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Imitating the Obscene: Henry Higden's Versions
of Horace's Satire 1.2 and Juvenal's Satire 6

Stuart Gillespie

Henry Higden (*bap.* 1645), a product of Westminster School, entered the Middle Temple in 1665. He was not called to the bar until 1686, the same year in which the first of his three published works appeared. This was a translation or imitation of Juvenal's Satire 13 titled *A Modern Essay on the Thirteenth Satyr of Juvenal*, published by Dryden's bookseller, the young Jacob Tonson. When his next production, a version of Juvenal's Satire 10, appeared in 1687 as *A Modern Essay on the Tenth Satyr of Juvenal*, it was prefaced by commendatory verses from Dryden, with similar contributions from Aphra Behn and Elkanah Settle.

Charles Gildon described his contemporary Higden as 'a Person known to all the conversable part of the Town, for his Pleasant and Facetious Company'.¹ His social prominence may help explain his sorry legal career: he is reported by Tom Brown as being forced to take measures to prevent his room in the Temple being padlocked for non-payment of rent.² Neither did his success as a writer prove enduring. Higden's sole attempt at a stage play ended in disaster in 1693, when his comedy *The Wary Widow* was badly cut (by the Master of the Revels), badly produced, badly performed, and badly received. No further plays or other publications appear to have followed, and by the time Gildon recorded his biographical notes on Higden in 1699, he could not say whether he was still alive. His later fate is unknown.

Higden's two published classical imitations have, however, had their admirers. Dryden not only commended his *Modern Essay on the Tenth Satire of Juvenal* in his dedicatory verses, but

¹ Gerald Langbaine, continued by Charles Gildon, *The Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets* (London, 1699), p. 72.

² *The Second Volume of the Works of Mr Thomas Brown* (London, 1715), p. 177.

borrowed details from it extensively when he composed his own more celebrated version of the satire a few years later in 1693. The relationship between the two works has been explored in these pages by David Hopkins, who concluded that Dryden's debt to Higden implied very close knowledge of his version, and that Dryden was able to develop and improve on many of Higden's hints. Hopkins characterizes Higden's work as 'sometimes uncertain', his octosyllabic verse often producing a 'trivializing' effect at odds with the 'lapidary dignity' he attains at his best. Nevertheless, Hopkins shows, suggested to Dryden how wit and moral sententiousness could be 'viably combined'.³

As a translation, Higden's version of Juvenal 13, also in rhyming octosyllabic couplets, takes the same free approach its writer defended in the Preface to his Juvenal 10, which declares his aim of giving 'Life and Spirit to his Author, by making him English, in a Modish and Familiar way'.⁴ It too feels at times like burlesque, not least in the balancing act its versification involves:

Both Law and Equity afford
A Thousand Precedents on Record;
Demonstrating, That Breach of Trust is
So frequent, 'tis scarce thought Injustice.⁵

Octosyllabic couplets are a rare verse form indeed in imitations of ancient satire (as in imitations of other ancient genres) in the later seventeenth century. In her commendatory verses for Higden's Juvenal, Aphra Behn anticipates that some readers will 'blame' his 'Measures', given that Juvenal 'drest his *Satyr* in more lofty Rhimes'. But, she reassures him,

³ David Hopkins, 'Dryden and the Tenth Satire of Juvenal', *T&L*, 4 (1996), 31-60 (pp. 46-9).

⁴ Higden, *A Modern Essay on the Tenth Satyr of Juvenal* (London, 1687), sig. A4^v.

⁵ Higden, *A Modern Essay on the Thirteenth Satyr of Juvenal* (London, 1686), p. 3.

Had the *Great Bard* thy *Properer Numbers* view'd,
 He wou'd have lay'd his stiff Heroicks by,
 And this more *Gay*, more *Airy Path* pursu'd,
 That so much better leads to *Raillery*.⁶

Octosyllabic couplets were felt appropriate mainly for comic or parodic poetry, and their use in such contexts in original works like Samuel Butler's mock-heroic *Hudibras* (1663-78), or slightly later by Jonathan Swift, is well known. Their principal association in classically-based English verse in this era is with the travesty traditions to which Charles Cotton's burlesque-Virgilian *Scarronides* (1665) and Alexander Radcliffe's *Ovid Travestie* (1673) belong. These somewhat earlier productions are considerably more rough and ready in versification than Higden's Juvenal, deliberately making their clumsiness part of the subversion of the grandeur of the *Aeneid* or the sophistication of the *Amores*.

Henry Higden's known work does not currently extend beyond these three items – verse translations of two of Juvenal's satires, and the (prose) stage play *The Wary Widow*. But two substantial further classical imitations can now be added to this limited record. I turn first to Higden's version of a Horatian satire, a full text of which appears in print for the first time in the latter part of the present article.

