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The Problem of Alexander Pope's Thematic Originality in "An Essay on Criticism"

INTRODUCTION

William H. Marshall¹ describes Lord Byron's copy of Nicolas Boileau's works, the first volume of which, on the shortened-title page, carries the signature "Byron. Venice.", while the title page of the second volume bears only "Byron". Byron says among other things of Pope and Boileau:

With regards to their writing, their times (the Augustan Age in England and France), and their fame, "no two authors . . . afford us so complete and happy a parallel". They were the Horaces and Virgils of Louis and Anne. "Their poems will stand as models and test of excellence" They were for ancient writers, and against the modern ones. They both reaped "laurels and acclamation . . . showers of hisses . . . but the only advantage obtained over Pope and Boileau consisted in their enemies succeeding in being damned to everlasting fame". And then: "Of Pope must be said that he had more true sensibility and native poetic mind in him than Boileau".

This is Byron's impression after a general reading of Pope and Boileau. The purpose of this work is to compare the authors' most similar works, *An Essay on Criticism* and *L'Art Poétique*, by analysing their contents, and to draw pertinent conclusions about the relative thematic qualities of the works, as well as about Pope's possible dependence on, or freedom from, Boileau.

¹ The Bibliography at the end of the work contains complete references; wherever necessary, short identifying notes, like numbers of pages and verses, are inserted into the text itself.

I. POPE AS BORROWER OF THEMES

Unconvincing Evidence

It has long been supposed that Pope's *Essay* is mainly based on Boileau's *Art Poétique*. We shall have to examine Pope's indebtedness with regard to the contents in some detail.

Clark (p. 197) argues that one of the proofs that Boileau was Pope's model is his use of Boileau's unity devices by such words as "nature", "reason", "good sense"; another one would be Pope's acceptance of Boileau's standpoint that rules may be broken, as well as the "tone of urbanity" as opposed to the Italian tone of "didacticism".

With the possible exception of the broken rules, which, however, Horace also breaks, the other "proofs" seem unconvincing. Both poets, Boileau more than Pope, are didactic.

In connection with "unity", speaking of Pope, Audra² (p. 218) holds the opposite view: "In spite of the subtlety of his art, he did not succeed, and he could not succeed, in imprinting on his subject matter the unity which only an original jet of thought may assure". This is one of his proofs that Pope imitated Boileau.

In my opinion, neither of the views is true, because those watchwords come up in any classicist criticism, and Pope's work has a unity of its own: it is addressed to the critics. If Boileau's work, addressed to poets, has a unity of its own, Pope's must have one too, since Pope treats mainly the same themes, only he applies them to the critics. Audra destroys his own argument for Pope's imitation: if Pope imitated Boileau extensively, as Audra affirms it, then Pope's work must have more or less the same unity as Boileau's.

Equally unconvincing is Clark's argument that Pope, "the English Boileau" (p. 191), at the age of twenty, when he wrote *An Essay*, could hardly have written "such a mature work" (p. 193). In a work of art, a borrowed subject is less important than the poetic touch the poet gives it. On the other hand, there are other poets who at an early age created mature works.

Neither is a conclusive proof that Pope in his *Essay* uses the same names which John Dryden, on the request of William Soame, the translator of *L'Art*, substituted for the French ones (Audra, p. 203). In this way Boileau was "transplanted to the English soil". Pope does not necessarily use the names in the same relations: "Nay, shou'd great Homer lift his awful Head, / Zoilus again would start up from the Dead" (464—465), which

² English quotations from the works in French are in my own translation. Audra and Williams, in the *Pastoral Poetry and "An Essay on Criticism"*, refer to the number of the verses commented.

becomes in Soame's translation: "Let mighty Spencer raise his reverend head, / Cowley and Denham start up from the dead" (1052—1053), otherwise Pope's probable source, as it will be shown later.

Pope's Own Evidence

Pope's own admission is most important in the question of imitation. In connection with this, Audra's argument of Pope's "thoughts and rhymes retained by his tenacious memory" (215) is beside the point, because it is unthinkable that a young aspiring writer, who had been imitating and translating with a view to learning, would have relied exclusively on his memory, and would not have had Boileau, such an important work, on hand when he composed *An Essay*. There are two very probable possibilities. Even to-day, and still more in the past, when there were no ready "thesauruses" to help a struggling writer, an aspiring poet or novelist jots down notes while he reads, to serve him for his own writing I just cannot imagine Pope, eager to learn from others, not having done the same. And moreover, I cannot imagine that he would not have had on hand all the books he might have considered important for his own topic. A researcher in any field does the same; a translator does: he uses reference books and all the previous translations available, in all the languages he knows.

In Spence's *Anecdotes* (p. 278), Pope said to Spence: "My first taking to imitating was not out of vanity, but humility. I saw how defective my own things were; and endeavoured to mend my manner by copying good strokes from others". Although "to copy" here probably means "to attempt to resemble", it so strongly intimates the main, practical meaning of the word. I am sure Pope did not consciously memorize as he read, but made notes. By imitating established writers, Pope proceeded exactly in the same way as the Renaissance painters, who imitated their masters until they themselves became masters. Modern schools of writing, although they stress that you learn writing by writing, must nevertheless base their teaching on the imitation of the best that has been written so far.

It is of paramount importance for the possibility of Pope's use of *L'Art* in the original, to establish his knowledge of French. By his own admission, he had an imperfect knowledge of the language, but the fact is that he read French. He must have enjoyed the reading, or he would not have read. In his letter to Bolingbroke of April 9, 1724, about his reading of Voltaire's *La Henriade*, he says: "It is but this Week that I have been well enough in my head to read the Poem of the

League with the attention it deserves . . . I cannot pretend to judge with any exactness of the beauties of a foreign Language which I understand but Imperfectly". The statement, although a fact, may reveal an exaggerated humility, such as also appears in *An Essay*. Pope would not have read a French original if he had not enjoyed it. He read "with the attention it deserves" — with the same application he learnt writing. If Pope had used to-day's technical linguistic terms, he might have said that his knowledge of French was rather passive than active: he understood it (written and maybe spoken, or both), but could not speak it or write it. People read English novels without being able to pronounce the language: they may come rather close to perfect understanding if they are more visual than aural types. Pope's persistency in reading French might afford such an indication. An aural type, hearing in his ears pronounced what he reads, would be decidedly disheartened by the irksome task, especially if of such a perfectionist nature as Pope's. But notwithstanding the extent of his savouring a French work of art, Pope, because of his own conviction that he understood French imperfectly, very probably used both the original and a translation of *L'Art*.

