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RONALD PAULSON

Dryden and the energies of satire

In the twenty volumes of the standard edition of Dryden's works there are only three major satires. This is strange considering that his reputation today is primarily as a satirist, the father of Augustan satire (Swift, Pope, Gay, and Fielding). *MacFlecknoe* (1676) and *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) were the two satires he singled out in his "Discourse concerning the original and progress of Satire" (1693), and, besides these, there were only *The Medal* (1682) and the characters of Doeg and Og in *Absalom and Achitophel* Part II (1682). Thereafter satire in his poetry was incidental, most fully utilized in the bestiary and beast fables of *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), a poem whose end was not ostensibly satiric. Satire remained fragmentary, as in the Horatian imitations he wrote at the end of his life. And yet running through the whole of Dryden's *oeuvre* we can detect the energies of satire.

In "A Discourse concerning . . . Satire," which is still the best essay in English on the nature of satire, Dryden notes two derivations: from the Greek *satyra* and the Latin *satura*, the first essentially a tone, the second a form (*Works* IV: 3–90).[1] The first, supposedly drawing on the nature of satyrs (rough hairy beasts, man to the waist and goat below), is characteristically crude demotic language of a sort that reveals satire's ritual origins in the curse addressed to drought, worms, parasites, and the forces of sterility, which balanced prayers and praise addressed to the sun and rain, the forces of fertility. Dryden prefers the Latin etymology from *satura*, filled with food or sated; *satura lanx* was a festival platter filled to overflowing with meats chopped fine and, recovering a more savory version of the *satyra* tone, heavily seasoned. He cites approvingly the rhetorician Quintilian's dictum, "Satura [as opposed to other literary forms, epic, panegyric, elegy, pastoral] tota nostra est," satire is wholly ours, wholly Roman. The prototypical Roman satirists were Horace and Juvenal, whose formal verse satires were mixtures of many things, subjects, and examples, but (Dryden makes the important point) they maintain the unity of a single theme, one vice tying together the multitudinous examples (*Works* IV: 79).

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In the case of Horace, his *satura*, which he modestly called a *sermo* (a conversation), uses the *exemplum*, an anecdote or telling example, to illustrate opposite extremes such as avarice and prodigality, deviations from a "golden mean" which, Horace implies, lies between. (Horace's *Epistles*, on the other hand, foreground a recommended course of action or way of life, against which deviations are contrasted and condemned.) Horace wrote in the age of Augustus, as a member of the imperial inner circle, which also included the epic poet Virgil. The alternative prototype was Juvenal, who lived in the time of the "bad" emperors, and in whose satires a corrupt present (a Rome no longer Roman) is contrasted with an ideal lost in the distant (republican, even pre-Horatian) past. The mode is no longer a conversation among like-thinking equals but the savage indignation of a lone survivor.

In the 1690s Dryden translated the satires of Juvenal and Persius, to which he attached his "Discourse concerning . . . Satire." He ends with a comparison of Horace and Juvenal, coming finally down on the side of the second. Juvenal's vision of imperial Rome in the time of Domitian (rather than Horace's in the Augustan age) is the implicit vehicle for Dryden's feelings about England in the reign of William III when he wrote his "Discourse." Dryden wrote, however, Horatian epistles, and his ideal of satiric practice, described in the most famous passage of the "Discourse," retains the *savoir faire* of Horace, who "writ according to the Politeness of *Rome*, under the Reign of *Augustus Caesar*" (*Works* IV: 78):

> Yet there is still a vast difference betwixt the slovenly Butchering of a Man, and the fineness of a stroak that separates the Head from the body, and leaves it standing in its place. A man may be capable, as *Jack Ketch's* Wife said of his servant, of a plain piece of Work, a bare Hanging; but to make a Malefactor die sweetly, was only belonging to her husband. (*Works* IV: 71)

"I wish I cou'd apply it to myself," he adds, citing the character of Zimri (the Duke of Buckingham) in *Absalom and Achitophel*. The duke, he claims, "was too witty to resent it as an injury. If I had rail'd, I might have suffer'd for it justly" (*Works* IV: 71). The reference is back to 1681 and the reign of Charles II, when Dryden was Poet Laureate; but the words could apply as well to a satirist writing in a time of censorship.[2]

The Restoration was the beginning of an age (*the* age) of English satire, defined by its historical situation following a decade of disastrous civil war and Puritan commonwealth. Cavalier satire represented the Puritan "Saint" as a speaker of pious words that masked sexual desire and economic interest, summed up in mock forms based on impersonation, in fact on masquerade: a plebeian rebel/enthusiast claims (pretends to be, thinks he is) something he is not, ultimately the head of state. In the example given by the influential

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French satirist-theorist, Nicolas Boileau, the fishwife talks as if she were Queen Dido, thus satirizing the social pretensions or the seditious inclination of the lower orders – the outsiders who want to get in or replace the insiders.[3] (A model was Horace's *Sermones*, his verse satires, especially 1.ix, but the particular case of the mock form appears only in *Epode* 2, a lyric in which praise of the country life turns out to be delivered by a usurer.) On the other hand, if Queen Dido talks the language of a fishwife she reveals the low bodily reality under the royal trappings. The model this time was travesty, enjoyed by the French in Scarron's *Virgile travestie* (1648) and carried over into English by Charles Cotton in his *Scarronides* (1663). The Cavaliers (later the Court Wits) first satirized the Puritan hypocrite by revealing his true lust and greed, and then, in the 1670s following disillusionment with the Restoration (or the shifting political winds), satirized the king by exposing the sexual urge – the scepter that is only a penis, controlled by his mistresses – at the bottom of his policies-of-state. The mock heroic (the fishwife thinks she is Dido) served the court party satirizing its opponents, and travesty (Dido revealed to be no more than a fishwife) served the opposition. Dryden, patronized by the Duke of York (and implicitly by his brother the king, who made him poet laureate), took the court's position and wrote mock-heroic satire.

What Dryden did not write was the primitive *satyra* based on the curse and the medical and penal metaphors of cure and punishment, of phlebotomy and purgation, scourging and pillorying, not to mention burning, biting, piercing, and blistering – the satire practiced by his predecessors and illustrated by his contemporary John Oldham, whose *Satyres upon the Jesuits* appeared in 1680, shortly before *Absalom and Achitophel*:

> All this urge on my rank envenom'd spleen,
> And with keen Satyr edge my stabbing Pen:
> That its each home-set thrust their blood may draw,
> Each drop of Ink like *Aquafortis* gnaw.[4]

Oldham's diction is Elizabethan (when Juvenalian satire was understood as primarily invective). With his example of Jack Ketch, Dryden preserves the punishment metaphor,[5] but beheading is carried out with such style that the victim is not immediately aware that he has lost his head. Even looking back from the 1690s when he is himself an outsider and Juvenalian "rebel," Dryden calls for an ideal of civility and politeness commensurate with the dignity he attributed to a royal poet – a version of politeness the Whigs Addison and Steele in the 1700s would adapt to an ethos of their own, which condemned Dryden's natural successors, Pope and Swift, as writers of crude slanders and lampoons.