Five extant copies are known to me of this English verse translation of Horace's Satire 1.2 which was apparently composed about 1690. These copies are found in the following manuscript sources:

⁶ Higden, *A Modern Essay on the Tenth Satyr of Juvenal* (London, 1687), sig. a1^v.

1. Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. poet. 159
2. Victoria and Albert Museum, Dyce Catalogue no. 43
3. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 14090
4. Nottingham University Library, Portland MS PwV43/3
5. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, File 17462

In four of the five copies no ascription is hinted at, but the Beinecke copy carries the following heading, clearly in the hand of the original scribe and not a later addition:

The Second Satyr
of the first Book of Horace
made English.
By H: H:

The initials are not the only feature connecting this work to Higden. This Horatian imitation also employs the octosyllabic couplets he used for his Juvenalian satires, and these octosyllabic couplets are of very much the same character. As we shall see, certain local details also strongly suggest the same hand in both. Why initials only, and why no ascription at all in the other copies? Probably for the same reason that this imitation went unprinted: its content is obscene.⁷ The work was evidently sufficiently attractive to readers for it to be copied and recopied for circulation between acquaintances, or within larger commercially-produced manuscript compilations,⁸ but it may well

⁷ A secondary reason might be that the imitation names real-life figures in satirical connections, but such names could easily be replaced by rules in print.

⁸ Of the five known copies, the Beinecke's began life as an independent manuscript, carrying an ownership inscription ('John Adamson') in the space between the heading and the first line, while

be that Higden would not have wished to acknowledge it publicly.⁹ The Latin satire was itself often omitted or cut short in editions of Horace's works for reasons of its verbal obscenity and its treatment of sexuality; even in the twentieth century, 'coarse' and 'sensational' were just two of the words used to describe this Horatian satire on sexual indulgence and adultery.¹⁰ In the twentieth century, too, it was still common for editions as well as commentaries and translations to exclude everything in the Latin from line 24 or 28 onwards (it is 134 lines long).

By 1690, the approximate date of Higden's Satire 1.2, several selective attempts at translation and imitation of 'Horace in English' had appeared, and Horace's early modern status as a moralist ensured that the *Satires* figured among them. Attitudes to Satire 1.2 must have varied, and it was ignored by some of those who translated other parts of the Horatian corpus, but Higden's version was by no means unprecedented. There were two recent predecessors: Alexander Brome in

the Bodleian copy was also once a 'separate', with its own pagination, before being bound into a volume containing many other separates. The rest of the five manuscripts listed (nos 2-4) are the type of 'vast manuscript anthologies' that from the late 1680s onwards represent a 'consolidation of the court satire of the previous two reigns' (Harold Love, *English Clandestine Satire, 1660-1702* (Oxford, 2004), p. 64). All come from the so-called Cameron scriptorium (a scriptorium was a concern which carried out copying to order from its stock of poems), with the texts of nos 2 and 3 being almost identical even in very small details.

⁹ This is not to suggest that the Beinecke copy or any of the other manuscripts addressed in the present discussion are autograph: there are no indications of this anywhere. Nor does the Beinecke copy necessarily imply that other exemplars had the words 'By H:H:' in their headings: it may be that this copyist had more direct knowledge of the author's identity.

¹⁰ See H. Rushton Fairclough's Loeb edition, *Horace: Satires, Epistles, and Ars poetica* (1926; revised edn Cambridge, MA, 1929): 'This immature and forbidding sketch, coarse and sensational in tone, and doubtless one of Horace's earliest efforts' (p. 17).

his *Poems of Horace*, 1666, and Higden's near-contemporary Thomas Creech in his *Odes, Satyrs, and Epistles of Horace*, 1684. Presumably both could excuse a translation of 1.2 on the grounds of an obligation to include all the *Satires* for completeness' sake, but, as we shall see, Brome, in particular, in any case produces a sanitized English 1.2.

These two versions, and a further selection of later English translations of Horace's Satire 1.2, have recently been compared in an essay by Catherine Schlegel. She finds that Brome and Creech reflect 'the liberalism of the post-Restoration period that is much noted by students of that era', and which is not in evidence in eighteenth- or nineteenth-century translations of Horace's Satire 1.2. Creech, she concludes, is 'not without his moralizing', but both he and Brome 'have a natural idiom at their disposal that captures Horace's Latin better than English translations have since'.¹¹

Brief comparison of Creech and Brome with Higden's Horace is worthwhile; all three translations possess different qualities. Schlegel compares the earlier English versions of Horace's lines 68-71:

huic si mutonis verbis mala tanta videnti
 diceret haec animus: "quid vis tibi? numquid ego a te
 magno prognatum deposco consule cunnum
 velatumque stola, mea cum conferbuit ira?"¹²

¹¹ Catherine Schlegel, 'Horace *Satires* 1.2: Taste and Translation', *CML*, 22 (2002), 57-83 (pp. 61-2).