An internal, corroborative proof of the above, concerning Pope's probably defective pronunciation of French, is his verse in *An Essay* itself: "And Boileau still in Right of Horace sways" (714). If "Boileau" is stressed on the first syllable, the verse is a perfect iambic pentameter. To read it with the stress on the second syllable would mean to abuse the rhythm of the verse. Because the word "still" should certainly be stressed in the line, a trochee as the second foot would hardly have a "raison d'être". A fluent speaker of French, however, would not sacrifice the original accent of a French name. Pope pronounced "Boileau" as any non-French speaking Englishman would, with the stress on the first syllable.

These general indications point to a high probability that Pope used Boileau; individual themes will substantiate them still further. When talking about Pope's advice Audra is right to state: "So to say, there are none which could not be found in Boileau" (p. 228), but whether Pope borrowed them from Boileau or Horace, or even from other sources, is another question; an even more important one is what he did with them.

Boileau in Pope

Because both Boileau and Pope treat mainly the same subjects, but look at them from the different angles—poetical or critical—they must agree extensively. In some themes, Pope might have used either the original *Art Poétique* or some of

its translations, as well as Horace's *Ars Poetica*. So Boileau and Pope generally agree on the question of the "dark thoughts":

Il est certains Esprits, dont les sombres pensées
Sont d'un nuage épais toujours embarrassées.
Le jour de la raison ne le scauroit percer.
Selon que nostre idée est plus ou moins obscure,
L'expression la suit, ou moins nette, ou plus pure.
Ce que l'on conçois bien s'énonce clairement,
Et les mots pour le dire arrivent aisément. (i, 147—153)

False Eloquence, like the Prismatic Glass,
Its gawdy Colours spreads on ev'ry place;
The Face of Nature we no more Survey,
All glares alike, without Distinction gay:
But true Expression, like th' unchanging Sun,
Clears, and improves whate'er it shines upon,
It gilds all Objects, but it alters none.
Expression is the Dress of Thought, and still
Appears more decent as more suitable;
A vile Conceit in pompous Words express,
Is like a Clown in regal Purple drest;
For different Styles with different Subjects sort,
As several Garbs with Country, Town, and Court. (311—323)

The subjects are certainly the same, but Boileau uses the single metaphor of a cloud while Pope uses three: "Prismatic Glass", "the unchanging Sun", and clothes. Boileau himself uses the metaphor of clothes at the beginning of Chant II.

Both Boileau and Pope stress simplicity and modesty as the prerequisites *sine qua non* of a writer: "Soyez simple avec art, / Sublime sans orgueil, agreable sans fard" (i, 101—102); "But where's the Man, who Counsel can bestow, / Still pleas'd to teach, and yet not proud to know?" (631—632).

There are some negative characteristics which writers should avoid. One of them is too great an ambition. Those who do not adhere to their own field, may experience a sad development: "Some have at first for Wits, then Poets past, / Turn'd Criticks next, and prov'd plain Fools at last" (36—37). Something similar happened to Ronsard:

Reglant tout, broüilla tout, fit un art à sa mode:
Et toutefois long-temps eut un heureux destin.
Mais sa Muse en François parlant Grec et Latin,
Vit dans l'âge suivant par un retour grotesque,
Tomber de ses grands mots le faste pedantesque.
Ce poëte orgueilleux trebuché de si haut.. (i, 124—129)

Boileau expresses the same idea also in general: "Mais souvent un Esprit qui se flatte, et qui s'aime, / Méconoist son genie, et s'ignore soy-même" (i, 19—20).

There is a similarity between Pope's "Some to Conceit alone their Taste confine, / And glitt'ring Thoughts struck out

at ev'ry Line" (289—290) and Boileau's "La pluspart emportez d'une fougue insensée / Toûjours loin du droit sens vont chercehr leur pensée" (i, 39—40), which idea Pope also expresses in his passage on the bizarre language (305ff.).

The poets also agree on the harmfulness of jealousy:

Fuyez sur tout, fuyez ces basses jalousies,
Des vulgaires esprits malignes phrenesies.
Un sublime Ecrivain n'en peut estre infecté.
C'est un vice qui suit la Mediocrité.
Du Merite éclatant cette sombre Rivale
Contre luy chez les Grands incessamment cabale. (iv, 111—116)

Envy will Merit as its Shade pursue,
But like a Shadow, proves the Substance true;
For envy'd Wit, like Sol Eclips'd, makes known
Th' opposing Body's Grossness, not its own.
When first that Sun too powerful Beams displays,
It draws up Vapours which obscure its Rays;
But ev'n those Clouds at last adorn its Way,
Reflect new Glories, and augment the Day. (466—473)

However, how much more varied and powerful Pope's expression is!

Some parts of *An Essay* point to translation as the possible source. When Pope was writing his work, there was William Soame's translation of Boileau's *Art Poétique* available, published in 1683 with John Dryden's changes and substitution of English names for the French ones. Jacob Tonson published it again in 1708, and supplied the above information. There are many indications that Pope used the translation. Boileau urges authors to study nature: "Que la Nature donc soit vostre étude unique, / Auteurs..." (iii, 359—360), and the human heart, as a part of nature: "Quiconque voit bien l'Homme, et d'un esprit profond, / De tant de coeurs cachez a penetré le fond" (iii, 361—362). In other words, Boileau expresses the truth that it is enough to know one man to know basically all, although "La Nature feconde en bizarres portraits / Dans chaque ame est marquée à de differens traits" (iii, 369—370). Nature is synonymous with good sense: "Aux dépens du bon sens gardez de plaisanter. / Jamais de la Nature il ne faut s'écarter" (iii, 413—414) and reason: "Aimez donc la Raison. Que toûjours vos écrits / Empruntent d'elle seule et leur lustre et leur prix" (i, 37—38). Simplicity is in harmony with nature: "Que le debut soit simple et n'ait rien d'affecté" (ii, 269). Pope expresses mainly the same ideas:

First follow Nature, and your Judgment frame
By her just Standard, which is still the same:
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchang'd, and Universal Light,

Life, Force, and Beauty, must to all impart,
 At once the Source, and End, and Test of Art.
 Art from the Fund each just Supply provides,
 Works without Show, and without Pomp presides:
 In some fair Body thus th' informing Soul
 With Spirits feeds, with Vigour fills the whole,
 Each Motion guides, and ev'ry Nerve sustains;
 It self unseen, but in th' Effects, remains. (68—69)

These are the same ideas of nature as light, synonymous to reason and good sense, supplier of life, force and beauty, simple, "without Show, and without Pomp", expressing "de differens traits". Audra (p. 219) points to Boileau (i, 37—38), quoted above, as the source for verses 71—72. Soame translated: "Love Reason then; and let whate'er you write / Borrow from her its beauty, force, and light" (37—38). And indeed, "beauty, force, and light" are all in Pope's line 72, the last one also coming up as Pope's rhyme.