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Dryden began as a poet of praise, whether of Cromwell or Charles II, but implicit in the genre was a space for satire. In 1649 young Lord Hastings dies of the smallpox, which is compared to the uprising of the rebels who killed, about the same time, their king, Charles I. Hastings is praised, the rebels condemned. Praise is the form that dominates both Dryden's *Heroic Stanzas* on the death of Cromwell and *Astrea Redux* on Charles II's Restoration, and praise remains a constant in his dedications, prefaces, prologues, and epilogues, as well as in his major works, the heroic plays to which they were attached. The model for Dryden's poems of praise was the classical panegyric, "a Speech deliver'd before a solemn and general Assembly of People, especially in praise of a great Prince," that is, in praise of a Cromwell or a Charles II, as opposed to the subject of an encomium, which was *any* person.[6] In one of the models of panegyric, Pliny's address to the Emperor Trajan, the form was neither biography nor catalogue of virtues but a series of contrasts between good and evil: an almost Juvenalian enumeration of the irresponsibility, effeminacy, triviality, weakness, and licentiousness of previous emperors and, in the present, the piety, abstinence, and fortitude of Trajan.

Sir William Davenant – poet, dramatist, and, in the 1650s, Royalist in exile – in his preface to *Gondibert* (1650) had argued that the panegyric historically subsumed the greatest of genres, the epic. He made the point that princes admire and emulate the epic hero and so become worthy of such admiration themselves. Dryden followed Davenant's theory (and his practice in *The Siege of Rhodes*) by making his own heroic plays the celebration of heroes, contrasting the heroic individualism of Almanzor with the solipsism of Lyndaraxa, the weakness of the king Boabdalin, and the treachery (guided by sexual passion) of his brother Abdalla. One character is interrelated with another, producing a dramatic version of extremes, opposites, and contrasts, but always with implicit an ideal or normative figure. The panegyric, in short, offered Dryden room for contrasting portraits, which eventually he developed into the portraits in *Absalom and Achitophel* of David, Barzillai, and the "loyal few" set against the traitors Achitophel, Zimri, Corah, and their rebel legions.

The basic unit on which Dryden builds all his satires (as well as his panegyrics) is the portrait or "character," that succinct summation of a personality developed to a fine art by his contemporaries Halifax, Burnet, and Clarendon (whose satiric progenitors in the previous age were Earl, Hall, and Overbury). The character, like satire itself, was based on classical models, in particular the histories of Tacitus and the comparative and contrasting portraits of Plutarch in his *Lives*. In *Absalom and Achitophel* the character is based most pertinently on the epic catalogues of heroes and on Milton's parody of these in his portraits of the rebel angels in Book 1 of *Paradise*

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Lost. (To judge by Dryden's admiration for Chaucer, the prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* provided another model.)

In Pliny's panegyric on Trajan the contrast is most prominently between the past and the present (*prius* and *nunc*): the vicious past is, or we hope will be, superseded by the virtuous present. In Davenant's preface to *Gondibert* he argues that the theme of epic comes from "elder times," whereas panegyric deals directly with the present. Virgil's *Aeneid* showed Dryden how in an epic the past can serve as an analogue for the present, the emphasis less on the story than on the placing of our present society beside that of the past. Contemporary "society" is the common subject of Virgil's epic and Dryden's major satires.

The nucleus of Dryden's satire is the epic simile, specifically Virgil's. In the famous Neptune simile (*Aeneid* 1. 148) the storm disrupting Aeneas' pilgrimage to found Rome is compared to a contemporary Roman crowd, which is brought back to order by Neptune, who is compared to a Roman orator. The simile not only extends the reference outward to the world of nature, using nature and natural phenomena to illustrate human behavior and emotions, but to "one man" who within the text is Aeneas and without, in Rome, Octavius. The simile comparing the storm to the out-of-control Roman crowd is a microcosm of the larger analogy between Aeneas then and Octavius now, Troy Novant (London) and contemporary Rome (*prius* and *nunc*) – a case of propaganda justifying the Empire with which Octavius was replacing the Republic.

The comparison of past and present dominates Dryden's early Horatian epistle "To My Honored Friend, Dr. Charleton" (1663), where the bad past is corrected by the Restoration: Aristotle (a priori reasoning) is contrasted with and temporally replaced by Christopher Columbus and his discovery of the new world, as well as by English empirical philosophy and science; Oliver Cromwell is replaced by Charles II, and thus the "Torrid Zone . . . fevrish aire" of civil war and theocracy by the Stuart Restoration: "Temp'rate . . . zone . . . fann'd by a cooling breez" (*Works* 1: 43, lines 10–11). Inigo Jones's former identification of Stonehenge with a temple is now replaced by Dr. Charleton's "restoration" of it as a throne (it was also a refuge for the fleeing Charles II after his defeat at Worcester). Only a shift of emphasis would be necessary – quantitative rather than qualitative – to turn the panegyric into a satire. One needs only imagine the poem is not about Charleton but Aristotle and Inigo Jones's "temple," with Columbus locked away like Galileo by the Inquisition – and imagine that Cromwell did not die and George Monck, Duke of Albermarle had no way of restoring Charles II. This possibility is always implicit in Dryden's panegyrics, for generic reasons and perhaps also for reasons of a basically satiric temperament.[7]

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When Dryden's similes do not connect past and present they suggest that one eye is always on politics. In his prologues and epilogues (attached to his own and the plays of others), which were his chief experimental ground for formal verse satire in the 1660s and 1670s, the similes most often compare the stage and England, acting and politics, the playwright/poet and the monarch, and the critics of plays and dissident Whigs. One half of the comparison is poetry-drama, the other politics; the tenor and vehicle are usually balanced (as in the "Charleton" epistle), but with the Popish Plot in 1679–80 the emphasis shifts toward politics. In the prologues and epilogues written for performance at Oxford, the university is contrasted with London, places where poets are more and less respected, critics more and less good, and past glory with present urban values. Depending on whether value is placed on the side of the tenor or the vehicle, these poems are panegyric or satire.[8]

In *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), the conventional simile governs the first part about the Dutch naval battles (the English fleet "like maimed fowl" or "Some falcon"), but in the second part, on the Plague and Fire, the simile takes the form of *this* historical event is like – or rather anticipates or fulfills – *that* historical event. Alan Roper, discussing *Annus Mirabilis*, has called this strategy analogy,[9] a term under which Dr. George Cheyne in the eighteenth century subsumed typology: "Analogy and its Appendages, Type, Allusion, Similitude, Parable, Hieroglyphic and Allegory (all more remote or nearer Approaches to Analogy) is the only natural Language the Deity can speak to us at present, under our Degeneracy and Lapse."[10] Divine analogy related microcosm and macrocosm – God and king; the spirit and body; religion, politics, and art. But Christian typology, as in *Annus Mirabilis*, was analogy based on history. The Great Fire of London is like an insurrection, specifically that of the usurper Cromwell ("As when some dire usurper heav'n provides / To scourge his country with a lawless sway"):