¹² Daniel Hooley's forthright translation runs: 'What if the voice of his cock, as he looked on such calamity, would say to him this: "What do you want? Do I ask you for a cunt descended from venerable consul or posh-gowned when my desire boils up?"'. Daniel Hooley, 'Horace's Rud(e)-

Schlegel (p. 79) is particularly interested in the words ‘mutonis’ and ‘cunnum’. ‘Muto’ and ‘cunnum’ are, as Emily Gow puts it, ‘the candid Latin equivalent of four-letter words ... for the sexual organs (or standing for the whole person)’.¹³ Brome glosses over these, rendering the first highly euphemistically as ‘Natural *genius*’ and ignoring the second completely:

Now if that Natural *genius* of his
Should say to him, when he had seen all this,
Sir, what d’you mean? Do I require, when e’re
I am inrag’d, the Daughter of a *Peer*
Or any *marri’d* woman?¹⁴

Creech is much more upfront, and verbally obscene:

Suppose his *Whore-Pipe* now being vext at this,
Should ask him, *did I want a Noble Miss,*
A Whore of Quality to cool my Flame?
*No, I had been content with meaner Game.*¹⁵

In Higden’s version this passage is expanded and given a different turn, steering it away from

imentary Muse: Sat. 1.2’, *EIAnt*, 5.2 (October 1999). Quoted from

<<https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/EIAnt/V5N2/hooley.html>>, accessed 29 January 2019.

¹³ *Horace: Satires, Book I*, edited by Emily Gowers (Cambridge, 1981), p. 88.

¹⁴ Alexander Brome, *The Poems of Horace* (London, 1666), p. 194.

¹⁵ Thomas Creech, *The Odes, Satyrs, and Epistles of Horace* (second edn, London, 1684), p. 378.

verbal obscenity and improving the comedy. All the translators follow the Latin in assigning words to the penis, but Higden creates a somewhat more fully scripted dramatic exchange; a formal speech, or rather two. As in the other cases, the ‘poor sneaking squire’ protests to his ‘knight’ that it was not he who cared about the social standing of the sexual partner:

Pego's Defence

Say, if you can, did I require
 One nobly born to quench Love's Fire?
 Or care I, when my Mettle's hot,
 What Sire my manag'd Filly got?

The Knight's Answer

To whom the Knight: My Mistress springs
 From antient Race of *Saxon* Kings:
 Her Beauty's crown'd with noble Birth;
 I scorn the Mushrooms of the Earth.

(157-64)

Higden's slightly more elaborate dialogue goes one step further than Brome or Creech, whose versions allot fewer words to Pego and make the reply much terser.¹⁶ Higden's dialogue has the scope to suggest two speaking styles, and so to develop hints of character for the speakers. Pego's nimble syntactical inversions and sub-clauses contrast with the simple grammatical constructions used by the ‘knight’. It is a momentary double act, and this switch between Pego's rhetorical facility

¹⁶ Brome continues rather feebly: ‘what could he | Then answer to't? that *womans* meat for me, | Who is descended of a *noble* stem’. Creech has ‘What answer could be given? what be said? | *Only, forsooth, She was a Noble Maid*'.

and his interlocutor's plain iterative mode hints that Pego is suave, fast-thinking, witty, whereas his owner is ponderous of speech, and fixed of attitude. Tonally, too, Higden keeps things attractively light-touch: the joke name 'Pego' is not a word entirely from the stews, as Creech's 'whore-pipe' must be. Equally, he avoids the wooden literalism of Brome: for Brome's 'when e're | I am inrag'd' (Horace's 'diceret haec animus', 69) he offers 'when my Mettle's hot'.

This, of course, is to judge these three responses to the Horatian satire as English writing, not to assess them in terms of their accuracy as guides to the meaning of the Latin. No doubt Brome and Creech, in their restraint, have much more of that quality traditionally called 'fidelity' towards their source. Overall, one might note, Higden's 313 lines compare to 228 in Brome and 185 in Creech, a disproportion too large to be accounted for solely by his predecessors' use of longer, ten-syllable lines. Yet there are plenty of points at which an imitator like Higden can rise to Horace's challenge where a translator, with less freedom, might not. One example must suffice: a moment late in the satire when Horace's speaker expresses his preference for less socially elevated sexual partners. He names two female figures of exalted rank from the story of the earliest era of Roman settlement; his partner, he says, is everything they could be:

haec ubi supposuit dextro corpus mihi laevum,

Ilia et Egeria est

(125-6)