Audra (p. 210) also notices the similarity of Soame's "And afar off hold up the glorious prize" (1087) — in Boileau: "Et vous montrer de loin la courone et le prix" (iv, 230) — and Pope's "...learn'd Greece... / Held from afar, aloft, th' Immortal Prize" (92—96). And the idea and the rhyme correspond indeed.

Among the contemporary writers, so different from the Ancients, there is much rivalry and strife. Pope says: "Now, they who reached Parnassus' lofty Crown, / Employ their Pains to spurn some others down" (514—515). Boileau, continuing on the thought of the opposing forces of "la Mediocrité" and "le Merite", says: "Et sur les piés envain tâchant de se hausser, / Pour s'égalier à lui, cherche à le rabbaïsser" (iv, 117—118). Soame: "Base rivals ... / Maliciously aspire to gain renown / By standing up and pulling others down" (971—974). Also on this point Audra (p. 212) seems to be right; the same idea and the "down" rhyme indicate the probable source.

Soame is surely the source of Pope's (Audra, p. 211): "Nay shou'd great Homer lift his awful Head, / Zoilus again would start up from the Dead" (464—465) with his "Let mighty Spenser raise his reverend head, / Cowley and Denham start up from the dead" (1052—1053). Pope, however, gives his verses a critic's twist, even makes it an antithesis, because Zoilus was Homer's bitter critic, while Soame (in this case, Dryden) simply enumerates the poets whom he would like to live again. Three English names have been substituted for only one French here: "Que Corneille pour lui rallumant son audace, / Soit encor le Corneille et du Cid et d'Horace" (iv, 195—196), "lui" being the Prince. The same pair of rhymes, however, are revealing.

Both Boileau and Pope think that to be a poet is a divine gift:

C'est envain qu'au Parnasse un temeraire Auteur
 Pense de l'art des Vers atteindre la hauteur.
 S'il ne sent du Ciel l'influence secrete,
 Si son Astre en naissant ne l'a formé Poëte,
 Dans son genie étroit il est toujours captif. (i, 1—5)

In Poets as true Genius is but rare,
 True Taste as seldom is the Critick's Share;
 Both must alike from Hev'n derive their Light,
 These born to Judge, as well as those to Write. (11—14)

Talents are divided sparingly: "Nature to all Things fix'd the Limits fit, / And Wisely curb'd proud Man's pretending Wit" (52—53) and "La nature fertile en Esprits excellens / Sçait entre les Auteurs partager les talens" (i, 13—14). When we look at Soame's translation, as reprinted in the Cambridge *Dryden*, "Nature abounds in wits of every kind, / And for each author can a talent find" (13—14), there is not too much similarity, with the exception of the common idea. But Audra (p. 210) quotes the same passage as: "Nature to all things fix'd the limits fit / And wisely curbed proud man's pretending wit", which leads us closer to Pope's rendering. So this surely raises the question of which edition of Soame's translation of Boileau's *Art Poétique* Pope used.

My quotations of William Soame's translation of *L'Art Poétique* are from George R. Noyes's *Poetical Works of John Dryden*, which follows the edition of the *Art of Poetry* of 1683. The publisher Jacob Tonson reprinted the edition in 1708 in *The Annual Miscellany for the Year 1694*. I have seen Tonson's editions of the book of 1716 and 1727, and they follow the same text as John Dryden, at the translator's request (according to Tonson's advertisement preceding the *Art of Poetry*), revised it and substituted English names for the French ones. The same text also appears in Kinsley's *Dryden* and in Albert S. Cook's *Art of Poetry*. Clark quotes from it too. But Audra's quotations from the *Art of Poetry*, as it has already been shown, differ at some points. Audra (p. 213) also quotes: "You can no church, no monastery chuse, / To shelter you from their pursuing muse", referring to the persistent readers of their own works to other people, which is in Noyes's *Dryden*: "There is no sanctuary you can choose / For a defense from their pursuing Muse" (912—913). The Cambridge (Noyes's) text, following the translation of 1683, is surely better: "sanctuary" stands for the pleonasm of "church" and "monastery"; and Boileau himself has only "Temple". But Pope repeats the pleonasm: "No Place so Sacred from such Fops is barr'd, / Nor is Paul's Church more safe than Paul's Church-yard" (622—623). It is rather safe to assume that Pope followed, perhaps in addition to that, a text partly different from the one of 1683.

E. Curll published "The Second Edition, Revis'd and Compar'd with the last Paris Edition" of "*The Art of Poetry in Four Canots*" in 1715, with the prefixed advertisement: "Tho' sir William Soame's Translation of the following Poem, was in several Places very well done; yet the Diction of Poetry has been so much improv'd since his Time, that upon strictly comparing this Piece with the Original it has been found capable of many Amendments, not only in the Versification, but the Sense".

The advertisement, cleverly silent about the role of John Dryden, must mean the "many Amendments" done in the first edition of this "Revis'd" *Art of Poetry*, from 1712. It cannot refer to the second edition as an improvement on the first one, because "the Diction of Poetry" could not have been "so much improv'd" in that short period of time from 1712 to 1715. But the second part of the advertisement, "In this Edition are likewise inserted Classical References, and some curious Explanatory Notes, taken from the last Paris copy of our Author's Works, publish'd since his Death by the Famous M. Renaudot", can refer only to the second English edition, since "the last Paris copy" of Boileau's works was published in 1713. Hence it is clear that the publisher, E. Curll, numbers only his own editions of the *Art of Poetry*. Together with the *Art of Poetry* of 1715, the 1714 edition of Boileau's *Lutrin* is bound, translated by J. Ozell. In the same volume, the complete works of Boileau are advertised, published in three volumes from 1711 to 1713. The *Art of Poetry* is included in the first volume, which brings us very close to Pope's publication of *An Essay* in 1711. So two publishers, Tonson and Curll, were printing their own editions of Boileau's *Art of Poetry*, the latter one with the "corrections" of J. Ozell (presumptuous after John Dryden's touches, but at the time this may have not been so apparent). It seems natural that Pope would use a "Revis'd" edition, printed or in manuscript, alone or together with another one.