> Till fully ripe his swelling fate breaks out
>   And hurries him to mighty mischiefs on;
> His prince, surprised at first, no ill could doubt
>   And wants the pow'r to meet it when 'tis known.
> . . . .
> Such was the rise of this prodigious fire,
>   Which in mean buildings first obscurely bred,
> From thence did soon to open streets aspire,
>   And straight to palaces and temples spread.
> (*Works* I: 91–3, lines 849–52, 857–60)

The Great Fire is also like a purgation or atonement in the 1660s for the sin of rebellion against the monarch in the 1640s. The words Dryden puts into

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Charles II's mouth allude to Isaiah's Suffering Servant, the type of Christ: "If mercy be a precept of thy will, / Return that mercy on thy servant's head . . . On me alone thy just displeasure lay, / But take thy judgements from this mourning land" (*Works* I: 99, lines 1055–6, 1059–60). As simile, the fire is like the Christian Atonement for the sin of rebellion (Eve's original disobedience), from which only the king (God/his Son) can "redeem" his nation. As typology, the 1640s foreshadow the 1660s – or the latter fulfill the former. Dryden uses typology to explain and justify a catastrophe, showing that it is not, as the opposition party would have it, punishment for a sinful court in the 1660s but rather atonement for the opposition's sin of rebellion in the 1640s, being repeated now in the 1660s.[11]

Dryden does not employ allegory. In *Absalom and Achitophel*, describing Achitophel's conception of his son, which is *like* the conception of rebellion, he alludes to Satan's "conception" of rebellion which, allegorically, shows him producing the offspring Sin. But Achitophel is not Temptation or Evil; he is typologically Satan tempting Absalom by persuading him that he is the "Son," Christ; in the 1680s he is typologically the First Earl of Shaftesbury and Charles's bastard, the Duke of Monmouth. These are all "discernible, historically authentic particulars," not allegorical representations.[12] If Virgil used the past to glorify the present – connecting Augustus with Aeneas, Rome with its humble origins – Christian typology offered the present (the antitype) as a corrective of the past, which frees man from the Old Testament Law, indicating his redemption or "restoration." The Old Testament is the negative pole, the New the positive; this as opposed to the Juvenalian structure (especially Satire III, but evident in all the satires) of value embodied in a past now lost and subverted.

Part of Dryden's running argument in the 1660s and 1670s (as in Neander's speeches in the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*) was that contemporary poets improved on the works of the giants of the Elizabethan-Jacobean age. The present "has the advantage of knowing more, and better than the former" age.[13] In the "Battle of the Ancients and Moderns" the present improved on the past because it benefited from the past's mistakes as well as its discoveries. In the art of translation into English (one of Dryden's greatest accomplishments), the poet absorbed the classical into the national culture, and the original object from the past was revalidated if not superseded by its new Englishness.

In the plot of comedy an older generation tries to block a younger and more vigorous one, preventing its love affairs – as, for example, the Townleys and Woodvilles of Etherege's *Man of Mode* (1676). But, as Etherege shows, there is also a sense of loss: Lady Woodville's sentimental view of love in the past (Petrarchan or Cavalier) corresponded to the words of Rochester's

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Artemiza in "An Epistle from Artemiza in the City to Chloe in the Country," who recalls a time when love was not perverted into a "business" or into affectation (literally *aping*) or mere custom. In Rochester's satires love and right reason (based on the senses) are ideals, no longer attainable except as memories of the past. In the libertine terms of Rochester and Etherege, they are unattainable because of our fallen (Hobbesian) state of nature, in which we can only seek change and are driven, at bottom, by fear. When love *is* supposedly present, as in Rochester's "Imperfect Enjoyment," the ordinarily potent rake (potent with whores) becomes incapable of consummation – and so is incapable of producing offspring such as, in the macrocosm, a royal heir.

Dryden's identification with the libertine tradition was through the idealization of wit. His argument for the Moderns, as the present correcting the past, pitted a comedy of wit (and witty conversation) against a comedy of humors and humor characters. In his preface to *An Evening's Love* (1671) he distinguishes wit from humor: "The first works on the judgment and fancy; the latter on the fancy alone: there is more of satisfaction in the former kind of laughter, and in the latter more of scorn" (*Works* x: 203). Since both obviously share the end of comedy (as argued by critics from Aristotle to Hobbes and Dennis) as "scorn," the first, he writes, "entertains us with the imperfections of humane nature," the second "with what is monstrous and chimerical." The distinction recalls the Jonsonian dramatic satire, *Everyman Out of His Humour* or, at its highest reach, *Volpone*: humor characters (characters distorted into monsters by the preponderance of one humor) must be de-humored by a satirist, in a discourse roughly that of Oldham's *Satyrs upon the Jesuits*.[14]

In his earliest writings on wit, Dryden devalues humor and with it satire against wit and comedy. When one "writes humour he makes folly ridiculous," but "when wit, he moves you, if not alwayes to laughter, yet to a pleasure that is more noble" (*Works* x: 202), and this is because humor (adapting Aristotle) represents "conversation with the vulgar," thus demonstrating "much of ill nature in the observation of their follies"; while Dryden associates wit with the aristocratic conversation of the Restoration, which, he argues, made this age more polished than the last (Horace over Lucilius, the Empire over the Republic). Dryden cites the conversation of courtiers and, the ultimate model, the monarch himself, the epitome of witty conversation; that is, he equates wit, polite discourse, aristocracy, and monarchy. Jonsonian humor has by the 1670s come to be represented by Jonson's imitator, the "true-blue Whig," and Dryden's comedic rival, Thomas Shadwell. In

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his own comedies, and in the higher register of his heroic plays, Dryden uses witty conversation as his valuative norm. He employs humor characters like Lyndaraxa and Abdalla as the far end of a spectrum of "the imperfections of humane nature."

By arguing for wit over humor Dryden identified himself with the Earl of Rochester and the aristocratic Court Wits: he was, after all, a country gentleman, the brother-in-law of Sir Robert Howard, and by 1688 the king's poet laureate. He dedicated *Marriage A-la-Mode* (1671) to Rochester with an appreciative essay, acknowledging his patronage, suggestions, and perhaps even contributions. The libertine premise in *Marriage A-la-Mode* is the inability of natural men and women to continue living within the constraints of the institution of marriage, and included are two libertine lyrics, the second a Drydenian (softened) version of Rochester's "Imperfect Enjoyment."[15]

In his "Allusion to Horace" of *c.* 1675, Rochester distinguished himself from Dryden as a genteel Horace correcting his crude precursor Lucilius, and on the grounds of class disqualified Dryden from practicing wit. Dryden is a drudging professional, addressing the ignorant masses with his plays (a position Dryden had defended in his preface to *An Evening's Love*). To be witty Dryden can only cry "cunt." The break between Dryden and Rochester was a result of the polarizing of parties and the increased criticism of the monarch – and especially his brother, the Catholic heir, Dryden's patron. As Rochester wrote his "Allusion to Horace" he was also reducing the monarch's Body Politic to his body private and the illusion of what Dryden was to call "god-like" to the gross reality of his sexual apparatus.

