

DICTION AND STYLE

IN THE POETRY

OF

JOHN DRYDEN

BY

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I can scarcely think of you not admiring Dryden without, I may say, exasperation ... What is there in Dryden? Much, but above all this: he is the most masculine of our poets; his style and his rhythms lay the strongest stress of all our literature on the naked thew and sinew of the English language. HOPKINS to BRIDGES.

ABBREVIATIONS.

Essays: Essays of John Dryden, ed. W.P. Ker, 2 vols.,
Oxford, 1926.

Essays and Studies: Essays and Studies of the English
Association.

J.E.G.P.: Journal of English and Germanic Philology.

M.L.N.: Modern Language Notes.

M.L.R.: Modern Language Review.

M.P.: Modern Philology.

Noyes: The Poetical Works of Dryden, ed. G.R. Noyes,
Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1950.

P.M.L.A.: Publications of the Modern Language Association.

P.Q.: Philological Quarterly.

R.E.S.: Review of English Studies.

Sargeaunt: The Poems of John Dryden, ed. John Sargeaunt,
Oxford, 1913.

Spingarn: Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, ed.
ed. J.E. Spingarn, 3 vols., Oxford, 1908-9.

St. Phil.: Studies in Philology.

Summers: Dryden: The Dramatic Works, ed. Montague Summers,
6 vols., Nonesuch Press, London, 1931.

NOTE: For the reader's convenience, the notes are printed on the versos,
facing the pages to which they apply. Only a few notes, which are
cumbersome reference-lists and do not materially affect the reading
of the text, are placed at the end of the appropriate chapter.

Notes to p. I.

1. Quoted by Preserved Smith, A History of Modern Culture, London, 1929, I. p. 148.
2. Evelyn's Diary: e.g., 22nd March, 1652 (gardening); 11th July, 1654, and 22nd June, 1664 (collectors and rarities); 28th August, 1666, 29th April, 1675, 13th December, 1685 (practical science); and Evelyn's letters to Pepys on the Navy.
For Evelyn's passion for books, and his interest in binding,
3. see Geoffrey Keynes, John Evelyn as a Bibliophile, in Transactions of the Bibliographical Society, XII, 1931-2, 175 ff.
3. 13th July, 1654 ('that most obliging and universally-curious Dr. Wilkins'); 9th August, 1661 (Palmer's clocks, telescopes, mathematical instruments, and pictures); 17th October, 1671 (Sir Thomas Browne's collection of medals, books, plants, and natural things); 6th January, 1692 (Bishop Burnet's funeral sermon on Boyle)--- the works of Boyle were read aloud in Mr. Pepys' household (Pepys' Diary, June 4th and 10th, and Sept. 15th, 1667); 22nd March, 1675 (the accomplishments of Petty---- see Pepys' Diary, Feb. 1st, 1663/4, on the King's amusement at Petty's boat).

I

THE CRITICAL BACKGROUND



- 1. The scientific spirit in Dryden's day, and its bearings on critical theory ---- interest in language and style----the psychology of Hobbes: fancy, judgment, and wit----the literary psychology of Dryden: fancy, judgment, wit, and the language of poetry.
- 2. Poetic diction and style: seventeenth century critical interest in the language of poetry----Dryden's views on poetic language: the standard of good current usage; neologism and archaism; technical terms----imagery and the conceit----the idea of 'Nature'.



Dryden lived in an age of scientific interest and achievement; and that achievement was fully recognised, not only by scientists and philosophers, but by men of letters. It is natural that the philosopher Leibnitz, thinking and working in a scientific atmosphere, should declare with enthusiasm that

we have raised up a truly philosophical age, in which the deepest recesses of nature are laid open, in which splendid arts, noble aids to convenient living, a supply of innumerable instruments and machines, and even the hidden secrets of our bodies are discovered; not to mention the new light daily thrown upon antiquity. (1)

Scientific enthusiasm, and even a practical interest in scientific experiment, were not however confined to philosophers and mathematicians like Leibnitz. The career of Pepys is an example of the fusion of civic responsibilities with broad scientific interests; Hobbes was mathematician, philosopher, and poet; and Evelyn moved chameleon-like in the realms of horticulture, art-collecting, engraving and book-binding, chemistry and physics, translation from the classics, and discoursed on smoke, the earth's

(2)

vegetation, and the art of navigation. Evelyn's Diary, in its circumstantial daily records, throws light not only on the versatility of its author, but on the remarkably varied interests of the circles in which he moved. There was Wilkins of Wadham, with his collection of 'artificial, mathematical, and magical curiosities'; there was Palmer, with his collection of clocks; Sir Thomas Browne's house and garden at Norwich were 'a paradise and cabinet of rarities'; Robert Boyle promoted biblical translation, theological discussion, medicine and chemistry; and the versatile Sir William Petty studied philosophy and mathematics, was a doctor of medicine, invented a double-bottomed boat which proved a failure, made a map of Ireland, played his part in affairs of state,

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and wrote good Latin poetry. Charles II himself, though doubtless his enthusiasm

1. Arthur Bryant, King Charles II, 1931, pp. 106-7.
2. Evelyn, Diary, 24th April, 1692. Cf. eulogium on Boyle, 6 Jan. 1692.
3. E.g., the Duke of Buckingham, who, according to Burnet, 'was drawn into chymistry: And for some years he thought he was very near finding the philosopher's stone' (History of his own Time, I. (1724), p.100); and who, in Dryden's words,
.. in the course of one revolving Moon,
Was Chymist, Fidler, States-man, and Buffoon.
(Absalom, 11.549-50).
4. Cf. Evelyn's account of Pepys: 'Mr. Sam Pepys, a very worthy, industrious, and curious person...learned in many things, skill'd in music, a very greate cherisher of learned men of whom he had the conversation..' (Diary, 26th May, 1703)
5. 12th March, 1667.
6. Essays, I. pp. 36-7.

for the sciences was as inconstant as his attention to the business of government, had a laboratory in which he delighted to work, 'making researches into the heart of things more exact than the nebulous nature of political life afforded, dissecting, composing cordials or endeavouring to fix mercury'. (1)

The Renaissance ideal of the versatile and accomplished gentleman was not out-moded in Dryden's time, though it had taken on a scientific colouring. Evelyn praises

Mr. Waller, an extraordinary young gentleman of greate accomplishments, skill'd in mathematics, anatomy, music, painting both in oil and miniature to greate perfection, an excellent botanist, a rare engraver on brass, writer in Latin, and poet; and with all this exceeding modest. His house is an academy of itself. (2)

Such versatility was often mere dilettantism; but the very range of scientific and scholarly interests linked, by a common enthusiasm, men as widely different as the academic group which formed the core of the Royal Society, gentlemen of the court, some of the aristocratic 'Wits' in their less mercurial moods, and middle-class civil servants like

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(4)
Pepys. Pride in the achievements of the Royal Society was not limited to academic circles. Writing to Cowley on the work of the Society, Evelyn urges that

you are able to shew that they have layd solid foundations to perfect all noble Arts, and reforme all imperfecte Sciences. It requires an History to recite not onely the Arts, the Inventions, & Phaenomena already absolved, improved, or opened. In a word, our Registers have outdone Pliny, Porta, & Alexis, and all the Experimentists, nay the Verulam himselfe, and have made a nobler and more faithfull Collection of real seacrets usefull and instructive, than has hitherto been shewn. (5)

Dryden himself shares in the general self-congratulation of the age of science; he echoes Evelyn's praise:

Is it not evident, in these last hundred years (when the study of philosophy has been the business of all the Virtuosi in Christendom), that almost a new Nature has been revealed to us? ---that more errors of the school have been detected, more useful experiments in philosophy have been made, more noble secrets in optics, medicine, anatomy, astronomy, discovered, than in all those credulous and doting ages from Aristotle to us? so true is it, that nothing spreads more fast than science, when rightly and generally cultivated. (6)

In an age when poets were enthusiastically writing of the achievements of science, and when many gentlemen of a scientific or philosophical bent were also poets, the sciences naturally made an important contribution to the themes and interests of poetry.

- I. In The Seventeenth Century Background (London, 1934), Professor Basil Willey has described the influence on seventeenth century poetry both of the Cartesian philosophy and of the attitudes of thought and the directions of interest which that philosophy developed. Cartesian rationalism emphasised the scientific at the expense of the imaginative and poetic view of the world, and helped to widen the gulf between the themes and the value of poetry and the themes and the value of prose. Professor Willey, in a generalisation which is intended to cover only certain types of poetry, but is nevertheless broadly valid, says:

Cleavage began to appear between 'values' and 'facts'; between what you felt as a human being or as a poet, and what you thought as a man of sense, judgment, and enlightenment... Prose was for conveying what was felt to be true, and was addressed to the judgment; poetry was for conveying pleasure, and was addressed to the fancy (pp. 87-88).

2. Bacon, Works, ed. Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, London, 1872, iv. p. 254. Bacon's whole attitude to this matter is analysed by K. R. Wallace in Francis Bacon on Communication and Rhetoric, N. Carolina, 1943.
3. Bacon, Works, i. p. II (Dr. Rawley's Life, 1670).
4. Spingarn, iii. p. 212.
5. Some educational theorists went so far as to condemn the study of languages in schools. See R. F. Jones, Science and Language in the Mid-seventeenth Century, J.E.G.P. xxxi, 1932.

The scientific interest in language, which has long been recognised as influencing the style of English prose in the later seventeenth century, affected also the theory and practice of the poets, and of Dryden particularly. Further, critical theory and aesthetics were considerably affected by speculations in the realm of psychology. (1)

Some of the scientists in Dryden's time were much concerned with linguistic problems, in a way which can be traced back at least as far as Bacon. For Bacon, the imagination operated in obedience to the reason in 'that science which we call Rhetoric, or Art of Eloquence'; but in poetry, the imagination roved lawlessly; and poetry was therefore banished from the scheme of knowledge as dangerous, unreliable, and untruthful ---- 'rather as a pleasure or play of wit than as a science'. 'And for all that concerns ornaments of speech, similitudes, treasury of eloquence, and such like emptinesses, let it be utterly dismissed' (2)

In the course of the seventeenth century, a growing preoccupation with the sciences resulted in a distrust of eloquence, and of the imaginative appeal of figurative language. A frontal attack on ornate language, and on the rhetorical manipulation of words as against their use to express meaning directly and economically, was made by the great concentration of experimental scientists in the Royal Society. Style was the handmaid of science, and a strong, clear, colourless handling of words was essential to the advancement of scientific knowledge. At the beginning of the century, Bacon, it is said, 'would often ask if the meaning were expressed plainly enough, as being one that accounted words to be but subservient or ministerial to the matter'; and Wotton, writing in the age of science, declared that (3)

when men have spoken to the point, in as few words as the Matter will bear, it is expected they should hold their tongues. Even in the Pulpit, the Pomp of Rhetoric is not always commended, and very few meet with Applause who do not confine themselves to speak with the Severity of a Philosopher as well as with the Splendour of an Orator----two things not always consistent. (4)

The utilitarian scientist insisted on the use of language as a means to an end; figures were distractions, and obscured truth. Sprat, in his History of the Royal Society, is an uncompromising advocate of the plain style. He condemns 'this vicious abundance of Phrase, this trick of Metaphors, this volubility of Tongue, which makes so great a noise in the World'; he regards purity of speech as a mark of national greatness; and states the ideal of the Royal Society thus: (5)

1. The History of the Royal Society of London..., 2nd edition, 1702, pp. II2-3.

Cf. Hobbes, Leviathan, I. v: 'The Light of humane minds is Perspicuous Words, but by exact definitions first snuffed, and purged from ambiguity; Reason is the pace; Encrease of Science, the way; and the Benefit of man-kind, the end. And on the contrary, Metaphors, and senseless and ambiguous words, are like ignes fatui.....'

2. Works, ed. A.R. Waller, Cambridge, 1905, i. p.452.

3. Science and English Prose Style 1650-75, P.M.L.A., xlv, 1930.

4. R.F. Jones, Science and Language in the Mid-seventeenth Century, xxxi, 1932.

Cf. Petty's statement (quoted by Mr. Jones) that 'whereas all writing ought to be descriptive of things, they are now only of words, opinions, theories...'

a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions, clear senses; a native easiness: bringing all things as near the Mathematical plainness, as they can: and preferring the language of Artizans, Countrymen, and Merchants, before that, of Wits, or Scholars. (1)

Sprat was not merely a theorist; his merits as a stylist were recognised both by scientific enthusiasts writing in prose, and by the poet Cowley. (2)

Mr. R. F. Jones gives evidence of the general anxiety among scientists to conform to the new standards. (3) For example, the first edition of Glanvill's Vanity of Dogmatising (1661) is flamboyant in style; but in the second edition, which contains an address to the Royal Society and praise of the scientific movement, the author confesses the stylistic faults of his first edition; and in the third edition there is further revision and simplification in accordance with the Society's requirements.

The insistence on a cold accuracy in language produced attempts to reduce words to mere mathematical symbols, and to construct a universal scientific language. The culmination of these efforts was Wilkins' project for a 'philosophical language' in 1668, in which he illustrates the imperfections of all existing languages, and sets out a system of symbols which is 'the literal realisation of Hobbes' conception of words as the marks of things'. (4)

The historical importance of the Royal Society's attention to language lies in its contribution to the development of a plain prose style; but its significance for my purpose is the widespread general interest of an influential and varied company of men ----philosophers, scientists, and men of letters alike---- in the values, selection and use of words. Evelyn's letter to Wyche, who was the chairman of a committee on language set up by the Royal Society, contains an interesting catalogue of the supposed sources of linguistic development and corruption:

Victories, Plantations, Frontieres, Staples of Com'erce, pedantry of Schooles, Affectation of Travellers, Translations, Fancy and Style of Court, Vernility and mincing of Citizens, Pulpits, Political Remonstrances, Theaters, Shoppes...

Evelyn's list of guides to good usage, and of possible ways of controlling the use of words, indicates a thoughtful and far-reaching awareness of the complexity of linguistic problems. He recommends a grammar and a reliable orthography; a guide to punctuation; collections of 'pure English-words' and technical terms; an enquiry into dialect and idiom; 'a full catalogue of exotic Words, such as are daily exhibited by our Logo-

Notes, p.5.

1. Spingarn, ii. pp.311-12.

2. For an account of seventeenth and eighteenth century interest in the project of an academy, and in the appointment of committees for the improvement and standardisation of the language, see B.S. Monroe, An English Academy, M.P. viii, 1910-II.

3. Aristotle, De Anima, III, iii, 2.

Cf. Descartes, Meditations on the First Philosophy, vi:

When I attentively consider what imagination is, I find that it is simply a certain application of the cognitive faculty (facultas cognoscitiva) to a body which is immediately present to it..

(Everyman edition, 1937, p.127).

4. Hobbes, Works, ed. Sir W. Molesworth, London, 1839, iii. 5-6 (Leviathan, I. ii.).

daedali', with a resolution on which are to be rejected and which retained; a collection of 'the most quaint and Courtly expressions, by way of Florilegium'; and a 'reduction of some of the old layd-aside words and expressions had formerly in delicijs'. (I)
 There is ample evidence, in the later seventeenth century, of the interest shown in (2) linguistic problems and the standards of good writing by philosophers and men of letters; and, consequently, there is good reason for expecting frequent discussion on the use of language in poetry in the critical essays of Dryden and others.

The development of psychology which accompanied the scientific movement had a considerable effect on literary theory. Here Hobbes was the pioneer and leader. Hobbes was interested in the processes of the imagination as the object of scientific analysis and description; and his views on the nature of imagination have an immediate relevance for the study of Augustan poetry.

In Hobbes' psychology there are three important mental faculties: fancy, judgment, and wit. Hobbes uses the term fancy in three distinct senses: as the initial stage in ordinary perception----- the mental image resulting from the operation of the external world upon the senses; as the image which remains after the object which has been apprehended by the senses has been removed----- that is, the memory; and as a constructive and compounding function of the mind itself. The first use is ultimately Aristot- (3)
 elian, and has little bearing on aesthetics; the other uses of the term are more important. In his second use of fancy, which he does not consistently distinguish from imagination, Hobbes speaks of it as 'decaying sense'. Mental images become obscured and dimmed with time, and with the successive accumulations of sense-experience; and

This decaying sense, when we would express the thing it self (I mean fancy itself), we call imagination....: But when we would express the decay, and signifie that the Sense is fading, old, and past, it is called Memory. So that Imagination and Memory are but one thing, which for divers considerations hath divers names. (4)

For Hobbes, however, the imagination is more than an ever-fading recollection of sense-experience; it is also creative. In this third use of fancy ----- the constructive function of the mind ----- Hobbes distinguishes between simple and compound imagination. Simple imagination is the recollection of the images of objects which have been previously known in sense-experience; compound imagination operates

Notes, p.6.

1. Works, II. 6 (Leviathan, I. ii.).
2. Works, iv. 55-6 (Human Nature).
3. Works, iv. 55-6 (Human Nature).
4. Works, iv. 55-6 (Human Nature).
5. C.W. Thorpe, The Aesthetic Theory of Thomas Hobbes, Michigan, 1940, p. 106.
6. Works, iii. 57-8 (Leviathan, I. viii.).
7. Works, iii. 58-9 (Leviathan, I. viii.).

as when from the sight of a man at one time, and of a horse at another, we conceive in our mind a Centaure. So when a man compoundeth the image of his own person with the image of the actions of another man; as when a man imagines himself a Hercules or Alexander... it is a compound imagination, and properly but a Fiction of the Mind. (1)

The function of the constructive imagination is to discover likenesses in things of different natures: a man has a good fancy if he delights in finding 'unexpected similitudes' through comparison. From these similitudes

proceed those grateful similies, metaphors, and other tropes, by which both poets and orators have it in their power to make things please or displeas, and show well or ill to others, as they like themselves. (2)

There is, however, a second faculty of the mind which plays a part in making comparisons between things: this faculty is judgment. Judgment distinguishes differences, instead of similarities; and the possessor of a good judgment is apt in 'discerning suddenly dissimilitude in things', by which 'men attain to exact and perfect knowledge for to judge is nothing else than to distinguish and discern'. (3)

Thirdly, Hobbes recognises a faculty which he calls wit ---- a certain 'tenuity and agility of spirits', which combines both imagination and judgment. Mr. Thorpe's summary of Hobbes' account of wit will suffice here: Wit is

that ready 'discourse of mind' which is marked by quickness of perception, unusual aptness in discerning likenesses and differences, and general agility in the pursuit of ideas and the use of them to some definite end. Judgment, as well as fancy, is requisite, and seems native to natural wit. The proportion of fancy to judgment will vary in different kinds of wit. In acquired wit, judgment will be the more prominent; in natural wit, fancy. The historian and the scientist, for example, will have much judgment but little fancy; the poet, on the contrary, requires a pre-eminence of fancy, with less, though sufficient, judgment. (5)

Hobbes is clear that although judgment itself is a valuable possession, fancy without judgment is no good gift. 'Without steadiness, or direction to some end, a great Fancy is a kind of Madness.' In demonstrations, in counsels, and 'all rigorous search of truth', judgment does all, except that fancy may provide 'some apt similitude'. In oratory, fancy is dominant, because the primary object is not truth. In history, the judgment must be supreme, and fancy has no place 'but only in adorning the style'. In poetry, however, although both faculties are requisite, fancy has a prominent place: In a good poem, whether it be epic or dramatic; as also in sonnets, epigrams, and other pieces, both judgment and fancy are required: but the fancy must be the more eminent; because they please for the extravagancy; but ought not to please by indiscretion. (7)

Notes, p.7.

1. Seventeenth Century Background, London, 1934, pp. 216-7.
2. Thorpe, op. cit., p. 87.
3. Answer to Davenant, Spingarn, ii, pp. 59-60.
4. Works, iii. 57 (Leviathan, I. viii.).
5. Spingarn, ii, p. 65.

Professor Willey quotes Hobbes' account of the creative imagination as a 'further testimony... in the psychological theories of the time, in which judgment is custom-
(1)
arily valued above fancy'. Mr. Thorpe, on the other hand, sees in Hobbes' 'creative
(2)
imagination' a step towards the complex conception of imagination in Coleridge. While I cannot subscribe to Mr. Thorpe's claim, I think that there is in Hobbes' aesthetic a higher value set on fancy than Professor Willey recognises. Fancy, says Hobbes, in a passage which contains much of eighteenth century critical theory in embryo,

when any work of Art is to be performed findes her materials at hand and prepared for use, and needs no more than a swift motion over them, that what she wants, and is there to be had, may not lie too long unespied. So that when she seemeth to fly from one Indies to the other, and from Heaven to Earth, and to penetrate into the hardest matter and obscurest places, into the future and into herself, and all this in a point of time, the voyage is not very great, her self being all she seeks... All that is beautiful or defensible in building, or marvellous in Engines and Instruments of motion, whatsoever commodity men receive from the observations of the Heavens, from the description of the Earth, from the account of Time, from walking on the Seas, and whatsoever distinguisheth the civility of Europe from the Barbarity of the American savages, is the workmanship of Fancy but guided by the Precepts of true Philosophy. But where these Precepts fail, as they have hitherto failed in the doctrines of Moral vertue, there the Architect, Fancy, must take the Philosopher's part upon her self. He therefore that undertakes an Heroick Poem, which is to exhibit a venerable & amiable Image of Heroick vertue, must not only be the Poet to place and connect, but also the Philosopher, to furnish and square his matter, that is, to make both Body and Soul, colour and shadow of his Poem out of his own Store... (3)

The wide sweep and the exalted tone of this passage indicate that Hobbes not only recognises the tremendous power and value of that faculty which perceives, invents and constructs in the arts, but also recognises the supreme importance of the imagination in the creative work of the poet.

Hobbes admits the value of novelty in imaginative writing. A well-equipped poet will find it easy to discover similitudes which delight the reader not only with figur-
(4)
ative ornament, but also 'by the rarity of their invention'. This effective novelty is not to be attained by ingenuity or art alone, but by drawing on a rich experience---a view which harmonises with Hobbes' account of the working of fancy. It is the want of a richly endowed mind which drives the inferior poet to forced, artificial language:

From knowing much, proceedeth the admirable variety and novelty of Metaphors and Similitudes, which are not possible to be lighted on in the compass of a narrow knowledge. And the want whereof compelleth a Writer to expressions that are either defac'd by time or sullied with vulgar or long use... As the sense we have of bodies consisteth in change and variety of impression, so also does the sense of language in the variety and changeable use of words. I mean not in the the affectation of words newly brought home from travail, but in new and withall significant translation to our purposes of those that be already received, and in far fetch't but withal apt, instructive, and comly similitudes. (5)

Notes, p.8.

1. See C. Lloyd, Dryden and the Royal Society, P.M.L.A. xlv, 1930.

2. An interest in the problems of free-will and determinism, and a general 'sympathetic intellectual curiosity', runs through his plays (see Louis Bredvold, Dryden, Hobbes, and the Royal Society, M.P. xxv, 1927-8).

Dryden confesses a sceptical attitude to philosophical questions in several places in his essays (Essays, i, pp. 124, 163, 260) and the preface to Religio Laici; and Dr. Bredvold has shown the complexity of the connections between Dryden's scepticism and the philosophical currents of his time (The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, Michigan, 1934).

3. Aubrey, Brief Lives, ed. A. Clark, Oxford, 1898, i, p. 372.

The fancy, then, may range through the fields of memory and experience, seeking poetic material, and may combine and construct that material into ideas and images; but the quality of the finished poem will depend not only upon a strong fancy, but upon the richness of the experience from which it draws; and it is in this play of the fancy upon the stores of knowledge that the happiest and most significant imagery and diction is produced. The persistence of the metaphysical tradition can be seen in Hobbes' account of the ranging fancy, in the value he sets on the fresh applications of words, and on 'far fetch't but withal apt' similitudes.

These are some of the elements in Hobbes' psychology which are significant for my present purpose. It cannot be said that Hobbes is either consistent or profound. His terminology is often confused; and since his discussion of artistic problems is only a small part of his general philosophical enquiry, it is dangerous to stress his conclusions as though they constituted a deliberately constructed aesthetic. The contradictions in his philosophical writing, and the weakness of many of the positions he adopted, make it difficult to see in his aesthetic doctrines any reliable and consistent pattern. The Hobbesian views which I have outlined, however, seem to have influenced Dryden, and find an echo in many places in his critical essays.

Dryden was enthusiastic over the scientific and philosophical achievements of his age. His connection with the Royal Society was neither strong nor constant; but as a man of letters closely in touch with both Court and city circles, he certainly came within the range of the wide and various influences of the Society. The scientific element in his imagery and diction, particularly in the early poems, is considerable; and although he was not a profound or persistent thinker, his work reveals a constant interest in philosophical questions, and a reflective habit of mind. Yet, although he reflects the general scientific and philosophical interest of his time, both as a man and as a poet, it is not easy to establish clear links between him and such a representative philosopher-scientist as Hobbes. Aubrey says that 'Mr. John Dreyden, Poet Laureat, is his (Hobbes') great admirer, and often makes use of his doctrines in his plays', and claims that he has this information from Dryden himself. Dryden's own declared opinion

Notes, p.9.