Some instances intimate that Pope might have used both the original and a translation. So for instance, when Pope and Boileau advise authors to study the Ancients (Audra, p. 219; Clark, p. 194):

Know well each Ancient's proper Character,
His Fable, Subject, Scope in ev'ry Page,
Religion, Country, Genius of his Age. (119—121)

Conservez à chacun son propre caractere.
Des Siècles, des Païs, étudiez les moeurs.
Les climats font souvent les diverses humeurs. (iii, 112—114)

Keep to each man his proper character.
Of countries and of times the humors know;
From different climates differing customs grow.

(Soame, 538—540)

The “proper character” is in all the three texts.

Something similar appears in the question of proportion and harmony, although here too, we could go as far as Horace (“ordo” in line 41):

Il faut que chaque chose y soit mise en son lieu;
Que le début, la fin, répondent au milieu;
Que d'un art délicat les pieces assorties
N'y forment qu'un seul tout de diverses parties;
Que jamais du sujet, le discours s'écartant
N'aïlle chercher trop loin quelque mot éclatant. (i, 176—181)

Each object must be fix'd in the due place,
And differing parts have corresponding grace;
Till by a curious art dispos'd, we find
One perfect whole, of all the pieces join'd.

(Soame, 177—180)

Some Figures monstrous and mis-shap'd appear,
Consider'd singly, or beheld too near,
Which, but proportion'd to their Light, or Place,
Due Distance reconciles to Form and Grace.

(Pope, 171—174)

The thought is the same, and the rhymes betray the source (Clark, p. 195). Pope again, has given his own expression a dynamic perspective, made it his own, so that even the idea, let alone the rhymes, fades into relative insignificance. Because Pope addresses critics, he forms his own angle:

A perfect Judge will read each Work of Wit
With the same Spirit that its Author writ,
Survey the Whole, nor seek slight Faults to find. (233—235)

The treatment of the theme is similar in Boileau and Pope (Audra, p. 218). “Un seul tout”, “one perfect whole” — although Pope does not modify his “Whole” with “perfect”, he qualifies his “Judge” with it; Soame’s rhyme “find” is also in Pope.

Some additional passages may lead us both to Soame and Horace. The problem of the breaking of rules, for instance. “Thus Pegasus . . . / May . . . / From vulgar Bounds with brave disorder part, / And snatch a Grace beyond the Reach of Art” (150—155). Clark (pp. 194—195) points out that the verses derive from Soame’s

A generous Muse may sometimes take her flight;
When, too much fetter'd with the rules of art,
May from her stricter bounds and limits part. (934—936)

In Boileau's own words:

Quelquefois dans sa course un esprit vigoureux
Trop resserré par l'art, sort des règles prescrites,
Et de l'art même apprend à franchir leurs limites. (iv, 78—80)

Yes, the rhymes are the same, as some other words: "may", "vulgar Bounds" instead of "stricter bounds", "Reach of Art" instead of "rules of art". Of course, Pope's expression is swifter-moving, streamlined. The verb "snatch" activates the verses. It seems, however, that Pope drew from yet another source in Boileau. Speaking about the ode, Boileau says: "Son stile impetueux souvent marche au hazard. / Chez elle un beau desordre est un effet de l'art" (ii, 71—72). Soame translated it: "Her generous style at random oft will part, / And by a brave disorder shows her art" (301—302). Boileau's rhyme itself, "art" is taken over by Soame and Pope. And Soame uses the same pair of rhymes in both instances, the same Pope has in his own rendering. What is amazing, Pope has "brave Disorder" from this second quotation from Soame.

Boileau is very conscious of the need for the variety of style, and so is Pope:

Sans cesse écrivant variez vos discours.
Un stile trop égal et toujours uniforme,
En vain brille à nos yeux, il faut qu'il nous endorme.
On lit peu ces Auteurs nez pour nous ennuyer,
Qui toujours sur un ton semblent psalmodier. (i, 70—74)

In writing, vary your discourse and phrase;
A frozen style, that neither ebbs or flows,
Instead of pleasing, makes us gape and doze.
Those tedious authors are esteem'd by none,
Who tire us, humming the same heavy tone.

(Soame, 70—74)

But in such Lays as neither ebb, nor flow,
Correctly cold, and regularly low,
That shunning Faults, one quiet Tenour keep;
We cannot blame indeed — but we may sleep.

(Pope, 239—242)

Pope's "neither ebb, nor flow", a corrected version of Soame's "neither ebbs or flows", is revealing; as well as the rhyme "flow"; not to speak about the idea, which is, however, also in Horace. It is Pope who brings forth exactly Horace's thought: "in vitium ducit culpae fuga, si caret arte" (31) — "Shunning a fault may lead to error, if there be lack of art". This seems rather a sure proof that Pope used for the writing of *An Essay* both Soame and Horace.

But in studying Boileau, Pope did not limit himself only to *L'Art Poétique*. It seems he studied all the works of Boileau. Both Boileau and Pope have similar ideas about nature. But it is true, they might have come to them through different channels. In the conclusion of his Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*. John Dryden says: "...because many men are shocked at the name of rules, as if they were a kind of magisterial prescription upon poets, I will conclude with words of Rapin, in his reflections on Aristotle's work of poetry: "If the rules be well considered, we shall find them to be made only to reduce nature into method..." (p. 146). Because of Pope's admiration for Dryden, it is almost sure that his "Nature Methodized" (89) comes from this source. This method is what makes a work of art, as Pope says: "True Wit is Nature to Advantage drest, /What oft was Thought, but ne'er so well exprest" (297—298), the same thought which Boileau expresses in his Preface: "...une pensée neuve... est... une pensée qui a dû venir à tout le monde, et que quelqu'un s'avise le premier d'exprimer. Un bon mot n'est bon mot qu'en ce qu'il dit une chose que chacun pensoit et qu'il l'a dit d'une maniere vive, fine et nouvelle" (pp. 1—2).

The ancient writers have best followed nature; therefore, both Boileau (iii, 295—308) and Pope (124—129, 130—140, 181—194) entertain the same esteem for them. Modern writers should imitate them. Clark (p. 197) points at the case of Longinus, about whom Pope says, "And is himself that great Sublime he draws" (680), while Boileau in his *Traité du Sublime* stresses: "Souvent il fait la figure qu'il enseigne; et, en parlant du Sublime, il est lui-mesme tres-sublime" (p. 333). This source seems to be clear.