The first salvo was the Duke of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* (1671), which reduced Dryden's heroic love/honor conflicts to the putting on and taking off of boots.[16] Proving that Dryden's employment of couplets, however skilled, was not suited to any conceivable form of genuinely heroic drama, Buckingham and his collaborators recommended that Bayes turn to satire, which was, as Dryden had made clear, a step down from comedy, as humor was from wit. It was Buckingham, attacking Dryden for political as well as aesthetic reasons, who drew Dryden's attention to the satiric utility of his couplet, at the same time that he stimulated Dryden to respond in kind. Within his "perception about the potential for unintended comedy in rhymed drama," Dryden came to realize that couplets are most effectively used for a mock-heroic satire to correct Whig travesty.[17]

In Dryden's first major satire, *MacFlecknoe*, Shadwell and the shabbier parts of London are compared (as by a simile) to Rome, the emperor, Virgil, and Aeneas – as well as to John the Baptist. *MacFlecknoe* shows the poetaster aspiring to the laurel, the seditious rebel aspiring to the throne.[18] The mock

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epic was available to Dryden not only in Boileau's *Lutrin* but in the work of one of his favorite poets, Chaucer, whom Dryden recovered in the 1690s in his metaphrase of "The Nun's Priest's Tale" in *Fables*. In one of Dryden's additions to Chaucer's text, Chanticleer, the strutting rooster (reversing the beast-admiring premise of Rochester's "Satyr against Reason and Mankind"), says that he "with pleasure see[s] / Man strutting on two Legs and aping me!"(*Works* VII: 313, lines 459–60). In *MacFlecknoe* the poetaster sees himself as superior to real poets as Chanticleer does to his human master and mistress. In the terms of past-present, the past is the memory of Augustus and Virgil, and so the present of Flecknoe and Shadwell is a degeneration, but, in the 1670s, it is only a subculture within a classical culture and not yet dominant. *MacFlecknoe* is not yet Juvenalian but rather a mock-heroic satire on the ridiculous pretensions of the poetasters and their political analogues, the out-of-place Whigs.

MacFlecknoe is also a defense of wit against humor. With wit Dryden attacks Shadwell's humor, his farcical "humor characters." Shadwell declares his lineage from Jonson, but Jonson's satire of humor characters has by now degenerated into Shadwell's meaningless laughter, laughter for its own sake, at their farcical japes. With Rochester Dryden presumes that wit operates more efficiently on these figures than the mere representation of "the follies and extravagances of *Bedlam*." He makes wit normative in a satire of humor; the poet's wit provides the "bite" that Shadwell's humor so notably lacks. The measured, solemn voice of Dryden notices the resemblance between Flecknoe and Augustus, based on the common element of succession (poetic *and* royal). To connect Shadwell and Jonson is witty in that Dryden discovers a likeness: not only does Shadwell imitate Jonson and think he is Jonson's heir, he physically resembles him (both are fat); and yet, what *Dryden* notes in this witty similitude is the difference – how unlike they are in value; and this is judgment, a quality superior to wit. If Dryden supplies the "bite" that Shadwell lacks, he also adds to this the judgment that he felt Rochester and Buckingham lacked.[19] With the word "Nonsense" he detects the difference between Flecknoe and Augustus, which in effect adds to Rochester's irresponsible wit the correction of judgment – replacing the mere fancy of the libertine aristocrat with the the authority of the true satirist.

In his post-Rochester phase, Dryden would have agreed with Archbishop Tillotson that "Wit is a very commendable quality, but then a wise man should always have the keeping of it. It is a sharp weapon, as apt for mischief as for good purposes if it be not well manag'd."[20] Dryden has absorbed Hobbes's contrast in *Leviathan* (1650) between wit and judgment (anticipating Locke's in his *Essay* of 1690), whose locus is "conversation and business":

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> those that observe their similitudes, in case they be such as are but rarely observed by others, are said to have a *good wit*; by which, in this occasion, is meant a *good fancy*. But they that observe their differences, and dissimitudes; which is called *distinguishing*, and *discerning*, and *judging* between thing and thing; in case, such discerning be not easy, are said to have a *good judgment* . . . The former, that is, fancy, without the help of judgment, is not commended as a virtue: but the latter which is judgment, and discretion, is commended for itself, without the help of fancy.[21]

Dryden employs both: wit, which finds similarities between the most dissimilar objects, is corrected by judgment, which distinguishes the difference elided by wit – raising satire above the comedy of aristocratic libertine conversation to a nobler, more just, more dignified art, as Dryden now conceived it. In the "Discourse Concerning . . . Satire" the image of shaking the head which, unnoticed by the object of satire, has been cut off, suggests the operation of wit upon an oblivious humor character of the sort Jonson and Shadwell created, and applied in *Absalom and Achitophel* to the great wit Buckingham himself ("too witty to resent it as an injury").[22] Dryden's animus against the aristocratic libertine rebel fits with his invocation of Jack Ketch, who beheaded the king's enemies, guilty of treason; beheading was for precisely those aristocratic traitors like the Duke of Buckingham or the Earl of Shaftesbury (not for the plebeians, who were hanged, drawn, and quartered).[23] In *Absalom and Achitophel* Rochester's libertine wit, politicized in Whiggery, unleashed in fancy and religious enthusiasm, is transferred to Shaftesbury-Achitophel, and is now "to madness near allied" (line 163), who even begets his son "while his soul did huddled notions [i.e., subversive plots] try," thus producing "a shapeless lump, like anarchy" (lines 171–2) – that is, treason.

The two most celebrated and influential mock-heroic satires of the seventeenth century were Dryden's *MacFlecknoe* and *Absalom and Achitophel*, but the mode operates very differently in each. In *MacFlecknoe* a subject is made ridiculous by comparing it to an elevated type (Shadwell to Roman emperors and poets), seeming to say that Shadwell *thinks of himself* as Roman, but the contrast shows wherein his greatness really lies (he rules not Rome but the kingdom of Nonsense). *MacFlecknoe* served (by way of Samuel Garth's *Dispensary* of 1699) as model for Pope's mock-epic *Dunciad* (1728ff.); that is, the characters whose humor is to aspire to a higher status, to which they are ludicrously ill suited. For Swift and Pope mock heroic diction is used to characterize virtually all their objects of satire as affected, deluded, and seditious. Dryden continues to write what is essentially witty conversation (supplemented by judgment), and Pope does much the same; but Swift takes seriously the element of pretension and delusion (ultimately madness). He, returning to Jonsonian mimesis, turns the mock

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heroic discourse into impersonation of the humor character, who exposes himself out of his own mouth.

