

found the doors all fast. Looking out at the entry door, he saw the same woman, in the same garb again; and said, *In God's name, what do you come for?* He went to bed, and had the same woman again assaulting him. The child in the cradle gave a great screech, and the woman disappeared. It was long before the child could be quieted; and though it were a very likely thriving child, yet from this time it pined away, and after divers months died in a sad condition. He knew not Bishop, nor her name; but when he saw her after this, he knew by her countenance, and apparel, and all circumstances, that it was the apparition of this Bishop, which had troubled him.

Source: Mather, Cotton. 1693. "The Wonders of the Invisible World." Available at: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=Bur4Nar.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=all>

▣ Begging Laws (1697)

This excerpt provides an example of an early badging law used to identify "legitimate" disabled people, who were eligible to receive alms and permitted to beg within parishes.

Parliament directed that *all* people legitimately on relief . . . shall upon the shoulder of the right sleeve of the uppermost garment . . . in an open and visible manner, wear such badge or mark as is herein-after mentioned and expressed, that is to say, a large Roman P, together with the first letter of the name of the parish or place whereof such poor person is an inhabitant, cut either in red or blue cloth.

Source: "8 & 9 William 3, ch. 30." 1697. Reprinted in de Schweinitz, Karl. 1943. P. 87 in *England's Road to Social Security*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

▣ John Dryden, from the Preface to *Fables, Ancient and Modern* (1700)

In this preface, John Dryden admits to some physical effects of his advancing age, but he declares that his mental acuity and "judgment" have persisted—indeed, have increased. His "faculties of soul" remain, even if his memory is fading slightly. He could "lawfully

plead some part of the old gentleman's excuse" for any imperfections in the book, but he will not in this case, asking instead for a general allowance for mere human frailty.

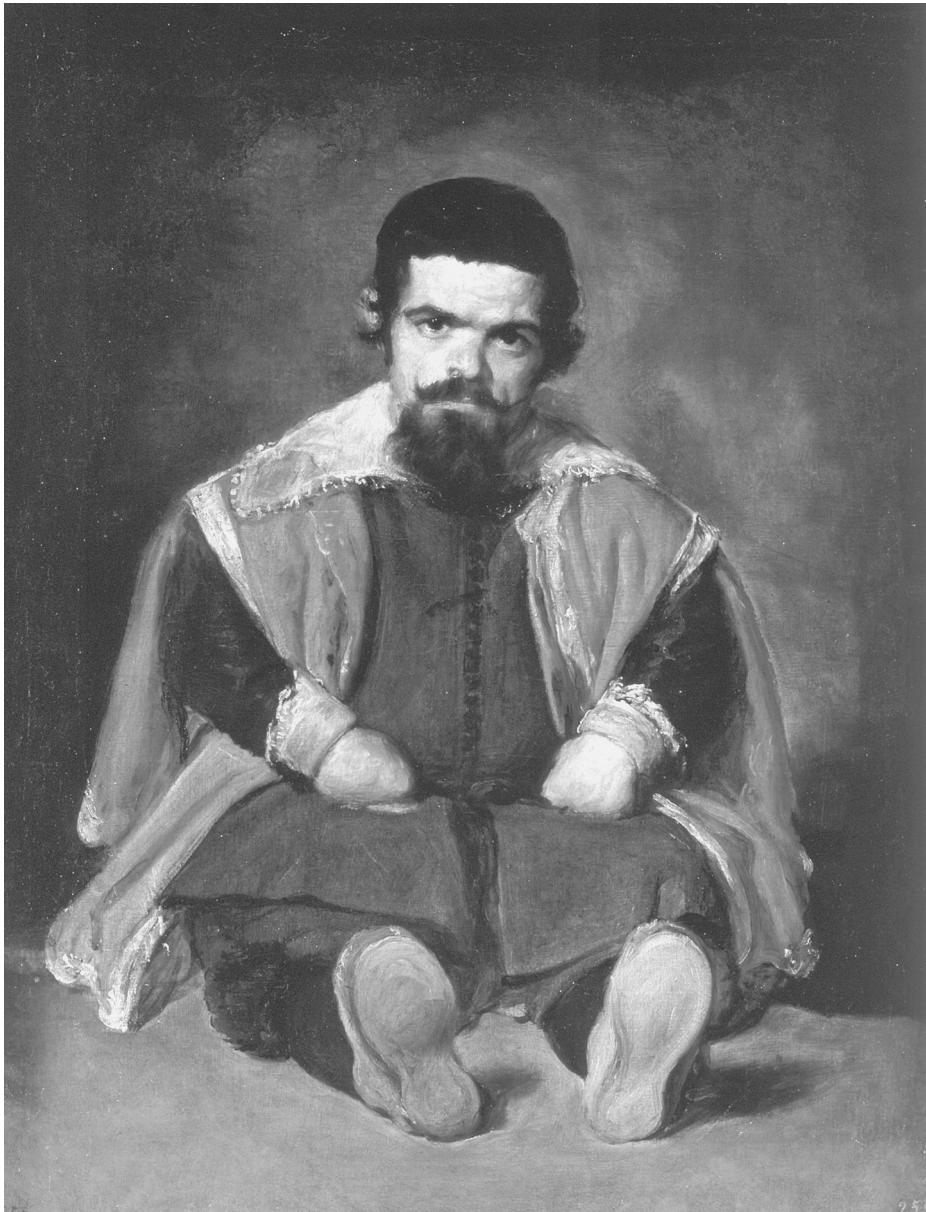
By the mercy of God, I am already come within twenty years of his number, a cripple in my limbs; but what decays are in my mind, the reader must determine. I think myself as vigorous as ever in the faculties of my soul, excepting only my memory, which is not impair'd to any great degree; and if I lose not more of it, I have no great reason to complain. What judgment I had, increases rather than diminishes; and thoughts, such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only difficulty is to choose or to reject; to run them into verse, or to give them the other harmony of prose. I have so long studied and practis'd both, that they are grown into a habit, and become familiar to me. In short, tho' I may lawfully plead some part of the old gentleman's excuse, yet I will reserve it till I think I have greater need, and ask no grains of allowance for the faults of this my present work, but those which are given of course to human frailty.

