in acts of beneficence to mankind. *Tremble, thou earth! at the presence of the Lord; at the presence of the God of Jacob; which turned the rock into standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters!** It were endless to enumerate all the passages both in the sacred and profane writers, which establish the general sentiment of mankind, concerning the inseparable union of a sacred and reverential awe, with our ideas of the divinity. Hence the common maxim, *primos in orbe deos fecit timor.** This maxim may be, as I believe it is, false with regard to the origin of religion. The maker of the maxim saw how inseparable these ideas were, without considering that the notion of some great power must be always precedent to our dread of it. But this dread must necessarily follow the idea of such a power, when it is once excited in the mind. It is on this principle that true religion has, and must have, so large a mixture of salutary fear; and that false religions have generally nothing else but fear to support them. Before the christian religion had, as it were, humanized the idea of the divinity, and brought it somewhat nearer to us, there was very little said of the love of God. The followers of Plato have something of it, and only something. The other writers of pagan antiquity, whether poets or philosophers, nothing at all. And they who consider with what infinite attention, by what a disregard of every perishable object, through what long habits of piety and contemplation it is, any man is able to attain an entire love and devotion to the Deity, will easily perceive, that it is not the first, the most natural, and the most striking effect which proceeds from that idea. Thus we have traced power through its several gradations unto the highest of all, where our imagination is finally lost; and we find terror quite throughout the progress, its inseparable companion, and growing along with it, as far as we can possibly trace them. Now as power is un-

PRIVATION

doubtedly a capital source of the sublime, this will point out evidently from whence its energy is derived, and to what class of ideas we ought to unite it.

SECTION VI

PRIVATION

All *general* privations are great, because they are all terrible; *Vacuity, Darkness, Solitude* and *Silence*. With what a fire of imagination, yet with what severity of judgment, has Virgil amassed all these circumstances where he knows that all the images of a tremendous dignity ought to be united, at the mouth of hell! where before he unlocks the secrets of the great deep, he seems to be seized with a religious horror, and to retire astonished at the boldness of his own design.

*Dii quibus imperium est animarum, umbræq; silentes!
Et Chaos, et Phlegethon! loca nocte silentia late?
Sit mihi fas audita loqui! sit numine vestro
Pandere res alta terra et caligine mersas!
Ibant obscuri, sola sub nocte, per umbram,
Perque domos Ditis vacuas, et inania regna.**

*Ye subterraneous gods! whose awful sway
The gliding ghosts, and silent shades obey;
O Chaos hoar! and Phlegethon profound!
Whose solemn empire stretches wide around;
Give me, ye great tremendous powers, to tell
Of scenes and wonders in the depth of hell;
Give me your mighty secrets to display
From those black realms of darkness to the day.*

PITT.*

*Obscure they went through dreary shades that led
Along the waste dominions of the dead.*

DRYDEN.*

SECTION VII

VASTNESS

Greatness¹ of dimension, is a powerful cause of the sublime. This is too evident, and the observation too common, to need any illustration; it is not so common, to consider in what ways greatness of dimension, vastness of extent, or quantity, has the most striking effect. For certainly, there are ways, and modes, wherein the same quantity of extension shall produce greater effects than it is found to do in others. Extension is either in length, height, or depth. Of these the length strikes least; an hundred yards of even ground will never work such an effect as a tower an hundred yards high, or a rock or mountain of that altitude. I am apt to imagine likewise, that height is less grand than depth; and that we are more struck at looking down from a precipice, than at looking up at an object of equal height, but of that I am not very positive. A perpendicular has more force in forming the sublime, than an inclined plane; and the effects of a rugged and broken surface seem stronger than where it is smooth and polished. It would carry us out of our way to enter in this place into the cause of these appearances; but certain it is they afford a large and fruitful field of speculation. However, it may not be amiss to add to these remarks upon magnitude; that, as the great extreme of dimension is sublime, so the last extreme of littleness is in some measure sublime likewise; when we attend to the infinite divisibility of matter, when we pursue animal life into these excessively small, and yet organized beings, that escape the nicest inquisition of the sense, when we push our discoveries yet downward, and consider those creatures so many degrees yet smaller, and the still diminishing scale of existence, in tracing which the imagination is lost as well as the sense, we become amazed and confounded at the wonders of minuteness; nor can we distinguish in its effect this extreme of littleness from the vast itself. For division must be infinite as well as addition; because the idea of a perfect unity can no more be

¹ Part 4, section 9.