In *Absalom and Achitophel*, on the other hand, a contemporary event is elevated by comparing it with the story in 2 Samuel of David and Absalom.[24] Dryden himself makes the valid connection between Charles II and David, with the common element fecundity and adultery. The true importance of the event is shown – not only how important it really is but exactly how to interpret it, negatively and positively. In *Absalom and Achitophel* no one is simply mocked by the analogy, though some are severely condemned. With the Old Testament typology and the allusions to *Paradise Lost* (in subject and diction), even the evil characters, are made to seem of the greatest importance – and threat. The poor crippled Shaftesbury becomes the ominous Satanic figure of the Great Tempter, and Absalom becomes not only the truly beloved son but a pseudo-Christ in the desert, a role imposed upon him by Achitophel (who calls him "saviour").[25]

Dryden's overtly political poems are in the mock-heroic mode, which permits him to deflate the plebeian pretensions of the Whigs (and their poets) but also to take them seriously. (Rochester's travesty did not take Charles seriously; he made him a fool only, and essentially "humorous.") The fiction of *Absalom and Achitophel*, where a contemporary subject is elevated by comparison with the Old Testament, its true importance shown, led to the mock epic of John Phillips's *Splendid Shilling* (1701) and Pope's *Rape of the Lock* (1712–14). There a shilling or a lock of hair, by being heroicized, is mocked; but attention is also drawn to its beauty and its special qualities, which may transcend the heroic stereotypes of an earlier time, certainly draw attention to the anachronism of those heroic standards in 1700s London.

When in the "Discourse concerning . . . Satire" Dryden mentions his own satires, *MacFlecknoe* and *Absolom and Achitophel*, he classifies them as Varronian – that is, according to his definition, a mixture of styles (verse and prose, different voices or levels of style), including "Tales or Stories of [the satirist's] own invention."[26] Dryden's *The Hind and the Panther* (1687) was his most obviously Varronian work. The structure is Lucianic, a dialogue of contrasting voices: that of the narrator, the more personal voice of Dryden himself (talking about himself), the voices of the Hind and the Panther in conversation, of each telling her fable, and of characters within the fables; and so dialogue, monologue, narrative, and speech permit Dryden, for example in the Panther's fable, to satirize the sparrows and the Martin for their respective folly and knavery, while qualifying the truth of the tale by the character of the teller, noted for the "malice of her tale."[27]

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A significant characteristic of Varronian satire is imitation or parody – the juxtaposition of texts, ancient and modern: Varro "often quoted the Verses of *Homer* and the Tragick Poets, and turn'd their serious meaning into something that was Ridiculous" – as in Seneca's "Mock Deification of *Claudius*" and Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* (IV: 47–8). Thus the mock-heroic diction of *MacFlecknoe* combines the epic or heroic drama with demotic lowlife and farce; *Absalom and Achitophel* combines biblical parody with contemporary history, juxtaposing different characters and voices. *Absalom and Achitophel*, like Varronian satire, is not formally satiric; its form is closer to that of the court masque, where at the end the king reasserted order over a world of threatening chaos. Charles's reassertion of order also recalls the ending of *The Conquest of Granada* or one of Dryden's comedies – or, indeed, Molière's *Tartuffe*, where Tartuffe's total victory is canceled by the intervention of none other than Louis XIV. What keeps the ending satiric rather than comic is the fact that Achitophel, Absalom, and Tartuffe are not, as in comedy, reabsorbed into the social order. One might say that *Absalom and Achitophel* is satire disguised as a miniature epic or a court masque. Although about the triumph of David-Charles, its main energy is satiric rather than panegyric. (So also the real aim of *The Hind and the Panther* is denigration of the beasts who threaten the Hind.)

The imitation (going back, perhaps, to Rochester's "Imitation of Horace") became the basis for Dryden's mature satire. His translations, more often (to use his own terminology) "metaphrases," were often "imitations" in that he worked variations upon the original, bringing it up to date; and this included not only parallels but recognizable deviations, discrepant and ironic analogies, based on a strategy of allusion. *Absalom and Achitophel* alludes to *Paradise Lost* by invoking the *gravitas* of the Miltonic diction and adapting the Miltonic plot to the story of David and Absalom. Dryden learned from *Paradise Lost* how to use elevated and sacred parody: Milton's Satan is a mock Aeneas, leaving the ruins of Troy to refound his empire in Italy; he transplants his empire to God's newly created earth. Satan, Sin, and Death are a Satanic parody of the Trinity, and their building of the bridge connecting Chaos and earth parodies God's Creation.

The satiric fiction of Dryden's satires derives from *Paradise Lost*: a cast of characters, Satan, Adam, and the crowd of unreliable, restless, and fallen angels (Dryden's backsliding Israelites); a story of temptation and fall, based on a lie (Satan is the Prince of Liars, or, in the *Aeneid*, Sinon), a plot invented by the tempter.[28] The consequence is an image of chaos: Milton's Chaos; in the *Aeneid* the unruly crowd of Virgil's storm simile, or better, the Greek soldiers who emerge from the horse and in the darkness burn and blindly kill each other as well as the Greeks. The vocabulary Dryden employs throughout

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all his poems is of monarch, rebel, usurper, and so on – as in the prologues and epilogues, each a little story of order and disorder (a small court masque): politically, monarchy vs. commonwealth, hereditary ruler vs. democracy.

The religious, political, and literary subjects coincide: God, a rightful monarch, a true poet, and (as in *Religio Laici*) a textual authority, with their negations. The terms, moral and religious, are sin and evil, the first divine, the second civic. On the theological level, the sin (original and thereafter) is disobedience, Eve's denial of God's order, and so a negation; on the level of civil society, the sin is treason, rebellion, and usurpation – the denial or replacement of the monarch (reflecting the first Commandments that there be no other, no false gods); and so the evil, from the Genesis story to *Paradise Lost*, is temptation to disobedience – the original temptation by the serpent Satan, which was based on a lie (that eating of the Tree of Knowledge brought godhead). Finally, evil in the theological sense (as in the Problem of Evil) is death, disease, pain, and labor; and for Dryden this is the direct consequence of temptation and rebellion in a Commonwealth. Democracy and chaos are always self-defeating (in *The Medal* the inevitable falling out between the elitist libertine Shaftesbury and his mob of enthusiast followers), and variously take the form of degeneration, decline, flux, entropy, and loss – or a return to Hobbes's state of nature, "nasty, brutish, and short."

Theological sin and evil both are the absence of good. The evil represented in *MacFlecknoe* accords with the Christian definition – an absence or denial or perversion of the good, which is everything created. There can be no evil in a world created by God (that is, not a Manichean world of equal powers of good and evil); and so the evil here is *not*-Augustus, *not*-Virgil, and *not*-Christ, not sense but only nonsense (as in *The Dunciad* it will be anti-creation). Among other things, it is Satan's parody of God, or, as in "But S— 's genuine night admits no ray," it is darkness, night, the absence of light, implicitly opposed to the Light of John 1: 5ff. and the First Epistle 1: 5–7. In political terms, therefore, evil was the denial of the monarch, revolt and regicide – and in practice the many against (a degeneration, fragmentation of) the one.