The presentation of the problem of rhymes leads also to Pope's reading of the rest of Boileau:

Where-e'er you find the cooling Western Breeze,
In the next Line, it whispers thro' the Trees;
If Crystal Streams with pleasing Murmurs creep,
The Reader's threaten'd (not in vain) with Sleep. (350—353)

Although there is nothing corresponding in *L'Art*, a very similar treatment appears in Boileau's Satire II (Clark, p. 196):

Si je louois Philis, *En miracles feconde,*
Je trouverois bientost, *A nulle autre seconde.*
Si je voulois vanter un objet *Nonpareil;*
Je mettrois à l'instant, *Plus beau que le Soleil.*
Enfin parlant toujours d'*Astres* et de *Merveilles,*
De *Chef-d'oeuvres des Cieux,* de *Beautez sans pareilles.*

(p. 18, vv. 37—42)

While Pope fights only against banal rhymes, and takes the need for their being sensible for granted, Boileau on the other hand expatiates more on the subject. He is against rhymes as the only ornament of verses: "La Rime, au bout des mots assemblez sans mesure, /Tenoit lieu d'ornemens, de nombre et de césure" (i, 115), but what Boileau regrets here is the poet's neglect of all the other possible ornaments: Boileau is again on the side of form, and he shows more modesty (because he admits his own weakness in the verses quoted above) than Pope would be capable of.

Horace as Source

Several themes already have led us to Horace's *Ars Poetica* as a possible source. There are additional ones, like the need for would-be authors to examine themselves severely before embarking on the writing career:

O vous donc, qui brûlant d'une ardeur perilleuse,
Courez du bel Esprit la carrière epineuse,
N'allez pas sur des vers sans fruit vous consumer,
Ni prendre pour génie une amour de rimer.
Craignez d'un vain plaisir les trompeuses amorces,
Et consultez long-temps votre esprit et vos forces. (i, 7—12)

Pope echoes it, but of course, applies it to critics:

But you who seek to give and merit Fame,
And justly bear a Critick's noble Name,
Be sure yourself and your own Reach to know,
How far your Genius, Taste, and Learning go;
Launch not beyond your Dept, but be discreet,
And mark that Point where Sense and Dullness meet. (46—51)

Horace says the same:

Sumite materiam vestris, qui scribitis, aequam
viribus et versate diu, quid ferre recusent.
quid valeant umeri. (38—40)
(Take a subject, ye writers, equal to your strength; and
ponder long what your shoulders refuse, and what they are able
to bear.)

Boileau, more direct and practical, goes a little further than Pope and literally tries to scare a would-be dramatist: "Il trouve à le siffler des bouches toujours prestes" (iii, 148). This case, however, does not apply so much to a critic — the public in a theatre assumes a critic's position. Moreover, faithful to his practical teaching, Boileau even stresses the advantages of other professions. Telling the story of a notorious Florence doctor-killer, who turned a good architect (iv. 1—24), he concludes:

Soyez plutôt Mâçon, si c'est votre talent,
 Ouvrier estimé dans un art nécessaire,
 Qu'Écrivain du commun, et Poète vulgaire.
 Il est dans tout autre art des degrés différents.
 On peut avec honneur remplir les seconds rangs:
 Mais dans l'art dangereux de rimer et d'écrire,
 Il n'est point de degré du médiocre au pire. (iv, 26—32)

In this Boileau is faithful to Horace: "mediocribus esse poetas / non homines, non di, non concessere columnae" (372—373) — "But that poets be of middling rank, neither men nor gods nor booksellers ever brooked".

Audra and Williams stress a similarity between Pope's "Stones leap'd to Form, and Rocks began to live; / With sweeter Notes each rising Temple rung . . ." (702—703) and Boileau's "Qu'aux accords d'Amphion les pierres se mouvoient, / Et sur les murs Thebains en ordre s'élevoient" (iv, 149—150). The theme is the same. Soame: "Amphion's notes, by their melodious pow'rs, / Drew rocks and woods, and rais'd the Theban tox'rs" (1005—1006). But in this case Horace seems a more probable source:

dictus et Amphion, Thebanæ conditor urbis,
 saxa movere sono testudinis et prece blanda
 ducere quo vellet. (394—396)
 (hence too the fable that Amphion, builder of Thebes's citadel,
 moved stones by the sound of his lyre, and lead them whither
 he would by his supplicating spell.)

Boileau's text is almost a translation of Horace's. Pope did not mention the names (he was not too eager to show his indebtedness), but otherwise his idea echoes Horace faithfully. Pope, moreover, did not depart from stones, as Soame did in his translation, adding "woods" to stones. Pope is, in fact, a little weak here, guilty of a pleonasm ("stones" and "rocks").

Pope's verses: " 'Tis not enough no Harshness gives Offense, / The Sound must seem an Echo to the Sense" (364—365) remind of Boileau's (Audra and Williams): "Le vers le mieux rempli, la plus noble pensée / Ne peut plaire à l'esprit, quand l'oreille est blessée" (i, 111—112). And the resemblance leads to almost a proof if we see what Soame said: "The fullest verse and the most labor'd sense / Displease us, if the ear once take offense" (109—110). Although the idea itself may lead to Boileau as the source, only when one sees that Pope used the same rhymes as Soame, the evidence for the loan becomes almost conclusive. Pope, however, starts from the opposite direction: while Boileau stresses the importance of sound, Pope emphasizes the significance of thought. In this respect, Pope is nearer to Horace than to Boileau. Horace warns against "versus inopes rerum nugæque canoræ" (322) — "verses void of thought, and

sonorous trifles", stressing also the sense. Pope, moreover, enriches his saying with a simile ("Sound must seem an Echo to the Sense"), and thus makes it more his own.

Paradoxically, while Boileau "reveres" the language,

Sur tout, qu'en vos escrit la Langue reverée
Dans vos plus grands excez vous soit toujours sacrée...
Sâns la Langue en un mot, l'Auteur le plus divin
Est toujours, quoyqu'il fasse, un méchant Ecrivain, (i, 154—161)

he also violates it for the sake of form; Pope, on the contrary, denounces too great a concern for language alone,

Others for Language all their Care express,
And value Books, as Women Men, for Dress:
Their Praise is still — The Stile is excellent:
The Sense, they humbly take upon Content.
Words are like Leaves; and where they most abound,
Much Fruit of Sense beneath is rarely found, (305—310)
but treats it most fairly.

However, while the classicists tried to model their language on Latin, a dead language, Horace in *Ars Poetica* (46—72) manifests an astounding licence to create new words and thus enrich the language. Horace's views run counter to all the classicist conceptions of a language fixed by rules; in projection, they open the door to modern languages and modern literatures. With his less rigid stress on the importance of language alone, Pope is nearer to Horace than Boileau is.

The theme of the importance of work leads us also to Horace. "True Ease in Writing comes from Art, not Chance" (362), Pope says. Boileau advises, as to a proposed work of art: "Polissez-le sans cesse, et le repolissez" (i, 172). Better than Boileau and Pope, Horace expresses the idea with a metaphor: "limae labor et mora" (291) — "the toil and tedium of the file".