INFINITY

arrived at, than that of a compleat whole to which nothing may be added.

SECTION VIII

INFINITY

Another source of the sublime, is *infinity*; if it does not rather belong to the last. Infinity has a tendency to fill the mind with that sort of delightful horror, which is the most genuine effect, and truest test of the sublime. There are scarce any things which can become the objects of our senses that are really, and in their own nature infinite. But the eye not being able to perceive the bounds of many things, they seem to be infinite, and they produce the same effects as if they were really so. We are deceived in the like manner, if the parts of some large object are so continued to any indefinite number, that the imagination meets no check which may hinder its extending them at pleasure.

Whenever we repeat any idea frequently, the mind by a sort of mechanism repeats it long after the first cause has ceased to operate.¹ After whirling about; when we sit down, the objects about us still seem to whirl. After a long succession of noises, as the fall of waters, or the beating of forge hammers, the hammers beat and the water roars in the imagination long after the first sounds have ceased to affect it; and they die away at last by gradations which are scarcely perceptible. If you hold up a strait pole, with your eye to one end, it will seem extended to a length almost incredible.² Place a number of uniform and equidistant marks on this pole, they will cause the same deception, and seem multiplied without end. The senses strongly affected in some one manner, cannot quickly change their tenor, or adapt themselves to other things; but they continue in their old channel until the strength of the first mover decays. This is the reason of an appearance very frequent in madmen; that they remain whole days and nights, sometimes whole

¹ Part 4, section 12.

² Part 4, section 14. This should presumably read: "Part 4, section 13."

years, in the constant repetition of some remark, some complaint, or song; which having struck powerfully on their disordered imagination, in the beginning of their phrensy, every repetition reinforces it with new strength; and the hurry of their spirits, unrestrained by the curb of reason, continues it to the end of their lives.

SECTION IX

SUCCESSION and UNIFORMITY

Succession and *uniformity* of parts, are what constitute the artificial infinite. 1. *Succession*; which is requisite that the parts may be continued so long, and in such a direction, as by their frequent impulses on the sense to impress the imagination with an idea of their progress beyond their actual limits. 2. *Uniformity*; because if the figures of the parts should be changed, the imagination at every change finds a check; you are presented at every alteration with the termination of one idea, and the beginning of another; by which means it becomes impossible to continue that uninterrupted progression, which alone can stamp on bounded objects the character of infinity.¹ It is in this kind of artificial infinity, I believe, we ought to look for the cause why a rotund has such a noble effect. For in a rotund, whether it be a building or a plantation, you can nowhere fix a boundary; turn which way you will, the same object still seems to continue, and the imagination has no rest. But the parts must be uniform as well as circularly disposed, to give this figure its full force; because any difference, whether it be in the disposition, or in the figure, or even in the colour of the parts, is highly prejudicial to the idea of infinity, which every change must check and interrupt, at every alteration commencing a new series. On the same principles of succession and uniformity, the grand appearance of the ancient heathen

¹ Mr. Addison, in the Spectators concerning the pleasures of the imagination,* thinks it is, because in the rotund at one glance you see half the building. This I do not imagine to be the real cause.