(Hooley: 'when such a one has placed herself just so, body to body, she is an Ilia and Egeria together')

Creech omits 'Ilia' but retains the name 'Egeria' at the probable cost of puzzling many readers; his translation does not provide notes (it reads: whil'st She my Arms doth fill, | She's my *Egeria*, or what e're I will', p. 381). Brome, perhaps for this reason, avoids names altogether, making the

Horatian speaker's point, as a consequence, much less clear:

When such a *Creature* in mine Armes does lie,

She is my *Love*, my *Queen*, my *Deitie*

(Brome, p. 197)

At this point Higden rather ingeniously uses two names from English history to correspond to the Roman ones. They are names which had become proverbial and would have been readily recognized by his readers, belonging to two famous mistresses of past kings of England. Jane Shore, the concubine of Edward IV, is frequently named in Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Rosamond Clifford belongs to the twelfth century; she was the mistress of Henry II, and became the subject of many legends and stories:

Her when I clasp with all her Charms,

I'th' Circle of my willing Arms,

And thus dissolve in Love, 'tis she

Is *Shore* and *Rosamond* to me

(288-91)

Higden's specificity answers to the Horatian passage, and, like so many other features of this imitation, accommodates it to a new English context.

* * *

I now turn to the second verse translation which I believe should henceforth be attributed to Higden. This appears, uniquely to my knowledge, in another, otherwise unconnected, Rawlinson manuscript in the Bodleian Library: MS Rawlinson poetry 195. It was first printed, as an anonymous work, in

my compilation *Newly Recovered English Classical Translations, 1600-1800* (Oxford, 2018; hereafter ‘*NRECT*’). It is an imitation of Juvenal’s Sixth Satire (of 661 lines) in English octosyllabic couplets (at a length of 1,457 lines). It appears in *NRECT* as items JU01 and XJU01, the first being the selections included in the print publication, the second being the complete text of the imitation which appears in the digital Annexe to that publication.¹⁷

Discussion and illustration of this work (hereafter ‘J6’) will be confined here to the question of attribution, but this is not an open-and-shut case; various kinds of evidence must be noted. For one thing, English imitations of Juvenal were not so rare in the later decades of the seventeenth century that there is *prima facie* reason to associate Higden’s printed version of Satire 10 with this imitation of Satire 6.¹⁸ All the same, in 2018 my editorial note to this unassigned Juvenal 6 registered that ‘within the wider history of Juvenalian imitation, the closest predecessor is Henry Higden, whose versions of S13 (1686) and S10 (1687) are the only precedents for the use of octosyllabics’. The reason I went no further is given in the next sentence: ‘But although their effect is often close to burlesque, Higden’s work is positively restrained in comparison with this Satire 6 (*NRECT*, p. 215).’ Thanks to the emergence of Higden’s Horace Satire 1.2 (hereafter ‘H1.2’), the ‘restraint’ I had in mind can now be seen to be a feature of only part of his output of imitations of ancient satire. In the offensiveness of their content, both the previously unattributed satires are beyond risqué: they are outrageous.

In both cases, the rare choice of octosyllabic rhyming couplets is enough in itself to create suspicions of a connection with Higden’s previously known imitations. Beyond this, it is not only a question of the verse form selected, but of the way it is used. As already noted, Higden’s rhymes

¹⁷ A free-to-download pdf of the complete Annexe is available at <nrect.gla.ac.uk>.

¹⁸ For Juvenal translations and imitations printed 1660-1700 see my ‘A Checklist of Restoration English Translations and Adaptations of Classical Greek and Latin Poetry, 1660-1700’, *T&L*, 1 (1992), 52-67 (pp. 59-60).

are generally not clumsy. They might perhaps be called ‘awkward’, but this is deliberate. It is made part of the fun that the reader often registers them as deliberately cheeky or contrived:

‘broker/bespoke her’ (J6, 1317-18), ‘Madams/*Jack Adams*’ (J13, p. 25), ‘*Bon ’Sperance*/Elephants’ (J10, p. 25), ‘should say’t/Magistrate’ (H1.2, 69-70). Another very pronounced characteristic is syntactical inversion: ‘And should I strive of each disease | To give the names and qualities’ (J10, p. 39); ‘With Joy the Triumph bear away’ (H1.2, 249); ‘If her spouse to the wars is sent’ (J6, 1282). This might be supposed a natural result of the pressures created by the joint demands of rhyme and the short eight-syllable line, but in fact it is notably rare in both Cotton’s *Scarronides* and Radcliffe’s *Ovid Travestie*, whereas it is pervasive in all four of the Juvenalian and Horatian imitations under consideration here.