Swift's satire also derives from Varronian satire – from the paradoxical encomium and Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*. As in *MacFlecknoe*, the affected tone of praise conceals a mock panegyric. Irony would be basic to Swift's satires – blame by praise. Swift and Dryden both rely upon the discrepancy between what a text appears to say and what it says; but Swift's depends on the discrepancy between what it *appears* to be and what it *is*; Swift embodies irony in a deluded speaker, and the reader is intended to believe, up to a point,

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that it is Folly speaking and not Erasmus or Swift. The words of Gulliver, Isaac Bickerstaff, the Grub Street Hack, and the Modest Proposer are passed off in printed texts whose apparent authenticity deceives and thereby implicates the unwary reader. Therefore the lie (the successful lie, whether of Satan or Sinon) is the primary focus of Swift's satire – a simulated almanac, a Modest Proposal, an Argument against abolishing Christianity, even the dying speech of a criminal on his way to the gallows (summed up in his essay on lies in *The Examiner*). The "plot," the form the lie took for Dryden, a donnée of the Popish Plot scare, becomes Swift's project or proposal aimed at tempting the unwary.

In Dryden's satire irony is incidental and seldom sustained, never extended to "black journalism" or satiric impersonation. Even in the prologues and epilogues the speakers are only mouth-pieces – Horatian speakers, often supplemented by an adversarius; and these are poets or actors playing out the similes that dominate the poems. In *MacFlecknoe* the dramatic voice of Flecknoe is simply a mock-epic diction parallel to Dryden's. Only in the plays does Dryden have a basis for mimicry. In Lyndaraxa's speeches in *Conquest of Granada* or Morat's in *Aureng-Zebe* he puts the words of rebels and usurpers into the mouth of Swiftean villains, who expose themselves in what we might think of as distantly Varronian satire. *Absalom and Achitophel*, a genuinely Varronian satire, uses the speeches of the heroic plays to recall the speakers in *Paradise Lost*.

But in both *MacFlecknoe* and *Absalom and Achitophel* Dryden uses a normative poet's voice, similar to Pope's though with the authority of a poet laureate and representative of the crown – until 1689 when both Dryden and his patron, James II, were deprived of office – and the result is normative discourse. Dryden's Horatian imitations laid the ground for Pope's Horatian–Juvenalian satires and epistles of the 1730s and 1740s, and so for Samuel Johnson, Dryden's true heir (and greatest admirer), in "London" and "The Vanity of Human Wishes." Swift's poems, which are travesties, poetry of the out-of-office, follow not from Dryden's poetry but from Rochester's.

The Medal, Dryden's third satire, is mock heroic only in so far as the head of Shaftesbury on the medal struck to celebrate his acquittal is contrasted with the royal head on a true coin of the realm. It shows Achitophel, acquitted of treason by Whiggish London juries, elevated by the crowd into a false idol, his face usurping the king's. *The Medal* is, however, a discursive satire, its diction Juvenalian denunciation. Even the Shaftesbury medal recalls Juvenal's use of a central image – a giant fish (which he treats mock-heroically), a dinner party, the relationship of a patron and a client that has degenerated into that

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of knave and fool, or a Rome repopulated by un-Roman immigrants, or a Rome in which gender roles have been reversed.

If, however, we accept Phillip Harth's interpretation, *The Medal* follows from Charles's successful restoration of order in *Absalom and Achitophel* and shows Shaftesbury and his Whigs, however victorious momentarily, now reduced to a small enclave within the City of London,[29] analogous to the kingdom of Nonsense in *MacFlecknoe*, a contained cancer within the Body Politic of England. The lord mayor's (or Shaftesbury's crippled) body replaces the king's, the body poxed replaces the Body Politic. Swift picks up from *The Medal* not its form, for it lacks anything approaching a Swiftean impersonation, but its melange of metaphors, which build piecemeal into an image of the body politic with disease working within it and seeking an outlet; this Swift uses as a unifying image in *A Tale of a Tub*.

In his Juvenal translations, Dryden gives himself more freedom to express indignation of the sort used in *The Medal* and his portraits of Doeg and Og. But, given the 1690s, and within the context of Juvenal's savage indignation, he uses innuendo, and so he chooses Juvenal's Satires I and III. From Satire I he takes the satirist's need in bad times to evade the censor, using past history to write about the present; and from Satire III he takes the image of Rome overrun by foreigners, with the Greeks now William III's Dutch friends (which Johnson, in his "London" of 1739, replaces with the French): loss, foreign invasion, and, among other forms of degeneration (another favorite Juvenalian subject), that of gender divisions, for which read William III's minions. Umbricius leaves present-day Rome for the country and the distant past – back to Cumae, where Aeneas first landed and consulted the Sybil.

Dryden's satire in the 1690s appears in the suggestive parallels of Juvenal's satires, his revisions of *The Aeneid* (Aeneas now an imperialist invader, a Panther to Latium's Hind), and his additions to Chaucer's "Nun's Priest's Tale," which emphasize Chanticleer's hubris, the clerical hypocrisy of the fox, the moral disaster of flattery, and the vocabulary of usurpation – the fox is "th'artificer of lies" (Satan), and "loyal subjects often seize their prince, / Forced (for his good) to seeming violence" and "treason" (lines 776, 790–2, 808).[30]

In the Horatian "Epistles" he wrote in the 1690s Dryden returns to the panegyrics of the 1660s, but now the counter examples are situated in a present contrasted with a nostalgic past. In "To my dear Friend Mr. Congreve" he writes a passage that places himself and Congreve in the position of Flecknoe and Shadwell in *MacFlecknoe*. The world is turned upside down, and they are now the lone bearers of value in a society governed by Shadwells and Rymers:

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Oh that your Brows my Lawrel had sustain'd,
Well had I been depos'd, if You had rein'd!
The Father had descended for the Son;
For only You are lineal to the Throne.
. . . .
But now, not I, but Poetry is curs'd;
For *Tom* the Second reigns like *Tom* the first.
(*Works* IV: 433, lines 41–4, 46–7)

In "To My Honour'd Kinsman, John Driden of Chesterton" (1700) the Horatian epistle serves as a vehicle for satire on an adversarial England of hunt-loving and bloodthirsty "princes," murderous physicians, and greedy apothecaries, which sets off the true old-fashioned Englishman, the poet's Cousin Driden.

Dryden's satire becomes ostensibly Juvenalian only after the fall of James II in 1688 – and the loss of his laureateship. Juvenalian satire uses the past to denigrate the present, showing how it has fallen away from the ideal in the past. Instead of a fulfillment of a long, divinely ordained process (as in Christian typology or Virgilian epic), the present is a perversion, a parody. The significance of the past for Dryden shifts from the bad past of the 1640s and 1650s redeemed by the Stuart Restoration (when he talked of how we are now better poets than the Elizabethans and Jacobeans) to the 1670s and nostalgia for the Restoration and the innocent 1660s, now corrupt with politics and dissent, and finally to the 1690s.