temples, which were generally oblong forms, with a range of uniform pillars on every side, will be easily accounted for. From the same cause also may be derived the grand effect of the isles in many of our own old cathedrals. The form of a cross used in some churches seems to me not so eligible, as the parallelogram of the ancients; at least I imagine it is not so proper for the outside. For, supposing the arms of the cross every way equal, if you stand in a direction parallel to any of the side walls, or colonnades, instead of a deception that makes the building more extended than it is, you are cut off from a considerable part (two thirds) of its *actual* length; and to prevent all possibility of progression, the arms of the cross taking a new direction, make a right angle with the beam, and thereby wholly turn the imagination from the repetition of the former idea. Or suppose the spectator placed where he may take a direct view of such a building; what will be the consequence? the necessary consequence will be, that a good part of the basis of each angle, formed by the intersection of the arms of the cross, must be inevitably lost; the whole must of course assume a broken unconnected figure; the lights must be unequal, here strong, and there weak; without that noble gradation, which the perspective always effects on parts disposed uninterruptedly in a right line. Some or all of these objections, will lie against every figure of a cross, in whatever view you take it. I exemplified them in the Greek cross in which these faults appear the most strongly; but they appear in some degree in all sorts of crosses. Indeed there is nothing more prejudicial to the grandeur of buildings, than to abound in angles; a fault obvious in many; and owing to an inordinate thirst for variety, which, whenever it prevails, is sure to leave very little true taste.

SECTION X

Magnitude in BUILDING

To the sublime in building, greatness of dimension seems requisite; for on a few parts, and those small, the imagination cannot rise to any idea of infinity. No greatness in the manner

can effectually compensate for the want of proper dimensions. There is no danger of drawing men into extravagant designs by this rule; it carries its own caution along with it. Because too great a length in buildings destroys the purpose of greatness which it was intended to promote; the perspective will lessen it in height as it gains in length; and will bring it at last to a point; turning the whole figure into a sort of triangle, the poorest in its effect of almost any figure, that can be presented to the eye. I have ever observed, that colonnades and avenues of trees of a moderate length, were without comparison far grander, than when they were suffered to run to immense distances. A true artist should put a generous deceit on the spectators, and effect the noblest designs by easy methods. Designs that are vast only by their dimensions, are always the sign of a common and low imagination. No work of art can be great, but as it deceives; to be otherwise is the prerogative of nature only. A good eye will fix the medium betwixt an excessive length, or height, (for the same objection lies against both), and a short or broken quantity; and perhaps it might be ascertained to a tolerable degree of exactness, if it was my purpose to descend far into the particulars of any art.

SECTION XI

INFINITY in pleasing OBJECTS

Infinity, though of another kind, causes much of our pleasure in agreeable, as well as of our delight in sublime images. The spring is the pleasantest of the seasons; and the young of most animals, though far from being compleatly fashioned, afford a more agreeable sensation than the full grown; because the imagination is entertained with the promise of something more, and does not acquiesce in the present object of the sense. In unfinished sketches of drawing, I have often seen something which pleased me beyond the best finishing; and this I believe proceeds from the cause I have just now assigned.

DIFFICULTY

SECTION XII

DIFFICULTY

¹ Another source of greatness is *Difficulty*. When any work seems to have required immense force and labour to effect it, the idea is grand. Stonehenge, neither for disposition nor ornament, has any thing admirable; but those huge rude masses of stone, set on end, and piled each on other, turn the mind on the immense force necessary for such a work. Nay the rudeness of the work increases this cause of grandeur, as it excludes the idea of art, and contrivance; for dexterity produces another sort of effect which is different enough from this.

SECTION XIII

MAGNIFICENCE

Magnificence is likewise a source of the sublime. A great profusion of things which are splendid or valuable in themselves, is *magnificent*. The starry heaven, though it occurs so very frequently to our view, never fails to excite an idea of grandeur. This cannot be owing to any thing in the stars themselves, separately considered. The number is certainly the cause. The apparent disorder augments the grandeur, for the appearance of care is highly contrary to our ideas of magnificence. Besides, the stars lye in such apparent confusion, as makes it impossible on ordinary occasions to reckon them. This gives them the advantage of a sort of infinity. In works of art, this kind of grandeur, which consists in multitude, is to be very cautiously admitted; because, a profusion of excellent things is not to be attained, or with too much difficulty; and, because in many cases this splendid confusion would destroy all use, which should be attended to in most of the works of art with the greatest care; besides it is to be considered, that unless you can produce an appearance of infinity by your disorder, you

¹ Part 4, sections 4, 5, 6.