1. Essays, i, pp. 259-60. See his satirical comments on Hobbes, Essays, ii, p. 252.

2. Essays, i, p.1.

An interesting poetical version of Dryden's 'fancy... in his first work' occurs in the 'too little, and too lately known' Oldham's Letter from the Country (Oldham's Poems, 1703, p.253):

When at first Search I traverse o'er my Mind,
None but a dark and empty Void I find:
Some little Hints at length, like Sparks, break thence,
And glimm'ring Thoughts just dawning into Sense:
.....
Till the dusk Images, mov'd to the Light,
Teach the discerning Faculty to chuse.....

Cf. also C. Day Lewis, The Poetic Image, London, 1947, p. 69.

3. Cf. Temple, Of Poetry, Spingarn, iii, p. 80:

There must be a sprightly Imagination or Fancy, fertile in a thousand Productions ranging over infinite ground, piercing into every Corner.... There must be a great agitation of Mind to invent, a great Calm to Judge and correct....

4. Essays, i, p.8.

5. Hobbes, in Spingarn, ii, pp. 59-60; Davenant quoted by Ker in Essays, i, p. 287; cf. Dryden, Essays, i, p. 14.

of Hobbes is not one of unqualified approval. In one place he compares Lucretius' 'noble pride, and positive assertion of his opinions' with the dogmatism of Hobbes, (I) and contrasts his own natural diffidence and scepticism. In addition to temperamental differences between Dryden and Hobbes, which may have been obstacles to Dryden's appreciation of Hobbes' doctrines, the disfavour into which Hobbes' religious and political views brought him, and his discredit as a philosopher and mathematician, may have prejudiced Dryden against him. There are, however, some clear connections between Hobbes' notions on imagination and the creative process, and those of Dryden: without insisting on a direct link between these two sets of ideas too dogmatically, it can at least be said that Dryden makes full use of the psychological thought of his time as it is represented in Hobbes.

Dryden shows from the first an interest in the complicated problems of poetic creation; and he uses the terms fancy, judgment, and wit frequently in his critical essays. In his earliest essay, the dedication of The Rival Ladies, he speaks of the first stages in the writing of his play,

when it was only a confused mass of thoughts tumbling over one another in the dark; when the fancy was yet in its first work, moving the sleeping images of things towards the light, there to be distinguished, and then either chosen or rejected by the judgment.... that first tumult of my thoughts...(2)

Here the fancy is primary; it is the initial phase in the creative process, when thoughts and recollections are thrown forward uncritically and without selection into the poet's consciousness, there to be organised and developed by the judgment. This basic distinction between the free, rich, productive fancy and the critical judgment (3) is Hobbesian; and it is echoed again and again in Augustan criticism. Later in the same essay, Dryden speaks of imagination as 'a faculty so wild and lawless, that like (4) a high-ranging spaniel, it must have clogs tied to it, lest it outrun the judgment'. This picture of the restless, searching fancy recalls Hobbes' references to the 'ranging spaniel' of the imagination, and to the swift motions of fancy in the fields of memory; and Davenant, too, speaks of 'the dexterity of thought, rounding the world, like the Sun, with unimaginable motion, and bringing swiftly home to the memory universal survey'. (5)

Notes, p. 10.

1. Summers, ii, p.440. Dryden is of course echoing Milton, Paradise Lost, v, 100-05: of the Soul's faculties 'Reason is chief';

.... Fansie next

Her office holds; of all external things,
Which the five watchful Senses represent,
She forms Imaginations, Aerie shapes,
Which Reason joyning or disjoyning, frames
All what we affirm or what deny.....

- Cf. The Hind and the Panther, iii, 515-6; Hobbes, Leviathan, i, 2 -- 'the imaginations of them that sleep'; Chamberlayne, Pharomnida, iii, 3, 217ff:

Her sleep-imprisoned fancy, wandering in
The shades of darkened reason, did begin
To draw Argalia's image on her soul....
(Saintsbury, Minor Caroline Poets, Oxford, 1905, i, p. 152.)

2. Summers, iii, p. II4. Cf. Julia to Roderick in The Rival Ladies, Summers, i, p. 151: 'My Love to thee is Born by Inclination, not by Judgment'.
3. Essays, i, pp. 224, 229; cf. p. 136.
4. Essays, i, p. 146.
5. Essays, i, p. 153; Summers, vi, 242.
6. Summers, ii, pp. 332-3.

The wildness and irresponsibility of fancy, which Hobbes stressed, is emphasised by Dryden in many places. Lucifer, in The State of Innocence, soliloquises over the sleeping Adam and Eve:

Their Reason sleeps; but Mimic fancy wakes;
Supply's her parts, and wild Idea's takes
From words and things, ill-sorted, and mis-joyn'd;
The Anarchie of thought and Chaos of the mind:
Hence dreams confus'd and various may arise... (1)

Fancy is at work, not only in the distraction of dreams, but in crises of the passions. It plays a part in the imaginings of love. Almahide speaks to Almanzor in The Conquest of Granada:

These are the day-dreams which wild fancy yields,
Empty as shadows are, that fly o're fields.
O, whether would this boundless fancy move!
'Tis but the raging Calenture of Love.
Like a distracted Passenger you stand,
And see, in Seas, imaginary Land,
Cool Groves, and Flow'ry Meads, and while you think
To walk, plunge in, and wonder that you sink. (2)

An uncontrolled fancy has serious effects on style. The fury of Shakespeare's fancy, says Dryden, often carried him beyond the bounds of judgment in coining new words or distorting the senses of words in current use; it is evident from the absurdities of poets who have trusted to fancy as their only guide, that 'if this fancy be not regulated, it is a mere caprice, and utterly incapable to produce a reasonable and judicious poem'.⁽³⁾

Nevertheless, fancy is essential to the poet; it gives 'the life-touches and secret graces' to a poem, and is a poet's chief characteristic --- 'for so much the word fancy implies'.⁽⁴⁾ It is the only guide in the imaginative representation of the supernatural, and the basis of the 'fairy kind of writing, which depends only upon the force of imagination'.⁽⁵⁾ In the preface to Tyrannic Love, Dryden makes a plea for boldness of fancy against dull common-sense; and in the Prologue to the play declares that:

Poets, like Lovers should be bold and dare,
They spoil their business with an over-care.
And he who servilely creeps after sence,
Is safe, but ne'er will reach an Excellence.
Hence 'tis our Poet in his conjuring,
Allow'd his Fancy the full scope and swing. (6)

In insisting that lapses in a daring, sublimely imaginative poet are to be preferred to a dreary mediocrity, Dryden is following the tradition of Horace and Longinus; but he also accepts Hobbes' dictum that different kinds of writing require a greater or a

Notes, p.II.

1. Essays, ii, pp. 165-6; i, p. 136; i, p. 245.

Cf. Parsons' To Mr. Dryden on his CLEOMENES (Summers, vi, p. 303), in which Dryden is hailed as the reconciler of fancy and judgment. Cf. also Dennis, Critical Works, ed. E.N. Hooker, Baltimore, 1939, ii, p. 385: of fancy and judgment,

the first (is) like an extraordinary Wife, that appears always beautified, and always charming, yet is at all times Decent, and at all times Chast: the Second like a Prudent and well-bred Husband, whose very sway shows his compliance, and whose very Indulgence shows his Authority.

2. Essays, i, pp. 14-15.

3. Essays, i, p. 15. Cf. Wolseley, Preface to Valentinian, Spingarn, iii, p. 22.

4. Essays, i, p. 15.

lesser degree of fancy, with a correspondingly slighter or more severe control exercised the judgment. Epic, for example, requires vigour and boldness in metaphor and expression; comedy requires a blend of fancy and judgment, whereas mere farce employs the fancy only; and the drama generally demands a balance:

neither can a true just play, which is to bear the test of ages, be produced at a heat, or by the force of fancy, without the maturity of judgment. For my own part I dare venture nothing without a strict examination. (1)

A third important term in Dryden's literary psychology is wit. His definitions vary, and occasionally his terms overlap; the distinctions between fancy and wit, or judgment and wit, are not always clear, nor do they seem to have been at all times clear to Dryden. His first full treatment of wit occurs in the preface to Annus Mirabilis, where it is clearly associated with imagination. Dryden makes a distinction between 'wit-writing', which he identifies with 'the faculty of imagination', ranging over the fields of memory, and 'wit written', which is 'that which is well defined, the happy result of thought or product of imagination'. Wit is thus both involved in the poetic process itself, and also a vital element in the finished poem. Dryden proceeds to consider the wit which is proper to a heroic poem, and distinguishes it from other kinds --- from the wit of the epigram, the antithesis, and the 'sentence'. Wit in the epic consists chiefly in 'the delightful imagining of persons, actions, passions, or things'; and, being 'lively and apt description', it sets before the reader a vivid picture of objects imagined 'as perfectly, and more delightfully than nature'. The wit defined here as 'delightful imagining' is that which is involved in 'wit-writing', in creation; and the wit defined as 'lively and apt description' is 'wit written', the wit of the finished poem.

Dryden then analyses the poetic imagination, and its characteristics:

So then the first happiness of the poet's imagination is properly invention, or finding of the thought; the second is fancy, or the variation, deriving, or moulding, of that thought, as the judgment represents it proper to the subject; the third is elocution, or the art of clothing and adorning that thought, so found and varied, in apt, significant, and sounding words: the quickness of the imagination is seen in the invention, the fertility in the fancy, and accuracy in the expression. (4)

Notes, p.12.

1. p. 9, supra.

2. The Age of Dryden, in The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, London, 1933.

3. Dennis stands rather apart, in his skilful explanation of the unity of the creative process (Critical Works, ed. Hooker, i, p.375). His insistence on the complete naturalness and aptness of all the elements in a poem precludes any false emphasis on mutually exclusive stages in the process of composition, or on stages which are quite distinct in order of execution. A practising poet like Dryden would not be guilty of making a distinction between the phases of composition too rigidly; but it is clear from his theory, as it will be from his practice, that words are thought of as the dress of ideas, sought out and disposed with conscious art.

4. Lives of the English Poets, ed. G.B. Hill, Oxford, 1905, iii, p. 219.

Cf. Ben Jonson, Discoveries (in Ben Jonson, ed. C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson, Oxford, 1947, viii, p. 615):
For a man to write well, there are required... In style to consider, what ought to be written; and after what manner; Hee must first thinke, and excogitate his matter; then choose his words, and examine the weight of either. Then take care in placing....

Here Dryden develops his earlier account of fancy as 'moving the sleeping images of things towards the light'; ^(I) fancy operates with judgment upon the material of the poet's mind. It is not simply a preparatory faculty, discovering the material for judgment; it functions creatively with the judgment. The complex creative process is here analysed in a way which tends to separate its elements too forcibly from one another; and it would ^{be} dangerous to take Dryden's account to imply a time sequence of invention ---- fancy and judgment ---- elocution. However, since Dryden, in common with Hobbes and others, regards the invention and the fancy as operating early in the process, and since he places 'accuracy' in elocution after that imaginative quickness and fertility which mark the co-operative working of fancy and judgment, it can at least be said that he thinks of the adornment of a poet's thought and imagery with appropriate language as being the last part of the process to finish. As Mr. T. S. Eliot says of this passage:

In 'fancy' the finding of the words seems to me already to have begun; that is, 'fancy' is partly verbal; nevertheless, the work of elocution.... is the last to be completed. (2)

The implication is, I think, that the poet's expression in words, when the poem is finished, is the result of deliberate, studied selection, rather than the unmodified product of imagination: that his diction is in large measure the dress of his imagery and thought, studiously and discriminatingly fitted to them. In an age like Dryden's, when poets were much concerned with standards of expression, and with the rules governing the selection of words for various poetic styles, a poet's language could not be regarded as the result of happy accident; ⁽³⁾ Pope's practice, for example, as Johnson describes it, is characteristic of the Augustan approach to composition:

The method of Pope, as may be collected from his translation, was to write his first thoughts in his first words, and gradually to amplify, decorate, rectify, and refine them. (4)

The view of poetry as essentially the result of taking thought under the stimulus of imagination, with all that this implies of a studied and selected diction, is of course at the very heart of neo-classical literary theory. Orator fit; poeta nascitur did not imply that the poet's work had no need of art and technique, either in style or in language.

Notes, p.13.

1. Essays, i, pp. 15-16.
2. Essays, i, pp. 79-80.
3. Essays, i, pp. 138-9.
4. Essays, i, pp. 139-40.
5. Essays, i, p. 163. Cf. i, p. 161.
6. Essays, i, p. 172.
7. Essays, i, p. 172.

Later in the preface to Annus Mirabilis, Dryden declares that the wit of the dramatist, whose dialogue is 'supposed to be the effect of sudden thought', excludes 'a too curious election of words, too frequent allusions, or use of tropes, or, in fine, anything that shows remoteness of thought, or labour, in the writer'. Ovid, like the dramatist, is concerned with the representation of passion, and his diction is therefore 'the least part of his care; for he pictures nature in disorder, with which the study and choice of words is inconsistent'. With the style of the dramatist, Dryden contrasts the style and diction of Virgil, who is in so much his master. Virgil, he says, expresses his thought with all the graces of elocution, and writes more figuratively than Ovid, setting out 'as well the labour as the force of his imagination'. There is labour involved in eloquent and figurative writing; and if, contrary to custom, a Shakespeare draws his images 'not laboriously, but luckily', that is doubtless due to the miraculous ability of his 'largest and most comprehensive soul'.

In the preface to An Evening's Love, Dryden distinguishes wit from pleasantness: 'pleasantness was not properly wit, or the sharpness of conceit' in the plays of Ben Jonson. The definition of wit as 'sharpness of conceit' was common in Dryden's age; it is this sense he is thinking of when he deplores the superfluity of wit in Jacobean drama, and when he claims that 'the language, wit, and conversation of our age, are improved and refined above the last'. In the Essay on the Dramatic Poetry of the Last Age, Dryden comments on the shortcomings of Jonson when he attempted 'wit in the stricter sense, that is, sharpness of conceit'; and he recognises that Jonson's presentation of folly, involving both fancy and judgment, is 'wit in a larger signification'. While Dryden thus uses the term wit in its narrower sense (approximating to our own), he still clings to his early, broader notion of wit as associated with imagination and the whole creative process.

However, he declares that he will not contest the claims of some who would describe wit in Jonson as the ability to write 'properly, and as the character requires'. Here he adds a third sense to the term, anticipating his own later definition of wit as 'propriety of thoughts and words'. This definition he offers

Notes, p.14.

1. Essays, i, p. 316 (Ker's note).

2. Essays, i, p. 270.

Dryden is not of course doing more than to develop Ben Jonson's principle that the poet must excogitate his matter and then choose his words (see p. 12, supra, note 4).

Mr. Kenneth MacLean, anxious to trace the influence of Locke's philosophy on Dryden, maintains that although Dryden defined wit as 'propriety' in 1677, "in 1692, two years after the appearance of the Essay concerning Human Understanding, he has quite a different interpretation of wit, and one that coincides exactly with Locke's". (John Locke and English Literature, Yale, 1936, p. 64). Mr MacLean thinks that there is a connection between Locke's view that wit was 'the faculty of assembling ideas and finding similitudes' and Dryden's declaration in the dedication of Eleonora:

..I was transported by the multitude and variety of my similitudes; which are generally the product of a luxuriant fancy, and the wantonness of wit. Had I call'd in my judgment...I had certainly retrench'd many of them. Here, however, Dryden is doing no more than to revive the older use of the term from Hobbes and from his own early essays. I find no evidence that Locke's Essay had any influence on Dryden's literary psychology. At the time of the appearance of the Essay, Dryden was nearly sixty; by then his mind had no doubt hardened; and in the last ten years of his life he wrote little criticism which could, in its content, be open to influence from Locke.

3. Essays, i, p. 256.

4. Essays, i, p. 234.

as a conclusion to the Apology for Heroic Poetry, and again, seven years later, in the preface to Albion and Albanus. He looked on the definition as his own, but was later 'pleasingly convinced' that Aristotle had made one very like it. (I)

In the preface, he explains that

Propriety of thought is that fancy which arises naturally from the subject, or which the poet adapts to it. Propriety of words is the clothing of these thoughts with such expressions as are naturally proper to them; and from both of these, if they are judiciously performed, the delight of poetry results. (2)

The 'thought' of a good poem, then, is the product both of nature and of art--- it grows from the poet's material, and is sometimes worked upon by deliberate art. The language, on the other hand, seems to be the result entirely of deliberate art --- it is the dress of the thought, and is placed second in the sequence of composition. Dryden makes it clear that, in this new definition of wit, he is setting aside the earlier and generally accepted definition, 'sharpness of conceit'. In the preface to Sylvae, he declares that he drew his definition from particularly close consideration of Virgil:

for propriety of thoughts and words are only to be found in him, and where they are proper they will be delightful..... He is everywhere above conceits of epigrammatic wit, and gross hyperboles; he maintains majesty in the midst of plainness. (3)

The narrower sense of wit, 'sharpness of conceit', is applied to Ovid, who is frequently witty out of season; leaving the imitation of Nature, and the cooler dictates of his judgment, for the false applause of fancy...Seneca's censure will stand good against him; Nescivit quod bene cessit relinquere: he never knew how to give over, when he had done well. (4)

Dryden is no more consistent in his use of wit than he is in his use of other critical terms; he gives the word many different shades of meaning within the wide range of significations accepted for it by the criticism of his day. His final definition, however, is of great importance for the study of his theory of diction and his poetic practice.

To summarise: Dryden, like Hobbes, emphasises the free and primary activity of the imagination, in providing the poet with his working material, and in moulding and developing that material. Both critics stress the irresponsibility of the uncontrollable imagination, but they regard its restless vitality as essential to the poet. The cooperation of judgment with fancy, however, is necessary for the composition of a just and excellent poem. The current conception of wit

as that faculty which produces conceits and brilliance of style, usually with the danger of excess, is frequently set forth by Dryden; but, at the same time, he develops Hobbes' definition of wit as a 'tenuity and agility of spirits' to identification with the imagination itself; and early in his criticism Dryden seems to regard wit as the constant and supreme faculty which governs poetic composition from the first 'moving the sleeping images of things towards the light' to the final presentation of thought and imagery in 'apt, significant, and sounding words'. The conception of true wit as propriety of thought and expression is implicit in Dryden's earliest discussions on composition. The evolution of his own definition is both natural and important; natural, in his placing wit behind the perfection of words and thoughts which goes far towards the total effect of a poem; and important, because of the stress laid on propriety of diction. Finally, there is in Dryden's criticism a frequent tendency to think of the language and figure of a poem as evolved or selected comparatively late in the creative process, less the result of happy accident or genius, than of deliberate and laborious art. At the same time, happy accident and genius must not be overlooked: Dryden's own experience as a poet must have provided a check to any merely artful or mechanical view of the language of poetry, and the critical theory of the classical tradition has much to say on the operation of genius.

---- 2 ----

Undoubtedly the scientific and philosophical movement of the later seventeenth century contributed to the general interest in language, and influenced critical theory where it was concerned with the standards and principles of poetic diction. The critical tradition itself, however, was not silent on these problems. The language of poetry was one of the main topics of Renaissance criticism; the Elizabethan critics, with their two dominant themes of rhetoric and the immense expansion of the English vocabulary, have much to say on the subject; and the interest continued into the early seventeenth century. Ben Jonson, the central force in the English classical tradition which Dryden inherited, may be taken as represent-

Notes, p.16.

1. Discoveries, in Ben Jonson, edited by C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson, Oxford, 1947, viii, p. 588.
2. *ibid.*, p. 618.
3. *ibid.*, p. 622.
4. *ibid.*, p. 622.
5. *ibid.*, pp. 622-3.
6. *ibid.*, pp. 623, 625.

ative of the traditional attitude to language and style before Dryden's time.

Jonson criticises the faulty language of the Jacobean drama; and his Discov-eries contain pointed and characteristically terse observations on good diction.

The true artificer in words considers, he says,

what word is proper: which hath ornament: which height: what is beautifully translated: where figures are fit: which gentle, which strong to shew the composition Manly. And how hee hath avoyded faint, obscure, obscene, sordid, humble, improper, or effeminate Phrase; which is not only prais'd of the most, but commended, (which is worse) especially for that it is naught. (1)

Archaism is to be avoided by young poets lest, falling too much in love with antiquity, 'and not apprehending the weight, they grow rough and barren in language onely'; Spenser, however profitable his matter, 'in affecting the Ancients, writ no Language'. There is some danger, too, in coining new words:

A man coyne not a new word without some perill, and lesse fruit; for if it happen to be received, the praise is but moderate; if refus'd, the scorne is assur'd. Yet we must adventure, for things, at first hard and rough, are by use made tender and gentle. It is an honest error, that is committed, following great Chiefes. (3)

Jonson is everywhere moderate and reasonable in his attitude to the extension of the established literary vocabulary. He readily admits the value of words borrowed from antiquity in giving grace and beauty to a poem, but he advises caution:

wee must not be too frequent with the mint, every day coyning. Nor fetch words from the extreme and utmost ages; since the chiefe vertue of a style is perspicuitie. (4)

Perspicuity is assured most easily by a constant respect for current usage. The unusual word has merit only when introduced in moderation:

Some words are to be cull'd out for ornament and colour, as wee gather flowers to straw houses, or make Garlands; but they are better when they grow to our style; as in a Meadow, where though the meere grasse and greenesse delights, yet the variety of flowers doth heighten and beautifie. (5)

Although Jonson naturally inclines to a 'strict and succinct style..where you can take away nothing without losse', he recognises, in accordance with the classical tradition, that each literary kind has its own proper style and language.

Language 'most shewes a man: speake that I may see thee'; and different writers will speak in different terms. Distinctions are to be observed between language which is 'high and great', with massy, powerful diction; language which is 'humble and low'; and language of the middle kind,

plaine, and pleasing: even without stopping, round without swelling; all well-torn'd, compos'd, elegant, and accurate... And according to their Subject, these stiles vary.. (6)

Notes, p. 17.

1. Davenant, for example, repeats Jonson's objection to the archaism and coining of Spenser; as 'the most vulgar accusation that is laid to his charge'; but in his own attitude to archaism, he is far from moderate (see Spingarn, ii, p.6). The idea of the standard of current usage is emphasised frequently--- by, for example, Wolseley in the preface to Valentinian (Spingarn, iii, p. 27); and Wolseley severely criticises 'antiquated Words and obsolete Idioms of Speech'. Hobbes condemns foreign words 'till.. they become vulgar' by long use, and proscribes technical terms (Spingarn, ii, p.68).
2. Ronsard, Art Poétique, ii; Du Bellay, Franciade, IIme preface; Cf. Balzac, Entret. 38.
3. Deimier, Académie de l'art poétique (1610), I27-8, 433; Malherbe, Commentaire sur Desportes; Vaugelas, Remarques sur la langue française, (1648), pref. ii and x; Balzac, Les Passages défendus (1644) iii.
4. Deimier, op.cit., 431-2; Vaugelas, op.cit., pref. xi. These texts, with much supplementary material, are to be found in the 'loci critici' of Vial and Denise: Idées et Doctrines Littéraires du XVIIIme Siècle, Paris, 1933.
5. Boileau, the spokesman of French neo-classical criticism, rejects the free use of classical vocabulary exemplified by the Pléiade, while recognising the contributions of Ronsard to poetry (Oeuvres, ed. G. Mongrédien, Paris, 1943; L'Art Poétique, i, 126-8); he praises Malherbe as the apostle of purity and clarity (op.cit., i, 141-2); and he emphasises the need for attention to standards in diction (op.cit., i, 157-62). Boileau's Art Poétique reiterates the standards of accuracy, clarity, balance and precise completeness of statement. For a discussion of neo-classical standards of expression in France, see René Bray, La Formation de la Doctrine Classique en France, Paris, 1931.
6. Summers, v, 9.

Jonson's opinions on diction are typical of much critical writing during the century; (1) and the French critics of the seventeenth century, to whom Dryden was indebted for much of his material in several branches of literary theory, provide a mass of observations on the principles of diction which serves to fill out the more casual views of the English critics. The sources of Restoration views on the language of poetry, and of Dryden's views in particular, are very varied. To trace Dryden's debts to their French origins, or any others, is not my concern here; but a summary of French critical opinions on diction has value as a parallel instance. Further, Dryden's concern with the standards of courtly expression reflect in large measure the French point of view which the Restoration court brought home with it.

Just as the attitude of the seventeenth century English critics to archaism in poetry contrasted strongly with the principles underlying the archaism of Spenser and his school, so the French neo-classical attitude stands in clear contrast to the earlier doctrines of the Pléiade. Ronsard and Du Bellay had recommended the free adoption of old words; but the neo-classical critics asked why it was necessary to 'desenterrer une langue morte', or to mix the living with the dead. (2) Provincialisms and dialect words came in for strong criticism also ---- words which were 'plebée, bas et plus que plebée, peu courtisan bas et populaire, vieil, obsoletum'; and good usage was defined as the use of the court and the capital city. (3) Neologisms, 'mots composés', and technical terms, much favoured by the theorists of the Pléiade, were generally condemned. (4) The principles of poetic diction in French criticism were, by the middle of the seventeenth century, purity, clarity, freedom from provincial colour and archaism, and a constant respect for good cultivated usage. (5)

Standards in language concern Dryden a good deal in his critical essays. In praising the work of Richelieu and the French Academy in the dedication of Troilus and Cressida, he laments 'how barbarously we yet write and speak' in England; confesses himself frequently doubtful whether he is writing idiomatic English; and calls for a closer study of English in which the wisdom and the standards of 'the Court, the Colledge, and the Town' would be joined. (6) He regrets that English is

Notes, p.18.