But a poet should not devote all his life just to writing verses; he should also live:

Que les vers ne soient pas vostre éternel employ.
Cultivez vos amis, soyez homme de foy.
C'est peu d'estre agreable et charmant dans un livre;
Il faut sçavoir encore et converser et vivre. (iv, 121—124)

Pope seems to be indebted to Boileau for his verse (Audra p. 228; Audra and Williams): "A Knowledge both of Books and Humankind" (640), although only the idea is the same, and moreover, Horace's "respicere exemplar vitae morumque iubebo / doctum imitatore et vivas hinc ducere voces" (317—318) — "I would advise one who has learned the imitative art to look to life and manners for a model, and draw from thence living

words". Although the writer's benefit from living may be only implied from Boileau and Pope, Horace expresses it accurately.

Boileau warns against the persistent reader of his own works to others:

Gardez-vous d'imiter ce Rimeur furieux,
Qui de ses vains écrits lecteur harmonieux
Aborde en recitant quiconque le saluë,
Et poursuit de ses vers les passans dans la ruë.
Il n'est Temple si saint des Anges respecté,
Qui soit contre sa Muse un lieu de seureté. (iv, 53—58)

Nor imitate the Settles of our times,
Those tuneful readers of their own dull rhymes,
Who seize on all th' acquaintance they can meet,
And stop the passengers that walk the street:
There is no sanctuary you can choose
For Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread. (622—625)
(Soame, 908—913)

Soame does not mention angels as Boileau and Pope do. Pope says:

No Place so Sacred from such Fops is barr'd,
Nor is Paul's Church more safe than Paul's Church-yard:
Nay, fly to Altars; there they'll talk you dead;
For Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread. (622—625)

Because of this very fact, it is highly probable that Pope had the French original in hand (Audra, pp. 213, 217; Clark, pp. 196—197), although Pope has added, as it has been amply shown, more inventive things to his borrowed material than are the "Angels" in this particular case. Angels are not too hard to associate with altars. Pope's probable indebtedness, in this case, to an "amended" Soame has been discussed earlier. Horace himself describes a crazy poet (in order not to be crazy, he should live as other people do) at length, including the assiduous reader of his own works to others. Horace is even naturalistic in his treatment of such a reader, while Boileau and Pope are not: "Quem vero arripuit, tenet occiditque legendo, / non missura cutem, nisi plena cruoris, hirudo" (475—476) — "if he catches a man, he holds him fast and reads him to death — a leech that will not let go the skin, till gorged with blood".

It is reasonably clear that Pope, for the material for *An Essay*, made use not only of Boileau's original and translation (or translations) of *L'Art Poétique*, but also Horace's *Ars Poetica*, as well as, by inference, probably some other works, which are not the subject of this thesis. The fact alone, that Boileau was not Pope's only or even principal source, as the impression has been so far, decreases Pope's indebtedness to Boileau, without having to mention the way Pope worked the material out.

II. POPE'S THEMATIC ORIGINALITY

One could hardly find one single instance in *An Essay on* which Pope has not impressed the stamp of his originality, either of thought or of art, or of both. Here are some clear examples in which Pope differs from Boileau.

It seems that Pope's esteem for the Ancients is more stressed than Boileau's. In fact, it is limitless (653—674). He would not deprive the Ancients of any privileges. For the modern writers he has disdain (325 ff.). He allows licence only to the Ancients; warns the Modern against it (163 ff.). Even the precedents for transgressions should be set at least by the Ancients (166).

Whatever is nearer to the Ancients, Pope admires more. Even France, which adheres to rules, "Critic Learning flou-rish'd most in France" (712). At first glance, the words "The Rules, a Nation born to serve, obeys, / And Boileau still in Right of Horace sways" (713—714) may be taken at their face value. But if we take them as such, they go against whatever Pope preaches in his essay. Further on,

But we, brave Britons, Foreign Laws despis'd,
And kept unconquer'd and unciviliz'd,
Fierce for the Liberties of Wit, and bold,
We still defy'd the Romans, as of old, (715—718)

also seems like boasting, and it is antithetical to the thoughts of France. It is, however, hardly believable that an admirer of French literature and classicism would express such a negative opinion of the country. And it is also improbable that such an educated, critically-minded man as Pope would boast of the "brave Britons". The verse "And kept unconquer'd, and unciviliz'd" betrays Pope's aim. That this is a subtle irony against his own country is more apparent from the following verses:

Yet some there were, among the sounder Few
Of those who less presum'd, and better knew,
Who durst assert the juster Ancient Cause,
And here restor'd Wit's Fundamental Laws. (719—722)

Pope appreciates English writers only to the extent to which they follow the Ancients, and they are only exceptions. Boileau devotes more space to French authors, and manifests genuine esteem for a number of them.

Although both Boileau and Pope stress the importance of sense in a work of art, Boileau keeps to form more rigidly than Pope, whose language is more natural. "Que toujours dans vos vers, le sens coupant les mots, / Suspende l'hémistiche, en marque le repos" (i, 105—106) is a more practical advice

than anything Pope has given. In his care for form, Boileau has created one of his rare metaphors, even a personification—vowels become persons: “Gardez qu’une voyelle à courir trop hastée, / Ne soit d’une voyelle en son chemin heurtée” (i, 107—108).

The difference of approach as to sound and sense is clear-cut throughout the two works in question. While Boileau fights against the “ugly sounds”: “Fuyez des mauvais sons le concours odieux” (i, 110). Pope, as it seems, takes euphony for granted, but rather stresses the necessary correspondence of sound with sense:

But most by Numbers judge a Poet’s Song,
And smooth or rough with them is right or wrong.
In the bright Muse though thousand Charms conspire,
Her Voice is all these tuneful Fools admire,
Who haunt Parnassus but to Please their Ear,
Not mend their Minds; as some to Church repair,
Not for the doctrine, but the Musick there. (337—343)

Pope is quite original in his thought: “Whoever thinks a faultless Piece to see, / Think what ne’er was, nor is, nor e’er shall be” (253—254), although Audra and Williams bring it in connection with Boileau’s “A ces petits défauts marquez dans sa peinture, / L’esprit avec plaisir reconnoist la nature” (iii, 107—108). A connection seems plausible if Boileau’s text is taken out of its context; Boileau speaks of the “flaws” in a character.