will have disorder only without magnificence. There are, however, a sort of fireworks, and some other things, that in this way succeed well, and are truly grand. There are also many descriptions in the poets and orators which owe their sublimity to a richness and profusion of images, in which the mind is so dazzled as to make it impossible to attend to that exact coherence and agreement of the allusions, which we should require on every other occasion. I do not now remember a more striking example of this, than the description which is given of the king's army in the play of Henry the fourth;

*All furnished, all in arms,
All plumed like ostriches that with the wind
Baited like eagles having lately bathed:
As full of spirit as the month of May,
And gorgeous as the sun in Midsummer,
Wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls.
I saw young Harry with his beaver on
Rise from the ground like feathered Mercury;
And vaulted with such ease into his seat
As if an angel dropped down from the clouds
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus.**

In that excellent book so remarkable for the vivacity of its descriptions, as well as the solidity and penetration of its sentences, the Wisdom of the son of Sirach, there is a noble panegyric on the high priest Simon the son of Onias; and it is a very fine example of the point before us.

How was he honoured in the midst of the people, in his coming out of the sanctuary! He was as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full: as the sun shining upon the temple of the Most High, and as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds: and as the flower of roses in the spring of the year; as lillies by the rivers of waters, and as the frankincense tree in summer; as fire and incense in the censer; and as a vessel of gold set with precious stones; as a fair olive tree budding forth fruit, and as a cypress which groweth up to the clouds. When he put on the robe of honour, and was clothed with the perfection of glory, when he went up to the holy altar, he made the garment of holiness honourable. He himself stood by the hearth of the altar com-

LIGHT

*passed with his brethren round about, as a young cedar in Libanus, and as palm trees compassed they him about. So were all the sons of Aaron in their glory, and the oblations of the Lord in their hands, &c.**

SECTION XIV

LIGHT

Having considered extension, so far as it is capable of raising ideas of greatness; *colour* comes next under consideration. All colours depend on *light*. Light therefore ought previously to be examined, and with it, its opposite, darkness. With regard to light; to make it a cause capable of producing the sublime, it must be attended with some circumstances, besides its bare faculty of shewing other objects. Mere light is too common a thing to make a strong impression on the mind, and without a strong impression nothing can be sublime. But such a light as that of the sun, immediately exerted on the eye, as it overpowers the sense, is a very great idea. Light of an inferior strength to this, if it moves with great celerity, has the same power; for lightning is certainly productive of grandeur, which it owes chiefly to the extreme velocity of its motion. A quick transition from light to darkness, or from darkness to light, has yet a greater effect. But darkness is more productive of sublime ideas than light. Our great poet was convinced of this; and indeed so full was he of this idea, so entirely possessed with the power of a well managed darkness, that, in describing the appearance of the Deity, amidst that profusion of magnificent images, which the grandeur of his subject provokes him to pour out upon every side, he is far from forgetting the obscurity which surrounds the most incomprehensible of all beings, but

—*With the majesty of darkness round
Circles his throne.**

And what is no less remarkable, our author had the secret of preserving this idea, even when he seemed to depart the farthest from it, when he describes the light and glory which

flows from the divine presence; a light which by its very excess is converted into a species of darkness,

*Dark with excessive light thy skirts appear.**

Here is an idea not only poetical in an high degree, but strictly and philosophically just. Extreme light, by overcoming the organs of sight, obliterates all objects, so as in its effect exactly to resemble darkness. After looking for some time at the sun, two black spots, the impression which it leaves, seem to dance before our eyes. Thus are two ideas as opposite as can be imagined reconciled in the extremes of both; and both in spite of their opposite nature brought to concur in producing the sublime. And this is not the only instance wherein the opposite extremes operate equally in favour of the sublime, which in all things abhors mediocrity.

SECTION XV

Light in BUILDING

As the management of light is a matter of importance in architecture, it is worth enquiring, how far this remark is applicable to building. I think then, that all edifices calculated to produce an idea of the sublime, ought rather to be dark and gloomy, and this for two reasons; the first is, that darkness itself on other occasions is known by experience to have a greater effect on the passions than light. The second is, that to make an object very striking, we should make it as different as possible from the objects with which we have been immediately conversant; when therefore you enter a building, you cannot pass into a greater light than you had in the open air; to go into one some few degrees less luminous, can make only a trifling change; but to make the transition thoroughly striking, you ought to pass from the greatest light, to as much darkness as is consistent with the uses of architecture. At night the contrary rule will hold, but for the very same reason; and the more highly a room is then illuminated, the grander will the passion be.