I. Summers, v, p.10.

The need for an English Academy, especially in view of the French example, is a constant theme in Augustan criticism. See E. Freeman, A Proposal for an English Academy, M.L.R., xix, 1924; O.F. Emerson, John Dryden and a British Academy, Proc. British Academy, x, 1921; B.S. Monroe, An English Academy, M.P., viii, 1910-II.

The Royal Society set up a committee to consider the improvement of the language, and Dryden and Sprat were members. Evelyn's interest in the project produced the letter quoted above, pp. 4-5. Dryden discusses the idea more than once (Essays, i, p.5; ii, p.110). Cf. also Defoe's Essay on Projects; Addison, Spectator 135; Swift, Tatler 230 and letter to Harley, 22nd February, 1712.

2. Essays, ii, p.110.

3. Essays, i, p.5.

4. Boileau, Art poétique, iv, 122-4. Cf. Johnson's belief that Dryden's wide knowledge was in part gleaned from 'various conversation' (Lives, ed. G.B. Hill, Oxford, 1905, i, p.417).

Dryden's sense of the importance of social intercourse for men of letters is incidentally reflected in the dedication of The Assignation, when he rejoices in the comparison of his own society with that of the Roman Augustans-- 'We have, like them, our Genial Nights..' (Summers, iii, p.276).

5. Essays, i, p.253.

6. Essays, i, p.81. Cf. Essays, i, p.163.

7. Essays, i, p.165, 167.

Cf. G.B. Evans, A Seventeenth Century Reader of Shakespeare, R.E.S., xxi, 1945: a MS notebook of Dryden's time on the style and language of Elizabethan and Restoration plays.

Dryden was interested in grammar as well as diction. There is preserved an interesting letter which he wrote to Walsh, offering criticisms on Walsh's style and grammar (Letters, ed. C.E. Ward, Duke University Press, 1942, no.17).

'full of monosyllables, and those clog'd with consonants', and admits the necessity of introducing words from other languages to reduce the poverty of the native tongue:

by which means we abound as much in Words, as Amsterdam does in Religions; but to order them, and make them usefull after their admission, is the difficulty. A greater progress has been made in this, since his Majesties Return, than perhaps since the conquest to this time. But the better part of the work remains unfinish'd; And that which hath been done already ... must be digested into Rules and Method.. (I)

Again, Dryden regrets that there is as yet 'no English prosodia, not so much as a tolerable dictionary, or a grammar; so that our language is in a manner barbarous'. (2)

In the absence of an authoritative standard, he declares himself anxious to write an English distinguished from the language of pedants and affected travellers. His concern and his own standard is good current usage; and he follows Boileau in emphasising the importance of social intercourse in the making of a poet: (3) (4)

The proprieties and delicacies of the English are known to few; 'tis impossible even for a good wit to understand and practise them, without the help of a liberal education, long reading, and digesting of those few good authors we have among us, the knowledge of men and manners, the freedom of habitudes and conversation with the best company of both sexes... (5)

This concern with the conversation of the gentleman as the true standard of expression is best seen in Dryden's criticism of the earlier seventeenth century poets. Beaumont and Fletcher 'understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen' much better than Shakespeare did; but the language has been refined and improved still further since their day. The weaknesses of the Jacobean were, he says, solecisms and flaws in sense; and the test case is Ben Jonson, who is found on examination to have 'writ not correctly'. Dryden exposes Jonson's bad grammar, confusion and obscurity, **inaccurate** expression, tautology, anachronism, and 'ill-placing of words'. Such criticism comes ill from Dryden either as a poet or as a dramatist; but it does reveal a keen and searching interest in the proprieties of writing. (6) (7)

Again, Dryden's criticism might have been greatly modified had he had a more thorough knowledge of Elizabethan language and style. However, his examination of the Jacobean well exemplifies the Augustan passion for correctness; and the close, detailed analysis of style and diction remains a feature of critical writing in the neo-classical period from the essays of Dryden and Dennis to Johnson's Lives.

Notes, p.19.

1. Essays, i, pp. 169-70.

2. Essays, i, p. 175.

3. Essays, i, p. 176.

For a verse statement of the same point of view, see
Dryden's commendatory verses To my Dear Friend Mr. Congreve,
On His COMEDY, call'd, The Double-Dealer.

4. Essays, i, p. 176.

5. Spingarn, iii, p.16.

In contrast with the defects of the poetry of 'the last age', Dryden sets the achievements of his own generation. The melodious disposition of words was introduced into poetry by Waller; and in the poets of the Restoration period, thought is more finely dressed and language more courtly than ever before. (1) In this improvement, says Dryden, the court and town society have had a primary influence. The Jacobean age lived in an age of less gallantry, and their interest centred less on the court. Jonson, he admits, was 'conversant in courts'; but he was not equipped to take advantage of his opportunities. (2) From court conversation, Dryden declares emphatically, proceeds 'the last and greatest advantage of our writing'. It was the misfortune of Charles II to spend years of exile at foreign courts; but since these provided the most cultured society in Europe, the King's misfortune became the advantage of England, since his influence improved manners and made conversation free and graceful. (3) Poetry inevitably benefited:

This being granted to be true, it would be a wonder if the poets, whose work is imitation, should be the only persons in ~~three~~ kingdoms who should not receive advantage by it; or, if they should not more easily imitate the wit and conversation of the present age than of the past. (4)

Although the standards of cultivated current speech form the groundwork of much of the verse style of Dryden's time --especially for familiar, occasional, comic and satiric writing-- they were not taken as the unmodified rule for all poetical composition. For the Augustan, the range of the poetic muse was extensive. At one limit, poetry might work with mean or everyday material, and did so more persistently in the neo-classical period than in any other. True genius, says Wolseley,

like the Anima Mundi which some of the Ancients believ'd, will enter into the hardest and driest thing, enrich the most barren Soil, and inform the meanest and most uncomely matter; nothing within the vast Immensity of Nature so devoid of Grace or so remote from Sense but will obey the Formings of his plastic Heat and feel the Operations of his vivifying Power... (5)

At the other limit, however, there were themes and material traditionally 'poetic', which demanded lofty, majestic and imaginative treatment; and the poetry which dealt with such material required many qualities of ornament and eloquence which could not be supplied from the resources of cultivated usage and courtly conversation alone. The ancient distinctions between the poetic genres were fully maintained in Augustan

(1) Notes, p.20.

1. Essays, i, p. 135.
2. Essays, i, p. 148.
3. Essays, i, p. 246.
4. Essays, i, p. 248.
5. Summers, ii, p. 330.
6. Essays, i, pp. 255, 256.
7. Essays, i, p. 258.

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

poetry; and each 'kind' had its own well-defined characteristics. Critical theory modified the principle of adherence to the graceful, simple, perspicuous standards of cultured conversation to meet the diverse needs of the poetic categories.

(1)

Dryden allows to comedy 'much of conversation with the vulgar'. Serious plays, on the other hand,

ought not to imitate conversation too nearly. If nothing were to be raised above that level, the foundation of Poetry would be destroyed. And if you once admit of a latitude, that thoughts may be exalted, and that images and actions may be raised above the life... you are already so far onward of your way, that you have forsaken the imitation of ordinary converse. (2)

What is required of the heroic play, however, is not a mode of expression which abandons ordinary speech for an excessively ornate and extravagant diction-- what Dryden **calls** 'fustian'-- but an elevated style and vocabulary. Dryden confesses, with justice, the extravagance of much of his own dramatic writing; but a distinction must be made between the truly magnificent, and the bombastic. The dramatist must seek

(3)

purity of phrase, .. clearness of conception and expression, .. boldness maintained to majesty, .. significancy and sound of words, not strained into bombast, but justly elevated; (4)

and in the preface to Tyrannic Love, Dryden eloquently states the ennobling effects of a majestic utterance in heroic drama:

By the Harmony of Words, we elevate the mind to a sense of Devotion, as our solemn Musick, which is inarticulate Poesie, does in Churches; and by the lively images of piety, adorned by action, through the senses, allure the Soul; which while it is charmed in a silent joy of what it sees and hears, is struck at the same time with a secret veneration of things Celestial, and is wound up insensibly into the practice of that which it admires. (5)

The heroic poem, like the heroic play, requires a style and diction raised above the average. Virgil, Dryden's acknowledged master in the loftier kind of poetry, is praised as 'a succinct and grave majestic writer', who weighed every word and syllable:

He is everywhere above conceits of epigrammatic wit, and gross hyperboles; he maintains majesty in the midst of plainness; he shines, but glares not; and is stately without ambition.. I drew my definition of poetical wit from my particular consideration of him: for propriety of thoughts and words are only to be found in him; and where they are proper they will be delightful. (6)

There is an inimitable grace in Virgil's words, and in them principally consists that beauty, which gives so unexpressible a pleasure to him who best understands their force. (7)

Notes, p.21.

1. Essays, i, pp. 271, 277.
2. Essays, i, p. 278. Cf. Addison's ironical comments, Spectator, Nos. 18 and 29.
3. Essays, i, pp. 171 and 51.
4. Essays, i, pp. 266 and 268.
5. Essays, ii, p. 29.

Cf. Dryden on Milton, 1693: 'I found in him a true sublimity, lofty thoughts, which were clothed with admirable Grecisms, and ancient words, which he had been digging from the mines of Chaucer and Spenser, and which, with all their rusticity, had somewhat of venerable in them..(Essays, ii, p. 109).

In Dryden's later years, the language of Milton was approved, condemned, and often faintly praised. In 1713, Addison noted that 'the learned World is very much divided upon Milton as to this point' (Spectator, No. 285).

For a summary of criticism of Milton's language, see E.N. Hooker, Critical Works of Dennis, i, pp.429-30).

In his 'majesty in the midst of plainness', Virgil combines the two principles of clear, pure expression and of elevation; and in style and diction, he remains one of Dryden's constant models, from Annus Mirabilis to the translations of Dryden's last years.

Dryden's attitude to coinages and archaisms was a conservative one. In some of his work, he confesses himself bound by circumstances to depart from the established vocabulary of his time. In discussing the problems of operatic libretto, for example, he makes the perennial complaint of the librettist, that he is prevented from writing the 'lofty, figurative, and majestic' verse proper to stage dialogue by the unnatural demands of the music. He is forced to concentrate on propriety of sound and rhythm rather than on propriety and elegance of expression. (I) It is with this sense of frustration and restriction, that Dryden confesses himself forced 'to coin new words, revive some that are antiquated, and botch others; as if I had not served out my time in poetry, but was bound apprentice to some doggerel rhym⁽²⁾er'.

In spite of this, Dryden is not consistently critical of neologism and archaism. He approves Horace's moderate practice of 'applying received words to a new signification', and quotes with approbation Horace's advice on the sparing and cautious introduction of new words. (3) In 1685, he declares that Spenser's experimental use of dialect in The Shepherdes Calender was not a success, and praises Milton's poetic merits 'without defending his antiquated words, and the perpetual harshness of their sound'; (4) but by 1693 his attitude to these poets has become much modified, and even runs into cautious praise. Milton is Spenser's disciple, archaising from choice rather than from necessity; and, although both poets use the antiques and the novelties of language too frequently,

yet, in my opinion, obsolete words may then be laudably revived, when either they are more sounding, or more significant, than those in practice; and when their obscurity is taken away, by joining other words to them, which clear the sense; according to the rule of Horace, for the admission of new words. But in both cases a moderation is to be observed in the use of them: for unnecessary coinage as well as unnecessary revival runs into affectation; a fault to be avoided on either hand. (5)

Dryden's moderate attitude, exemplified here, is the key to his own poetic practice. Answering the complaint that he latinises too much, he declares (1697) that

Notes, p.22.

1. Essays, ii, p. 234.

2. Elyot, Of that knowledge, whiche maketh a wise man, Proheme a ii.
See Sir William Craigie, The Critique of Pure English from
Caxton to Smollett, S.P.E. Tract, lxxv, Oxford, 1946.

3. Essays, ii, p. 267.

4. 2nd. edition, 1737, p. 184.

5. Spectator, No. 297. Addison also criticises Dryden's use of
sea-terms in the Aeneis.

when I find an English word significant and sounding, I neither borrow from the Latin, nor any other language; but, when I want at home, I must seek abroad.... I trade both with the living and the dead, for the enrichment of our native language. (1)

Here, in 1697, the policy which began with Elyot's desire 'to augment our English tongue' in the early sixteenth century, and provoked so much controversy and so much poetry in the Elizabethan period, is boldly re-stated. It is ⁽²⁾ not, however, mere necessity which promotes archaism and other sorts of innovation in Dryden, as it was with the early augmenters; the reverential attitude towards the classical poets and Dryden's English predecessors plays a part:

When an ancient word for its sound and significancy deserves to be revived, I have that ~~reason~~ reasonable veneration for antiquity to restore it. (3)

Colloquialisms and technical terms were generally condemned by neo-classical critics, at least so far as the higher types of poetry were concerned, on the ground of propriety. Hobbes, in the preface to his Homer (1675), observed that 'the names of Instruments and Tools of Artificers... are far from being fit to be spoken by a Heroe'. Phillips, in the preface to Theatrum Poetarum in the same year, took the more liberal view that epic should not be ashamed of

vulgar, unknown, or unusual words, if either terms of Art, well chosen, or proper to the occasion, for fear of frightening the Ladies from reading, as if it were not more reasonable that Ladies who will read Heroic Poems should be qualified accordingly, than that the Poet should check his fancy for either Men or Ladys whose capacities will not ascend above Argalus and Parthenia;

but in general, the technical word was elbowed out of poetry by the Augustan critics with a resolution which gathered force as the eighteenth century advanced. Bysse, in The Art of English Poetry (1702), advised the poet to avoid 'most of the Terms of Arts and Sciences... with all Pedantick hard Words'; Spence, in his Essay on Mr. Pope's Odyssey, allowed the limited use of familiar technical terms, but ⁽⁴⁾ warned against those which carry difficulty or affectation with them; and Addison censured Milton for the use of learned words and technicalities, since 'it is one of the greatest Beauties of Poetry, to make hard Things intelligible'. ⁽⁵⁾ Johnson, criticising Dryden's sea-terms, sets out the general neo-classical attitude to technical words succinctly:

Notes, p.23.

1. Lives, ed. G.B. Hill, Oxford, 1905, i, p. 433.
2. Essays, i, p.13.
3. Essays, ii, p. 236.
Cf. Dryden's avoidance of dialect in translating Theocritus,
because he was writing for 'our ladies' (Essays, i, p. 266).

It is a general rule in poetry that all appropriated terms of art should be sunk in general expressions, because poetry is to speak a universal language. This rule is still stronger with regard to arts not liberal or confined to few, and therefore far removed from common knowledge; and of this kind certainly is technical navigation. (1)

Such critical comments might be multiplied from Augustan documents: the use of technical terms was censured, with occasional reservations, on the grounds of unintelligibility, impropriety in a poem dealing with lofty things and noble persons, pedantry, and obstruction to the universal appeal of poetry. This censure was a logical part of the neo-classical theory of poetry; and Dryden, at least in his later criticism, might be expected to subscribe to it.

In the preface to Annus Mirabilis, he confesses that he made a deliberate effort to enrich his descriptions of the fleets with sea-terms:

In general I will only say, I have never yet seen the description of any naval fight in the proper terms which are used at sea; and if there be any such, in another language... yet I could not prevail myself of it in the English; the terms of art in every tongue bearing more of the idiom of it than any other words. We hear indeed among our poets, of the thundering of guns, the smoke, the disorder, and the slaughter, but all these are common notions... For my own part, if I had little knowledge of the sea, yet I have thought it no shame to learn; and if I have made some few mistakes, it is only, as you can bear me witness, because I have wanted opportunity to correct them; the whole poem being written.. where I have not so much as the converse of any seaman. (2)

Ker, annotating this passage, says that 'Dryden changed his mind about terms of art, and in the Dedication of the Aeneis has given the opposite view'. There Dryden says:

I will not give the reasons why I writ not always in the proper terms of navigation, land-service, or in the cant of any profession. I will only say, that Virgil has avoided those proprieties, because he writ not to mariners, soldiers, astronomers, gardeners, peasants, etc., but to all in general, and in particular to men and ladies of the first quality, who have been better bred than to be too nicely knowing in the terms. In such cases, it is enough for a poet to write so plainly, that he may be understood by his readers; to avoid impropriety, and not to affect to be thought learned in all things. (3)

Ker over-simplifies, in saying merely that Dryden has here changed his mind about technical terms. Dryden says that he wrote 'not always' in the proper terms; and in the passage just quoted there is a clear implication that technical terms, although avoided by Virgil, are by themselves 'just proprieties'. Dryden did no more than to avoid excessive technicality, in deference to his circle of cultured but non-specialist readers. Unless we recognise this, and allow that technical terms were not in themselves improper in poetry, from Dryden's point of view, we must **change**

I. The ideal heroic poet is 'a man who.. to his natural endowments, of a large invention, a ripe judgment, and a strong memory, has joined the knowledge of the liberal arts and sciences, and particularly moral philosophy, the mathematics, geography, and history, and with all these qualifications is born a poet' (Essays, ii, p.36).

2. Lives, ed. G.B. Hill, Oxford, 1905, i, p.420.

the poet with serious inconsistency; for there is a considerable technical element in the vocabulary of the Aeneis itself. Indeed, Dryden in many places introduces terms of art without any warrant from his original; and in his version of the Georgics, he made little effort to reduce the technicality of Virgil. In his note to the second Georgic, he apologises lest 'for want of sufficient skill in Gardening, Agriculture, &c., I may possibly be mistaken in some Terms'.

Dryden's attitude to technical words seems to have been a fairly consistent and liberal one. He does not appear to have been much concerned by critical condemnations of terms of art; he draws freely on the vocabulary of the arts, crafts and sciences throughout his career, and in a wide variety of contexts; and his only reservation is that the polite reader should not be oppressed and bewildered by unintelligible technicalities in a poem. More positively, I suggest that the sensibly restricted use of a technical vocabulary is a sound corollary to Dryden's conception of the learned and richly endowed poet; it harmonises both with his notion of the freely ranging fancy, and with his untrammelled use, in practice, of any type of word or image which suited his immediate purpose; and, most important of all, his moderate technicality may be interpreted, especially in the light of the preface to Annus Mirabilis, as part of Dryden's persistent effort to write vividly, colourfully and realistically. Despite an element of truth, Johnson's well-known estimate of Dryden's contribution to poetic diction is far from accurate:

There was therefore before the time of Dryden no poetical diction: no system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestick use and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpose of a poet. (2)

Dryden made no very serious effort to keep his poetic vocabulary free from 'the grossness of domestick use'; and Johnson himself has something to say on his employment of technical terms. Dryden's diction no doubt provided his disciples with a basic vocabulary which was standard, polished and refined --- such a vocabulary was indeed one of his ideals; but he gave epic and drama, the highest types of verse he attempted, their full share of words and phrases which the strict Augustan critic could not fail to deplore. As in much else besides diction, he recognises the value of critical principles, and yet does not hesitate to modify them when the pursuit of the craft of poetry seems to justify it.

Notes, p.25.

1. Essays, i, p.35.
2. Essays, ii, p.19.
3. Essays, ii, pp. 108-9.
4. Cf. T.S. Eliot's view that Cowley falls between the metaphysical and the Augustan schools: Note on Two Odes of Cowley, in Seventeenth Century Studies presented to Sir Herbert Grierson, Oxford, 1938, p. 237.
5. See A.H. Nethercot, The Reputation of Abraham Cowley (1660-1800) P.M.L.A., xxxviii, 1923; and The Reputation of the Metaphysical Poets during the Seventeenth Century, P.Q., iv, 1925.
6. Spingarn makes the distinction shortly and well: 'The turn may be one of words or thoughts, but in either case it has its basis in a reality of nature. Therein lies its superiority over the conceit: their difference renews the humanist's opposition between 'words' and 'things' (op.cit., i, p. xlv).

The ideals of simplicity, directness and noble plainness influenced Dryden's attitude, not only to words, but to imagery. In the Essay of Dramatic Poesy (1668), Cowley is named with Suckling, Denham and Waller, the poets of correctness and conversational grace; he is a poet 'elevated, copious, and full of spirit'; and although he differs in style from the others, he is associated with them as the great poetic leaders in Dryden's early period. In 1693, however, Dryden describes Cowley as the disciple of Donne; and Cowley shares, by implication, some of Dryden's criticism of Donne's conceited and perplexing style. Donne is censured in a famous passage:

(1)

He affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softnesses of love. (2)

Cowley, says Dryden, copied Donne to a fault. Looking for those turns of thought and 'turns' in diction which he regards as one of the chief beauties in poetry, Dryden scanned the work of 'the darling of my youth, the famous Cowley':

there I found, instead of them, the points of wit, and quirks of epigram, even in the Dauids, an heroic poem, which is of an opposite nature to those puerilities; but no elegant turns either on the word or on the thought. (3)

It is not surprising that Dryden's attitude to Cowley should change. Cowley had enough sympathy with the scientific interest and enthusiasm of the Restoration to make him attractive to his younger contemporaries; but his style, with its pedantry, forced wit, and startling juxtaposition of ideas and imagery, looks back to an earlier generation and to a poetic tradition which was becoming out-moded.

The turns of word and thought, which Dryden praises in others and practises in his own poetry, are not the perplexing and ingenious games which Cowley plays with words and ideas, but something less complex and more graceful and easy. The Augustan poets turned from the metaphysical paradox, the bold association of apparently contrasted ideas and images, to the contrast and opposition in antithesis. They play, not with contrasted ideas, but rather with methods of contrast: their style is marked, not by the metaphysical pattern of dissociated ideas, but by the opposition of ideas and the heightening of that opposition by rhetorical devices in the balanced couplet. Thus the turn does not synthesis things which are

Notes, p. 26.

1. 'As the Elizabethan quibble on words passed into the metaphysical quibble on sense, so the latter passed into a new style of wit which depended less upon ambiguity than upon the antithesis of ideas, or less upon startling reconciliations and more upon surprising oppositions' (G. Williamson, The Pattern of Neo-Classical Wit, M.P., xxxiii, 1935-6).
2. Lives, ed. G.B. Hill, Oxford, 1905, i, p.460.
3. Essays, i, p. 18; i, p. 186; i, pp. 15-16.

naturally distinct; it emphasises rhetorically the distinctions between things.

Dryden, although his development illustrates the gradual reaction from the metaphysical tradition, never quite threw off the influence of Donne and the disciples of Donne in his poetic imagery. By his time, the intellectual flux of the Renaissance had settled. Science and speculative thought continued to make great strides, but with a quiet, practical calm which instructed the mind and enriched communal life much more than it fired the poetic imagination. The ferment of events and ideas in which Shakespeare and Donne had striven to match mind and imagination with the times, had largely subsided; and with it went the raison d'être of the bold, extravagant, complicated poetic imagery of the Jacobean. The conceit had by Dryden's time lost its vital connection with thought and feeling; what had been functional, and had found its justification in its integral, functional nature, had become decorative and excrescent. This Dryden in some measure realised; but he never abandoned the conceit as inept and outmoded. His closest affinity is with the precise, ~~restrained~~, direct classical style of Jonson, which helped to shape the poetic tradition of the Augustans; but his rejection of the metaphysical manner was much more thorough in his criticism than in his practice. The reasons for this are, I think, two. In the first place, Johnson was right in saying that, next to argument, Dryden's delight 'was in wild and daring sallies of sentiment, in the irregular and excentrick violence of wit'. He was naturally strong, vivid, ingenious and extravagant in his thought and expression; and his conceited flights of fancy are ultimately the product of that exuberant temperament. There is little sense in pretending, as some critics have done, that he outgrew the fascination of his 'false lights'; his conceits and fancies are an integral part of his poetic character. Secondly, the doctrine of fancy encouraged him in the perpetuation of the conceited style. Fancy was the source of the bold imagery of the higher types of poetry; and it combined with the new influence of Longinus on critical thought, and the important example of Ovid's 'odoriferous flowers of fancy', to hold Dryden firmly in the extravagant tradition which in theory he condemned.

In his critical essays, Dryden lays tremendous stress on the poetic value of imagery. It is 'the very height and life of poetry'; it springs from the excitement of the poet's mind; and it demands all a poet's labour and art. Dryden's

Notes, p. 27.