There is a sense in which Dryden always wrote Juvenalian satire (whether in the reign of Charles II, James II, or William III). *Religio Laici* (1684) pretends to be a Horatian epistle on the subject of religious belief, which posits a mean between extremes. The "mean" is a Latitudinarian belief in a few basic unarguable truths, and where disagreement persists one should follow the tradition of the Church Fathers. But in *Religio Laici* the middle way fudges the fact that Dryden is really opposing the authority of the Fathers to the combined extremes of aristocratic atheism and plebeian religious enthusiasm. *Religio Laici* followed soon after *The Medal*, and the deviations reflect the dissensions among Shaftesbury Whigs, with which Dryden ended *The Medal*; that is, the readings of Shaftesbury the deist and the City mob of religious enthusiasts are together opposed to a proper reading of the Bible. In the prologues and epilogues, though they sound like Horatian *sermones*, the satire was based on sheer contrast. The contrast between monarchy and commonwealth is at the bottom of all his satires, the Juvenalian convention only becoming more emphatic as the first recedes into the past and is replaced by the second. Imitation itself involves the contrast between past and present,

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as an ideal and the real (the text made viable for contemporary English men and women), the primitive and the modern.

Dryden's use of Juvenal illustrates the close relationship between satire and elegy. In *Alexander's Feast*[31] the bard Timotheus, a sort of poet laureate (in this sense, both Tom One – Thomas Shadwell – and Tom Two – Thomas Rymer), flatters Alexander (William III) with memories of his great victories, urging him on to relive them in more bloodshed, and eventually to burn the city of Persepolis.[32] But Timotheus is also the poet who elegizes the defeated king Darius (James II), now deserted by friends and followers.

When in *The Hind and the Panther* Dryden writes, "Here let my sorrow give my satire place, / To raise new blushes on my British race," he is conflating elegy and satire. Panegyric subsumes elegy, extending from "Upon the death of the Lord Hastings" (1649) to the elegies of the 1690s. There are even elements of elegy in the mourning for Barzilai's son (contrasted with the monstrous birth of Shaftesbury's son) in *Absalom and Achitophel*, and of Absalom himself; and again in the panegyric of the Duchess of Ormonde (wife of Barzilai's grandson the Second Duke of Ormonde). Finally, "The Secular Masque," recalling the court masque and the golden time before the civil war, suggests that the last decade of the century has rendered civil war, Restoration, life public and private, all meaningless – and now the past, finally discredited, can only be bettered by something new. The mourning of elegy suits a poet writing Juvenalian satire, which judges the degenerate present by comparison with an idealized, lost past, first in 1649, then again in the 1690s.

This mode informs Dryden's most successful dramatic effort, his "tragedy" *All for Love* (1678): Antony and Cleopatra – heroic grandeur and love – are survivors of the Flood (read, civil wars) which sweeps away the anachronistic figures of Antony and Cleopatra, as described by Serapion in the opening lines of the play:

> Here monstrous phocae panted on the shore;
> Forsaken dolphins there, with their broad tails,
> Lay lashing the departing waves: hard by 'em,
> Sea-horses flound'ring in the slimy mud,
> Tossed up their heads, and dashed the ooze about 'em.
> *Enter* ALEXAS *behind them.*
> (*Works* XIII: I.i. 11–15)

The appearance of Alexas, the eunuch, heralds the new age. As the play opens the battle of Actium is already past and lost. The tone, from Serapion's opening speech to the final words, is elegiac; and the prologue and epilogue show, on the comic level, similarly ambivalent feelings about the past.[33]

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The heroic energies and splendors of *The Conquest of Granada* have been replaced and are now memories in the unheroic world of Alexas and Octavius that is engulfing Antony and Cleopatra.

Laura Brown has said of the final simile, "See, see how th'lovers sit in state together, / As they were giving laws to half mankind!" (v. i. 507–8): "As a lost and ruined lover and a poor, weak woman, the 'real' Antony and Cleopatra give no laws, direct no fates, and attain no glory. They are only like the monarchs whose names they bear."[34] In so far as these are characters who only make it appear that empires and eternal glory are at stake, the simile is a sentimental version of the satiric mock-heroic of *MacFlecknoe*, and the tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra is the other side of the satire of Flecknoe and Shadwell.

"Venom" (as in the last line of Dryden's translation of Juvenal III) is the added ingredient of satire – and (again, as in the translation of Juvenal into English) indirection. *All for Love* (with its preface attacking Rochester and the aristocratic, libertine, Whig ethos), written in the disillusionment and the political fragmentation of the 1670s, represents the coming age with Octavius, who never appears on stage and is only seen through Antony's eyes – as cold, a youth ("'tis the coldest youth . . . so tame"), no soldier, all energy directed toward power, whose symbol within the dramatis personae is the other survivor, the eunuch Alexas.[35] *All for Love* comes after *MacFlecknoe* and before *Absalom and Achitophel* and the Popish Plot. It seems out of place with the optimism of these satires; it rather anticipates the elegiac satire of the 1690s. It might be argued that the elegy expresses Dryden's characteristic, and satiric, stance.

Classical satire offered Dryden two models: Horace contrasted opposite extremes and indicated as an ideal (or only a norm) a middle way between them; while Juvenal contrasted good and evil, as past and present, basing the contrast on a principle of degeneration – the present is a corruption of the past (Horace's satire supposed a dialectical progress). Horace wrote about folly (in the *sermones* but not, always, in the *epodes*), which usually affects only oneself and was, moreover, as he explained, correctible. Although it could spread like a stain to implicate others, it was essentially self-absorbed. Juvenal's evil reached out, engrossing, damaging, and destroying others – as in Dryden's figures of the tempter and usurper. The Christian idea of evil was similar to that of Juvenal, who influenced the grimmer Church Fathers (Jerome, Tertullian, Irenaeus): it was a falling away from, a degeneration or merely a bad parody of, most generally an absence of, the good. Elegy, based on Pauline love, served as the Christianizing of Juvenal's satire, mourning where Juvenal condemned; its mood was sadness where Juvenal's was anger and indignation. Finally, Varronian satire completed Dryden's picture by

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feigning a tone of mourning, as in *Absalom and Achitophel* – or of praise in *MacFlecknoe*; thus recalling the Varronian sense of this genre versus that, this text versus that, this time and that.