SECTION XVI

COLOUR considered as productive of
the SUBLIME

Among colours, such as are soft, or cheerful, (except perhaps a strong red which is cheerful) are unfit to produce grand images. An immense mountain covered with a shining green turf, is nothing in this respect, to one dark and gloomy; the cloudy sky is more grand than the blue; and night more sublime and solemn than day. Therefore in historical painting, a gay or gaudy drapery, can never have a happy effect: and in buildings, when the highest degree of the sublime is intended, the materials and ornaments ought neither to be white, nor green, nor yellow, nor blue, nor of a pale red, nor violet, nor spotted, but of sad and fuscous* colours, as black, or brown, or deep purple, and the like. Much of gilding, mosaics, painting or statues, contribute but little to the sublime. This rule need not be put in practice, except where an uniform degree of the most striking sublimity is to be produced, and that in every particular; for it ought to be observed, that this melancholy kind of greatness, though it be certainly the highest, ought not to be studied in all sorts of edifices, where yet grandeur must be studied; in such cases the sublimity must be drawn from the other sources; with a strict caution however against any thing light and riant;* as nothing so effectually deadens the whole taste of the sublime.

SECTION XVII

SOUND and LOUDNESS

The eye is not the only organ of sensation, by which a sublime passion may be produced. Sounds have a great power in these as in most other passions. I do not mean words, because words do not affect simply by their sounds, but by means altogether different. Excessive loudness alone is sufficient to overpower the soul, to suspend its action, and to fill it with terror. The noise of vast cataracts, raging storms, thunder, or artillery, awakes a great and awful sensation in the mind, though we can observe no nicety or artifice in those sorts of music. The shouting of

multitudes has a similar effect; and by the sole strength of the sound, so amazes and confounds the imagination, that in this staggering, and hurry of the mind, the best established tempers can scarcely forbear being borne down, and joining in the common cry, and common resolution of the croud.

SECTION XVIII

SUDDENNESS

A sudden beginning, or sudden cessation of sound of any considerable force, has the same power. The attention is roused by this; and the faculties driven forward, as it were, on their guard. Whatever either in sights or sounds makes the transition from one extreme to the other easy, causes no terror, and consequently can be no cause of greatness. In every thing sudden and unexpected, we are apt to start; that is, we have a perception of danger, and our nature rouses us to guard against it. It may be observed, that a single sound of some strength, though but of short duration, if repeated after intervals, has a grand effect. Few things are more awful than the striking of a great clock, when the silence of the night prevents the attention from being too much dissipated. The same may be said of a single stroke on a drum, repeated with pauses; and of the successive firing of cannon at a distance; all the effects mentioned in this section have causes very nearly alike.

SECTION XIX

INTERMITTING

A low, tremulous, intermitting sound, though it seems in some respects opposite to that just mentioned, is productive of the sublime. It is worth while to examine this a little. The fact itself must be determined by every man's own experience, and reflection. I have already observed, that¹ night increases our terror more perhaps than any thing else; it is our nature, that, when we do not know what may happen to us, to fear the worst that can happen us; and hence it is, that uncertainty is so

¹ Section 3.

THE CRIES OF ANIMALS

terrible, that we often seek to be rid of it, at the hazard of a certain mischief. Now some low, confused, uncertain sounds, leave us in the same fearful anxiety concerning their causes, that no light, or an uncertain light does concerning the objects that surround us.

*Quale per incertam lunam sub luce maligna
Est iter in silvis.*——*

——*A faint shadow of uncertain light,
Like as a lamp, whose life doth fade away;
Or as the moon cloathed with cloudy night
Doth shew to him who walks in fear and great affright.*
SPENSER.*

But a light now appearing, and now leaving us, and so off and on, is even more terrible than total darkness; and a sort of uncertain sounds are, when the necessary dispositions concur, more alarming than a total silence.