1. Essays, ii, p. 40.
2. Essays, i, p. 3.
3. Essays, i, p. 3.
4. Essays, ii, pp. 117-8.
5. Essays, ii, p. 125.

Introduction to the Introduction

(5)

(8)

views on image making harmonise with his attitude to poetic diction: the poet is a conscious artist, shaping the word-and-image pattern of his poem. Yet, just as diction must not be too artificial, so imagery must not be forced and unnatural. Dryden praises Dorset's poetry as a smoothed diamond set in gold, 'the perfect work of art and nature', in which the poet's thoughts

are always so remote from the common way of thinking, that they are, as I may say, of another species than the conceptions of other poets; yet you do not go out of nature for them. Gold is never bred upon the surface of the ground, but lies so hidden and so deep, that the mines of it are seldom found... (1)

It remains for me to give some account of those aspects of the complex idea of 'Nature' which bear on Dryden's views on language and style. For Dryden, 'Nature' is the end of art. He speaks of composition in which the fancy, memory and judgment are extended like limbs on the rack, reaching out towards Nature --- 'a thing so almost infinite and boundless, as can never fully be comprehended, but where the images of all things are always present'. Yet Nature is not completely beyond the poet's reach: Dryden speaks of Orrery's success in the attempt, because 'the knowledge of men is your daily practice in the world'. Orrery reaches Nature in his writing through his close understanding of human nature. Here then, in a single passage, Dryden thinks of Nature as at once the all-comprehensive ideal and end of art, and as the true and actual; and these two notions are of complementary importance in his critical theory.

Firstly, Nature in poetry is perfection. In the Parallel of Poetry and Painting, Dryden quotes Bellori as reiterating the Platonic and Renaissance doctrine that sublunary nature cannot reach perfection --- 'all things which are sublunary are subject to change, deformity, and decay'. Art makes perfect, realising the ideal which nature offers but cannot reach because of the flaws and disproportions in the material world. The poet and the painter work towards the idea of a perfect Nature, 'thereby correcting Nature from what she actually is in individuals, to what she ought to be, and what she was created'. This is essentially the Renaissance development, as seen for example in Sidney, of the Aristotelian doctrine of the universality and perfection of art, and of a poetry which is higher and more philosophical than history. Poetry and painting, says Dryden,

views on large writing passages with his attitude to poetic diction the poet is a conscious artist, shaping the word-and-image pattern of his poem. Yet, just as diction must not be too artificial, so literary must not be too natural.

Notes, p. 28.

1. Essays, ii, p. 137.
2. Essays, ii, p. 135.
3. Essays, i, pp. 182, 183.
4. Essays, i, p. 183.
5. Essays, ii, p. 132.
6. Essays, ii, p. 139.

... in the end of art, he speaks of composition in which the literary, literary and judgment are extended from fiction on the real, reaching out towards nature ... 'a thing as almost infinite and boundless, as can never fully be comprehended, but where the image of all things are always present'. Let nature be not only directly beyond the poet's reach; rather speaks of Grotius's process in the ... very reaches nature in his writing through his close understanding of human nature. Here then, in a single passage, Hayden thinks of nature as at once the all-comprehensive ideal and end of art, and as the true and actual; and these two notions are of complementary importance in his critical theory.

literally; nature in poetry is perfection, in the parallel of poetry and relating. Hayden quotes Bellini as interpreting the Platonic and Aristotelian doctrine that ordinary nature cannot reach perfection -- all things which are ordinary are subject to change, degeneracy, and decay. And this perfect, relating the ideal which nature always but cannot reach because of its flow and disposition in the material world. The poet and the painter work towards the idea of a perfect nature, 'literally conceiving nature as that which actually is in individuals, so that the right to be, and that the right to be created'. This is especially the Renaissance development, as even for example in Sidney, of the Aristotelian doctrine of the immutability and perfection of art, and of a poetry which is higher and more philosophical than history, poetry and painting, says Hayden.

present us with images more perfect than the life in any individual; and we have the pleasure to see all the scattered beauties of Nature united by a happy chemistry, without its deformities or faults. (1)

This is a conception which influences the Augustan attitude to the 'Ancients'.
(2)
Nature, says Dryden, is the same in all ages; and the poet is aided in his search for perfection by the example of the great poets of the past and the rules of their practice, since their very greatness is the result of their close study of Nature. Dryden's attitude to classical rule is, in the main, conservative. He deplores an uncritical imitation of the ancients; but he recognises that generally to have pleased, and through all ages, must bear the force of universal tradition... They, who would combat authority with particular opinion, must first establish themselves a reputation of understanding better than other men. (3)

Thus I grant you, that the knowledge of Nature was the original rule; and that all poets ought to study her, as well as Aristotle and Horace, her interpreters. (4)

Dryden's second use of the term Nature concerns the real and the true. He criticises the farcical and grotesque in art as 'a lower sort of poetry and painting, which is out of Nature... The persons of a farce are all unnatural, and the manners false, that is, inconsisting with the characters of mankind'.
(5)
Not only character and theme are affected; unnecessary ornament in a poem, and irrelevant digression in its design, are unnatural:

No person, no incident, in the piece, or in the play, but must be of use to carry on the main design. All things else are like six fingers to the hand, when Nature, which is superfluous in nothing, can do her work with five. A painter must reject all trifling ornaments; so must a poet refuse all tedious and unnecessary descriptions. (6)

I turn now to Dryden's poetic practice. The rigid division of his poetry into 'kinds' gives a very false picture of its qualities and texture. Dryden was by nature too independent, too boldly experimental in his treatment of a theme in verse, to be rigidly faithful to merely theoretical principles. His attitude to the diction of poetry was eclectic; he broke across the fences of the literary categories in search of the material for free expression; and indeed, the doctrine of fancy, with all its stress on the freshness and originality of true poetic imagination, and its implied condemnation of mere tradition and convention, encouraged him to take liberties with the rules. Further: amidst all the variety of theme and manner

in his poetry, certain modes of expression emerge as natural to Dryden's genius. In him at least, the style is the man, and his individual tones can be detected everywhere in his work. He has a range of vocabulary, a texture of style, and a quality of voice, which are distinctive and unmistakable--- in the magniloquence of heroic drama, the thunder of destructive criticism, the solemnity of rhetorical reflection, the vigorous action of a tale, the resonant laughter and the wicked chuckles of satire, and the genial grace of verse conversation.

Some attention to the poetic categories, with their established varieties of style, is necessary; Dryden never treated traditional standards with disrespect. He was, however, less often a poet of the study, diligently applying the rigid theory of his time to a selected range of poetic types, than a poet of the court and the town--- improving an occasion in politics or society with his pen, writing for the entertainment of theatre audiences, celebrating or satirising contemporary celebrities, and modifying his standards and his styles to suit the occasion. My division of his work is consequently of the loosest kind. My intention is, in the light of traditional critical theory, Dryden's own critical opinions, and the practical needs of the hour, to study his methods in performing a variety of poetic tasks; and so to draw out the lineaments and analyse the tones and the texture of his style.

I begin with his translations of the Latin and Greek poets. These offer a wide range of styles and tones, from familiar verse through satire and pastoral to heroic narrative. Dryden's critical essays contain some of the shrewdest general estimates of classical poets and their styles in our literature. To the task of translation he brought sensitiveness, sympathy, sound scholarship, and immense poetic versatility. Thus, in a study of his views on translation, his attitude to his originals, and his success or failure in carrying these originals over into English, throws into relief the essential features of his own poetic character, the range and limits of his versatility, and the natural mode of expression into which he moves, whatever type of poetry he takes up.

II

TRANSLATION FROM THE CLASSICS (I)

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1. Dryden and the principles of translation.
2. Dryden's use of seventeenth century editions of the classics----
the commentators ----- earlier English translators.
3. Translations: Ovid ---- Horace ---- Theocritus ---- Virgil's
Eclogues ---- Juvenal ---- Persius ---- Lucretius ---- Homer.

Alike with wonder and delight we view'd
The Roman Genius in thy Verse renew'd:
We saw thee raise soft Ovid's Amorous Fire,
And fit the tuneful Horace to thy Lyre:
We saw new gall imbitter Juvenal's Pen,
And crabbed Persius made politely plain.

To Mr. Dryden, on his Excellent Translation
of VIRGIL, 1797.

As a translator, Dryden stands, historically and in temperament, in the main stream of the neo-classical tradition. The sense of kinship with classical periods, especially with Augustan Rome, was strong in his age; and this sense of kinship had important bearings on the theory and practice of verse translation. Translation which aimed only at a scholarly accuracy was neither much practised nor highly valued. A literal rendering of a classical author served no important purpose in an age when the originals were within the reach of any educated man. There is besides, in merely literal translation, the implication that the literature translated is remote in tone and content from the native tradition, and that the first task to be undertaken is objective, scientific study, with comprehension as its end. The value of translation from the classics in Dryden's day was not that it placed an imperfectly understood literature within the grasp of the educated reader, but that it strengthened and maintained the links which were felt to bind the classical authors and their translators together. The brotherhood of the classical and the neo-classical was emphasised; one spirit and style was understood and interpreted by another. Stress was therefore laid, not upon literalness, but upon the communication of the quality and tone of the original. An old author was to be brought to life in a new linguistic medium; and this resuscitation conferred benefit not only on the original and on the reader, but on the language which was used for this purpose. For in translation, as Phillimore says, 'the slowness of invention is stimulated. The junior tongue, confronted with the problem, or piqued by the challenge, of keeping pace with its elders and betters, must develop missing organs, borrow for its deficiencies, strain itself to unsuspected capacities and attainments. (1)

In his preface to Ovid's Epistles, Dryden distinguishes three types of translation, and discusses their merits. These three are 'metaphrase, or turning an author word by word, and line by line, from one language to another'; 'paraphrase, or translation with latitude'; and 'imitation', in which the translator 'assumes the liberty, not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion. The task of the translator who wishes to be faithful at once to the words, content, style and tone of his original is well-nigh impossible. Dryden regards a (2)

Notes, p.32.

1. Essays, i, p. 237. On the movement away from literalism, see Spingarn, i, pp. xlvi-lviii.
2. Essays, ii, pp. 9, 10.
3. Essays, i, p. 233.
4. Essays, i, p. 242;
5. Essays, i, p. 254.
6. Essays, i, p. 243.

version which is merely literal as pedantic: 'tis a faith like that which proceeds from superstition, blind and zealous'.⁽¹⁾ The other extreme of 'imitation' is hardly within the province of a translator; for it is not a rendering of an original author, but only the use of him as a pattern of style. Between these two extremes lies Dryden's ideal method, 'paraphrase'.

In defending 'paraphrase' against the literalists, in the dedication of Examem Poeticum, Dryden succinctly expresses the Augustan aim of reviving an old author in a new language, with close attention to his style and tone:

Sure I am, that if it be a fault, 'tis much more pardonable than that of those who run into the extreme of a literal and close translation, where the poet is confined so straitly to his author's words, that he wants elbow-room to express his elegances. He leaves him obscure; he leaves him prose, where he found him verse... I have, ... attempted to restore Ovid to his native sweetness, easiness, and smoothness; and to give my poetry a kind of cadence.. as like the original, as the English can come up to the Latin. (2)

(3)

On the one hand, 'we are bound to our author's sense'; but on the other hand, his character and spirit must be comprehended, and carried over in the translation. Some liberty, therefore, is to be allowed in expression; the translator is also the interpreter of his original. The qualifications of a translator, on this view, are numerous. Scholarship is essential: but beyond this, the translator must be sensitive, sympathetic, interpretative, in his approach to his original, and must be a master of his own language and that of his author alike. (4)

Thus it appears necessary, that a man should be a nice critic in his mother-tongue before he attempts to translate a foreign language.. he must perfectly understand his author's tongue, and absolutely command his own. So that to be a thorough translator, he must be a thorough poet. (5)

Translators of merit are therefore rare; 'there are so few who have all the talents which are requisite'.⁽⁶⁾ The view that a good translator must be a 'thorough poet' is fundamental in Dryden's practice, since the peculiar faculties of a poet, especially his fancy, give him considerable licence as a translator. The translator's business is liberally artistic; it is 'to make his author appear as charming as he possibly can, provided he maintains his character':

Notes, p.33.

1. Essays, i, pp. 252-3.
2. Essays, ii, p. 31.
3. Phillimore well says that 'perfect translation requires a sort of mutual action set up in both languages... the two languages must be equivalent in point of expressiveness' (op.cit., p.4).
4. Essays, i, p. 252.

Translation is a kind of drawing after the life; where everyone will acknowledge there is a double sort of likenesses, a good one and a bad. 'Tis one thing to draw the outlines true, the features like, the proportions exact, the colouring itself perhaps tolerable; and another thing to make all these graceful, by the posture, the shadowings, and chiefly, by the spirit which animates the whole. (1)

The language difficulty is a serious one in any task of translation; and the critics of Dryden's day, although they had much to say in praise of the power and refinement of their own language, also sufficiently appreciated the qualities of the classical languages to realise that translation into English was bound, by differences in linguistic texture alone, to be inadequate. Imitation of the grand manner of the classical poets, says Dryden, is nevertheless within the reach of the English translator, provided that he has the talent of his great models: the language,

though not of equal dignity, yet as near approaching to it, as our modern barbarism will allow, which is all that can be expected from our own, or any other now extant, though more refined: and therefore we are to rest contented with that only inferiority, which is not possible to be remedied. (2)

This difference in the quality of the two languages demands, in a translator, all the sensitiveness and art of a poet who is aware of linguistic niceties, and appreciates the amount of stretching and straining which his own language will take in the process of translation. There is compensation for the difficulties of language, in the insight of the poet-translator: where the transfer from one language to another cannot be carried out without loss, or so much change that the resemblances between the old and the new are somewhat obscured, a sympathetic poet may bring the imaginative quality and the spirit of his original to new life in a different linguistic medium. So it is that Dryden, seeking to convey in translation that 'spirit which animates the whole' in the original, feels justified in expanding or omitting, and in adding fresh colour and poetic suggestion here and there. His business is to maintain the character of his author; and in the licence of practical interpretation, he says,

where I have taken away some of their expressions, and cut them shorter, it may be possibly on this occasion, that what was beautiful in the Greek or Latin, would not appear so shining in the English: and where I have enlarged them, I desire the false critics would not always think, that those thoughts are wholly mine, but that either they are secretly in the poet, or may be fairly deduced from him; or at least, if both those considerations should fail, that my own is of a piece with his, and that if he were living, and an Englishman, they are such as he would probably have written. (4)

Notes, p. 34.

1. Essays, i, pp. 265-6; ii, III.

2. Essays, ii, pp. II3-4.

3. Cf. Johnson's defence of Pope's modern style and tone in the Homer, Lives, ed. G.B. Hill, Oxford, 1905, iii, p. 240:

To a thousand cavils one answer is sufficient; the purpose of a writer is to be read... Pope wrote for his own age and his own nation: he knew that it was necessary to colour the images and point the sentiments of his author; he therefore made him graceful, but lost him some of his sublimity'. See also Hill's note on this passage.

4. Johnson celebrates Dryden's triumph over prosaic accuracy in translating Virgil: Johnson, op.cit., iii, p. 279.

This last passage not only serves as a text for Dryden's considerable elaboration of his originals, especially in imagery; it throws some light on his reasons for modernising his originals. He aims at bringing his original to new life in English, in the dress and style, and with the attitudes of mind and modes of expression, which give him, for Restoration England, that sort of contemporaneity and actuality which he had for his own age. The extent to which Dryden modernises his originals varies a good deal: there is obviously more scope (and need) for modernising a social satirist like Juvenal than an epic poet like Virgil, whose matter is to a large extent independent of time and change. Sometimes Dryden's regard for his reading public governs his treatment of a classical poet; as he avoids imitation of Theocritus' rustic language, because he translates for ladies who would not understand or appreciate homely words, so he avoids mere literalism in the Juvenal, because 'we write only for the pleasure and entertainment of those gentlemen and ladies who, though they are not scholars, are not ignorant', and the poet has therefore a duty in clarifying obscurities and in interpreting allusions. Modernising makes a classical poet comprehensible; and it also emphasises the links between Roman and English ways of life. Dryden and his collaborators in the Juvenal endeavoured to make him speak that kind of English, which he would have spoken had he lived in England, and had written to this age. If sometimes any of us... make him express the customs and manners of our native country rather than of Rome, 'tis either when there was some kind of analogy betwixt their customs and ours, or when, to make him more easy to vulgar understandings, we give him these manners which are familiar to us. (2)

Dryden's general approach to the task of translation, then, is essentially that of the professional and popular poet: his business is to present a classical author in a form which does not do any injustice to his matter; which properly conveys the quality of his style and diction to the reader, as far as linguistic differences will allow; which interprets and draws out his suggestions and implications while it transfers his material; which gives him as far as possible the modern costume most like that which he wore in his own time and to his contemporaries; and which is, above all, readable and vital.

Notes, p.35.

1. Dryden's Latin Scholarship, M.P., xl., 1942-3.
2. E.g., Persius V; note 23; VI, note 3.
3. E.g., notes on AEneis iv, 944; Pastorals, iv, 72; AEneis, vi,
4. Dryden was of course anxious to avoid charges of pedantry; and full scholarly annotation was not necessary in a popular translation. He avoided excessive or recondite annotation (see Essays, ii, p.204).

Dryden regarded the scholarly and sensitive understanding of a classical poet as an essential quality in a translator. False estimates of his own ability as a classical scholar, and of his use of editors, commentators, and earlier translators, have sometimes led to false estimates of his success as a translator. The classical texts which he used were often very different from their modern counterparts; and the accuracy of his scholarship can only be gauged from a comparison of his translations with the seventeenth century forms of the originals. From his prefaces and notes, we know which texts he used most frequently: the Juvenal of Ludovicus Prateus (Paris, 1684), the Virgil of Carolus Ruæus (Paris, 1675), Casaubon's Persius (Paris, 1605), and the two editions of Ovid by Heinsius (1652) and Cnipping (1670). Mr. J.M. Bottkol has examined these editions closely, and gives a valuable account of the ways in which, following seventeenth century texts, Dryden appears to diverge from standard modern versions of the originals. (1) The majority of these divergences are attributable to (i) variant readings, and portions of the classical text which are now regarded as spurious; (ii) the commentaries in Dryden's editions; and (iii) the prose versions which run round the poetical text in the Delphin editions, often misleading the translator when he was seduced into following easy prose rather than difficult verse.

Mr. Bottkol's copious illustration shows that Dryden handled his originals far more cautiously and intelligently than has usually been supposed. Further evidence, however, is to be found in Dryden's notes to his translations. The bulk of his annotation in the Juvenal and Persius, in accordance with his intention of writing for the pleasure and entertainment of the unscholarly, is briefly explanatory. In these notes he draws heavily on the commentators, and in many places he provides his reader with the alternative views of the scholars, and offers his own opinion. Annotation in the Virgil follows the same general pattern; but here Dryden occasionally discusses his own views at considerable length. Some of these notes are very full; and the only criticism which might be made is that they are relatively few, and do not of themselves give an adequate picture of the amount of labour which Dryden put into his ground-work. (4)

Notes, p.36.

1. Essays, ii, p.92, pp.III ff; ii, pp. 10, 247; i, p. 230; i, p. 264; ii, p.222. For the relationship between Dryden's Virgil and that of Lauderdale, see Hugh Macdonald, Dryden Bibliography, Oxford, 1939, pp. 323-4.
2. Essays, ii, pp. 10, 247.
3. He translated an elegy of Ovid's for Miscellany Poems, 1684; parts of the Metamorphoses, including the whole of the first book for the third Miscellany (1693); translations of large parts of the Metamorphoses appeared in the Fables volume, 1700; and versions of part of the Art of Love and the Amores were published by Tonson after Dryden's death (Macdonald, op.cit., nos 40 and 47).

Dryden's texts and commentators were not the only influences which carried him away from strict accuracy in translation. His critical essays show that he studied and made use of earlier translations ----- Holyday's and Stapylton's versions of Juvenal, Sandys' Ovid, Creech's Lucretius, Chapman's and Ogilby's translations of the Iliad, and a whole series of versions of Virgil, including those by Mulgrave, Roscommon, Denham, Waller, Cowley and Addison. There are also some signs of indebtedness to Creech's Theocritus. Dryden's debts to his predecessors are often greater than he himself implies. In 1693, for example, in the dedication of Examen Poeticum, he criticises the literalism of Sandys' Ovid, and says that he has not read Sandys since boyhood; but in 1700, introducing the Fables, he curiously turns to Sandys' praise. Neither of these critical passages, however, gives any indication of the great extent to which Dryden drew on Sandys, particularly in the Fables, where he is constantly making use of Sandys' rhymes and turns of phrase. Dryden is in varying degrees indebted to his predecessors, both for poetic interpretations of the classical originals, and for striking words and phrases; and these predecessors were not invariably committed to literal translation. Allegiance to a poetic tradition, and a desire to make full use of good English verse translations even when they were not strictly accurate, account for much of Dryden's divergence from the originals.

Further, Dryden's theory of paraphrastic translation, with its licensed extraction of suggestion and implication in the original, and his declared principle of modernising where necessary, denied him any consistent application of his scholarship. He appreciated the sense and spirit of his originals, however, often with great sensitiveness and insight; and beneath that appreciation there inevitably lies scholarly competence.

---- 3 ----

The author to whom Dryden turned again and again in critical illustration, and whose work he picked up more than any other for occasional experiments in translation, was Ovid. The reason for the fascination which Ovid held for Dryden

Notes, p. 37.

1. Essays, i, pp. 235, 15, 53, 233.

2. Essays, i, pp. 233 and 236; i, p. 234, ii, pp. 256-7;
ii, pp. 109-110; ii, pp. 254-5.

3. Essays, ii, p.9.

The author to whom Lyden turned again and again in critical illustration, and whose work he picked up more than any other for occasional comments in translation, was Ovid. The reason for the fascination which Ovid held for Lyden

is not far to seek; he has much to say in his critical essays on the excellences of Ovid. He was impressed by Ovid's sense of form and design. He was delighted by Ovid's representation of human passion: Ovid 'images.. the movements and affections of the mind' with a quick and fertile fancy; and he has the dramatist's power of revealing the tension between conflicting passions in a single soul, and of arousing the reader's sympathy. This capacity for depicting passion underlies the vivid force of Ovid's style. Further, all Ovid's poems 'bear the character of a court, and appear to be written, as the French call it, cavalièrement'; and although Dryden censures Ovid's wit as over-pointed, prodigal and often unseasonable, he cannot resist the attractions of the style. He praises the grace and refinement of Ovid's writing, and declares that with him ended the golden age of the Roman tongue. Dryden's admiration for Ovid, and his enjoyment in trying to translate him 'in character', are reflected in his critical essays; and with the results of his experiments he was delighted. In 1693, he spoke of his translations of parts of the Heroides and the Metamorphoses as 'the best of all my endeavours in this kind; ... perhaps.. he was more according to my genius'.

Despite Dryden's appreciation of Ovid's representation of human passion, he seldom succeeds in translating the impassioned rhetoric of the Latin adequately. Ovid's characteristic concentration is beyond him: for example-----

pressa refovisti pectora nostra tuis.
et mihi, vive soror, soror o carissima, dixti,
vive: nec unius corpore perde duos.

Heroides, xi, 58-60

Yet, feigning comfort, which thou cou'dst not give,
(Prest in thy Arms, and whisp'ring me to live:)
For both our sakes, (said'st thou) preserve thy Life;
Live, my dear Sister, and my dearer Wife.

Canacee, 65-68.

When Dryden does not have to concentrate his expression, and he has elbow-room for the broad, free style in which he excels, he reaches Ovid's manner beautifully. Ovid, in the song of Polyphemus, weaves a delicate and harmonious pattern in repeated sounds on a framework of marked metrical iteration. In Dryden's version, his easy control of the couplet, his smooth rhythms, and the resistance of the couplet to the pointed concentration of the Latin produce a level grace and a singing note as fine as the original:

Candidior nivei folio, Galatea, ligustri;
 floridior pratrix; longa procerior alno;
 splendidior vitro; tenero lascivior hædo;
 lævior assiduo detritis æquore conchis;
 solibus hibernis, æstiva gratior umbra;
 nobilior pomis.....

Metamorphoses, xiii, 789ff

Oh lovely Galatea, whiter far
 Than falling Snows, and rising Lillies are;
 More flowry than the Meads, as Crystal bright;
 Erect as Alders, and of equal height:
 More wanton than a Kid, more sleek thy Skin
 Than Orient Shells, that on the Shores are seen:
 Than Apples fairer, when the boughs they lade;
 Pleasing, as Winter Suns or Summer Shade..

The Fable of Acis, 66 ff.

Dryden's bravura, and the enthusiastic violence of much of his imagery, has some justification in Ovid; but Dryden, drawing out qualities and tones which he perceives in his original, or reads into it, out-Ovids Ovid. In the accounts of battle in Metamorphoses XII, for example, Ovid's colourful descriptions of slaughter are often translated with excessive crudeness; and Dryden is prone to jocular burlesque:

figitur huic duplici **Gryneus** in lumina ramo,
 eruiturque oculos; quorum pars cornibus hæret;
 pars fluit in barbam, concretaque sanguine pendet. Meta., xii, 268-70

At Grineus these he throws; so just they fly,
 That the sharp Antlers stuck in either Eye;
 Breathless and Blind he fell; with Blood besmear'd;
 His Eye-balls beaten out hung dangling on his Beard.

The Twelfth Book, 376-9

exiluire oculi; disjectisque ossibus oris,
 acta retro naris, medioque infixata palato est.

