

COMMENT ON USHER GAHAGAN'S LATIN VERSION OF POPE,
ESSAY ON CRITICISM IN USHER GAHAGAN,
TENTAMEN DE RE CRITICA,
(LONDON, 1747)

'Tis hard to say, if greater want of Skill
Appear in writing, or in judging ill.
Num, male scribendo, censendone, proditur artis
Pauperis major: Res ovenit ardua dictu.

The translation of this first Distich is literal to a Word, yet the diction pure Latin; I shall therefore take this opportunity of giving my sentiments on literal translations where they are good and where otherwise; and think in general, that the Metaphrase, of literal translation, is preferable to the Paraphrase, or loose translation, provided there be no Abatement of the Purity and Idiom of the language used in the Metaphrase; for the Justness of a translation consists in giving not only the original Author's Turn of Thought, but also his Turn of Expression, if that can possibly be accomplished consistently with the Elegance and propriety of the translating Language. Horace indeed says:

Nec Verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
Interpres: (*Ars poetica* 133-4)

But in this passage he is misapprehended by the Generality of his readers, as I shall shew from his context, which runs:

Publica materies privati iuris erit, si
Non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem,
NEC VERBO VERBUM CURABIS REDDERE FIDUS
INTERPRES, nec desilies in arctum, (*Ars poetica*, 131-4)

Where it is plain, that Horace talks of Imitations, and tells you that a Public Subject before treated of becomes your property if you do not (to use his own Expression) loiter about the beaten Ring, nor render word for Word like an exact Translator; clearly intimating,

that an exact Translator ought to render Word for Word. Horace then only blames servile and verbal Imitations, but tacitly approves an exact and literal Translation, and practised it himself in his *Ars poetica*, whence the Words under present consideration are quoted; for thus he translates the first Distich of Homer's *Odyssey*:

Dic mihi musa virum, captae post tempora Troiae,
Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes. (*Ars poetica*, 141-2)

Which is as plain and literal a translation as yours is of the first Distich in Mr Pope's *Essay upon Criticism*. Grutherus, in a treatise on several vulgar Misconstructions of the *Classicks*, made this remark long ago on the words *nec verbum verbo* etc. Having thus, both from the *Doctrice* and *Practice* of Horace, justified your choice of a literal translation, under the *Restriction* I have mentioned in the *Beginning*, I shall proceed to the rest of my *Remarks*.