



N<sup>o</sup> 408. *Wednesday, June 18.*

*Decet affectus animi neque se nimium erigere, nec subjacere serviliter.*  
Tull. de Finibus.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

I Have always been a very great Lover of your Speculations, as well in Regard to the Subject, as to your Manner of Treating it. Human Nature I always thought the most useful Object of human Reason, and to make the Consideration of it pleasant and entertaining, I always thought the best Employment of human Wit: Other Parts of Philosophy may perhaps make us wiser, but this not only answers that End, but makes us better too. Hence it was that the Oracle pronounced *Socrates* the wisest of all Men living, because he judiciously made choice of human Nature for the Object of his Thoughts; an Inquiry into which as much exceeds all other Learning, as it is of more Consequence to adjust the true Nature and Measures of Right and Wrong, than to settle the Distance of the Planets, and compute the Times of their Circumvolutions.

ONE good Effect that will immediately arise from a near Observation of human Nature, is that we shall cease to wonder at those Actions which Men are used to reckon wholly unaccountable; for as nothing is produced without a Cause, so by observing the Nature and Course of the Passions, we shall be able to trace every Action from its first Conception to its Death; We shall no more admire at the Proceedings of *Catiline* or *Tiberius*, when we know the one was actuated by a cruel Jealousy, the other by a furious Ambition; for the Actions of Men follow their Passions as naturally as Light does Heat, or as any other Effect flows from its Cause; Reason must be employed in adjusting

‘ the Passions, but they must ever remain the Principles  
‘ of Action.

‘ **THE** strange and absurd Variety that is so apparent  
‘ in Mens Actions, shews plainly they can never proceed  
‘ immediately from Reason; so pure a Fountain emits  
‘ no such troubled Waters: They must necessarily arise  
‘ from the Passions, which are to the Mind as the Winds  
‘ to a Ship, they only can move it, and they too often  
‘ destroy it; if fair and gentle, they guide it into the Har-  
‘ bour; if contrary and furious, they overset it in the  
‘ Waves: In the same manner is the Mind assisted or en-  
‘ dangered by the Passions; Reason must then take the  
‘ Place of Pilot, and can never fail of securing her  
‘ Charge if she be not wanting to herself: The  
‘ Strength of the Passions will never be accepted as an  
‘ Excuse for complying with them; they were designed  
‘ for Subjection, and if a Man suffers them to get the  
‘ upper Hand, he then betrays the Liberty of his own  
‘ Soul.

‘ **A**S Nature has framed the several Species of Beings  
‘ as it were in a Chain, so Man seems to be placed as the  
‘ middle Link between Angels and Brutes: Hence he  
‘ participates both of Flesh and Spirit by an admirable  
‘ Tie, which in him occasions perpetual War of Passions;  
‘ and as a Man inclines to the angelick or brute Part of  
‘ his Constitution, he is then denominated good or bad,  
‘ virtuous, or wicked; if Love, Mercy, and Good-na-  
‘ ture prevail, they speak him of the Angel; if Hatred,  
‘ Cruelty, and Envy predominate, they declare his Kin-  
‘ dred to the Brute. Hence it was that some of the An-  
‘ cients imagined, that as Men in this Life inclined more  
‘ to the Angel or the Brute, so after their Death they  
‘ should transmigrate into the one or the other; and it  
‘ would be no unpleasant Notion, to consider the several  
‘ Species of Brutes, into which we may imagine that  
‘ Tyrants, Misers, the Proud, Malicious, and Ill-natured  
‘ might be changed.