SECTION XX

The cries of ANIMALS

Such sounds as imitate the natural inarticulate voices of men, or any animals in pain or danger, are capable of conveying great ideas; unless it be the well known voice of some creature, on which we are used to look with contempt. The angry tones of wild beasts are equally capable of causing a great and awful sensation.

*Hinc exaudiri gemitus, iræque leonum
Vincla recusantum, et sera sub nocte rudentum;
Setigerique sues, atque in præsepibus ursi
Sævire; et formæ magnorum ululare luporum.**

It might seem that these modulations of sound carry some connection with the nature of the things they represent, and are not merely arbitrary; because the natural cries of all animals, even of those animals with whom we have not been acquainted, never fail to make themselves sufficiently understood; this cannot be said of language. The modifications of sound, which may be productive of the sublime, are almost

infinite. Those I have mentioned, are only a few instances to shew, on what principle they are all built.

SECTION XXI

SMELL and TASTE. BITTERS and STENCHES

Smells, and *Tastes*, have some share too, in ideas of greatness; but it is a small one, weak in its nature, and confined in its operations. I shall only observe, that no smells or tastes can produce a grand sensation, except excessive bitters, and intolerable stench. It is true, that these affections of the smell and taste, when they are in their full force, and lean directly upon the sensory, are simply painful, and accompanied with no sort of delight; but when they are moderated, as in a description or narrative, they become sources of the sublime as genuine as any other, and upon the very same principle of a moderated pain. "A cup of bitterness;" to drain the bitter "cup of fortune;" the bitter apples of "Sodom." These are all ideas suitable to a sublime description. Nor is this passage of Virgil without sublimity, where the stench of the vapour in Albunea conspires so happily with the sacred horror and gloominess of that prophetic forest.

*At rex sollicitus monstrorum oraculi fauni
Fatidici genitoris adit, lucosque sub alta
Consulit Albunea, nemorum quæ maxima sacro
Fonte sonat; sævamque exhalat opaca Mephitim.**

In the sixth book, and in a very sublime description, the poisonous exhalation of Acheron is not forgot, nor does it at all disagree with the other images amongst which it is introduced.

*Spelunca alta fuit, vastoque immanis hiatus
Scrupea, tuta lacu nigro, nemorumque tenebris
Quam super haud ullæ poterant impune volantes
Tendere iter pennis, talis sese halitus atris
Faucibus effundens supera ad convexa ferebat.**

I have added these examples, because some friends, for whose judgment I have great deference, were of opinion, that if the

sentiment stood nakedly by itself, it would be subject at first view to burlesque and ridicule; but this I imagine would principally arise from considering the bitterness and stench in company with mean and contemptible ideas, with which it must be owned they are often united; such an union degrades the sublime in all other instances as well as in those. But it is one of the tests by which the sublimity of an image is to be tried, not whether it becomes mean when associated with mean ideas; but whether, when united with images of an allowed grandeur, the whole composition is supported with dignity. Things which are terrible are always great; but when things possess disagreeable qualities, or such as have indeed some degree of danger, but of a danger easily overcome, they are merely *odious*, as toads and spiders.

SECTION XXII

FEELING. PAIN

Of *Feeling* little more can be said, than that the idea of bodily pain, in all the modes and degrees of labour, pain, anguish, torment, is productive of the sublime; and nothing else in this sense can produce it. I need not give here any fresh instances, as those given in the former sections abundantly illustrate a remark, that in reality wants only an attention to nature, to be made by every body.

Having thus run through the causes of the sublime with reference to all the senses, my first observation, (section 7.) will be found very nearly true; that the sublime is an idea belonging to self-preservation. That it is therefore one of the most affecting we have. That its strongest emotion is an emotion of distress, and that no¹ pleasure from a positive cause belongs to it. Numberless examples besides those mentioned, might be brought in support of these truths, and many perhaps useful consequences drawn from them.—

*Sed fugit interea, fugit irrevocabile tempus,
Singula dum capti circumvectamur amore.**

¹ Vide section 6, part 1.