Aside from the verse texture there is the matter of our author’s pronounced interest in the contemporary theatre. The author of J6 is, I wrote in 2018, ‘very familiar with the contemporary London stage, though he does not sound like an insider’ (*NRECT*, p. 215). Until the appearance of his one work for the stage in 1693, Higden, as far as we know, was not professionally associated with the theatre, but a keen interest is reflected in his allusions to stage plays currently or recently in the repertoire such as Wycherley’s *The Country Wife* of 1675 (J6, 120). That interest seems to combine at one point in J6 with close knowledge of a legal man’s way of life of when he writes of the summertime closure of the London theatres:

Others, while the dead Long Vacation
Causes from stage-playing a cessation –
While, in the empty theatre,
The hollow claps of doors you hear,
Sadly the tedious weeks they pass
From Trinity to Michaelmas.

(J6, 180-5)

In the English legal calendar, Trinity Term still ends in July, and Michaelmas Term begins in October. In the Horatian satire the allusions to the contemporary stage are present once again, and some are even more up-to-the-minute. The satirist imagines lovers who are caught with other men's wives and violently castrated; they are 'Poor *Pisquils*'. Pisquil was the name of a eunuch in Sir Charles Sedley's stage comedy *Bellamira*, 1687.

The interest in the stage is linked to the two most specific connections I have so far noted between the Juvenalian and the Horatian satires I now wish to attribute to Higden. In these cases the imitations use names which, originating in stage plays, had passed into common currency as type-names. In the Juvenal, the speaker at one point addresses a friend, in dissuasion from marriage:

Yet thou, incorrigible *Tony*,
 Design'st, in this age, *Matrimony*;
 And, more thy mistress to enamour,
 Art rigg'd by quaint *valet de chamber*.

(J6, 60-3)

A 'Tony' was a fool or ninny, and the term appears to have its origin in Middleton's *The Changeling* (1623, but known to have been performed as late as 1668). In the second scene two characters resolve to abbreviate the name of another, Antonio: 'Tony, Tony, 'tis enough, and a very good name for a fool', affirms Lollio. *OED* records 'Tony' as a term of abuse from 1654 until the later eighteenth century. But it is not, perhaps, one we would expect to encounter much in verse contexts, so its reappearance in the Horatian satire may be significant:

All men point at him for a Tony,
 That runs out a fair Patrimony,

Whether for sake of Miss, or Spouse,
That fond Plea no wise Man allows.

(H1.2, 137-40)

More decisive, because still more unusual, is the recurrence of a second stage-related insult or joke name across these two productions. Sir Jeffrey Smellsmock is a comic character in Thomas Shadwell's play *The Miser* (1672). The word 'smellsmock' is thereafter used allusively, and generically, in Sedley's *The Mulberry-Garden* (1675) and Edward Ravenscroft's *The English Lawyer* (1678), becoming a term for 'a licentious man', as the dictionary records. But, while no doubt a modish enough term in the speech of this era, it remained extremely rare in literary contexts, and had never appeared in verse at all by 1690.¹⁹ It looks more than a coincidence, therefore, that it appears both in the Horatian and Juvenalian satires:

What makes Sir Smellsmock, that rank goat,
On his fair, buxom wife to doat?

(J6, 373-4)

As did *Sir Smell-Smock*²⁰

Who, real Passion to discover,
Gave up into his Mistress' hands

¹⁹ Other than the works just noted, ECCO musters only six appearances of the term in print between 1672 and 1690. Two of these are in dictionaries, and only one has a literary context, in John Philips' 1687 translation of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*.

²⁰ Uniquely in the Juvenal 6 translation, this is a metrically defective line, perhaps reflecting the translator's slightly impetuous keenness to use the term.

His old paternal Seat of Lands:

(H1.2, 121)

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Horace's Satire 1.2 Imitated by Henry Higden

The text which follows is based on the Bodleian manuscript copy, no. 1 in the list given on p. 000 above, with a handful of corrections absorbed from others. Given that three of the five known manuscripts of this imitation (nos 2-4) were produced by the same commercial scriptorium, it is not to be expected that they will diverge significantly from each other, and my checks and spot-checks among the exemplars have revealed very few variants of substantive importance.

The intention has not been to provide a diplomatic transcription, but a reading text. The general principles on which the manuscript text has been edited are those developed for *NRECT*; the principles are set out on pp. 8-11 of that work. In this case the copyist took some pains to create a complete and consistent text, and editorial intervention has not been heavy. Three of the notes are signalled in my text as appearing in manuscript, and may well be originally the translator's own, as opposed to a copyist's.

Hor. Lib. i.

The Second Satyr.