Meta., xii, 252-3

His Eye-balls rooted out are thrown to ground:
 His Nose dismantled in his Mouth is found. The Twelfth Book, 352-3.

Dryden criticises Ovid's luxuriant fancy and ill-placed conceits; but he recognises that the startling conceit is an essential characteristic of the original, which cannot be reduced without loss. He takes full advantage of Ovid's precedent, moreover, and introduces supplementary conceits of his own ---- a practice which is justified in the interpretation of one poet by another. In Heroides VII, Dido says dramatically:

perque gens lacrimae strictum labuntur in ensem;
qui iam pro lacrimis sanguine tinctus erit

vii, 185-6

and Dryden, anxious to preserve the Ovidian 'turn', translates this:

My Tears flow down; the sharp Edge cuts their Flood,
And drinks my Sorrows, that must drink my Blood.

Dido to Aeneas,
199-200

Inept physical conceits are introduced 'unseasonably':

flumina iam lactis, iam flumina nectaris ibant;
flavaque de viridi stillabant ilice mella

Meta., i, III-12.

From Veins of Vallies, Milk and Nectar broke;
And Honey sweating through the pores of Oak.

The First Book, 142-3.

Dryden was labouring to reproduce the pointed, concentrated style of Ovid in a language by nature much looser than the Latin, and in a verse-form which runs easily into an epigrammatic smartness and raciness; but he had a rhetorical power equal to that of Ovid, and a natural grace of expression which ought to have compensated for the inevitable loss in precision and point. He was, however, too much given to that very indulgence in strong imagery for which he censures Ovid; and although it would have been no part of his task to thin out this Ovidian weed, the results do not often justify the encouragement which he gave to its growth.

There is an element in Ovid's poetry, however, which resembles Dryden's work at its most vigorously carefree; and here he is successfully bold in remoulding Ovid's material in the couplet, and in extending and elaborating his original without marring it. His ready sense of fun is provoked, for example, by the tale of Baucis and Philemon; Ovid makes the wine-cups replenish themselves by magic, and Dryden adds a touch of the grotesque, extending their miraculous powers to hilarious movement:

interea quoties haustum cratera repleri
sponte sua, per seque vident succrescere vina

Meta., viii, 679-80

Mean time the Beechen Bowls went round, and still,
Though often empty'd, were observ'd to fill;
Fill'd without Hands, and of their own accord
Ran without Feet, and danc'd about the Board.

Baucis and Philemon,
122-5.

Again, Dryden obviously enjoyed the task of translating the Art of Love. He caught the spirit of the original excellently, and developed and elaborated the colloquial element in it. Ovid's 'nos Venerem canemus' is turned to mock-heroic, when Dryden blends 'brothels' and dignity:

Notes, p. 40.

1. For example, Polyphemus' song, quoted supra, p.38; the description of Cyllarus and Hylonomie in Metamorphoses, xii (lines 524-76); and the description of the House of Fame in Metamorphoses, xi (Ceyx and Alcyone, lines 268-91).
2. Essays, i, pp. 171, 51, 13. See A.M. Ellis, Horace's Influence on Dryden, P.Q., iv, 1925.

este procul vittæ tenues, insigne pudoris;
 quæque tegis medios, instita longa, pedes.
 nos Venerem tutam, concessaque furta, canemus:
 inque meo nullum carmine crimen erit.

Ars Amatoria, i, 31-4

Far hence, ye Vestals be, who bind your Hair;
 And Wives, who Gowns below your Ankles wear.
 I sing the Brothels loose and unconfin'd,
 Th' unpunishable Pleasures of the Kind;
 Which all a-like, for Love, or Mony find.

Art of Love I, 35-9

Occasionally Dryden's delight in Ovid's theme carries him far from mere translation; and he elaborates with a careless, heartily colloquial zest. For instance, Ovid's single line, 'quo ferat, aut referat sollers ancilla tabellas', becomes:

An Orange-wench wou'd tempt thy Wife abroad;
 Kick her, for she's a letter-bearing Bawd;
 In short, be jealous as the Devil in Hell;
 And set thy Wit on work to cheat thee well.

Amores II, xix; Ovid 4I,
 Dryden 4I-44.

It is in this style, whether closely translating Ovid or elaborating and heightening him, that Dryden is most effective as a translator and most enjoyable to read. Here, Englishing Ovid's less elevated and complicated Latin, and on occasion exaggerating the verve and raciness of the original, Dryden is able to give his natural and irrepressible enthusiasm full reign. So too, in the Metamorphoses, his best work is to be found in the vigorous, slashing descriptions of battle. His portraiture and natural description is too often marred by excessive fancy; what is ingenious in Ovid frequently becomes tasteless and inept in Dryden. When he translates the disorder of passionate feeling which he so much admires in Ovid, he generally produces a flat rhetoric raised to a temporary and insecure elevation by repeated violent imagery. The pointed grace of Ovid's fine-writing is altogether different in kind from the massive strength of Dryden's characteristic style, and the economy of the Latin is beyond his reach. Apart from a few lovely descriptive passages in the pastoral style, his partial success in his translations of Ovid lies in his muscular enthusiasm and force.

Dryden's translations of Horace are much happier. He speaks of Horace as 'a great refiner of the Roman tongue'; acknowledges Horace as a sound judge in matters of diction and style; and praises the curiosa felicitas of his poetic language:

esta quocumque vitas tenent, insigne pudicitiae
quaeque tota medietate, insigne pudicitiae
non venarum tunc, conuulsione tunc, conuulsione
lignis quo nullum carmine oratione exit.

pat heros, ye Vestalis he, who bind your hair;
and Nives, who flows below your ankles wear.
I sing the Trochaea Iocosa and uocantia,
Th' unquenchable Pleasure of the kind;

Notes, p. 41.

1. Essays, i, pp. 266-7.

2. In Sylvae (I685): Odes, I, iii; I, ix; III, xxix: Epode ii.

An Ovidian sense would tempt the like approach;
Rich her, for she's a fast or -bearing hand;
In short, he feels as the Devil in Hell;
And not say his on work to cheer him well.

Section II
Ovid II
Ovid II

It is in this style, another clearly translating Ovid or epigrammatic and
belonging him, that Ovid is most effective as a translator and most enjoyable to
read. In fact, Ovid's less elevated and complicated Latin, and on occasion
exaggerating the verbs and nouns of the original, Ovid is able to give his un-
usual and irrepressible enthusiasm full reign. So too, in the Antiphrases, his de-
voted work is to be found in the various, striking descriptions of battles, his general-
use and natural description is too often marred by excessive fancy; what is lacking
in Ovid frequently becomes tasteful and light in Ovid. When he translates the
disorder of passionate feeling which he so much admires in Ovid, he generally pre-
sents a first rhetoric raised to a temporary and transient elevation by repeated viol-
ent imagery. The pointed grace of Ovid's thin-writing is altogether different in
kind from the massive strength of Ovid's characteristic style, and the economy of
the Latin is beyond his reach. Apart from a few fairly descriptive passages in the
pastoral style, his natural success in his translation of Ovid lies in his suc-
cessful and loose.

Ovid's translations of Horace are much happier. He speaks of nature as a
great reformer of the Roman tongue; acknowledges Horace as a sound judge in nature
of fiction and style; and unless the original language of his poetic language

That which will distinguish his style from all other poets, is the elegance of his words, and the numerousness of his verse; there is nothing so delicately turned in all the Roman language. There appears in every part of his diction, or (to speak English) in all his expressions, a kind of noble and bold purity. His words are chosen with as much exactness as Virgil's; but there seems to be a greater spirit in them. There is a secret happiness attends his choice, which in Petronius is called curiosa felicitas, and which I suppose he had from the feliciter audere of Horace himself. But the most distinguishing part of all his character seems to me to be his briskness, his jollity, and his good humour; and those I have chiefly endeavoured to copy; his other excellencies, I confess, are above my imitation. (1)

Dryden here ~~penetrates~~ the double secret of Horace's style in the Odes: it lies not only in an exquisitely turned, clear and simple expression, but also in a graceful, brisk vigour of style. The elements of purity and sprightly humour, which Dryden sets out to reproduce, (2) are both qualities of style which Dryden admired and exemplified frequently in his own original verse.

Much of the exquisite and calculated delicacy of Horace's diction, especially in epithets, escapes Dryden in translation. His style is looser and less concentrated than Horace's; and that fatal insensitiveness to a pointed and refined poetic diction, which mars so much of his Ovid, betrays him here too. What was within the reach of Ben Jonson, and would have been handled finely by Herrick or Carew or Marvell, is too subtly graceful for Dryden to transplant without damage. His own sensitiveness to words is strong and robust rather than exquisitely precise. For example, the closeness and the purity of Horace's opening in Odes I, iii, is dissipated and coarsened by Dryden with insignificant conventionalities:

Sic te Diva potens Cypri,
 sic ffatres Helenae, lucida sidera,
 ventorumque regat pater
 obstrictis aliis praeter Iapyga,
 navis...

So may th' auspicious Queen of Love,
 And the Twin Stars, (the Seed of Jove,)
 And he who rules the raging wind,
 To thee, O sacred Ship, be kind;
 And gentle Breezes fill thy Sails,
 Supplying soft Etesian Gales.....

Later in the same ode, Dryden misses the rich suggestion of Horace's epithets, with what is, despite his weight and strength, a serious poetic loss:

.. nec timuit praecipitem Africum
 decertantem Aquilonibus,
 nec tristes Hyadas nec rabiem Noti:

lines 12-14

Notes, p. 42.

- 1. D. Nichol Smith, John Dryden, Cambridge, 1950, p. 76.
- 2. E.g., Odes I, ix, lines 13-18 (Horace, lines 9-12).
- 3. E.g., the close of Epode ii.

That which will distinguish his style from all other poets, in the elegance of his words, and the number of his verses; there is nothing so felicitously turned in all the Roman language. There appears in every line of his poetry a certain grace and ease, which is not to be found in any other poet. His style is so full of images, and so full of variety, that it is almost impossible to copy his other works. (1)

These are the qualities which distinguish his style from all other poets, in the elegance of his words, and the number of his verses; there is nothing so felicitously turned in all the Roman language. There appears in every line of his poetry a certain grace and ease, which is not to be found in any other poet. His style is so full of images, and so full of variety, that it is almost impossible to copy his other works. (1)

That of the epigrams and calculated delivery of Horace's diction, especially in epigrams, escapes Dryden in translation. His style is lower and less exact than that of his Latin original; and that fatal insensitiveness to a polished and refined poetic diction, which was so much of his gift, betrays him here too, and was within the reach of his reason, and would have been handled finely by Marston or Marvell, in the empty grandeur for which he is famous. His own sensitiveness to words is strong and robust rather than exquisitely delicate. For example, the opening and the unity of Horace's opening in Odes I, iii, is his original and corrected by Dryden with a happy conventional:

So may the suspicious Queen of Love,
 And the Stern Hours, (the Hours of Love)
 And he who rules the evening Wind,
 To these, O sacred Ship, be kind;
 And haste to meet the British King,
 Copying soft British Lines....

Later in the same ode, Dryden makes the rich suggestion of Horace's epigrams, with what is, despite his weight and strength, a serious poetic loss:

... nor slight procreant Air,
 Descent from British Lines,
 nor British Lines and British Lines

Nor fear'd the winds contending roar,
 Nor billows beating on the Shoar;
 Nor Hyades portending Rain;
 Nor all the Tyrants of the Main.

lines 18-21

Dryden is, in some of these versions of Horace, very free. He paraphrased Odes III, xxix, in the Pindaric style: 'the subject was so congenial that what began as a
 (1)
 paraphrase became an original poem'. Apart from this deliberate attempt to translate Horace in an un-Horatian mode, however, Dryden expands and elaborates freely. Sometimes this expansion is merely a broadening and generalising, where Horace is
 (2)
 clear, vivid, and concrete: sometimes, on the other hand, Dryden develops Horace's imagery in a manner and with a broad, powerful sweep all his own:

subductum macies et nova febrium
 terris incubuit cohors,
 semotique prius tarda necessitas
 leti corripuit gradum.

Odes I, iii, 30-33

A train of Ills, a ghastly crew,
 The Robber's blazing track persue;
 Fierce Famine, with her Meagre face,
 And Feavours of the fiery Race,
 In swarms th' offending Wretch surround
 All brooding on the blasted ground:
 And limping Death, lash'd on by Fate
 Comes up to shorten half our date.

Odes I, iii, 40-47

Dryden manages Horace's briskness well. The lovely close writing in the opening of 'Vides ut alta stet nive candidum Soracte' is too economical and freshly simple for him; but the verse talk in the second part of the poem gives him his chance in the familiar style:

The pointed hour of promis'd bliss,
 The pleasing whisper in the dark,
 The half unwilling willing kiss,
 The laugh that guides thee to the mark,
 When the kind Nymph wou'd coyness feign,
 And hides but to be found again;
 These, these are joyes the Gods for Youth ordain.

) Odes I, ix, 32-8

Similarly, in his Pindaric paraphrase of Odes III, xxix, the didactic exposition of a carpe diem philosophy offers congenial matter and style; and Dryden, however free he is with the original, matches Horace's tones skilfully. When he departs from the Latin for a boldly modern version, in these more colloquial poems, he attains an
 (3)
 excellence which vies with that of the original. Again, he can, when he pleases, catch occasional gleams of Horace's broad, resonant manner: despite the flat render-

ing of siccis oculis in the following lines, he brings his own free, majestically plain tone to Horace:

quem mortis timuit gradum,
 qui siccis oculis monstra natantia
 qui vidit mare turbidum et
 infames scopulos Acrocerania ? Odes I, iii, 18-20

What form of death cou'd him affright,
 Who unconcern'd, with steadfast sight,
 Cou'd view the Surges mounting steep,
 And monsters rolling in the deep! Odes I, iii, 22-25

But, for an unexpectedly sensitive and musical version of Horace's delicate manner, rejecting purely classical references and yet remaining essentially true to the original, and blending simplicity, intimacy and grace, there is the close of Odes III, xxix:

tunc me biremis praesidio scaphae
 tutum per Aegaeos tumultus
 aura ferat geminusque Pollux lines 62-4

For me, secure from Fortunes blows
 (Secure of what I cannot lose,)
 In my small Pinnacle I can sail,
 Contemning all the blustering roar;
 And running with a merry gale,
 With friendly Stars my safety seek
 Within some little winding Creek;
 And see the storm ashore. lines 97-104

In general, Dryden very rarely manages to convey the full grace and the poetic quality of Horace's style in descriptive and reflective passages. On the other hand, when he turns to didactic or conversational passages, he conveys the Horatian ease and simple directness admirably. He clearly found it difficult here, as with Ovid, to gather the concentrated closeness of his original into short-lined and tightly-knit English verse ---- a difficulty due in part to the greater diffuseness of English, and therefore common in translation from Latin; and due in part also to his own predilection for a broad, expansively robust style, by this time fully developed and exercised in drama, satire, and verse argument. While, however, one occasionally wishes that Dryden had translated less of Ovid, it is regrettable that he did not give us more of Horace in English. The Horatian manner was at least within his reach, if not always under his control; he had a natural sympathy with much of the Horatian philosophy and attitude; and more than one of the poets who shared the neo-classical tradition with Dryden rang changes successfully on the Horatian style and outlook.

Notes, p. 44.

1. Preface to Sylvae, Essays, i, pp. 265-6.
2. Cf. supra, p. 23.
3. The Idylliums of Theocritus with Rapin's Discourse of Pastorals done into English, Oxford, 1684.
4. Rapin: De Carmine Pastoralis, prefixed to Thomas Creech's translation of the Idylliums of Theocritus (1684), with an introduction by J.E. Conington, Michigan, 1947. Pp. 5, 15; 32-3; 58; 51, 43.

Another classical poet writing in minor modes, whom Dryden attempted, was Theocritus. In his critical essays, he has less to say on this poet's style than on that of Ovid or Horace; but his remarks on 'the Greek gentleman' are admirably concentrated and to the point. Theocritus' distinguishing characteristic as a pastoral poet is the tenderness of his passions, and their natural expression in verse:

A simplicity shines through all he writes; he shows his art and learning, by disguising both. His shepherds never rise above their country education in their complaints of love.... Virgil's shepherds are too well read in the philosophy of Epicurus and of Plato, and Guarini's seem to have been bred in courts. (I)

Theocritus, like Tasso, 'never departed from the woods': his description and his representation of passion are taken from the country; and his diction, rustic and natural, is attractive and sweet, 'like a fair shepherdess in her country russet, talking in a Yorkshire tone'. Dryden avoids this dialect colouring, because he is writing, not for rustics, but for sophisticated ladies who would neither understand nor appreciate it. He had read Creech's translation of Theocritus, and drew upon it; and with that translation there was published an English version of Rapin's Dis-
(2)
course on Pastoral. Rapin's critical views on pastoral are orthodox, and they elaborate Dryden's brief comments in his critical preface. Rapin defines the three graces of pastoral poetry as simplicity, brevity, and neat sweetness of style. Pastorals were the invention of the simplicity and innocence of the golden age; and many pastoral poets offend against propriety by making their shepherds too polite and elegant. Yet a balance must be kept between refinement and rusticity: 'the thought ought to be rustick... yet it ought not to be Clownish'. The ideal pastoral style is neat and graceful, but not over-exquisite; adorned with 'all sorts of delicacies and surprising fancies', and yet not gaudy or luxuriant.
(4)

Dryden makes it clear in his preface that, although he delighted in Theocritus' imitation of country speech, he must needs avoid it in his translation, for expediency's sake. There was, on the other hand, no reason why he should not comply with the orthodox critical demand for a style and diction calculated to strike a nice balance between refinement and rusticity, or figurativeness and plainness. In fact, however, his love of the fanciful, and his desire to accommodate 'our ladies', lead

him into decorative expansion of his original, and into excessive fanciful extravagance. He titivates Theocritus with poetical epithets, rhetorical turns and graces, and elegant periphrases. The forsaken shepherd in Idyl III addresses Amaryllis in the high-flown tones of a distraught hero in the poetic drama:

ὦ τὸ καλὸν παθεῖσα, τὸ πᾶν λίθος, ὃ κυάνοφρον
νόρφα, πρόσπτου θού με τὸν αἰπὸν, ὡς τὸ φιλῆσω.
ἔστι καὶ ἐν κενεσίῳ φιλῆσαισιν ἑδέξα τερψίς.

lines 18-20

Unheeded Ruine! treacherous delight!
O polish'd hardness, soften'd to the sight!
Whose radiant Eyes your Ebon Brows adorn,
Like Midnight those, and these like break of Morn!
Smile once again, revive me with your Charms:
And let me dye contented in your Arms.

lines 39-44

The more ornate style of Theocritus' Idyl XVIII is closer to Dryden's own grand manner, and although he decorates more richly than Theocritus, the effect is not inappropriate in this epithalamium of Helen and Menelaus. But elsewhere, the ludicrous conceits of wit-writing strike very false notes:

ἀλλ' ἐνθῶν ἔκλαυε ποτὶ στυγνῆσι μελάθροισι,
καὶ κύσε τῶν φλιῶν...

Idyl XXIII, 17-18

Trembling before her bolted doors he stood,
And there pour'd out th'unprofitable flood.

31-32

καθεῦμαι δὲ πεσών, καὶ τὰ λύκοι ἴδε β' ἔδονται.
^{ὄκετ' αἰείδω}

Idyl III, 53-54

I lay me down to gasp my latest Breath,
The Wolves will get a Breakfast by my Death.

124-5

Dryden's choice of the couplet form, with its characteristic point, balance, and antithesis, was generally fatal to this translation. The couplet is excellent for translating rhetorical passages: and the merits of Dryden's version of Ovid's song of Polyphemus are recalled in this lovely lyrical passage:

καὶ τὸ ῥόδον καλὸν ἔστι, καὶ ὁ χρόνος αὐτὸ μαρμαίνει.
καὶ τὸ ἴον καλὸν ἔστι, ἐν εἴαρι καὶ ταχὺ γηραῖ.
λευκὸν τὸ κρίνον ἔστι, μαρμαίνεται ἀνίκα πικτεῖ.
ἃ δὲ χιών λευκὴ, καὶ τὰ κεταὶ ἀνίκα παχθηῖ.
καὶ κάλλος καλὸν ἔστι τὸ παιδικόν, ἀλλ' ὀλίγον εἴη.

Idyl XXIII, 28-32

The Rose is fragrant, but it fades in time:
The Violet sweet, but quickly past the prime;
White Lillies hang their heads, and soon decay,
And whiter Snow in minutes melts away:
Such is your blooming youth, and withering so...

57-61.

But the demands of the couplet form often draw Dryden into irrelevant expansion; the sense of the original is given in one line, and a second line is required to provide the inevitable balance or complement:

Ἄνις τις πολόφιλος ἀπηνέως ἤρατ' ἐφάρβω
 τὸν βορρῶν ἀγαθῶ, τὸν δὲ τρίτον οὐκέθ' ὄρῳ.
 With inauspicious love, a wretched Swain
 Pursu'd the fairest Nymph of all the Plain;
 Fairest indeed, but prouder far than fair,
 She plung'd him hopeless in a deep despair.

Idyl XXIII, I-2

I-4

The couplet comes into its own in Dryden's free version of Idyl XXVII. This poem is an erotic dialogue between a shepherd and a maid, swiftly moving in give-and-take sentences, and banteringly flirtatious in spirit. Dryden characteristically enlivens the dialogue by heightening the banter and increasing the element of racy colloquialism. Three examples will suffice:

[ΔΑ. οὐ φεύγεις τὸν ἔρωτα, τὸν οὐ φύγε παρθένος ἄλλη.]
 ΚΟ. φεύγω ναὶ τὸν Πάνα· εὐ δὲ Συῖον διὲν ἀείρους.

lines 18-19

I swear, I'll keep my maidenhead till death,
 And die as pure as Queen Elizabeth.

lines 34-5

ΚΟ. ὄρνυε μὴ μετὰ λέκτρα λιπῶν ἀέκουσαν ἀπενθῆν.

line 35

Swear then you will not leave me on the common,
 But marry me, and make an honest woman.

lines 60-61

ΔΑ. οἶδ' Ἀκροτίρη ἔσσι πατὴρ δὲ τοῖ ἔστι Μενάλκας.
 ΚΟ. εἶθρον ἔρα τῶν ἔλκος, εἶη σέθεν ἴσταται αὐλῆς.

lines 44-5

Hang both your pedigrees! Not one word more;
 But if you love me, let me see your living,
 Your house and home; for seeing is believing.

lines 83-6

Little harm is done here by Dryden's colourful and vigorous colloquialism; but his translations generally leave much to be desired. The abandonment of realistic diction, and of the critical rule of grace and polish with rustic simplicity, opened the door to Dryden's ever-active fancy; and the result, often extravagant, strained, and irresponsibly decorative, is satisfactory neither as English poetry nor as translation.

Notes, p. 47.

1. The Works of Virgil, 1697, A1^r--A2^v.

2. In the preface to the Pastorals, contributed to the Virgil by Dryden's friend Chetwood, the idealistic view of pastoral is rather unsystematically set out, with much the same attitude to style as that of Rapin (see supra, p.44). Dryden's moderate views are entirely his own here.

[A. of Dryden's Preface to the Virgil, 1697, A1^r--A2^v.]
The copyist has written the words in a very good hand.

I want, I'll keep my shepherd till death,
And die as pure as Queen Elizabeth.

Great then you will not leave us on this ocean,
But carry us, and save us from the storm.

For you, my dear, and for your dear ones,
I'll give you all the good I can procure.

Your house and home; for seeing us believing,
And if you love us, let us see your living.

Little harm is done here by Dryden's somewhat and vigorous collection of his translations generally leaves much to be desired. The abandonment of realistic diction, and of the artificial rule of stress and polish with trite simplicity, opened the door to Dryden's ever-active fancy, and the result often extravagant, strained, and irresponsibly decorative, is satisfactory neither as English poetry nor as translation.

Dryden is much more successful in the pastoral mode when he turns to translate Virgil's eclogues. He complained that Virgil's shepherds were too well-read and polite, and classed Virgil with the poets of artificial eclogue. The artificial pastoral manner, however, proved to be much more natural to Dryden than Theocritus' simpler and sweeter style. Dryden, in the letter to Clifford which opens his Virgil, (I) points out that the poet has raised himself above the humble style traditionally associated with eclogue; 'for he found the strength of his Genius betimes, and was even in his youth prelude to his Georgics, and his AENEIS'. In the fourth Eclogue the address to Pollio compelled Virgil to 'assert his Native Character, which is Sublimity'; in the sixth, he proceeds further, and invades the province of philosophy; and in the eighth he deals with topics which are 'above the Condition of his Persons'. Yet even in these poems, there is a suggestion of rusticity; the pastoral atmosphere is preserved by rural similitudes, and the general style is not improper:

They seem to me to represent our Poet betwixt a Farmer, and a Courtier, when he left Mantua for Rome, and drest himself in his best Habit to appear before his Patron: Somewhat too fine for the place from whence he came, and yet retaining part of its simplicity.