Source: Dryden, John. 1700. "Preface." *Fables, Ancient and Modern*. Available at: <http://bartleby.school.aol.com/39/25.html>

▣ "March's Ears" (1700)

This Welsh folktale touches upon a number of important themes, including the perceived importance of concealment to the disabled person as well as the fear of exposure and exhibition of the disability. This story emphasizes that disability affects the well-born and the low-born equally: no matter how many riches one possesses, a disability can ruin one's life.

March ab Meirchion was lord of Castellmarch, in Lleyn. He ruled over leagues of rich land, tilled by hundreds of willing and obedient vassals. He had great possessions, fleet horses, greyhounds, hawks; countless black cattle and sheep, and a great herd of swine. (But few possessed pigs at that time, and their flesh was esteemed better than the flesh of oxen. Arthur himself sought to have one of March's sows.) In his palace he had much treasure of gold, silver, and Conway pearls, and all men envied him. But March was not happy: he had a secret, and day and night he was torn with dread lest it should be discovered. *He had horse's ears!*



Portrait of the Jester Sebastian de Morra, by Diego Rodriguez Velázquez (1599–1660). One of Spain's most famous painters, Velázquez dedicated himself to painting the "common things" in his environment. When not pursuing his livelihood as a portraitist of the upper classes, Velázquez shirked the classical tradition's emphasis on symmetry and conventional beauty by painting many of his acquaintances who were people with disabilities.

Source: Art Resource, New York.

To no one was the secret known except his barber. This man he compelled to take a solemn oath that he would not reveal his deformity to any living soul. If he wittingly or unwittingly should let anyone know that March's ears were other than human, March swore that he would cut his head off.

The barber became as unhappy as March: indeed his wretchedness was greater, because his fate would be worse if the secret were revealed. March would undergo ridicule, which is certainly a serious thing : but the barber would undergo decapitation, which is much more serious. The secret disagreed with his constitution so violently that he lost his appetite and his colour, and began to fall into a decline. So ill did he become that he had to call in a physician. This man was skilled in his craft, and he said to the barber, "You are being killed by a suppressed secret: unless you communicate it to someone you will soon be in your grave."