NOTES

1. For a useful discussion of the "Discourse," see Howard Weinbrot, *Eighteenth-century Satire: Essays on Text and Context from Dryden to Peter Pindar* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 1–20. With Weinbrot's sections on Dryden, the reader should also consult Dustin Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Lexington, 1994). For background on the theory of satire, see Ronald Paulson, ed., *Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1971).
2. Cf. the preface to *Absalom and Achitophel*: "For there's a sweetness in good verse, which Tickles even while it hurts" (*Works* II: 3).
3. Boileau, *Le Lutrin* (1674, 1683), "Au lecteur," in *Œuvres* (1702), 1006.
4. Oldham, *Satires upon the Jesuits*, Prologue, lines 57–60, in *The Poems of John Oldham*, ed. Harold F. Brooks (Oxford, 1987), 6. In his elegy, "To the Memory of Mr. Oldham" (1684), Dryden compares Oldham and himself: Oldham wrote a kind of satire that dispensed with the decorum of the heroic couplet, "the numbers of thy native tongue." "But satire," Dryden adds, "needs not those, and wit will shine / Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line" (*Works* II: 175, lines 14–16). He employs a metaphor of organic growth: Oldham died before coming to full, "mellow," civilized growth (before Dryden wrote *Absalom and Achitophel*), and in fact represented the old, satyr-satire of the Elizabethans Jonson, Marston, and Hall.
5. He refers to the medical metaphor (preface to *Absalom and Achitophel*, *Works* II: 5) but does not use it except indirectly in *The Medal*, where he presents us with a poxed Body Politic.
6. See James D. Garrison, *Dryden and the Tradition of Panegyric* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1975).
7. On Dryden's "temper," see the preface to *An Evening's Love*, *Works* X: 202.
8. As critics have noticed, whenever Dryden writes about literature, he is writing also about religion and politics. See, e.g., Earl Miner, *Dryden's Poetry* (Bloomington, 1967) and Earl R. Wasserman, *The Subtler Language: Critical Readings of Neoclassical and Romantic Poems* (Baltimore, 1959).
9. Roper points out that in its first half, the English–Dutch war, *Annus Mirabilis* is primarily a series of epic similes (*Dryden's Poetic Kingdoms* [London, 1961], pp. 15–34, 74–86).
10. Cheyne, *An Essay on Regimen* [London, 1740], p. 228; see Earl R. Wasserman, "Nature Moralized: The Divine Analogy in the Eighteenth Century," *ELH* 20 (1953), 39–76.
11. See Michael McKeon, *Politics and Poetry in Restoration England: The Case of Dryden's Annus Mirabilis* (Cambridge, 1975).
12. See Edward Rosenheim, *Swift and the Satirist's Art* (Chicago, 1963), p. 25.
13. "Defense of the Epilogue," *Works* XI: 204.
14. See Alvin Kernan, *The Cankered Muse* (New Haven, 1959).

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15. The obsession with the problem of marriage persisted with Dryden long after his libertine phase (as in "To My Honoured Kinsman, John Driden").
16. *The Rehearsal*, III. v. Buckingham also makes much of Dryden's obsession with the "new" (both in the sense of his having superseded the Elizabethans and of introducing whatever is new and strange into his heroic dramas) and his reliance on fantastic similes (II. i.; I. ii. and III. i.).
17. See James Anderson Winn, *John Dryden and his World* (New Haven, 1987), p. 261, and more generally, on the sources of *MacFlecknoe*, pp. 290–8; also, supplementing Winn, Howard Erskine-Hill, "MacFlecknoe, Heir of Augustus," in *John Dryden: Tercentenary Essays*, ed. Paul Hammond and David Hopkins (Oxford, 2000), pp. 15–31.
18. Even the first MS version of *MacFlecknoe* with its plot of "royal" succession reflects the political crisis, evident by 1676 (Charles could have no children and the heir was therefore his Roman Catholic brother James), which was exacerbated by the exclusions bills and the Popish Plot that intervened before publication in 1682.
19. Rochester also explored the negative aspects of wit, but with irony: wits are distrusted as whores are because they leave behind the fear of infection. See "Artemiza to Chloe" and "Satyr against Reason and Mankind."
20. John Tillotson, "The Folly of Scoffing at Religion," *Works* (1696), pp. 40–1.
21. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I. viii, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford, 1960), p. 43. Cf. Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, II. xi. 2.
22. Dryden could also have been recalling the "huge, great hangman" Buckingham has cut off Bayes's head in *The Rehearsal* (I. ii.).
23. Cf. Dryden's remarks in "Defense of the Epilogue," *Works* XI: 213: "all Poetry being imitation, that of Folly is a lower exercise of fancy, though perhaps as difficult as the other: for 'tis a kind of looking downward in the poet; and representing that part of Mankind which is below him." Jonson's excelling lay in his representation of "low Characters of Vice and Folly" – as opposed to Dryden's, which in *Absalom and Achitophel* are high.
24. See Weinbrot, *Eighteenth-Century Satire*, pp. 80–99.
25. On the political nuances of *Absalom and Achitophel*, see Harth, *Pen for a Party: Dryden's Tory Propaganda in its Contexts* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 120–1; and, further, pp. 161, 173–5.
26. "Discourse concerning . . . Satire," *Works* IV: 46–8.
27. See Steven N. Zwicker, *Politics and Language in Dryden's Poetry* (Princeton, 1984), pp. 146–58.
28. See Bernard Schilling, *Dryden and the Conservative Myth: A Reading of "Absalom and Achitophel"* (New Haven, 1961); and Ronald Paulson, *The Fictions of Satire* (New Haven, 1967), pp. 120–8.
29. Harth, *Pen for a Party*, pp. 172–7.
30. See Zwicker, *Politics and Language*, chapter 6.
31. On Dryden's linking in his *Fables* of the "Epistle to the Duchess of Ormond" and his translation of Chaucer's "Palemon and Arcite" to William III's wars in Ireland, see Miner, *Dryden's Poetry*, pp. 293–4.
32. Cf. the epistle "To . . . John Driden," where Dryden directs an innuendo at William III, whose wars seemed never-ending:

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> When once the *Persian* king was put to flight,
> The weary *Macedons* refused to fight:
> Themselves their own Mortality confess'd;
> And left the son of *Jove* to quarrel for the rest.
> (lines 160–3)

33. R. J. Kaufman sees this as exemplary of the "terminal tragedy" of all Dryden's heroic plays. As Kaufman has noted, tragedy divides into two aspects – the satiric technique for analyzing human faults ("for satirizing deluded motivation") and "the sense of human greatness actively transforming its world" (89). Jacobean tragedy had been of this sort: satire was conveyed by a Vendice, Bosola, or Malevole. See R. J. Kaufmann, "On the Poetics of Terminal Tragedy: Dryden's *All for Love*," in *Dryden: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Bernard Schilling (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1963), pp. 86–94.
34. Brown, *English Dramatic Form, 1660–1760* (New Haven, 1981), p. 85.
35. The satiric structure of *All for Love* is best seen looking back from its burlesque in John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* (1728). Honor, Ventidius, and the Roman Antony, declined into the Egyptian Antony, now reemerges as Gay's Captain Macheath – and, worse, the "honor" of Jenny and Jemmy Twitcher. Duty has degenerated from the imperial Octavius to the mercantile Peachum. Love has slipped from Antony–Cleopatra down to Macheath–Polly and the romances he feeds her.

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