Dryden is careful to balance his praise of Virgil with his appreciation of the very different style of Theocritus. He speaks highly of Spenser's experiment in dialect in The Shepherdes Calender, and of the Spenserian account of pastoral love which is 'a perfect Image of the Passion which God infus'd into both Sexes, before it was corrupted with the Knowledge of Arts, and the Ceremonies of what we call good Manners'. In this comment on Spenser, Dryden is clearly harking back to the orthodox view of pastoral as a reflection of rustic life in the Golden Age; and of this type of artificial and idealised eclogue Virgil offered a good example. Yet Dryden also recognises that Virgil made some effort to give his diction a realistic colouring:

.... I must confess that the Boorish Dialect of Theocritus has a secret charm in it, which the Roman Language cannot imitate, tho' Virgil has drawn it down as low as possibly he cou'd: as in the cujum pecus, and some other words, for which he was so unjustly blam'd by the bad Criticks of his Age, who cou'd not see the Beauties of that merum rus, which the Poet described in those Expressions.(2)

Dryden thus began the task of translating the Eclogues with a sense of their polish and refinement; and yet, while recognising that in the main the Virgilian pastoral style was more decorative, urbane, and even courtly, than that of Theocritus, he was aware that Virgil had not wholly avoided a rustic diction. It is to be expected that in translating the Eclogues, he took the opportunity which Virgil offered of exercising his own natural sophisticated style, with occasional touches of rusticity in diction.

In the first place, much of the quality and the precision of Virgil's expression, especially in descriptive passages, is lost in translation. The closely-wrought and richly musical lines of the first Eclogue, with the central beauty of 'canet frondator ad auras', is flattened out with generalised and conventional phrases:

hinc tibi quae semper vicino ab limite saepes
 Hyblaeis apibus florem depasta salicti
 saepe levi somnum suadebit inire susurro:
 hinc alta sub rupe canet frondator ad auras;
 nec tamen interea raucae, tua cura, palumbes,
 nec genere aëria cessabit turtur ab ulmo. Ecl., i, 53-8

Behold yon bord'ring Fence of Sallow Trees
 Is fraught with Flow'rs, the Flow'rs are fraught with Bees:
 The busie Bees with a soft murm'ring Strain
 Invite to gentle Sleep the lab'ring Swain.
 While from the Neighb'ring Rock, with Rural Songs,
 The Pruner's Voice the pleasing Dream prolongs;
 Stock-Doves and Turtles tell their Am'rous pain,
 And from the lofty Elms of Love complain. Ecl., i, 71-8

'Lab'ring Swain' is a poor substitute for the direct tibi, tua cura of the Latin, when so much delight is promised; the simplicity of Virgil's picture of the crooning doves is sentimentalised; and the complicated sound-patterns in Virgil's last two lines are greatly weakened. This sort of loss is in some measure inevitable in translation, when the textures of the two languages are so different; and despite the inferiority of the English version, it has an even flow and a quietness which are not displeasing.

Less can be said, however, for Dryden's habit of jettisoning Virgil's richly concrete epithets, or for his failure to preserve something of Virgil's lovely contrasts in colour. Vitality, colour and sweetness are taken away in:

pro molli viola, pro purpureo narcisso
 carduus et spinis surgit paliurus acutis Ecl., v, 38-9

Notes, p. 49.

1. Eclogues, i, Virgil 8, Dryden 9; ii, Virgil 26, Dryden 32;
ii, Virgil 46, Dryden 63; iii, Virgil 95, Dryden 148.
Cf. Dryden, i, II; i, 70; v, 71-2; vi, 72; vi, 84; vii, 8.

2. E.g., Eclogues, i, Virgil 68-70, Dryden 91-6; v, Virgil 22-3,
Dryden 31-5.

And where the Vales with Violets'once were crown'd,
Now knotty Burrs and Thorns disgrace the Ground. Ecl., v, 57-8

quale per aestum
dulcis aquae saliente sitim restinguere rivo. Ecl., v, 46-7

As to the feavourish Travellor, when first
He finds a Crystal Stream to quench his Thirst. Ecl., v, 73-4

Virgil's contrasts in colour, which give vividness and pastoral beauty to the picture of the wandering bull of Pasiphae, are merely ignored:

a, virgo infelix, tu nunc in montibus erras:
ille latus niveum molli fultus hyacintho
ilice sub nigra pallentis ruminat herbas
aut aliquam in magno sequitur grege. Ecl., vi, 52-5

Ah, wretched Queen! you range the pathless Wood;
While on a flowry Bank he chaws the Cud;
Or sleeps in Shades, or thro' the Forest roves;
And roars in anguish for his absent Loves. Ecl., vi, 77-80

In the second place, Dryden frequently adorns and titivates his original. He loads his poems with the circumlocutions which characterise the artificial pastoral of the neo-classical period--- sheep become 'a woolly Breed'; mare is 'briny Flood'; candida Nais is the 'Daughter of the Flood'; aries is 'the Father of the Flock'.⁽¹⁾

Emotional passages are elaborated in conceits, and raised to the tones of the heroic play.⁽²⁾ Dryden's fancy often works havoc with the context and quality of his original. In one place, for example, he ruins with a ludicrous circus touch the poetic lamentation of a shepherd about to leave his beloved goats:

non ego vos posthac viridi proiectus in antro
dumosa pendere procul de rupe videbo;
varmina nulla canam.... Ecl., i, 75-7

No more, my Goats, shall I behold you climb
The steepy Cliffs, or crop the flowry Thyme!
No more, extended in the Grot below,
Shall see you browsing on the Mountain's brow
The prickly Shrubs; and after on the bare,
Lean down the deep Abyss, and hang in Air. Ecl., i, 104-9

Occasionally, however, Dryden's decorative expansion is poetically successful. As in the Ovid, he is most at his ease in lyrical passages, in which he writes paraphrastically. In Eclogue VII, Dryden's Corydon sings as gracefully as Virgil's, though in the looser, lyrical notes of mediaeval Latin rather than in Virgil's

Notes, p. 50.

1. Cross Currents in the English Literature of the Seventeenth Century, London, 1929, p. 319.

2. E.g., Eclogues, i, Virgil 36, Dryden 45-6; ix, Virgil 3-6, Dryden 4-10.

weighted style:

Nerine Galatea, thymo mihi dulcior Hyblae,
candidior cygnis, hederæ formosior alba,
cum primum pasti repetent præsepia tauri,
si qua tui Corydonis habet te cura, venito. Ecl., vii, 37-40

Fair Galathea, with thy Silver Feet,
O, whiter than the Swan, and more than Hybla sweet;
Tall as a Poplar, taper as the Bole,
Come charm thy Shepherd, and restore my Soul.
Come when my lated Sheep, at night return;
And crown the silent Hours, and stop the rosy Morn. Ecl., vii,
52-7.

Again, in this brief nature-picture, much of Virgil's suggestion, and his sound-effects, is retained; and in Dryden's closing line there is an attractiveness and a propriety rare in his gratuitous conceits:

quæ tibi, quæ tali reddam pro carmine dona?
nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus Austri
nec percussa iuvant fluctu tam litora, nec quæ
saxosas inter decurrunt flumina vallis. Ecl., v, 81-4

What Present worth thy Verse can Mopsus find!
Not the soft Whispers of the Southern Wind,
That play through trembling Trees, delight me more;
Nor murm'ring Billows on the sounding Shore;
Nor winding Streams that through the Valley glide;
And the scarce cover'd Pebbles gently chide. Ecl., v, 127-32

Thirdly, Dryden diverges from his original to introduce realistic touches and colloquialisms. Sir Herbert Grierson asks, 'Can you read far in any of the most serious and heroically pitched of Dryden's poems without being reminded at every turn of the wit and the satirist'; and the sudden strong colloquialism which is an important element in Dryden's satire comes again and again to startle us in his translations of classical poems in which such expression has no place. The sources of this are, I think, Dryden's assertive boldness and vigour, and a desire for the maximum amount of realism. When his love of the forcible works with Dryden's desire to give his eclogues a proper colouring of rustic realism, the result is not always happy. Sometimes he destroys the gravity and melancholy of Virgil's poetic shepherds. On the other hand, where the original is restrainedly satirical, or contains a suggestion of humour, Dryden makes this explicit; and his spirited colloquial force gives new life to the poetry. For example:

cantando tu illum? aut unquam tibi fistula cera
iuncta fuit? non tu in triviis, indocte, solebas
stridenti miserum stipula disperdere carmen?

Ecl., iii, 25-28

Thou sing with him, thou Booby; never Pipe
Was so profan'd to touch that blubber'd Lip:
Dunce at the best; in Streets but scarce allow'd
To tickle, on thy Straw, the stupid Crowd.

Ecl., iii, 34-7

non ego te vidi, Damonis, pessime, caprum
excipere insidiis, multum latrante Lycisca?

Ecl., iii, 17-18.

Did I not see you, Rascal, did I not!
When you lay snug to snap young Damon's Goat?
His Mungril bark'd...

Ecl., iii, 23-5

de grege non ausim quicquam deponere tecum:
est mihi namque domi pater, est iniusta noverca;
bisque die numerant ambo pecus, alter et haedos.

Ecl., iii, 32-4

You knew too well I feed my Father's Flock:
What can I wager from the common Stock?
A Stepdame too I have, a cursed she,
Who rules my Hen-peck'd Sire, and orders me.
Both number twice a day the Milky Dams;
And once she takes the tale of all the Lambs.

Ecl., iii, 46-51

In general, Dryden does not fulfil the expectation that he would be equal to the colourful, decorative and imaginative artificial style of Virgil. His inclination to work an artificial richness in diction and imagery into the pastoral does not take the legitimate opportunity offered by Virgil satisfactorily; and his treatment of Virgil's descriptive passages is often clumsy and flat. His circumlocutions and conventional poetic phrases are only the specious ornamentation of a cake which he has failed to bake richly enough to Virgil's recipe. On the other hand, he appreciated the element of realism and rusticity in Virgil's diction; and although he occasionally extends this improperly, his additions and colouring in the colloquial style are generally effective and entertaining.

The five satires of Juvenal which Dryden contributed to a composite translation of the whole corpus of sixteen, and the six satires of Persius which accompanied them into print (1693), make up a section of Dryden's translated verse in which congenial material is handled with appreciative boldness and considerable success.



...and the ... of ...

Notes, p. 52.

- 1. Essays, ii, p. 84.
- 2. See I.G. Scott, The Grand Style in the Satires of Juvenal, Smith College Classical Studies, No.8, Massachusetts, 1927.
- 3. Essays, ii, p. 108. See infra, chapter V.
- 4. Essays, ii, p. 85.
- 5. Essays, ii, pp. 113-4.



It appears from his critical essays, that Dryden delighted more in the satiric, ~~energetic~~ Juvenal, than in any other classical poet except Virgil. His critique of Juvenal is the praise of an enthusiast: the energetic thoroughness of the Satires appealed to a very similar quality in Dryden's nature, and he expresses his enthusiasm in terms of sheer transport: compared with Horace,

Juvenal is of a more vigorous and masculine wit; he gives me as much pleasure as I can bear; he fully satisfies my expectation; he treats his subject home: his spleen is raised, and he raises mine: I have the pleasure of concernment in all he says; he drives his reader along with him... When he gives over, it is a sign the subject is exhausted, and the wit of man can carry it no further. (1)

A second quality which Dryden recognises and appreciates in Juvenal is his elevation. Juvenal was greatly influenced by the schools of rhetoric; and in his figures, turns of phrase, and exalted rhetorical invective, he raises satire to the level of epic. His poetry is rich in epic imitation, and in parody of the heroic style for comic and satiric effect. His satire is deliberately and successfully invested with the dress which Cicero gives to the grand style-- vehemens, acer, ardens, gravis, grandiloquus, asper, tristis. It is chiefly from the example of Juvenal, and in the face of general practice among English satirists in Dryden's own day, that he derives his notion of satire as a species of heroic poetry: (2) (3)

His thoughts are as just as those of Horace, and much more elevated. His expressions are sonorous and more noble; his verses more numerous, and his words are suitable to his thoughts, sublime and lofty. All these contribute to the pleasure of the reader; and the greater the soul of him who reads, his transports are the greater. (4)

Dryden's aim is to bring Juvenal to new life in English-- to allow him to express himself, with all his immense energy and his nobility of style, in a modern tongue:

We have actually made him more sounding, and more elegant, than he was before in English; and have endeavoured to make him speak that kind of English, which he would have spoken had he lived in England, and had written to this age. (5)

Dryden's method in modernising Juvenal is not the thorough-going transformation of a classical poem into a modern, with concentration on modern applications and parallels rather than on close translation, which is the method of the Augustan imitators in such poems as Pope's Satires and Epistles of Horace Imitated and Johnson's The Vanity of Human Wishes. Dryden is a translator, and the sense of his author is inviolable. He appreciates the force of such a point of view as Johnson's, that (between Roman images and English manners there will be an irreconcilable dissimilitude, and the work will be generally uncouth and parti-coloured; neither original

Notes, p. 53.

1. Lives, ed. G.B. Hill, Oxford, 1905, iii, p. 247.
2. Satires, i, Juvenal 80, Dryden 122; i, Juvenal 94, Dryden 143; vi, Juvenal 60-66, Dryden 87-99.
3. Satires, iii, Juvenal 190-3, Dryden 312; vi, Juvenal 294-6, Dryden 411-2; x, Juvenal 362, Dryden 557.
4. Satires, iii, Juvenal 202, Dryden 330; vi, Juvenal 120-2, Dryden 174.

(I)

nor translated, neither ancient nor modern. Dryden reduces particular or local reference to generalisations, or omits altogether, much more often than he substitutes modern references. There is some substitution: for example, a Roman hack becomes, inevitably, the hapless Shadwell; 'quis totidem erexit villas' becomes 'What Age so many Summer-Seats did see?'; Juvenal's porticos and theatres are changed to 'the Park, the Mall, the Play-House, or the Court'. Generally, however, Dryden reduces or omits. Juvenal's lists of Latin place-names, often loaded with significance, are generalised to 'country Towns' and 'Foreign Parts'; and the phrase 'Venere, et coenis, et plumis Sardanapali' is reduced to the abstract 'Dalliance, Banquets, and Ignoble Ease'. Such omission and generalisation is poetically a loss, since much of Juvenal's colour and vividness, and the constant impression of realism in his poetry, depend on his rich allusion to the contemporary scene and to aspects of Roman life and conduct.

Dryden does not maintain Juvenal's elevation of style consistently in his translation. The dignity and sentiment in Juvenal's picture of a faithless wife is reduced to prosaic statement:

immemor illa domus et coniugis atque sororis nil patriae indulsit, plorantesque improba gnatos	VI, 85-6
Forgetting House and Husband, left behind, Ev'n Children too, she sails before the Wind.	VI, 120-I

The epic breadth of Juvenal's omnia and Asiam for the Troy which Priam saw destroyed in flames is narrowed down:

longa dies igitur quid contulit? omnia vidit eversa, et flammis Asiam ferroque cadentem	X, 265-6
But mark what age produc'd; he liv'd to see His Town in Flames, his falling Monarchy.	X, 410-II

The sentiment, colour and poetic suggestion with which Juvenal subtly touches the hard surface of his satire are often overlooked in translation. The molles columbae which flee from burning Rome become prosaic 'tame Pidgeons'; the colour contrast which brings Juvenal's brief picture of Messalina, seeking the brothels, to vivid life-- nigrum flavo crinem abscondente galero --is omitted; and in translating Juvenal's repelling simile of age as an ape, Dryden misses the sudden opening of the jungle scene behind:

pendentesque genas et talis aspice rugas
 quales, umbriferos ubi pandit Thabraca saltus,
 in vetula scalpit iam mater simia bucca X, 193-5

Such Wrinkles, as a skilfull Hand wou'd draw
 For an old Grandam Ape, when, with a Grace,
 She sits at squat, and scrubs her Leathern Face. X, 310-12.

The rhetorical accumulations which give Juvenal's verse a torrential force in moments of strong passion are not reproduced without loss of intensity by Dryden. He fails to convey the weight and emphasis of the Latin line: for example,

quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
 gaudia, discursus, nostri est farrago libelli I, 85-6

What Humane Kind desires, and what they shun,
 Rage, Passions, Pleasures, Impotence of Will,
 Shall this Satyrical Collection fill. I, 130-2

quis facile est aedem conducere flumina portus,
 siccandam eluviem, portandum ad busta cadaver,
 et praebere caput domina venale sub hasta III, 31-3

(Who) can hire large Houses, and oppress the Poor
 By farm'd Excise; can cleanse the Common-Shoare;
 And rent the Fishery; can bear the dead;)
 And teach their Eyes dissembled Tears to shed;)
 All this for Gain; for Gain they sell their very Head.) III, 56-60

Nevertheless, the form of the English satiric couplet, and its power and flexibility in the hands of Dryden, give a new and different force to these poems in the English version; and in many ways make them more effective satirically than Juvenal's heavy hexameters. This effectiveness is achieved largely by two devices of style -- skilful patterning in alliteration and consonantal repetition, and the use of balance and antithesis. I give two examples of each:

quid quod adulandi gens prudentissima laudat
 sermonem indocti, faciem deformis amici III, 86-7

They make a Wit of their Insipid Friend;
 His blobber-Lips, and beetle-Brows commend. III, 153-4

sunt quas eunuchi inbelles ac mollia semper
 oscula delectent et desperatio barbae
 et quod abortivo non est opus... VI, 366-8

There are, who in soft Eunuchs place their Bliss;
 To shun the scrubbing of a Bearded Kiss;
 And scape Abortion. VI, 483-5

iamne igitur laudas quod de sapientibus alter
ridebat, quotiens de limine unum
protuleratque pedem, flebat contrarius auctor?

X, 28-30

Will you not now, the pair of Sages praise,
Who the same End pursu'd, by sev'ral Ways?
One pity'd, one contemn'd the Woful Times;
One laugh'd at Follies, one lamented Crimes:

X, 4I-4

visne salutari sicut Seianus, habere
tantundem, atque illi summas donare curules,
illum exercitibus praeponere...

X, 90-2

Now tell me truly, wou'dst thou change thy Fate
To be, like him, first Minister of State?
To have thy Levees Crowded with resort,
Of a depending, gaping, servile Court:
Dispose all Honours, of the Sword and Gown,
Grace with a Nod, and Ruin with a Frown...

X, I44-9

Dryden is a much more humorous satirist than Juvenal. Juvenal found that difficile est saturam non scribere, and so did Dryden, often when the occasion and the poem prohibited it; but whereas Juvenal's gad-fly was a terrible indignatio, and his whole attitude to society a sardonic one, Dryden's satire was initiated by external circumstance or by an irrepressible sense of humour. It is natural, therefore, that Dryden should frequently provoke the strong and steady flame of Juvenal's satire to a laughing sprightliness. In Satire XVI, for example, Juvenal cynically declares that no one dare give evidence against the brutal soldiery; if there be such a man, the poet will think him indeed worthy of his ancestors. In Dryden's version, the whole passage is more vigorously written, and Juvenal's cynicism is lightened into simple humour:

audeat ille
nescio quis, pugnos qui vidit, dicere 'vidi',
et credam dignum barba, dignumque capillis
maiorum.

XVI, 29-32

Will He, who saw the Souldier's Mutton Fist,
And saw Thee maul'd, appear within the List;
To witness Truth? When I see one so brave,
The Dead, think I, are risen from the Grave;
And with their long Spade Beards and Matted Hair,
Our honest Ancestors are come to take the Air.

XVI, 45-50

Again, Dryden deliberately mistranslates Juvenal at one point, for the sake of a comic effect. In Satire X, Juvenal discusses zeal for learning; and describes the aspirations of a young scholar, who is followed to his lessons by a small boy carrying his satchel. Dryden ignores the student, and concentrates on the attendant in-

fant, making him the enthusiast, and thus at once emphasising the satiric picture of youthful zeal, and heightening the comedy:

eloquium aut famam Demosthenis aut Ciceronis
incipit optare et totis quinquatribus optat
quisquis adhuc uno parcam colit asse Minervam,
quem sequitur custos angustae vernula capsae X, II4-7

The Boy, who scarce has paid his Entrance down
To his proud Pedant, or declined a Noun,
(So small an Elf, that when the days are foul,
He and his Satchel must be born to School,)
Yet prays and hopes, and aims at nothing less,
To prove a Tully, or Demosthenes. X, 180-85

Dryden's humour, and the easy familiarity of his colloquial style, considerably alter the spirit of Satire VI. The strong sarcasm of Juvenal, in the address to Posthumus, is reduced almost to good-humoured chaff:

conventum tamen et pactum et sponsalia nostra
tempestate paras, iamque a tonsore magistro
pecteris, et digito pignus fortasse dedisti.
certe sanus eras. uxorem, Postume, ducis?
dic, qua Tisiphone, quibus exagitare colubris?
ferre potes dominam salvis tot restibus ullam,
cum pateant altae caligantesque fenestrae,
cum tibi vicinum se praebeat Aemilius pons? VI, 25-32

Yet thou, they say, for Marriage do'st provide:
Is this an Age to Buckle with a Bride?
They say thy Hair the Curling Art is taught,
The Wedding-Ring perhaps already bought:
A Sober Man like thee to change his Life!
What Fury wou'd possess thee with a Wife?
Art thou of ev'ry other Death bereft,
No Knife, no Ratsbane, no kind Halter left?
(For every Noose compar'd to Hers is cheap)
Is there no City Bridge from whence to leap? VI, 36-45

It is not only in passages which are colloquial in the original, that Dryden uses his slap-dash conversational manner effectively. The translation of Satire XVI is throughout much lighter, freer, and easier in style than the Latin. Dryden loses nothing of Juvenal's directness and power, but he considerably increases the element of grotesque force in the satirical pictures of military brutishness; and in the vivid rendering of Juvenal's last thrust at the soldier, Dryden strikes a note which would be thoroughly appreciated by his contemporaries:

ipsius certe ducis hoc referre videtur,
ut qui fortis erit, sit felicissimus idem;
ut laeti phaleris omnes et torquibus, omnes.. XVI, 58-60

Notes, p. 57.

1. Essays, ii, pp. 70, 101.

2. Essays, ii, pp. 70, 71.

3. Essays, ii, p. 74. Cf. Congreve's commendatory verses prefixed to the Persius:

Old Stoick Virtue, clad in rugged lines,
Polish'd by you, in Modern Brilliant shines:
And as before, for Persius our Esteem
To his Antiquity was paid, not him:
So now, whatever Praise, from us is due,
Belongs not to Old Persius, but the New.
For still Obscure, to us no Light he gives;
Dead in himself, in you alone he lives.

For 'tis a Noble General's prudent part
 To cherish Valour, and reward Desert:
 Let him be dawb'd with Lace, live High, and Whore;
 Sometimes be Lowzy, but be never Poor.

XVI, 92-5.

Dryden found Persius more troublesome to translate than Juvenal. Persius required, no less than Juvenal, an elevated style-- 'Is the grande sophos of Persius, and the sublimity of Juvenal, to be circumscribed with the meanness of words and vulgarity of expression?'; but he set his translator some perplexing problems:

as his verse is scabrous and hobbling, and his words not everywhere well chosen, the purity of Latin being more corrupted than in the time of Juvenal, and consequently of Horace, who writ when the language was in the height of its perfection, so his diction is hard, his figures are generally too bold and daring, and his tropes, particularly his metaphors, insufferably strained. (1)

Dryden does not regard Persius' violent figures and obscurities as deliberate; it is, he says, mere conjecture that Persius 'affected not to be understood, but with difficulty'; and these faults of style are to be attributed to the poet's immaturity. (2) For Dryden, the absence of a sound judgment leaves the way open to excessive fancy; and while daring figures are the products of licensed imagination, strained imagery and rough, ill-chosen diction are the results of inactive or immature judgment. Dryden declares that he has omitted Persius' perplexing figures and forced expressions from his translation; and this is due, I think, not only to his desire to cater for general readers, but also to his view that Persius is a faulty and immature poet who requires polishing and simplifying. (3)

His efforts to avoid the violence and obscurity of his author are not often satisfactory; the baby is frequently lost with the bath-water. 'Some on Antiquated Authors pore' is a poor substitute for the comic

est nunc Brisaei quem venosus liber Acci,
 sunt quos Pacuviusque et verrucosa moretur
 Antiopa, aerumnis cor luctificabile fulta? I, 76-8; Dryden I50

Either strict translation, with explanatory notes, or bold modernisation, would have been better. Again and again Dryden, although he delighted in startling metaphor, and in bold description, misses Persius' striking details and passes over his vivid and forceful figures. For example:

hic aliquis cui circum umeros hyacinthina laena est,
 rancidulum quiddam balba de nare locutus
 Phyllidas Hypsipylas, vatium et plorabile siquid,
 eliquat ac tenero subplantat verba palato

I, 32-5

One clad in Purple, not to lose his time,
 Eats, and recites some lamentable Rhime:
 Some Senceless Phyllis, in a broken Note;
 Snuffling at Nose, or croaking in his Throat.

I, 71-4

quin tu igitur, summa nequiquam pelle decorus,
 ante diem blando caudam iactare popello
 desinis, Anticyras melior sorbere meracas?

IV, 14-16

Leave; leave to fathom such high points as these;
 Nor be ambitious, e're thy time, to please;
 Unseasonably Wise, till Age, and Cares,
 Have form'd thy Soul, to manage Great Affairs..
 Drink Hellebore, my Boy, drink deep, and purge thy Brain.)