Bauds, Fiddlers, Whores, Buffoons¹ o' th' Age,

¹ *Bauds ... Buffoons*] 'Bawd' and 'whore' are terms which could, in the later seventeenth century, be applied to males as well as females, but more often refer to the latter. *Fiddlers*: those who play the instrument for hire. *Buffoons*: those 'whose profession is to make sport by low jests and antick postures' (Johnson).

With the kind Damsels of the Stage,
 Quacks, Drolls, Cheats, Bullies,¹ Spendthrifts, all

Condole *Lord Squander's*² Funeral:

Because he bore a Noble Mind,
 And always Liberal was, and kind.

<1 line #>

This wealthy Wretch still dreads to lend,

Or serve a worthy wanting Friend,

Lest the Censorious World should call

Him Cully,³ or a Prodigal:

10

Ask t'other Coxcomb, Why such haste

To lay his Grandsire's Manners waste?

Why in vain Treats, Expense, and Play,

He foolishly throws all away?

He cries: "What some praise, others blame;

What's one Man's Pride,'s, another's Shame:

¹ *Quacks ... Bullies*] A quack is a charlatan of any kind, a suitable description of Horace's 'pharmacopolae' (1), not only sellers of potions but confidence tricksters. A droll is a jester or wag; a bully is a blustering 'gallant', especially 'one who lives by protecting prostitutes' (*OED*).

² *Lord Squander's*] The dead man in the Horatian satire is a real individual, whereas this is a type name or joke name. There is a mixture of both kinds of name in each text, however; for an example of a real-life name in the imitation, see the final line.

³ *Cully*] 'Simpleton'.

The words of some one, pleading

in Excuse of the Usurer

Why should he not o'rereach, and cheat,

Since Heav'n still favours his Deceit?

You see, he lives at a good Rate,

And shapes Expense to his Estate.

The Author's Reply

But who believes your Speech, who sees

He wants even Necessities?

Th' unhappy Father (whom we see

Afflict himself in Comedy,¹

40

Because his wild rebellious Son

O'erseas is to the *Indies* run)

Lives not in such a wretched state,

Or suffers Penance at his Rate.

If any one desires to know

From whence these diff'ring Humours flow:

The Reason's plain: when Fools would shun

One Vice, on th' opposite they run;

Who fear a Shelf, and steer too wide,

Oft shipwreck on the other side,

50

Knowing no mean 'twixt th' extreme Vices

¹ *Father ... Comedy*] Horace (line 20) refers to a character in Terence who lives in misery after banishing his son.

And would you think *Cato* should say't,
 That was a sober Magistrate? 70
 When Youths than rutting Deer grow madder,
 With Tool, swell'd up with *Lust*, like Bladder,
 'Tis fit for Ease he hither come,
 And have a Run at gamesome Bum:
 While guilty Knaves employ their Lives
 To cony-catch¹ their Neighbours' Wives,
 When they, at every public Mill,
 Without a crime,² may grind their fill.
 "Such common Game (says one) I scorn,
 I only noble heads would horn." 80
 Observe what risks, and dang'rous Measures
 They tread, forsake the Road to Pleasures?
 When their fantastic love engages
 To trespass, and break others' Hedges,
 What various sorts of Hazards use
 T'attend them hunt in strange Purlieus?
 What wild Frays to Disasters fright
 And dog 'em, in stoln Flesh delight?

¹ *cony-catch*] To coney-catch is to cheat or deceive, but, noting that this does not make full sense, we realize that a pun is intended (see *OED*, 'cunny').

² *without a crime*] To their neighbour (ms note).

For her who's purchas'd for a Guinea,
 Who bleeds a sum¹ is deem'd a Ninny; 110
 While he's reputed stanch² and wise
 That frankly pays a Market-price:
 Him Misses love, respect, and call
 Free, gallant, just, and liberal,
 That will not strain his Purse and Means
 To humour wheedling, jilting Queans.³
 Some Fops are ravish'd with delight,
 Boast and insult in their Conceit,
 That they with *Matrons* hold no League,
 Nor drive with *Wives* no close Intrigue; 120
 As did *Sir Smell-Smock*⁴
 Who, real Passion to discover,
 Gave up into his Mistress' hands
 His old paternal Seat of Lands:
 Thank Heav'n, they never so miscarry'd,
 Or doted on a Jilt that's marry'd.

The Author's Answer

¹ *bleeds ... sum*] Compare *OED*, 'bleed' v. 5: 'to pay through the nose for'.

² *stanch*] '=staunch'; see *OED 2 quot.*: 'the blood continued staunch' (i.e. 'not flowing out').

³ *Queans*] A quean was 'a bold or impudent woman; a hussy; a prostitute' (*OED 1*).