- 41 *reasoning*: in *Poetics*, iv, Aristotle writes that man 'differs from other animals in that he is the most imitative of creatures, and he learns his earliest lessons by imitation. Also inborn in all of us is the instinct to enjoy works of imitation. What happens in actual experience is evidence of this; for we enjoy looking at the most accurate representation of things which in themselves we find painful to see, such as the forms of the lowest animals and of corpses' (transl. T. S. Dorsch, London: Penguin, 1965, p. 35). In *The Spectator*, 418 (Monday, 30 June 1712), Addison writes, on the same subject, that 'not only what is Great, Strange, or Beautiful, but any Thing that is Disagreeable when looked upon, pleases us in apt Description'.
- 42 *unhappy prince*: a reference to the death of Alexander the Great and the consequent disintegration of the Macedonian Empire. Alexander died of fever at Babylon in 323 BC at the age of 32. His closest comrade Hephaestion had died the previous year.
- fable*: as recounted by Homer in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.
- virtuous characters*: Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus (236/5–183 BC) conquered the Carthaginians by defeating Hannibal at Zama in 202. Burke fails to mention that later in his career Scipio, on trial for corruption, 'contented himself with reminding the people that the day [of the trial] was the anniversary of Zama and bidding them to follow him to the Capitol to offer thanks to the gods. Public opinion turned in his favour and the charge was not proceeded with' (*Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, Oxford, 1937). Marcus Portius Cato (95–46 BC) was the upright man and 'conscience of Rome' who was severely critical of Caesar and the Triumvirate. His last days and eventual suicide after defeat at Utica were dramatized in Addison's tragedy *Cato* (1713).
- 46 *less necessary*: see, e.g., n. to p. 41 *reasoning*.
- 47 *sublime*: see *On the Sublime*, vii.
- 49 *fibrâ*: 'how the secret entrails lie unfathomable'; from *Satires*, v. 29 by the Roman poet Persius (AD 34–62).
- 55 *crown had on*: Milton: *Paradise Lost*, II. 666–73; line 5 should read 'For each seemd either; black it stood as night'; and in the penultimate line Milton has 'a dreadful dart'.

- 56 *fidelibus*: 'slowly, through the news put before the eyes of a good man, the fate of those downcast arouses pity': *De Arte Poetica*, 180-1.

criticism: Burke is referring here to *Réflexions Critiques Sur La Poesie et Sur La Peinture* (Paris, 1755), I. 416.

Chevy-chase: Addison referred to Chevy-Chase in *The Spectator*, 70 and 74. 'The old song of Chevy-Chase', Addison writes in 70, 'is the favourite Ballad of the common People of England; and Ben Jonson used to say he had rather have been the Author of it than of all his Works.'

- 57 *monarchs*: *Paradise Lost*, I. 589-99.

- 58 *by several*: for the opposition Burke refers to see contemporary reviews in *Monthly Review*, 16 (1757), and *Literary Magazine*, 2 (1757).

than God: Job 4: 13-17.

- 59 *St. Anthony*: a popular subject for European painters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with examples by Salvator Rosa, Breughel, Teniers, Ribera, among others. For an interesting account of the subject see the introduction to Kitty Mrosovsky's edition of *The Temptation of St. Anthony* by Flaubert (London: Penguin, 1983).

Virgil's Fame: *Aeneid*, iv. 173.

Homer's Discord: *Il.* iv. 440-5.

- 60 *trumpet*: Job 39: 19, 20, 24 (misquoted).

- 61 *his pasture . . . sight of him*: Job 39: 5-8 (misquoted) . . . Job 39: 9, 10, 11; 41: 1, 4, 9.

- 62 *hid themselves*: Job 39: 7-8.

emotion: the reviewer in the *Monthly Review*, 16 (1757) had written: 'It is certain we can have the most sublime ideas of the Deity, without imagining him a God of terror. Whatever raises our esteem of an object described, must be a powerful source of sublimity; and esteem is a passion nearly allied to love: our astonishment at the sublime as often proceeds from an increased love, as from an increased fear.'

- 63 *am I made*: Psalms 139: 14 (misquoted).