IV, 28-34

cum lapidosa sheragra
 fregerit articulos, veteris ramalia fagi

V, 58-9

Till Knots upon his Gouty Joints appear

V, 78

On the other hand, Dryden attempts to heighten Persius' general tone in many places; he expands or supplies images, and increases Persius' satiric intensity and comic effect. In Satire I, Persius draws a picture of Cincimatus being called from his farm to public office; and, as Conington points out, emphasises the contrast between farm and senate-house 'by making the lictor act as farm-servant'. Dryden, in a free and leisurely style, increases this incongruity with new comic effect:

unde Remus, sulcoque terens dentalia, Quinti,
 cum trepida ante boves dictatorem induit uxor
 et tua aratra domum lictor tulit. euge poeta!

I, 73-5

Where Romulus was Bred, and Quintius Born,
 Whose shining Plough-share was in Furrows worn,
 Met by his trembling Wife, returning Home,
 And rustically Joy'd, as Chief of Rome:
 She wip'd the Sweat, from the Dictator's Brow;
 And o'er his Back, his Robe did rudely throw;
 The Lictors bore, in State, their Lord's triumphant Plough.)

I, 142 -8

Dryden is most successful, however, in translating passages where his love of familiar expression has free play. Persius' brief reference to the discomforts of life at sea, for example, is thoroughly modernised by Dryden, with a wealth of contemporary English nautical colour in his language:

Notes, p. 59.

I. A George was an earthen pot; swobbers was common sea-slang; a Boracchio was a wine-bag. and a Jack a leathern tankard.

2. See infra, chap. V.

I, 53-5

I, 71-7

IV, 14-1

IV, 19-2

V, 10-2

V, 15

I, 13-2

I, 11

11-10

11-10

11-10

11-10

11-10

11-10

11-10

tu mare transilias? tibi torta cannabe fulto
 cena sit in transtro, Veientanumque rubellum
 exalet vapida laesum pice sessilis obba?

V, 146-8

Cubb'd in a Cabbin, on a Mattress laid,
 On a Brown George, with lowsie Swobbers fed,
 Dead Wine that stinks of the Boracchio, sup
 From a fowl Jack, or greasie Maple Cup?

(I) V, 214-7

Dryden is constantly working modern colloquialisms into the text of his poems in this way. Passages which, in the Latin, are written in the tones of scornful, derisive speech, are dashed with modern colouring by the addition of oaths like 'a God's Name' and 'damme'; but there is no notable all-round increase in the already rough language and coarse allusion of Persius, and Dryden's rollicking conversational manner, which sometimes changes the whole quality of Juvenal, merely heightens or expands the original element of colloquialism in Persius.

Finally: although Dryden regarded feminine rhyme as below the dignity of the highest kind of satire, he fully appreciated its burlesque effects, and its value in supplementing colloquial diction. In the first of these examples, he follows Persius comically in parodying a poetaster's verse; and in the second, he uses feminine rhyme to enforce his familiar language:

claudere sic versum didicit 'Berecunthius Attis'
 et 'qui caeruleum dirimebat Nerea delphin',
 sic 'costam longo subduximus Appennino'

I, 93-5

"'Tis tagg'd with Rhyme, like Berecynthian Atys',
 "The mid part chimes with Art, which never flat is.
 "The Dolphin brave, that cut the liquid Wave,
 "Or He who in his line, can chine the long-rib'd Apennine. I,
 185-8

'... pupillumve utinam, quem proximus heres
 inpello, expungam, nam et est scabiosus et acri
 bile tumet; Nerio iam tertia ducitur uxor.'

II, 12-4

Oh were my Pupil fairly knock'd o'th' head;
 I shou'd possess th' Estate, if he were dead:
 He's so far gone with Rickets, and with th' Evil,
 That one small Dose wou'd send him to the Devil.

II, 23-6

There is less serious disparity between the styles of translation and original in Dryden's Persius than in his Juvenal. Dryden's predilection for pointed, epigrammatic writing, for hard, bold statement rather than for passionate declamation, and for colloquial dash and vigour, worked havoc with some important essential elements

Notes, p. 60.

1. Essays, i, pp. 259-60.

2. Essays, i, p. 264. The translations appeared in Sylvae, 1685.

in Juvenal's style; but although he misses much of the figuration in Persius, his general tone is in more constant accord with that of the original, and his ability as a colloquial poet stands him in good stead. His claim in the preface to the satires, inapplicable to much of the Juvenal, holds for his version of Persius: Persius does speak English as he would have spoken it, had he lived in Dryden's age and society. He is less decorative, and sometimes less forceful and shocking in his English dress; but what is lost in imagery is gained in pointed satiric expression.

There were two elements in the style of Lucretius which appealed to Dryden: his bold assertiveness in philosophical argument, and the warmth, elevation and torrential flow of his verse:

If I am not mistaken, the distinguishing character of Lucretius... is a certain kind of noble pride, and positive assertion of his opinions.... he seems to disdain all manner of replies.. All this, too, with so much scorn and indignation..

From this sublime and daring genius of his, it must of necessity come to pass, that his thoughts must be masculine, full of argumentation, and that sufficiently warm. From the same fiery temper proceeds the loftiness of his expressions, and the perpetual torrent of his verse, where the barrenness of his subject does not too much constrain the quickness of his fancy. (I)

Dryden pays a compliment to Creech, his predecessor, as a close translator and interpreter of the De Rerum Natura. His own method, he says, differs from that of Creech; he is translating selected passages from Lucretius for a poetical miscellany, and he therefore takes more liberty with the original than he would have done, had he been following Creech as a serious interpreter of the whole poem. (2)

In praising Lucretius' 'positive assertion', Dryden places his finger on the quality in his original which is most readily at his own command as a poet; and his experiment with Lucretius displays his excellence in couplet argumentation, especially when threads of satire are woven through the discussion. In translating Lucretius' third book, Against the Fear of Death, he blends impressively a simple, forceful speaking tone with a scornful nobility of feeling:

denique si vocem rerum natura repente
mittat et hoc alicui nostrum sic increpet ipsa
'quid tibi tanto operest, mortalis, quod nimis aegris
luctibus indulges? quid mortem congenis ac fles?
nam si grata fuit tibi vita anteacta priorque

et non omnia pertusum congesta quasi in vas
commoda perfluxere atque ingrata interiere,
cur non ut plenus vitae conviva recedis
aequo animoque capis securam, stulte, quietem?

De Rerum Nat., III,
931-9

And last, suppose Great Natures Voice shou'd call
To thee, or me, or any of us all,
What dost thou mean, ungrateful Wretch, thou vain,
Thou mortal thing, thus idly to complain,
And sigh and sob, that thou shalt be no more?
For if thy Life were pleasant heretofore,
If all the bounteous Blessings, I cou'd give,
Thou hast enjoy'd, if thou hast known to live,
And Pleasure not leak'd through thee like a Sieve,
Why dost thou not give thanks as at a plenteous feast,
Cram'd to the throat with life, and rise and take thy rest?

III,
121-131

This style is maintained throughout Dryden's version of the end of Book III, al-
though occasionally he overestimates the degree of heat in Lucretius' condemnations,
and falls into inappropriate invective. He is in places less imaginative than his
original: for example,

Cerberus et furiae iam vero et lucis egestas,
Tartarus horriferos eructans faucibus aestus,
qui neque sunt usquam nec possunt esse profecto

III, 1011-13

As for the Dog, the Furies, and their Snakes
The gloomy Caverns, and the burning Lakes,
And all the vain infernal trumpery,
They neither are, nor were, nor e're can be.

III, 222-5

Despite his natural power and resonance, Dryden falls just short of the most sonor-
ous and elevated style of Lucretius:

ad confligendum venientibus undique Poenis,
omnia cum belli trepido concussa tumultu
horrida contremuere sub altis aetheris oris,
in dubioque fuere utrorum ad regna cadendum
omnibus humanis esset terraque marique....

III, 833-7

When Punique arms infested Land and Main,
When Heav'n and Earth were in confusion hurl'd,
For the debated Empire of the World,
Which aw'd with dreadful expectation lay,
Sure to be Slaves, uncertain who shou'd sway...

III, 4-8

The Lucretian thunder is too heavy and sustained; it could be echoed in English
only by the weighted complexity of the Miltonic style. When, however, Dryden's ver-
sion is compared with the plodding, literal prosiness of Creech, one regrets that
Dryden did not devote more attention to Lucretius. Indeed, the range of Lucretius'
style, from argument and simple exposition to broad, majestic declamation, was

Notes, p. 62.

- 1. Essays, ii, pp. 12-13.
- 2. Iliad VI: Homer 380, Dryden 19; Homer 424, Dryden 75; Homer 369, Dryden I and 101; Homer 461, Dryden 133.
- 3. Essays, ii, pp. 12-13, 251, 253.

the style is maintained throughout Dryden's version of the end of book III.

though occasionally he overestimated the degree of loss in translation; occasionally not fall into inappropriate words. In places his translation is more original than the original.

They neither are, nor were, nor will be. And all the vein is natural language. The glory of nature, and the lasting name, as for the dog, the fox, and their kind.

Despite his natural grace and resonance, Dryden fails just short of the mark when one can distinguish style of translation.

and translations are hardly as simple as this. In fact, the translator's task is to find a way to reproduce the original's style and content in a way that is both accurate and readable.

When these two things are balanced and done, then the translator's job is done. For the translator's job is to find a way to reproduce the original's style and content in a way that is both accurate and readable.

the translator's job is to find a way to reproduce the original's style and content in a way that is both accurate and readable. This is a difficult task, but it is one that must be done if we are to have a good translation of a work of literature.

much more nearly at Dryden's command than was the richer, more closely-woven style of Virgil.

One of Dryden's two translations from Homer appeared in Examen Poeticum, with a companion piece of translation by Congreve. In the dedication, Dryden remarks that both his fragment and Congreve's are on 'pathetical' subjects; and he praises Congreve for intensifying the tenderness of the Greek original. Doubtless following Congreve's principle, Dryden adds touches of passion to the story of the parting of Hector and Andromache, which are foreign to the simple, direct concreteness of Homer, effective in what is left unsaid. The restraint and dignity of Andromache are replaced by effusive passion; and while Homer's Hector speaks of the possibility of Andromache's captivity in Greece, in terms thrilling and moving in their concreteness --- 'the day when some mail-clad Greek shall lead you, in tears, and take away from you the light of liberty' --- Dryden's Hector is vague, general, and rhetorical:

I see, I see thee in that fatal Hour,
Subjected to the Victor's cruel Pow'r;
Led hence a slave to some insulting Sword:
Forlorn and trembling at a Foreign Lord. Iliad VI, 124-7

Homer's clarity of style is smudged by generalities added to the dialogue, and by conceits. 'The blew-ey'd Progeny of Jove' is an un-Homeric rendering of δενὴν θεῶν; and 'the bellowing Oxen and the bleating Sheep' is a fatuous equivalent for Homer's stock, but colourful βουῶν, ἐπιπόδεσσι καὶ ἀγενηῆς αἰέσσι. κορυθαίολος ἔκτωρ has become merely 'brave Hector', and the Trojans have lost the vigorous epithet ἑκπόδεστος.⁽²⁾ The brightness and gleam of Homer's style, hardening into heroic resolution or softening and growing quiet in tenderness, are clouded and dissipated by Dryden; and he provides no compensating new quality of his own.

Dryden's later attempt to translate a part of the Iliad, in the Fables, is much more successful. He recognised that Homer was 'more capable of exciting the manly passions than those of grief and pity', and praised him for his impetuous vigour and his fire, by which he stirs up 'the irascible appetite'.⁽³⁾ In selecting Iliad I for translation in the Fables, Dryden found his opportunity: the invective force of the battle of words between Achilles and Agamemnon appealed to him, and he handled the passage freely and confidently. His amplification of Homer is well

justified by the tension and the passionate sweep of his verse:

Πηλείδης δ' ἔφατο· τὸν ἀπαρηρῆσιν ἑπέεσσιν
 Ἄτρεϊδην προσέειπε, καὶ εὖ πω λήγε χόλοιο·
 "οἴνοβαρές, κύνοσ ὄμματ' ἔχων, κραδίην δ' ἔλαφοιο,
 ὡς τε ποτ' ἐς πόλεμον ἔμα λαῶσ θωρηχθῆναι
 ὁδὸν ἄλοχόνδ' ἔναι σὺν ἀριστέεσσιν Ἀχαιῶν
 τέτληκας θυρῶ· τὸ δέ τοι κῆρ εἴδεται εἶναι.
 ἢ κοῦ λυγρὸν ἔστι κατὰ στρατὸν εὖρον Ἀχαιῶν
 δῶρ' ἀποαιεῖσθαι δὲ τις βέθεν ἄντιον εἴρη.
 δηροβόρος βασιλεύς.....

Iliad I, 223-
231.

At her departure his Disdain return'd;
 The Fire she fan'd, with greater Fury burn'd;
 Rumbling within till thus it found a vent:
 Dastard, and Drunkard, Mean and Insolent:
 Tongue-valiant Hero, Vaunter of thy Might,
 In Threats the foremost, but the lag in Fight;
 When didst thou thrust amid the mingled Peace,
 Content to bid the War aloof in Peace?
 Arms are the Trade of each Plebeyan Soul;
 'Tis Death to fight; but Kingly to controul.
 Lord-like at ease, with arbitrary Pow'r,
 To peel the Chiefs, the People to devour.
 These Traitor, are thy Tallents....

333-44.

Energy and humour are two almost complementary qualities in Dryden; and in Iliad I, his enthusiasm carries him away from propriety at the end of the book. Homer's attitude to the gods is by no means solemn and reverential; but Dryden closes the scene of the banquet in heaven with a broad smile which is hardly Homeric, and suggests court life much nearer home than Olympus:

The Feast continu'd till declining Light:
 They drank, they laugh'd, they lov'd, and then 'twas Night.
 Nor wanted tuneful Harp, nor vocal Quire;
 The Muses sung; Apollo touch'd the Lyre.
 Drunken at last, and drowsy they depart,
 Each to his House; Adorn'd with labour'd Art
 Of the lame Architect: The thund'ring God
 Ev'n he withdrew to rest, and had his Load.
 His swimming Head to needful Sleep apply'd;
 And Juno lay unheeded by his Side.

806-815.

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III

TRANSLATION FROM THE CLASSICS (II)
.....

- 1. Dryden and the translation of Virgil.
- 2. Dryden's version of the Georgics.
- 3. The AEneis: Dryden's sensitiveness to movement and sound-- his love of violent action and imagery--- fancy.
- 4. The diction of the AEneis: poetic circumlocutions--- Latinisms--- satiric tones and colloquialisms--- prosaic and dialect words--- technical terms.
- 5. The translations: general conclusions.

---ooOoo---ooOoo---

Virgil.. has been my master in this poem. I have followed him everywhere, I know not with what success, but I am sure with diligence enough. My expressions.. are as near as the idioms of the two languages would admit of in translation.

Preface to Annus Mirabilis (1667)

Invention and design were the particular talents of **H**omer. Virgil must yield to him in both...; but the dictio Virgiliana, the expression of Virgil, his colouring, was incomparably the better; and in that I have always endeavoured to copy him.

A Parallel of Poetry and Painting (1695)

TRANSLATION FROM THE CLASSICS

Notes, p. 65.

I. J.S. Phillimore, Some Remarks on Translation and Translators,
English Association Pamphlet, xlii, 1919, p. 9.

2. ibid., p. 15.

3. Essays, ii, pp. 229, 256; i, pp. 256, 258; i, p. 255; ii, pp.
215-7; i, p. 255, ii, pp. 227, 229; ii, p. 229, and i, pp.
256-7; i, p. 17, and ii, p. 148.

Virgil has been my master in this book. I have followed him everywhere, I know not with what success, but I do more with a different courage, by ex-
pression, and as near as the rhythm of the two languages would admit of
in translation.

Preface to Anna's Latin (1867)

invention and design were the work of the Latin scholar of the day. Virgil must
be held to the inimitable, and the Latin scholar, the executioner of
Virgil, his countryman, was the only one who could do it; and in fact a large
number of scholars are still doing it.

A Preface to Anna's Latin (1867)

---I---

Talent, says Professor Phillimore, is not everything in translation: works of this kind usually have their appropriate season, which, once past, seldom returns. At a certain age in their respective development two languages .. correspond by analagous characteristics; and this resemblance is the first condition of success in any attempt to translate a really original writer. (1)

Despite Dryden's own acknowledgement that Virgil's poetry has a quality which is untranslatable, and that seventeenth century English is far from adequate as a medium for translating Virgil, Professor Phillimore declares that 'Dryden has this great merit, a natural appreciation of the pitch of style in Virgil; which atones for some limitations in his scholarship and in his metrical resources'. (2)

In the face of traditional scholarly opinion of Dryden's Virgil, this is high praise. He indeed set out to translate Virgil into English poetry in the grand manner: but how far did Dryden appreciate the level of style and the quality of expression in his Latin original, and how far did his own linguistic equipment and his poetic character allow him to demonstrate that appreciation in practical terms through translation?

In his essays, Dryden speaks of Virgil always in terms of enthusiastic praise. The qualities of style which he selects for praise are a majestic plainness, above the tricks of hyperbole, epigram and conceit; a sensitiveness and an inimitable grace in the selection of words; a superb skill in patterning words for harmonious sound-effects; a precise brevity in expression; and a propriety in metaphor, maintained even in epic poetry, the language of which 'is almost wholly figurative'. It is not difficult to understand why Dryden should speak of Virgil as his master, and declare that in diction and expression he had always tried to follow his example. (3)

Virgil exemplified many of the Augustan ideals in style; and his broad, sonorous phrasing, exquisite diction, and mastery of rhythm and verbal harmony, were poetic characteristics which made an immediate and constant appeal to Dryden.

Notes, p. 65.

1. Essays, ii, p. 216; cf. ii, pp. 240-41.

2. Essays, ii, pp. 240-41.

3. Essays, ii, p. 227; p. 228.

Dryden had no mean notion of the task he set himself; and his whole attitude to his work is one of noble humility. Virgil, he says, took eleven years to the Aeneid; and he himself could wish that, to the three years he spent on his translation, he might add four more for revision. His Postscript to the Reader has a majestic and earnest simplicity, and a spirit of high endeavour in a high cause; and his sense of accomplishment is tempered with an awareness of his imperfection, which recalls Milton's declaration of his poetic ideals, and looks forward to Dr. Johnson's Preface to the Dictionary:

What Virgil wrote in the vigour of his age, in plenty and at ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years; struggling with wants, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write,.. Yet steady to my principles, and not dispirited with my afflictions, I have, by the blessing of God on my endeavours, overcome all difficulties, and, in some measure, acquitted myself of the debt which I owed to the public when I undertook this work..... For, what I have done, imperfect as it is for want of health and leisure to correct it, will be judged in after-ages, and possibly in the present, to be no dishonour to my native country, whose language and poetry would be more esteemed abroad, if they were better understood. (2)

Here is a sincerity which deserves not to be undervalued; and this postscript, if it reflects in any measure Dryden's purpose and attitude when he began his work, points to a broader, higher and more consistent policy than we may detect in any of his other translations. He looks back upon his labour as a heroic endeavour to represent a heroic poet in an English form worthy of his eminence and quality.

Dryden felt the sense of despair which oppresses any poet who attempts to translate Virgil; he confessed his own shortcomings as a translator; and he admitted the deficiencies of the English language when it is strained to accommodate a foreign poet of Virgilian quality. Literal translation, says Dryden, is made impossible by the qualitative differences between English and Latin: the Latin of Virgil particularly has a richness and a conciseness beyond the reach of any modern language. Of the two essential Virgilian qualities, brevity and elegance, the first seems to defy reproduction; and Dryden is therefore forced to concentrate on the second, even at the risk of loose paraphrase. Virgil is like ambergris, 'a rich perfume, but of so close and glutinous a body, that it must be opened with inferior scents..., or the sweetness will not be drawn out into another tongue'. (3)

Because he recognises the perfection of the Virgilian diction, he strives to retain as much of Virgil's vocabulary as possible; but most of his poetic words 'are of necessity to be lost, because they will not shine in any (language) but their own'. Further, the inevitable restriction of epic vocabulary to words which are 'grave, majestic and sublime' was a serious embarrassment to Dryden; despite the richness of the English language, and of his own linguistic ingenuity, Virgil made demands on his resources which he met with difficulty:

Virgil, above all poets, had a stock, which I may call ~~in~~exhaustible, of figurative, elegant, and sounding words: I, who inherit but a small portion of his genius, and write in a language so much inferior to the Latin, have found it very painful to vary phrases, when the same sense returns upon me.. Virgil called upon me in every line for some new word: and I paid so long, that I was almost bankrupt.. (1)

Dryden tried to meet the demand by borrowing-- 'I trade both with the living and the dead, for the enrichment of our native language'; and although, in the first place, much of his latinism was necessitated by the richness of his original, the translator is justified in adapting Virgil's vocabulary for English use, on poetic grounds. 'If we will have things of magnificence and splendour, we must get them by commerce. Poetry requires ornament, and that is not to be had from our old Teuton monosyllables'. In the end, however, the rich beauty of Virgil's Latin defies imitation; and of one illustration 'amongst a thousand others', Dryden says despairingly that 'I contemn the world when I think on it, and myself when I translate it'.⁽²⁾

Dryden's observations on the qualitative differences between Latin and English are sufficiently penetrating; but the gulf separating him from Virgil was wider than his criticism suggests. The distinguishing characteristic of the Virgilian style is an immense and subtle compression of meaning. In Virgil's hands, words induce or illuminate in one another significances which are otherwise only latent; he so disposes his poetic words, that he evokes a rich complication of primary meanings and secondary suggestions from a single line or a phrase; and he manipulates implications and associations to express the apparently inexpressible.⁽³⁾ This rich suggestion and subtle interaction in verbal patterns sets Virgil apart

from Dryden, not only in poetic technique but also in ultimate poetic value. Dryden was much more than a master of direct statement in poetry, with suggestion and imaginative association smoothed away as far as possible; but, on the other hand, there is in his grand style little of the complicated organisation of words and the subtle interplay of meaning which we associate with Virgil, Shakespeare, or Milton. He is, as he himself recognised, much nearer in style to the plain, majestic directness of Homer, than he is to Virgil. At a more superficial level of contrast, the involved syntax and the general texture of Virgil's Latin are very different from the comparatively straightforward English of Dryden; and this is not merely an obvious general difference between the whole syntactical structure of Latin verse and that of English, since in both Shakespeare and Milton there is an approximation to the convolution of Latin verse style.

Even when this essential difference in technique and quality between Dryden and Virgil has been allowed for, there is an insuperable difference in their total personalities, both as poets and as men; and here too, Dryden stands nearer to Homer than to Virgil. He expresses this difference very well, in contrasting the Greek poet and the Latin:

Virgil was of a quiet, sedate temper; Homer was violent, impetuous, and full of fire. The chief talent of Virgil was propriety of thoughts, and ornament of words: Homer was rapid in his thoughts, and took all the liberties, both of numbers and of expressions, which his language and the age in which he lived, allowed him. ... One warms you by degrees; the other sets you on fire all at once, and never intermits his heat... (I)

Dryden might here be comparing Virgil and himself. He stands so far from Virgil, in tonal quality, complexity of poetic reference, richness of suggestion, and general temperament, that a translation which carries the essential Virgil over into English with the minimum of qualitative loss, is not to be expected at his hands. This much must be recognised, before any attempt is made to compare his Virgil with the original. The poetic virtues of Dryden's Georgics and Aeneis are many; but they are the virtues of Dryden himself, in his singing robes; and they often take the place of inimitable Virgilian qualities which Dryden fully recognises but cannot bring out in his own poetry. Detailed comparison of translation and original here reveals, on the one hand, a failure to reproduce the true Virgilian manner; and on the other, the real quality of Dryden himself as a heroic poet.

Notes, p. 69.

1. Works of Virgil, 1697, ¶ IV.
2. Ibid., ¶ IR; Letters of John Dryden, ed C.E. Ward, Duke University Press, 1942, No. 41 (17th Feb., 1696).
3. Cf. Georgics, ii, 491-2, Dryden 700-701; iii, 28-9, Dryden 43-4; i, 74-6, Dryden 110-111.