This announcement did not give the barber much consolation. He explained to the physician that if he did as he was directed he would lose his head. If in any event he had to come to the end of his earthly career, he preferred being interred with his head joined to, rather than separated from, his trunk. The physician then suggested that he should tell his secret to the ground. The barber thought there was not much danger to his cervical vertebrae (this is the learned name for neck bones) if he did this, and adopted the suggestion. He was at once

relieved. His colour and appetite gradually came back, and before long he was as strong and well as he had ever been.

Now it happened that a fine crop of reeds grew on the spot where the barber whispered his secret to the ground. March prepared a great feast, and sent for one

of Maelgwn Gwynedd's pipers, who was the best piper in the world, to make music for his guests. On his way to Castellmarch, the piper observed these fine reeds, and as his old pipe was getting worn out, he cut them and made an excellent new pipe. When his guests had eaten and drunk, March ordered the piper to play. What was the surprise of all when the pipe gave out no music, but only the words, "Horse's ears for March ab Meirchion, horse's ears for March ab Meirchion," over and over again. March drew his sword and would have slain the piper, but the hapless musician begged for mercy. He was not to blame, he said: he had tried to play his wonted music, but the pipe was charmed, and do what he would, he could get nothing out of it but the words, "Horse's ears for March ab Meirchion." March tried the pipe himself, but even he could not elicit any strains from it, but only the words, "Horse's ears for March ab Meirchion." So he forgave the piper and made no further effort to conceal his deformity.

Source: V. Wales. n.d. "March's Ears." In *Welsh Fairy Stories*. Available at: <http://www.red4.co.uk/Folklore/fairytales/marchsears.htm>

▣ "The Story of the Barber's Sixth Brother" from *Arabian Nights* (1704–1717)

The plot of this tale from the Arabian Nights depends in part on the cultural ideas of difference regarding disabled people. The hunchback's body becomes not just an object of entertainment and merriment, but a literal object, as his apparently dead body is passed around, propped up, and examined before the discovery that his amazing "constitution" has made him only appear to be dead.

"This,"—continued the barber,—“is the tale I related to the Caliph, who, when I had finished, burst into fits of laughter.”

“Well were you called ‘the Silent,’” said he; “no name was ever better deserved. But for reasons of my own, which it is not necessary to mention, I desire you to leave the town, and never to come back.”

“I had of course no choice but to obey, and travelled about for several years until I heard of the death of the Caliph, when I hastily returned to Bagdad, only to

find that all my brothers were dead. It was at this time that I rendered to the young cripple the important service of which you have heard, and for which, as you know, he showed such profound ingratitude, that he preferred rather to leave Bagdad than to run the risk of seeing me. I sought him long from place to place, but it was only to-day, when I expected it least, that I came across him, as much irritated with me as ever”—So saying the tailor went on to relate the story of the lame man and the barber, which has already been told.

“When the barber,” he continued, “had finished his tale, we came to the conclusion that the young man had been right, when he had accused him of being a great chatter-box. However, we wished to keep him with us, and share our feast, and we remained at table till the hour of afternoon prayer. Then the company broke up, and I went back to work in my shop.”

“It was during this interval that the little hunchback, half drunk already, presented himself before me, singing and playing on his drum. I took him home, to amuse my wife, and she invited him to supper. While eating some fish, a bone got into his throat, and in spite of all we could do, he died shortly. It was all so sudden that we lost our heads, and in order to divert suspicion from ourselves, we carried the body to the house of a Jewish physician. He placed it in the chamber of the purveyor, and the purveyor propped it up in the street, where it was thought to have been killed by the merchant.”

“This, Sire, is the story which I was obliged to tell to satisfy your highness. It is now for you to say if we deserve mercy or punishment; life or death?”

The Sultan of Kashgar listened with an air of pleasure that filled the tailor and his friends with hope. “I must confess,” he exclaimed, “that I am much more interested in the stories of the barber and his brothers, and of the lame man, than in that of my own jester. But before I allow you all four to return to your own homes, and have the corpse of the hunchback properly buried, I should like to see this barber who has earned your pardon. And as he is in this town, let an usher go with you at once in search of him.”