⁴ *Sir Smell-Smock*] Sir Jeffrey Smellsmock is a comic character name in Thomas Shadwell's play *The Miser* (1672). A 'smell-smock' is 'a licentious man' (*OED*). This metrically defective, unrhymed line is the only example in this composition.

*throws the whole blame of his
Misadventure on poor Pego; who,
in a pretty Prosopopœia, Argues
the Case.*

The Knight, escap'd so as by Fire,
Blames *Pego*, his poor sneaking Squire, 150
As if he, Serpent-like, was Tempter,
And egg'd him on to this Adventure,
Tho' he, poor Snake, shar'd the Disaster,
And was drawn in by his lewd Master.
His Innocence he justify'd,
And thus to his Knight's Charge reply'd.

Pego's Defence

Say, if you can, did I require
One nobly born to quench Love's Fire?
Or care I, when my Mettle's hot,
What Sire my manag'd Filly¹ got? 160

The Knight's Answer

To whom the Knight: My Mistress springs
From antient Race of *Saxon* Kings:
Her Beauty's crown'd with noble Birth;
I scorn the Mushrooms of the Earth.

The Author's words

¹ *manag'd Filly*] In horse riding, a 'managed' animal was one which had been put through the exercises of the manège – the movements in which a horse was trained.

Wise Nature does instruct us, Sir,
 What is most fitting we prefer;
 And to avoid what's hurtful teaches:
 Nature's the inward Light that preaches.
 We rather should let Love miscarry,
 Than rob Life of what's necessary: 170
 'Tis better curb a headstrong Freak,¹
 Than give the Reins, and break our Neck.
 Of Quality leave vain Pursuit;
 That Game still brings more Pain, than Fruit:
 Nay, when we hope to get our full,²
 We find it true, more cry than Wool.³
 Nor can rich Dress, or Jewels bright,
 Make Legs or Thighs more straight or white;
 And Courtesans can often show
 The fairest Prospect of the two: 180
 They honestly expose their Ware,
 To open View, naked and bare;
 Nor practice shuffling⁴ Tradesmen's Slight,
 To put off coarse Ware by false Light,
 Contrive not to deceive your View;

¹ *Freak*] 'A capricious humour' (*OED*).

² *full*] 'Fill' (a standard usage).

³ *more ... Wool*] 'Great cry and little wool' is a proverbial dismissal of those who promise more than they deliver.

⁴ *shuffling*] 'Deceiving'.

Here you may see, and handle too.

Where noblest Jockeys Horses buy,

Each part's survey'd with curious Eye,

Lest, by some handsome Shape betray'd,

They dote upon a founder'd¹ Jade; 190

Peruse each Limb with Care and Heed,

Judge if he's made for Strength or Speed;

Observe his Buttocks fair and clean,

His rising Neck, Head small and lean,

Wide Nostrils, Eyes quick rowling bright;

Such Royal Chapmen² are i'th' right.

False Horscoursers,³ like Bands⁴ untrue,

Avoid a Trial, or fair View;

Teaching their Rascal Deer to fly

To Covert, from a Woodman's Eye; 200

And boldly, to the Bubble's⁵ Face,

Commend those Shapes deserve disgrace:

Praise lean Arms, bandy Legs, and to't

A crooked, nasty, pasty Foot;

A stout thick Waist, which does arise

¹ *founder'd*] 'Lamed'.

² *Chapmen*] 'Merchants', 'dealers'.

³ *Horscoursers*] 'Dealers in horses' (Johnson).

⁴ *Bands*] 'Promises'.

⁵ *Bubble's*] 'Dupe's' (OED 3).

An *Ostend* seige,¹ that's so well mann'd.
 Th' other, like open village lies,
 Where nothing baulks your Hands and Eyes:
 Perhaps she breathes a sweeter Air,)
 All thro' transparent Gauze, as clear,) 230
 And colour of the skin and Hair;)
 Straight Legs and Thighs, a pretty Foot,
 With charming Spot (blind Cupid's Butt).²
 'Tis strange he hits so small a Mark,
 But Instinct guides Love in the Dark:
 Her upright Body, slender Waist,
 That's with a circling Span embrac'd.
 Would you not rather choose plain Dealing,
 That bars neither your Sight nor Feeling,
 Rather than pay a wheedling Cheat 240
 Beforehand, for blown,³ tainted Meat?

*The Argument of the Courter
 of Wives of Quality*

'Tis true; but my fantastic Love
 Still nice and humorsome does prove;

¹ *Ostend seige*] The Siege of Ostend, 1601-4, was notorious for its length. English troops helped defend the city.

² *Spot ... Butt*] Cupid's 'butt' or target ('Mark', 234) is a cosmetic beauty spot fashionably worn on the face.

