Eliza Haywood, â??An Irregular Odeâ?•

Description

[ELIZA HAYWOOD]

â??An Irregular Odeâ?•

To Mr. WALTER BOWMAN, *Professor of the Mathematics. Occasionâ??d by his objecting against my giving the Name of* HILLARIUS *to* Aaron Hill *Esq.*

I Own the Name, which to my Muse owes Birth,
Is far beneath the mighty Wearerâ??s worth:
But say, what Means can torturâ??d Wit invent,
Charms to *describe* which in *Idea* pain?
Can Reading show a Word of such extent,
To grasp a Glory *Thought* can scarce contain?
To me, impossible it seems:
But *Thou!* alas! art far removâ??d from *Me* by vast Extreams.
Unskillâ??d in Science, in rude Ignâ??rance bred,
Unhappy that I am,
(For mine is not the *Blame*)
Learningâ??s sweet Paths I neâ??er was taught to tread.

But if such Force in well-placâ??d Letters dwells
Which can all Heaven Epitomize,
Contract Immensity to narrow Space,
Wide different Beauties in one Round comprize,
And blend their Lustre in a mixâ??d Embrace;
Thine is the Art, great Bard! and thine powâ??rful Spells.

Thou! who canst travel Natureâ??s Secrets oâ??er,
And all Philosophyâ??s dark Depths explore!
Thou! who to Worlds unknown canst point the way,
And to benighted Reason lend a Ray,
To guide the Wandâ??rer led too long astray,
Do *Thou* exert thy oftâ??-tryâ??d Skill!
And what might thousand Volumes fill
(Yet Language seem unable to discharge)
In one all-meaning *Fiat* speak at large.
By thy inspective Power,
Descry some lucky Hour,
When the sloth-shedding Sway of *Saturn* yields
To *Mercuryâ??s* inspiring Reign,

When vigorous Planets rule the Azure Fields,
And warmly actuate Manâ??s inventive Brain;
Study can know no nobler Aim,
Than to find out some comprehensive Name
For Him, whom to admire, is the best Plea for Fame.

A Name it must be, which implies,
At once the Wonders of his Soul and Eyes!
Cherubial Sweetness! Godlike Majesty!
Numberless Myriads of Divinities,
Which, sparkling, in his Looks, his Words, his Works, we see:
Harmonious let it be in Sound,
Yet with Solemnity abound;
With Heaven-tunâ??d Notes adorn the nervous Sense,
Soft as his Voice, but lofty as his Mien:
Each thrilling Syllable pleasâ??d-Awe impart,
Which throâ?? the Ear, may strike the Heart
With raptâ??rous Tremblings; touch the Strings of Life,
Make Extasy within it self at strife
â??Twixt Tenderness and Reverence:
To the *Mindâ??s* Eye make every Glory seen,
And the wrapt Soul feel all his Force, thoâ?? Worlds should rush between:

But if thou seekst what Learning cannot show,
For all in vain, I fear, is human Art,
To the great Source of perfect Knowledge go;
Shake off Mortality, and on a Beam
Of towâ??ring Thought, swift throâ?? the AEther dart,
Where blazing Galaxies of Light,
Strike the awâ??d Eye, and dazzle vulgar Sight;
Nor, till thou reach the Throne of the *Supreme*,
Let meaner Views retard thâ?? adventâ??rous Flight.
There, MOSES! DAVID! GIDEON! and the rest
Of the immortal Blest,
Who by his deathless Lays more glorious Shine,
Will hail thy glad Approach in shouting Throngs,
And bid thee welcome to the Realms divine;
Both Saints and Angels forward thy Request.
(Angels are his Admirers too,
And copy Hallelujahs from his Songs)
Nor shall thy Wishes vainly sue;
Thâ?? Almightyâ??s Self will smile with pleasâ??d regard,
And give thy daring Genius this reward:
Of all who Tribute paid,
Of Thee it shall be said,
Heavenâ??s darling Care stands all to thee confest,
Thou knowâ??st Him most, and canâ??st describe Him best.

But till that Day, my boastful Pride shall live!
A Pride, so vast, as Empire could not give!
Far as Creation reaches, shall the Name
Eliza chose, tune the whole Voice of Fame;
The wafting Air shall bear the Accents round,
And all the wide Expanse echo the raptâ??rous Sound:
Throâ?? every Orb, HILLARIUS shall be heard,
And Altars to his shining Virtues rearâ??d;
HILLARIUS *there*, as *here*, be understood,
By all the Wise, the Brave, the Great, and Good.

NOTES:

Subtitle *Hillarius* A reference to Aaron Hill (1685-1750), dramatist and poet who, in the early 1720s, developed â??a literary coterie dubbed the â??Hillarian circleâ?? after the name bestowed on him by one of his fervent admirers, the novelist and dramatist Eliza Haywoodâ?• (Christine Gerrard, *Aaron Hill: The Musesâ?? Projector, 1685-1750*, pp. 61-2); *WALTER BOWMAN* (1699-1782), a tutor and antiquary who, in 1717, was considered for the position of â??Chair of Mathematics in the Marischal College of Aberdeen Universityâ?• (Tweedie, â??A Study of the Life and Writings of Colin MacLaurin,â?• p. 134). Bowmanâ??s connection to Aaron Hill and the Hillarian circle remains obscure.

1 *Muse* â??The inspiring goddess of a particular poet; [hence] a poetâ??s particular genius, the character of a particular poetâ??s styleâ?• (*OED*).

17 *Lustre* â??Luminosity, brilliancy, bright light; luminous splendorâ?• (*OED*).

18 *Bard* â??A lyric or epic poet, a â??singerâ??; a poet generallyâ?• (*OED*).

30 *sloth-shedding Sway of Saturn.* In astrological terms, Saturn was associated with industriousness and determination.

31 *Mercuryâ??s inspiring Reign* In astrological terms, Mercury was associated with reason and wit.

32 *Azure Fields* Figurative phrase alluding to the skies or heavens.

39 *Cherubial* â??Angelicâ?• (*OED*).

40 *Myriads* â??Countless numbersâ?• (*OED*).

45 *Mien* â??The look, bearing, manner, or conduct of a person, as showing character, moodâ?• (*OED*).

61 *Moses* â??A Hebrew prophet and lawgiverâ?¦[who] was inspired by God on Mount Sinai to write down the Ten Commandmentsâ?• (*OCB*); *David* â??One of the best-known biblical charactersâ?• serves as follower and chosen hero of God in bible (*OCB*); *Gideon* A military leader of the Israelites who won an important battle over a Midianite army despite being outnumbered, a story recounted in Judges 6-8 (*OCB*).

79 *Eliza* A self-reference.

SOURCE: ***Poems on Several Occasions*** **(London, [1724]), pp. 1-4. [Google Books]**

Edited by Kaitlyn Faherty