The usher and the tailor soon returned, bringing with them an old man who must have been at least ninety years of age. “O Silent One,” said the Sultan, “I am told that you know many strange stories. Will you tell some of them to me?”

“Never mind my stories for the present,” replied the barber, “but will your Highness graciously be pleased

to explain why this Jew, this Christian, and this Mussulman, as well as this dead body, are all here?"

"What business is that of yours?" asked the Sultan with a smile; but seeing that the barber had some reasons for his question, he commanded that the tale of the hunch-back should be told him.

"It is certainly most surprising," cried he, when he had heard it all, "but I should like to examine the body." He then knelt down, and took the head on his knees, looking at it attentively. Suddenly he burst into such loud laughter that he fell right backwards, and when he had recovered himself enough to speak, he turned to the Sultan. "The man is no more dead than I am," he said; "watch me." As he spoke he drew a small case of medicines from his pocket and rubbed the neck of the hunchback with some ointment made of balsam. Next he opened the dead man's mouth, and by the help of a pair of pincers drew the bone from his throat. At this the hunch-back sneezed, stretched himself and opened his eyes.

The Sultan and all those who saw this operation did not know which to admire most, the constitution of the hunchback who had apparently been dead for a whole night and most of one day, or the skill of the barber, whom everyone now began to look upon as a great man. His Highness desired that the history of the hunchback should be written down, and placed in the archives beside that of the barber, so that they might be associated in people's minds to the end of time. And he did not stop there; for in order to wipe out the memory of what they had undergone, he commanded that the tailor, the doctor, the purveyor and the merchant, should each be clothed in his presence with a robe from his own wardrobe before they returned home. As for the barber, he bestowed on him a large pension, and kept him near his own person.

Source: Lang, Andrew, trans. 1898. "The Story of the Barber's Sixth Brother." *Arabian Nights*. Available at: <http://www.wollamshram.ca/1001/Lang/lang.htm>

▣ **Joseph Addison, from *The Spectator* (1711)**

The Spectator, a daily periodical issued by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele in 1711–1712 and by Addison alone in 1714, offered witty observations on manners and literature for a primarily middle-class audience. The excerpt from No. 58 provides a portion

of Addison's invective against the many forms of what he calls "false wit" in literature. In the excerpt from No. 63, Addison draws on these examples to create a dream vision in which disabled human bodies serve as metaphors for false wit.

From No. 58

Ut pictura poesis erit

—Horace

Nothing is so much admired and so little understood as Wit. No Author that I know of has written professedly upon it; and as for those who make any Mention of it, they only treat on the Subject as it has accidentally fallen inn their Way, and that too in little short Reflections, or in general declamatory Flourishes, without entering into the Bottom of the Matter. I hope therefore I shall perform an acceptable Work to my Countrymen if I treat at large upon this Subject; which I shall endeavor to do in a Manner suitable to it, that I may not incur the Censure which a famous Critick bestows upon one who had written a Treatise upon *the Sublime* in a low groveling Stile. I intend to lay aside a whole Week for this Undertaking, that the Scheme of my Thoughts may not be broken and interrupted; and I dare promise my self, if my Readers will give me a Week's Attention, that this great City will be very much changed for the better by next *Saturday Night*. I shall endeavor to make what I say intelligible to ordinary Capacities; but if my Readers meet with any Paper that in some Parts of it may be a little out of their Reach, I would not have them discouraged, for they may assure themselves the next shall be much clearer.

As the great and only End of these my Speculations is to banish Vice and Ignorance out of the Territories of *Great Britain*, I shall endeavor as much as possible to establish among us a Taste of polite Writing. It is with this View that I have endeavored to set my Readers right in several Points relating to Operas and Tragedies; and shall from Time to Time impart my Notions of Comedy, as I think they may tend to its Refinement and Perfection. I find by my Bookseller that these Papers of Criticism, with that upon Humour, have met with a more kind Reception that indeed I could have hoped for from such Subjects; for which Reason I shall enter upon my present Undertaking with greater Cheerfulness.

In this and one or two following Papers I shall trace out the History of false Wit, and distinguish the several Kinds of it as they have prevailed in different Ages of