EXPLANATORY NOTES

spectent: 'the initiated, who are without fear, watch this sun, these stars and moments of decline at particular times'; Epistles, 1. 6. 3-5.

relecta: 'with these things a certain Goddess of pleasure drew me to you, and what horror now to see your true nature revealed, lying open and visible from every side'; from *De Rerum Natura*, iii. 28-30 (misquoted), by the Roman philosophical poet Lucretius (c.99-c.55 BC).

64 *of the Lord*: Psalms 68: 8 (misquoted).

fountain of waters: Psalms 114: 7-8 (misquoted).

fecit timor: 'fear brought the first gods into the world'; from *Thebaid*, iii. 661, by the Roman poet Statius (AD c.40-c.96).

65 *inania regna*: *Aeneid*, vi. 264-9 (misquoted).

Pitt: *Aeneid*, vi. 371-8, transl. (1740) by Christopher Pitt (1699-1748).

Dryden: *Aeneid*, vi. 378-9, transl. (1697) by John Dryden (1631-1700).

68 *imagination*: *The Spectator*, 409, 411-21.

72 *fiery Pegasus*: 1 *Henry IV*, iv. i. 97-109 (misquoted). Burke omits line 105: 'His cuishes on his thighs, gallantly armed.'

73 *their hands*, &c.: Eccles. 50: 5-13 (misquoted).

his throne: *Paradise Lost*, II. 266-7 (misquoted). The quotation should read '... Covers his throne'.

74 *skirts appear*: *Paradise Lost*, III. 380 (misquoted). The quotation should read: 'Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear.'

75 *fuscous*: brown, dingy.

riant: laughing, gay.

77 *iter in silvis*: 'just like a journey through the woods can be, through the uncertain moonlit night, under its fitful light'; *Aeneid*, vi. 270-1.

affright: Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, II. vii. 29 (misquoted). The last line should read: '... and sad affright.'

luporum: 'the roaring and fury of the lions fighting rope and chains and bars can be heard through the night; wild boars

and bears rage in their caves and the shadows of huge wolves howl'; *Aeneid*, vii. 15-18.

- 78 *Mephitim*: 'and so the concerned king goes to the oracle of his ancestors, prophetic forest god, for signs; and he consults the gods of the sacred groves at the mouth of the Tiber, and he worships at the most holy spring of the forests; and so he scourges the evil spirits and the fierce powers of the goddess Malaria'; *Aeneid*, vii. 81-4 (misquoted).

ferebat: 'it was a deep cave, huge with an enormous opening, edged with rough stones and protected by a black pool and surrounded by dark woods over which no birds can fly; such were the fumes pouring from the mouth of the cave and rising to the sky'; *Aeneid*, vi. 237-41. Acheron was one of the rivers of Hades in Greek mythology.

- 79 *amore*: 'but nevertheless it does pass, time passes irrevocably by; it breathes upon us and then drifts past while we stay put, held captive by successive passions.' Virgil: *Georgics*, iii. 284-5 (misquoted).

- 87 *a priori*: reasoning from cause to effect.

- 89 *the fair sex*: the reviewer in the *Critical Review* (see n. to p. 58 *by several*) had written of the 1st edition that '... contrary to our author's opinion, we insist upon it, that the well proportioned parts of the human body are constantly found beautiful'.

- 91 *human body*: this idea is from *De Architectura*, iii. i. 3 by the Roman writer and soldier Vitruvius Pollio (c.50-26 BC).

- 92 *aptitude*: see Plato's *Gorgias*.

- 96 *Venus and Hercules*: Venus was originally a Roman goddess of gardens who became the goddess of Love. Hercules was a legendary Greek hero of extraordinary strength.

- 97 *raised it*: this example can be found in the essay 'Of Vaine-Glory' (No. 53) by Francis Bacon (1560/1-1626). The essay begins: 'It was prettily Devised of Aesop; The Fly sate upon the Axle-tree of the Chariot wheele, and said, What a Dust doe I raise? So are there some vaine persons, that whatsoever goeth alone, or moveth upon greater Means, if they have never so little Hand in it, they thinke it is they that carry it.'