‘ **A**S a Consequence of this Original, all Passions are  
‘ in all Men, but appear not in all; Constitution, E-  
‘ ducation, Custom of the Country, Reason, and the like  
‘ Causes may improve or abate the Strength of them,  
‘ but still the Seeds remain, which are ever ready to  
‘ sprout

' sprout forth upon the least Encouragement. I have  
 ' heard a Story of a good religious Man, who, having  
 ' been bred with the Milk of a Goat, was very modest  
 ' in Publick by a careful Reflexion he made on his Ac-  
 ' tions, but he frequently had an Hour in Secret, where-  
 ' in he had his Frisks and Capers; and if we had an  
 ' Opportunity of examining the Retirement of the strict-  
 ' est Philosophers, no doubt but we should find perpe-  
 ' tual Returns of those Passions they so artfully conceal  
 ' from the Publick. I remember *Machiavel* observes,  
 ' that every State should entertain a perpetual Jealousy  
 ' of its Neighbours, that so it should never be unprovi-  
 ' ded when an Emergency happens; in like manner  
 ' should the Reason be perpetually on its Guard against  
 ' the Passions, and never suffer them to carry on any De-  
 ' sign that may be destructive of its Security; yet at the  
 ' same Time it must be careful, that it don't so far break  
 ' their Strength as to render them contemptible, and con-  
 ' sequently it self unguarded.

' THE Understanding being of its self too slow  
 ' and lazy to exert it self into Action, it's necessary it  
 ' should be put in Motion by the gentle Gales of the  
 ' Passions, which may preserve it from stagnating and  
 ' Corruption; for they are as necessary to the Health of  
 ' the Mind, as the Circulation of the animal Spirits is  
 ' to the Health of the Body; they keep it in Life, and  
 ' Strength, and Vigour; nor is it possible for the Mind  
 ' to perform its Offices without their Assistance: These  
 ' Motions are given us with our Being, they are little  
 ' Spirits that are born and die with us; to some they are  
 ' mild, easy and gentle, to others wayward and unruly,  
 ' yet never too strong for the Reins of Reason and the  
 ' Guidance of Judgment.

' WE may generally observe a pretty nice Proportion  
 ' between the Strength of Reason and Passion; the great-  
 ' est Genius's have commonly the strongest Affections, as  
 ' on the other hand, the weaker Understandings have  
 ' generally the weaker Passions; and 'tis fit the Fury of  
 ' the Coursers should not be too great for the Strength of  
 ' the Charioteer. Young Men whose Passions are not a  
 ' little unruly, give small Hopes of their ever being con-  
 ' siderable; the Fire of Youth will of Course abate, and

' is a Fault, if it be a Fault, that mends every Day; but  
 ' surely unless a Man has Fire in Youth, he can hardly  
 ' have Warmth in Old Age. We must therefore be very  
 ' cautious, lest while we think to regulate the Passions,  
 ' we should quite extinguish them, which is putting out  
 ' the Light of the Soul; for to be without Passion, or to  
 ' be hurried away with it, makes a Man equally blind.  
 ' The extraordinary Severity used in most of our Schools  
 ' has this fatal Effect, it breaks the Spring of the Mind;  
 ' and most certainly destroys more good Genius's than it  
 ' can possibly improve. And surely 'tis a mighty Mis-  
 ' take that the Passions should be so intirely subdued;  
 ' for little Irregularities are sometimes not only to be  
 ' bore with but to be cultivated too, since they are fre-  
 ' quently attended with the greatest Perfections. All  
 ' great Genius's have Faults mixed with their Virtues, and  
 ' resemble the flaming Bush which has Thorns amongst  
 ' Lights.

' SINCE therefore the Passions are the Principles of  
 ' human Actions, we must endeavour to manage them so  
 ' as to retain their Vigour, yet keep them under strict  
 ' Command; we must govern them rather like free Sub-  
 ' jects than Slaves, lest while we intend to make them  
 ' obedient, they become abject, and unfit for those great  
 ' Purposes to which they were designed. For my part  
 ' I must confess I could never have any Regard to that  
 ' Sect of Philosophers, who so much insisted upon an  
 ' absolute Indifference and Vacancy from all Passion; for  
 ' it seems to me a Thing very inconsistent for a Man to  
 ' divest himself of Humanity, in order to acquire Tran-  
 ' quillity of Mind, and to eradicate the very Principles of  
 ' Action, because it's possible they may produce ill Ef-  
 ' fects.

*I am, SIR,*

*Your Affectionate Admirer,*

Z

T. B.



*Thursday,*