³ *blown*] 'Stale, flat, that has lost its freshness' (*OED*, *adj.*¹, 2).

When once possess'd, I loath the Game,
 And always court the flying Dame.
 Like a keen Huntsman, I with Hounds
 Run the Hare briskly o'er the Downs;
 And, having fairly kill'd the Prey,
 With Joy the Triumph bear away.

This Dish my Board doth proudly grace, 250
 And pleases, like the boasted Chase;
 But if I meet a shot-cours'd¹ Hare,
 Or basely strangled in a Snare,
 A *Jew* will sooner Swine's flesh eat,
 Than I can swallow such loath'd Meat.

The Author's Words

Think you, this Fancy will assuage
 Your Grief, or cure Love's burning Rage?
 Wise *Nature* would confine our *roving*
Cupids, and set bounds for *Loving*;
 Forbids us hunt chimeric Fancies, 260
 Like crack-brain'd Heroes in *Romances*:
 And, full as wise as that Intriguer,
 Will Towns impregnable beleaguer.
 If't happen, thro' excess of Drowth,
 Your burning Tongue cleave to your Mouth;

¹ *shot-cours'd*] Evidently meaning 'already shot' and dressed, as in Horace, but the term seems to be unrecorded.

Will you insist they'll bring you first
 Your gold Cup, ere you quench your Thirst?
 Or, pinch'd with Hunger, will you starve
 Unless they Quails or Lampreys serve?
 In case of need, will you refuse 270
 The Mistress or the Maid to use,
 Who luckily are plac'd at hand,
 And ready to obey Command?
 Will you, when help's at hand, let Lust
 Rage, till your swelling Engine's burst?
 Thank Heav'n, I'm not of that nice Mind;
 I'm for a Love easy and kind:
 The noisy Coquettes I detest,
 And love her thinks few words are best;
 Who only says (granting your Suit) 280
 "Money" anon, when he's gone out.
*Turner and Fox,*¹ that hister²-like
 Who on the easiest Terms will strike:
 And, when you beckon, does not linger,
 But's ready when you wag your Finger.
 Let her be straight, clean, handsome, tall,
 No fairer than is natural;
 Her when I clasp with all her Charms,

¹ Turner and Fox] Unexplained.

² *hister*] Cant for a Wench (ms note).

I'th' Circle of my willing Arms,
 And thus dissolve in Love, 'tis she 290
 Is *Shore* and *Rosamond*¹ to me:
 In that transporting hour, with ease
 I'll give her what Court-name² I please.
 Here I can frolic, without dread
 Of a Surprise, tho' in her Bed;
 Nor fear her jealous Spouse will come,
 Recall'd by Spies, at Midnight home.
 The Gates are broke, the House beset,
 And Instruments of Ruin met;
 The Lady starts pale from her Bed, 300
 Her guilty Confident's half dead:
 The Baud a Cart or Pillory fears,³
 Forebodes the Whip, or loss of Ears;

¹ *Shore and Rosamond*] Jane Shore was a famous royal mistress, the concubine of Edward IV. She is frequently named in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, but Nicholas Rowe's play *The Tragedy of Jane Shore* did not appear until some years after the apparent date of this reference, in 1714. Rosamond Clifford belongs to the twelfth century: she was the mistress of Henry II, and became the subject of many legends and stories.

² *Court-name*] Apparently meaning 'courting name', 'pet name'.

³ *Her guilty ... Pillory fears*] Both 'Confident' (so spelled by Pepys) and 'Baud' refer to the maid, who has acted as a go-between. A cart was still for Johnson in his 1755 *Dictionary* a vehicle in which a malefactor is 'exposed ... by way of punishment'.

The Wife, to save her Life, would scour,¹
 With loss of Jointure and of Dower;
 Undress'd and barefoot, Fear persuades
 My flight, t'escape from Whips to Blades,
 Lest Ransom high my Purse defray,
 Or Buttocks dearer Reck'ning pay;
 Or, to undo my Reputation, 310
 The Jest is spread quite o'er the Nation:
 Such a Surprise the worst Chance is,
*Smirk Darnel*² be my Judge in this.

¹ *scour*] 'Run away hastily' a slang word (*OED*, v.¹, 1c).

² *Smirk Darnel*] The name (sometimes appearing as 'Darnell' in the known manuscript copies) does not occur in printed sources of the relevant period. Higden seems to refer to a contemporary who has suffered a similar 'surprise', which is in line with standard contemporary readings of the Latin. See *The Satires, Epistles, and Art of Poetry of Horace* (London, 1743), p. 39 (on Horace's line 134): 'The Poet ends with one of the sharpest Strokes of Satire: For this *Fabius* was a famous *Lawyer* in those Times, and, being catch'd in Adultery, narrowly escap'd.