Boileau and Pope differ in their approaches to modesty, morality, and religion. In fact, their professed modesty and factual ambition are conflicting forces. Only a soaring ambition could have made Pope write *A Essay on Criticism*, to teach, first of all, himself how to write better. This seems clear from the passage where he addresses “Bards Triumphant”:

Oh, may some Spark of your Coelestial Fire
The last, the meanest of your Sons inspire,
(That on Weak Wings, from Far, pursues your Flights;
Glowes while he reads, but trembles as he writes)
To teach vain Wits a Science little known,
T’admire Superior Sense, and doubt their own! (195—200)

The professed modesty incompatible with the lofty teaching! “The last, the meanest of your Sons”: if he really thought so, he could hardly teach anybody.

Boileau follows similar lines:

Pour moy, qui jusqu’ici nourri dans la Satire,
N’ose encor manier la trompette et la lyre:
Vous me verrez pourtant, dans ce champ glorieux,
Vous animer du moins de la voix et des yeux:

Vous offrir ces leçons que mu Muse au Parnasse
 Rapporta jeune encor du commerce d'Horace;
 Seconder vostre ardeur, échauffer vos esprits,
 Et vous montrer de loin la courone et le prix.
 Mais aussi pardonnez si, plein de ce beau zele,
 De tous vos pas fameux, observateur fidele,
 Quelquefois du bon or je separe le faux,
 Et des Auteurs grossiers j'attaque les defaux;
 Censeur un peu fâcheux, mais souvent necessaire,
 Plus enclin à blâmer, que sçavant à bien faire. (iv, 223—236)

Both Pope and Boileau admit their being aspiring poets themselves, and they embark on teaching others how to write poems! There are, however, two very different traits visible in the passages. Boileau even begs pardon for his attacks; pope does not. Boileau shows a saving grace: he admits Horace as his source; Pope does not admit any directly. Pope certainly does not follow his own precept: "Let such teach others who themselves excell" (15). At the very end of *An Essay* this same inconsistency becomes apparent:

The Muse, whose early Voice you taught to sing
 Prescrib'd her Heights, and prun'd her tendier Wing,
 (Her Guide now lost) no more attempts to rise,
 But in low Numbers short Excursions tries:
 Content, if hence th' Unlearn'd their Wants may view,
 The Learn'd reflect on what before they knew, (735—740)

where he both identifies himself with the muse and "humbles" himself, mounting on the high pedestal of teaching.

More than Pope, Boileau is outspoken in his defence of morality. Moral advice permeates *L'Art*: "évitez la bassesse" (i, 79), "la saleté" (iii, 425), you should not betray virtue on paper, "Trahisant la vertu sur un papier coupable, / Aux yeux de leurs Lecteurs rendent le vice aimable" (iv, 95—96), and the conclusion is: "Aimez donc la vertu, nourrissez-en vostre ame" (iv, 108).

Pope gives to his teaching of morality the perspective of a critic:

Learn then what Morals Criticks ought to show,
 For 'tis but half a Judge's Task, to Know.
 'Tis not enough, Taste, Judgment, Learning, join;
 In all you speak, let Truth and Candor shine. (560—563)

"Candor" in line 563 may lead to Boileau's original (ii, 180), because Soame does not use the word: "I love sharp satire from obscenity free, / Not impudence that preaches modesty" (403—404), an inaccurate translation, by the way, because what Boileau attacks is hypocrisy, the opposite of »candeur". Pope, however, condemns obscenity as sharply as Boileau: "No Pardon vile Obscenity should find, / Tho' Wit and Art conspire to move

your Mind" (530—531). So in Pope's mind, as well as Boileau's, morality is more important than art, no "l'art pour l'art" for them. Pope instigates critics against blasphemies:

Witt's Titans brav'd the Skies,
And the Press groan'd with Licenc'd Blasphemies —
These Monsters, Criticks! with your Darts engage,
Here point your Thunder, and exhaust your Rage! (552—555)

As to religion, Pope is against the Middle Ages, when "Much was Believ'd, but little understood" (689) and against the monks who "finish'd what the Goths begun" (692), consistent with his belief in the necessary predominance of reason; but, on the other hand, he is also against the priests who do not believe, "Then Unbelieving Priests reform'd the Nation, / And taught more Pleasant Methods of Salvation" (546—547); he attacks the Scotists and Thomists— "Faith, Gospel, all seemed made to be disputed" (442). Thus, in the same way as his contemporary Jonathan Swift, although members of different Churches, Alexander Pope was for a religion enlightened by reason. Differently from Nicolas Boileau, he did not accept things so readily. Boileau takes even the establishment for granted: he seems to acquiesce in the government's execution of an atheist (ii, 189—190).

It is hard to speak about Boileau's original themes when he, as he admits himself, follows those of Horace. Nevertheless, in relation to Pope, he is more original in his more detailed, more practical advice, like this one: "Que dès les premiers vers l'Action préparée, / Sans peine, du Sujet applanisse l'entrée" (iii, 27—28). With relation to Horace, he brings forth a theme which Horace could not treat: the problem of Christian subject matter in poetry. For him, not only the treatment of subjects should be classical; the subjects themselves should be such. Boileau bars any "barbaric" subjects (iii, 244), as well as the Christian ones, the latter because of his own faith: "n'allons point dans nos songes, / Du Dieu de verité, faire un Dieu de mensonges" (iii, 235—236). To use Christian themes in literature seems an indirect desecration to him,

L'Evangile à l'Esprit n'offre de tous costez
Que penitence à faire, et tormens meritez:
Et de vos fictions le mélange coupable,
Mesme à ses veritez donne l'air de la Fable, (iii, 201—204)

equally condemnable as the direct one, blasphemies, "Faire Dieu le sujet d'un badinage affreu" (ii, 188).

Boileau drew a subtle, sharp distinction between literature and pornography: "L'amour le moins honneste exprimé chastement. / N'excite point en nous de honteux mouvement" (iv,

101—102), in just two verses, the theme which William Faulkner might have taken right from Boileau for his Nobel Prize address. Boileau, like Faulkner, stresses the human heart as a writer's aim: "Que dans tous vos discours la passion émuë / Aille chercher le coeur, l'échauffe, et le remuë (iii, 15—16). Reading Horace, Boileau, and Pope, one wonders what new can be added to literature. It has been recently stressed that sympathy is not enough for an author to possess; he should feel empathy for the subject he describes, for instance, not only be sorry for a drowning man, but help him. Although Boileau could not know this translation of the German word *Einfühlung*, he sees the need for such feeling. From a more sympathetic "Il faut dans la douleur que vous vous abbaissiez. / Pour me tirer des pleurs, il faut que vous pleuriez" (iii, 141—142) he goes to the empathetic "C'est peu d'estre Poëte, il faut estre amoureux" (ii, 44). Sympathy, however, we find in Horace: "si vis me flere, dolendum est / primum ipsi tibi" (102—103) — "If you would have me weep, you must first feel grief yourself".

In the case of Pope, more than any special treatment of individual themes, the general critical approach lends him a stamp of originality. Thus he is more independent of Boileau than Boileau of Horace.

Pope subjugates criticism to poetry. It is "the Muse's Handmaid" (102). And he develops his own ideas of criticism and its relation to poetry: "Perfect Judge will read each work of Wit / With the same Spirit that its Author writ" (233—234). The "trespassing" is unavoidable, because the fields are so closely related, and to say that Pope does it only through Boileau's influence is a little strained (Audra, p. 216).

In the question of an ideal critic, Pope agrees with Boileau:

Faites choix d'un Censeur solide et salutaire,
 Que la raison conduise, et le sçavoir éclairé,
 Et dont le crayon seur d'abord aille chercher
 L'endroit que l'on sent foible et qu'on se veut cacher.
 Lui seul éclaircira vos doutes ridicules:
 De vostre esprit tremblant levera les scrupules...
 Mais ce parfait Censeur se trouve rarement.
 Tel excelle à rimer qui juge sottement.
 Tel s'est fait par ses vers distinguer dans la ville,
 Qui jamais de Lucain n'a distingué Virgile. (iv, 71—84)

But where's the Man, who Counsel can bestow,
 Still pleas'd to teach, and yet not proud to know?
 Unbiass'd, or by Favour or by Spite;
 Not dully prepossess, nor blindly right;
 Tho' Learn'd, well-bred; and tho' well-bred, sincere;
 Modestly bold, and Humanly severe?
 Who to a Friend his Faults can freely show,
 And gladly praise the Merit of a Foe?

Blest with a Taste, exact, yet unconfin'd;
A Knowledge both of Books and Humankind;
Gen'rous Converse; a Soul exempt from Pride;
And Love to Praise, with Reason on his Side? (631—642)

The characteristics of such a critic are reason, knowledge, readiness to help. But such critics are rare, because talents are distributed sparingly. Pope details his idea of a critic, contributes more art to it, as usual. In fact, what Pope describes is a perfect man. The passage is nearest to Boileau's with "Who to a Friend his Faults can freely show". To Boileau's ideas Pope adds the ability to teach, but linked with modesty; justice with kindness; unerring taste.

Boileau and Pope come together again in the selection of a friend as one's own critic:

Faites-vous des Amis prompts à vous censurer.
Qu'ils soient de vos écrits les confidens sinceres,
Et de tous vos defauts les zeles adversaires.
Dépouillez devant eux l'arrogance d'Auteur ...
Un sage Ami toujours rigoureux, inflexible,
Sur vos fautes jamais ne vous laisse paisible.
Il ne pardonne point les endroits negligez.
Il renvoye en leur lieu les vers mal arrangez.
Il reprime des mots l'ambitieuse emphâse ... (i, 185—202)

Audra (p. 211) thinks this inspired Pope's "Trust not your self; but your Defects to know, / Make use of ev'ry Friend—and ev'ry Foe" (213—214), and Pope indeed seems to have summarized Boileau, but he has enriched the text, this time by an antithesis: "Friend... Foe". The similarity will become more apparent with Soame's translation:

But find you faithful friends that will reprove,
That on your works may look with careful eyes,
And of your faults be zealous enemies. (i, 186—188)

But because there is no other similarity than the same idea, Pope might have easily borrowed it from Horace: "si quid tamen olim / scripseris, in Maeci descendant indicis auris / et patris et nostras" — "Yet if ever you do write anything, let it enter the ears of some critical Maecius, and your father's, and my own".

Audra (p. 212) also thinks that Pope is indebted to Boileau for "But you, with Pleasure own your Errors past, / And make each Day a Critick on the last" (570—571), which is in Boileau: "Craignés-vous pour vos vers la censure publique? / Soyez-vous à vous-mesme un severe Critique" (i, 182—183), and in Soame: "The public censure for your writings fear, / And to yourself be critic most severe" (i, 183—184). I cannot see any agreement between the two texts. Pope's idea is quite different: he emphas-

izes a daily improvement by selfcriticism; Boileau stresses "public censure" as the motive for self-criticism. The ideas are completely different, although the subject, self-criticism, is the same.

As to the verse "To Err is Human; to Forgive, Divine" (525), Audra (p. 217) grants Pope the trait of originality: "This is one of the most beautiful precepts Pope has given, but the one he least willingly applied". The second half of the sentence may be true, but the first only partially. "Errare humanum est" is a well-known saying that has been used extensively. In Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*. Fourteenth Edition, it is under the heading of Anonymous Latin on p. 150. And the idea of divine forgiveness is also as old as religion. Pope could have joined the two thoughts into a striking antithesis—and one could hardly expect him to do more.

As has already been shown, Boileau uses the direct address extensively, as Horace does. Sometimes Boileau looks like a Biblical prophet: "Auteurs, prestez l'oreille à mes instructions" (iv, 85). Although Audra (229—230) sees a sign of Pope's having studied Boileau: "In fact, often (and is this not another proof of his minute study of him?) in Pope's movement and tone one finds again Boileau's manner". in this respect, rather than consider the apostrophe, which Horace and Boileau use extensively, a mark of Pope's indebtedness to Boileau, I should regard its scant use by Pope as a trait of originality.

To a certain extent, Pope's critical approach itself commands a more negative approach; Boileau's must be a more positive one. Pope is indeed unsurpassed in his demonstration of what is not good. In "Tho' oft the Ear the open Vowels tire" (345), there are three hiatuses, to be immediately followed by "While Expletives their feeble Aid do join" (346), with the expletive "do". "And ten low Words oft creep in one dull Line" (347) are just this, like "A needless Alexandrine ends the song / That, like a wounded Snake, drags its slow Length along" (356—357). But Pope does not shun the positive approach either. In "When Ajax strives some Rock's vast Weight to throw" (370), the line is longer in stresses than the others and the paradigm "Rock's vast Weight" is hard to pronounce and checks the speed of reading. In the case of a swift-line demonstration, the verse is also long, for the very reason that the whole of it can be pronounced fast and easily: "Camilla . . . / Flies o'er th' unbending Corn, and skims along the Main" (372—373).

The fact itself that Boileau was not his only source enhances Pope's originality, as do the twists he gives to the individual common themes, and his critical approach. Above all, however, it is Pope's art that makes him most original, almost unmatchably so.

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