In his essay on the Georgics, which forms the preface to Dryden's version in the 1697 Virgil, Addison declares that Virgil prevented his rural subject-matter from corrupting his style, by raising the themes of these four poems with solemn, magisterial verse and 'significancy of Expression': Virgil 'delivers the meanest of his Precepts with a kind of Grandeur, he breaks the Clods and tosses the Dung about with an air of gracefulness'. This critical view underlies Dryden's translation. In his dedication, he speaks of the Georgics as 'the best Poem of the best Poet', written in Virgil's maturity, 'when his Judgment was at the height, and before his Fancy was declining'; and in a letter to Chesterfield written while the Virgil was printing, Dryden declares that he 'labour'd and.. cultivated the Georgiques with more care than any other part...', and as I think myself with more success'.⁽²⁾

In many places, Dryden cannot retain the quality of the Latin, especially in imaginative description, and in the delicate or richly suggestive epithet.⁽³⁾

For example:

.. . . . quintam fuge: pallidus Orcus
 Eumenidesque satae; tum partu Terra nefando
 Coeumque Iapetumque creat, saevumque Typhoea
 et coniuratos caelum rescindere fratres I, 277-80

The Fifth be sure to shun;
 That gave the Furies and pale Pluto Birth,
 And arm'd, against the Skies, the Sons of Earth. I, 372-4

Translating Virgil's lovely picture of the sea-birds sporting in the spray, Dryden curiously misses the rapid movement suggested by the Latin verbs; and by choosing to translate pelagi volucres as 'Swans', he loses the vitality and exuberant joy of Virgil, and commits himself to a Spenserian dignity **inappropriate** to the context--- the delight of the swan is a sober spectacle:

certatim largos umeris infundere rores,
 nunc caput obiectare fretis, nunc currere in undas
 et studio incassum videas gestire lavandi I, 385-7

The Swans that sail along the Silver Flood,
 And dive with stretching Necks to search their Food,
 Then lave their Backs with sprinkling Dews in vain,
 And stem the Stream to meet the promis'd Rain.
 I, 529-32

Notes, p. 70.

1. Georgics, i, II5-6, Dryden I73-4; i, II9, Dryden I79; i, 3II, Dryden, 4I9; iii, 256, Dryden 399-400.
2. Georgics, i, 3I0, Dryden 4I7; iii, 366, Dryden 562-3.
Cf. Dryden's versions, ii, I2; ii, 20; ii, 400; iii, 374; iii, 668-9; iii, 37I (Virgil 238); iii, 550-3 (Virgil 357-9).
3. E.g., Caroline Poets, ed. G. Saintsbury, Oxford, I905, ii, p. 3I2 (Ayres); iii, I26-7 (Stanley); and Cowley, The Garden, stanza IO (in Several Discourses..., No. 5).
4. Georgics, ii, II8-9, Dryden I65-6; ii, 22I, Dryden 302; ii, 296, Dryden 408.

Occasionally Dryden reverses this process, and gives his translation graces, and touches of vividness and colour, which the original does not have. There is a concentration and an imaginative freshness in, for example, 'impetuous Rain swells hasty Brooks' (amnis abundans exit); 'glutton Geese' (improbus anser); and 'stormy Stars' (tempestas.. et sidera). Virgil's picture of the boar in spring, reviving his lust, is enriched and vitalised by Dryden's addition:

The sleepy Leacher shuts his little Eyes;
About his churning Chaps the frothy bubbles rise. (I)

Such additions are not numerous; and there is a difference between these occasional felicities in Dryden, and the sustained imaginative and verbal opulence of Virgil.

Fancy sat too frequently on Dryden's shoulder while he 'labour'd and cultivated' the Georgics. Taking courage from Virgil's constant use of metaphor, he worked into his translation a wealth of conceit which too often falsifies, cheapens or merely makes ridiculous. 'The Fleecy Skies new cloath the Wood' is a foolish fancy for the direct nix alta iacet; and although Virgil's image of the hard icicles forming on the countryman's beard in winter is a little strange and strained, Dryden reduces it to grotesque comedy by alluding to the crackling
(2)
sounds in the icy hair. Many of his less fortunate flights of fancy spring from a desire to emphasise the Virgilian habit of humanising crops, trees and animals
(3)
--- a habit to which many English Caroline poets had given fantastic support. When Virgil speaks of buds struggling through a tree's bark, Dryden develops the implication of an arboreal womb, and dubs the new bud 'th' admitted Infant'. Shrubs have bleeding veins; olives embrace 'Husband Elms in am'rous Twines'; and to the arms (bracchia) of Virgil's oak, Dryden, unable to leave well alone, adds
(4)
leafy hands.

Dryden strikes many false notes in pathetic passages. Orpheus' grief at the death of Eurydice is in vain, says Virgil, because illa Stygia nabat iam frigida cumba: this Dryden debases clumsily, with a suggestion of a wet seaside holiday:

Her Soul already was consign'd to Fate,
And shiv'ring in the leaky Sculler sate. IV, 739-40
(Virgil 506)

Occasionally Dryden reverses this process, and gives his translation Greek, and touches of wit and spirit, which the original does not have. There is a concentration and an imaginative freedom in, for example, 'Ingenious man' (Notes, p. 71.)

1. Georgics, iii, 506, Dryden 754-5; iii, 525, Dryden 784 ff.
2. Georgics, iii, 125 ff; Dryden 194 ff.
 iii, 162 ff; Dryden 259 ff.
 iii, 215 ff; Dryden 329 ff.

Such a change is not unexpected; and there is a difference between these two local features in English, and the unaltered Latin and Greek originals of Virgil.

They are too frequently on Dryden's side, and while he is labouring and criticising the Georgics. Taking courage from Virgil's example was of course, he worked into his translation a certain amount of content which he later followed.

are on their own side. 'The Muses' lines now stand the same, in a local way for the almost six lines; and although Virgil's image of the poet labouring on the countryman's land is rather a little strange and

strained, Dryden reduces it to grotesque comedy by allowing to the speaking words in the joy of his life. Many of his less fortunate flights of fancy sound like a desire to emphasise the Virgilian idea of the poet's life, and to make a point to which many of his own lines best fit. (3)

than Virgil's words of such striking beauty, and to develop the suggestion of an extended word, and also the new and 'the' repeated in Latin. (4) Dryden have chosen to use; since he has chosen to use 'the' in 'the' and to the stars (Georgics) of Virgil's own, Dryden, usually in a way well known, adds (5) locally.

Dryden's lines may have been in Latin's language, Dryden's lines as the death of Virgil is in Latin, says Virgil, because life is like a dream (Virgil's words) and a suggestion of a word which is

See also already in Virgil's 'The Muses' lines. IV, 125-130. And Virgil's in the last couplet. (Virgil's)

A horse in Dryden's version of Georgics III dies with 'patient sobbing, and with 'manly Groans' (spiritus interdum gemitu gravis); and the pathos of Virgil's melancholy reflections on the dead ox -- quid labor, aut benefacta iuvant?-- is lowered to the mock-elegiac level which the Latin touches at just a few points:

Now what avails his well-deserving Toil
To turn the Glebe; or smooth the rugged Soil;
And yet he never sapt in solemn State,
Nor undigested Feasts did urge his Fate... (I)

The era which produced Gray's Cat and Poor Maillie's Elegy has begun.

Generally, however, Dryden acquits himself well in handling those numerous passages in the Georgics where animals are invested with human qualities. The elevated and the comic are never far apart in Dryden: he seems constantly to have been tempted to turn the pompous and gravely heroic to comedy. The attribution of characters and personalities to the beasts of the field in the Georgics appealed to his sense of humour; and he enlarged upon this in his own delightfully sly way, without too seriously altering the spirit of his original. In the advice which Virgil gives on preparing a stallion for stud, there are hints of the horse's almost human character; and these Dryden develops boldly with such phrases as 'enable him to make his Court', 'the Nuptial Time approaches', 'Husband of the Herd', and 'produce him to the Faire'. The calf which is being trained to the yoke is characterised as a 'stubborn Child' set to learn the rural trade; Virgil's junge pares is jocularly rendered 'joyn'd with his School-fellows two by two'; and instructions on the feeding of the young oxen are coloured in the language of the Sunday School. Dryden humanises the heifer seeking her love in spring, as he does the stallion; and animal mating is quietly raised to a human level by the occasional introduction of phrases such as 'the Charm of that alluring Kind', 'the soft Seducer', 'with two fair Eyes his Mistress burns his Breast', and (the bull's) 'pining for the Lass'. Dryden is, strictly speaking, unfaithful to his original here; for the links between human and animal experience are usually but hinted, lightly and delicately, in Virgil: but only a humourless critic would judge Dryden adversely, when the general effect is so gently and slyly amusing.

Notes, p. 72.

1. Georgics, iv, 16, Dryden 20; Dryden 41-2; Dryden 102-5, 110 (note that Dryden's soldier-bees 'bite the dust' in the best epic manner, cf. AEn. xi, 418, &c); iv, 67, Dryden 93-5; 211 ff, Dryden 309, 312, 316. The political element was probably suggested by Addison's similar lines in his version of Georgics IV (e.g., lines 80, 281).

2. Georgics, iv, 178-80, Dryden 259; 188, Dryden 276-7; 242-3, Dryden 352-3; 198-9, Dryden 288-91.

The best example of delightful humanisation is to be found in Georgics IV, where Dryden greatly expands Virgil's account of the bees as creatures endowed with the mental and social habits of civilised man. Virgil's volantes become 'trading Citizens' and 'raw Soldiers'; and where he describes, in a mild heroic flight, the bees faring forth at the mercy of the summer winds, Dryden turns the swarm into a pirate fleet threatened by raging gales on their return from a voyage of plunder. Virgil's use of military reference is extended: Dryden equips the hive with horsemen and trusty guards. He heightens the allusions to civil war, and gives them contemporary colouring by translating duobus regibus as 'two Pretenders'. He uses Virgil's rege incolumi mens omnibus una est; amisso rupere fidem, to develop unmistakable references to the politics of his own life-time in such phrases as 'the Commons live, by no Divisions rent', 'subvert the Hive', 'crowd his Levees, and support his Throne', and 'the great Monarch's Death dissolves the Government'. The hive is a city, populated by all conditions and ages from the youthful swain to the 'grave, experienc'd Bee'; and the bees' life, utopian in its perfection, has no place for nuptial rites and 'wanton Woman-kind'. In his description of sickness and death in the hive, Dryden gives his bees human emotions and expressions, and all the paraphernalia of a human funeral:

They change their Hue, with hagger'd Eyes they stare,
 Lean are their Looks, and shagged is their Hair:
 And Crowds of Dead, that never must return
 To their lov'd Hives, in decent Pomp are born:
 Their Friends attend their Herse, and next Relations Mourn,)

IV, 370-74

It is not only in such humorous passages as these ---from a strictly critical point of view, irresponsible in a translator--- that Dryden successfully develops Virgil's pictures of animal life. He appreciates Virgil's spirit admirably in descriptions of vital, pulsing natural life; and in translating these, he amply compensates for his failure to carry over Virgil's sensitive and detailed pictures of the countryside without loss. A fine example is his portrait of the war-horse; and it is worth quoting in full with the original, for comparison:

Notes, p. 73.

1. See, for example, Dryden's version, iii, 105ff, where he provides a stable-craft of his own in good style; iii, 157-8, effective if unquoteable lines on the aged and impotent stallion, with a suggestion of the forcible diction of the satirist; and iii, 218-23.

tum, si qua sonum procul arma dedere
 stare locumnescit, micat auribus et tremit artus,
 collectumque premens volvit sub naribus ignem.
 4 densa iuba, et dextro iactata recumbit in armo;
 at duplex agitur per lumbos spina, cavatque
 tellurem et solido graviter sonat ungula cornu. III, 83-8

The fiery Courser, when he hears from far
 2 The sprightly Trumpets, and the shouts of War,
 Pricks up his Ears; and trembling with delight,
 4 Shifts pace, and paws; and hopes the promis'd Fight.
 On his right Shoulder his thick Mane reclin'd,
 6 Ruffles at speed; and dances in the Wind.
 His horny Hoofs are jetty black, and round;)
 8 His Chine is double; starting, with a bound.)
 9 He turns the Turf, and shakes the solid Ground.)
 Fire from his Eyes, Clouds from his Nostrils flow:
 II He bears his Rider headlong on the Foe. III, 130-40

Despite his varying caesurae, and the inferiority of his diction in resonance and weight, Dryden carries the roll and vigour of his verse through the whole passage, and achieves a controlled swell of rhythm and sound which Virgil manages only in his fourth line. Indeed, the comparative sharpness and staccato variety of the English is here an advantage: Dryden conveys, in terms of rhythm and verbal harmony, a fine picture of the reined-in strength, the jerky vigour (3-4) and the ferocity (10-11) of the war-horse. His portrait has more colour in it: sprightly (2) describes the sound of the trumpet, and also harmonises with the action of the horse; the ruffling, dancing mane (6) increases the pervading sense of rapid, vital movement; and Dryden's eighth and ninth lines are both more precise than Virgil's, in their detail and in speaking of the turf 'turned' rather than hollowed by a powerful hoof, and also more vivid and exciting in their diction (starting, bound, shakes). Dryden's version of the Georgics abounds in vigorous description of animal life --- particularly in his accounts of the mating season in (I) book III. Insensitive though he is to the delicacy of Virgil's pictures of nature, he introduces a new charm and vitality to the Georgics in his love of lively movement.

When we turn to the Aeneis, the same delight in movement and vigorous action is everywhere apparent. The most obvious and constant characteristic of Dryden's poetry is a tremendous energy. He is an aggressive, assertive, masculine poet. Boldness is one of the essential features in all his literary work: we see it, in various forms, in the strong individuality and independence of his critical writing, in the great variety of poetic and dramatic experiments which he conducted during a long and active career, in his satiric treatment of men and affairs, and in the daring excesses of his imagery and conceits. He is a poet of muscle, brawn and sinew; he delights in action, in violence, and in the thorough treatment of a theme. Although he sings sweetly enough in light lyric, his true poetic tones are deep, heavy, reverberating, and vital. His version of the Aeneid shows his perpetual dissatisfaction with the grave, sedate, composed artistry of Virgil, and his persistent efforts to give his translation the fire, vividness and pith of his own natural style.

He is constantly adding new details and new images to the original, in his effort to vitalise. Every combat and slaughter in the Aeneid provides him with an opportunity for expressing his delight in violent action; and he treats the original with a confident freedom. Poetically more important than the addition of detail, however, is Dryden's use of much stronger and more forceful verbs than those of Virgil. For example:

iactantemque utroque caput crassumque cruorem
ore eiectantem mixtosque in sanguine dentes V, 469-70

His Mouth and Nostrils pour'd a Purple Flood;
And pounded Teeth, came rushing with his Blood. V, 635-6

domus sanie dapibusque cruentis,
intus opaca, ingens.
visceribus miserorum et sanguine vescitur atro.
vidi egomet duo de numero cum corpora nostro
presa manu magna medio resupinus in antro
frangeret ad saxum, sanieque aspersa natarent
limina; vidi atro cum membra fluentia tabo
manderet et tepidi tremarent sub dentibus artus III, 618-19,
622-27

The Cave, though large, was dark, the dismal Flore
Was pav'd with mangled Limbs and putrid Gore.

.
The Joints of slaughter'd Wretches are his Food:
And for his Wine he quaffs the streaming Blood.

Note, p. 75.

I. AEn. I, 83, Dryden 122-3; X, Dryden 301; V, 126-7, Dryden 166-7; V, 807-8, Dryden 1055-7; V, 141, Dryden 185-6; V, 763-4, Dryden 997-1000.

See also: AEn. VIII, 673, Dryden 892-4, where surges play and dancing Dolphins add touches of brightness and joy; II, 206-7, Dryden **272-5**, the burning movement of the serpents; the noisy horsemanship of Ascanius, IV, Dryden 225-6; and the picture of the dove in the cave shaking 'her sounding Wings' till 'the Cavern rings with clatt'ring', V, 215-6, Dryden 277-8.

When we turn to the Aeneid, the same delight in movement and vigorous action is everywhere apparent. The most obvious and constant of Dryden's...
I. AEn. I, 83, Dryden 122-3; X, Dryden 301; V, 126-7, Dryden 166-7; V, 807-8, Dryden 1055-7; V, 141, Dryden 185-6; V, 763-4, Dryden 997-1000.
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These Eyes beheld, when with his spacious Hand
 He seiz'd two Captives of our Grecian Band;
 Stretch'd on his Back, he dash'd against the Stones
 Their broken Bodies, and their crackling Bones:
 With spouting Blood the Purple Pavement swims,
 While the dire Glutton grinds the trembling Limbs. III, 810-II,
 816-23

.. deturbat terrae truncumque, tepentem
 provolvens... X, 555-6

Mows off his Head, the Trunk a Moment stood,
 Then sunk, and rowl'd along the Sand in Blood. X, 775-6

To the episode of Alcides and Cacus, Dryden gives increased force and vividness; the narrative of flight, pursuit and violence is greatly enlivened by numerous little touches; and the description of the kill is in Dryden's most sinewy and enthusiastic style:

The Monster, spewing fruitless Flames, he found;
 He squeez'd his Throat, he writh'd his Neck around,
 And in a Knot his cripled Members bound.
 Then, from their Sockets, tore his burning Eyes,
 Rowld on a heap the breathless Robber lies. VIII, 343-7

Dryden's delight in movement and sound does not confine its expression to scenes of slaughter. His best description has a peculiar vividness, which he achieves largely by the sensitive use of words signifying swift, strong, or lively action. The liberated winds in Aeneid I, for example, ruunt et terras turbine perflant: Dryden, with merely conventional words, suggests something more of the merriment and exultation of the winds in their new freedom:

The raging Winds rush through the hollow Wound,
 And dance aloft in Air, and skim along the Ground.

Dryden's ocean is always lively. Billows 'dance around'; waters after a storm 'uncurl their ridgy Backs' and recline at the foot of a cliff; Xanthus 'ridges' himself in blood as he struggles through heaps of slain to the sea. Waves are lashed into sparkling and hissing activity by the sailors' oars; and in this brief picture of the mariners' departure in Aeneis V, Dryden's diction gives a stronger impression of the life and spirit of the scene than does the more sonorous language of Virgil:

..... placidi straverunt aequora venti:
 creber et aspirans rursus vocat Auster in altum

Then, from the South arose a gentle Breeze,
 That curl'd the smoothness of the glassy Seas;
 The rising Winds, a ruffling Gale afford,
 And call the merry Mariners aboard. (I)

Notes, p. 76.

1. AEn., IX, 346, Dryden 466. Other examples of increased vividness in the translation are the description of the waking household, VIII, 411-2, Dryden 543-4; and the description of Cerberus, janitor-Orci, VIII, 296-7, Dryden 393-5.

2. Contrast Dryden's effective use of verbs of action in:-

where in thickest Waves the Sparkles drove VIII, 340

The Doors, unbarr'd, receive the rushing Day VIII, 348

Night rushes down, and headlong drives the Day VI, 725

The speaker, speaking in a plain style, he found; He speaks his thought, he wields his words around; And in a short but varied language found. Thus, from their books, take his burning eyes, found on a heap the precious books lie.

The rising wind soon through the hollow wood, and dance aloft in air, and skim along the ground.

Dryden's words are always lively. Milton's 'dance aloft'; what after a storm 'up' and 'down' they 'skim' and 'roll' at the foot of a cliff; Milton's 'skim'; himself in blood as he 'skipped through' books of skin to the sea. Milton was indeed into sparkling and hissing activity by the sailors' cry; and in this brief picture of the sailors' departure in Aeneid V, Dryden's diction gives a stronger impression of the life and spirit of the scene than does the more sonorous language of Virgil:

... should structure various parts: order of apparatus various vices in alium. Then, from the north across a gentle breeze, that quill the unobscured of the glassy sea; the flying winds, a whirling tale allow; and call the airy elements' spirits.

There is a felicitous precision and delicacy in Dryden's selection of words in these lines. The stealthy movement of Rhoetus as he tries to escape Euryalus' midnight slaughter is suggested with like precision in 'behind a spacious Jarr he ^(I) slink'd for fear', where Virgil has simply metuens se post cratera tegebat; and Dryden describes the elusive shade of Juno as she leads Turnus away from the battle to safety aboard ship, with skilfully chosen verbs of swift, light, dancing movement:

huc ~~sese~~ sese trepida Aeneae fugientis imago
conicit in latebras... X, 656-7

For shelter there the trembling Shadow bent,
And skip'd, and sculk'd, and under Hatches went. X, 925-6

Dryden's sensitiveness to movement sometimes leads to strain and impropriety, however. Not every subject will stand the force of his strong diction; and he is often too bold and precipitate. Alternative similes are too suddenly and violently contrasted in

effugit imago
par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno II, 793-4

Light as an empty Dream at break of Day,
Or as a blast of Wind, she rush'd away. II, 1079-80

The closeness of the couplet pattern smartens up Virgil too boldly in

nocturnosque ciet manes: mugire videbis
sub pedibus terram et descendere montibus ornos. IV, 490-91

The yawning Earth rebellows to her Call;
Pale Ghosts ascend; and Mountain Ashes fall. IV, 708-9

The description of Lavinia's blush, though full and obviously decorative in Virgil, is rather too fanciful in the translation --- Dryden makes too much of the activity of colour:

flagrantes perfusa genas, cui plurimus ignem
subiecit rubor et calefacta per ora cucurrit.
Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit... XII, 65-7

A crimson Blush her beauteous Face o'erspread;
Varying her Cheeks by turns, with white and red.
The driving Colours, never at a stay,
Run here and there; and flush, and fade away. (2)
Delightful change! Thus Indian Iv'ry shows.. XII, 101-5

I. The sexual imagery in violated and Womb is typical of Dryden's natural description at its strongest. Heaven is ravished by descending darkness; mountains mate with the skies (AEneis, I, 130; III, 260; VIII, 252).

With Dryden's personification of the myrtle, cf. his description of the sacred laurel in Latinus' court. Virgil says that this tree was multoque metu servata per annos (VII, 60); in Dryden, its 'holy Hair was kept, and cut with superstitious Care' (90). The conceit is 'metaphysical': cf. Donne's fantastic description of plant life, Progresse of the Soule, stanzas xiii, xvi; and Benlowes, Theophila, canto XIII, ii.

It is worth noting that Dryden's sense of force, and his love of battle-scenes, encourage him to personify weapons conceitedly. Priam's ineffectual spear 'loiters' in the air (AEneis, II, 742-5); and weapons again and again drink their victims' blood (e.g., VII, 744; IX, 555; XI, 1176. Cf. also XI, 942, 'the Fields... are drunk with Blood'; II, 792).

A further aspect of Dryden's love of activity and vitality in this translation is his extravagance and boldness in the personification of Nature. Here, too, his delight in strong expression sometimes betrays him. Virgil provided Dryden with a precedent for the treatment of natural phenomena and events in human terms; but the unrestricted liberty of Dryden's fancy, re-inforced by his inclination to select the most vigorous and active words, works havoc with the propriety and dignity of the heroic style. There is a somewhat pleasing suggestion of the human in Dryden's lines on Tiber:

leni fluit agmine Thybris... II, 782

Where gentle Tiber from his Bed beholds
The flow'ry Meadows, and the feeding Folds. II, 1062-3

There is less to be said for these conceited personifications:-

nunc rapidus retro atque aestu revoluta resorbens
saxa fugit litusque vado labente relinquit XI, 627-8

Then backward with a Swing, they take their Way,
Repuls'd from upper Ground, and seek their Mother Sea;
With equal hurry quit th' invaded **Shore**, XI,
And swallow back the Sand, and Stones they spew'd before. 933-36

Charybdis.... sidera verberat unda III, 420,
423

The Waves mount up, and wash the face of Heav'n III, 539

gemitus lachrymabilis imo
auditur tumulo..... III, 39-40

The violated Myrtle ran with Gore.
Scarce dare I tell the Sequel: From the Womb
Of wounded Earth, and Caverns of the Tomb,
A Groan, as of a troubled Ghost, renew'd
My Fright..... (I) III, 53-56

Not all Dryden's attempts to embellish and vitalise his translation detract from the dignity of the heroic style. For example, he personifies the natural scene in his description of how Alcides disturbed the earth as he heaved a rock over Cacus' lair; and although this personification has a suggestion of Dryden's intrusive humour, it is none the less vivid and vigorous in its context:

impulit, impulsu quo maximus insonat aether,
dissultant ripae refluitque exterritus amnis VIII, 239-40

Notes, p. 78.

I. AEEn., I, 84, Dryden 125; I, 51, Dryden 77.

2. Virgil and Lucretius, in Proceedings of the Classical Association, xxviii, 1931, pp. 24-5, 39.

Thus heav'd, the fix'd Foundations of the Rock
 Gave way: Heav'n eccho'd at the ratling Shock.
 Tumbling it choak'd the Flood: On either side
 The Banks leap backward; and the Streams divide.
 The Sky shrunk upward with unusual Dread:
 And trembling Tyber div'd beneath his Bed.

VIII, 315-20

The liberated winds in Book I tear over the earth, raising 'liquid Mountains' of sea --- a hyperbole which increases the suggestion of terrific violence; and a single personifying epithet raises the negative phrase nimborum .. patriam to the poetic 'restless Regions of the Storms'.
 (I)

---- 4 ----

An element of style which is related to the conceit is the fanciful circumlocution, which absorbed much of the neo-classical imaginative and decorative impulse, and is generally regarded as one of the most mortifying characteristics of Augustan poetic diction. Dryden's Virgil is loaded with circumlocutions; and it offers the largest and most varied catalogue of examples of what is a major element in his poetic diction, and in that of the eighteenth century poets who followed his lead. A diction removed from every-day modes of expression, accepted as standard and yet always poetically fresh, was one of the aims of Virgil: he was aware, says Dr. Cyril Bailey, of the need for a fixed poetic language in Latin:

He could by imitation consecrate the language and phraseology of his predecessors as part of the poetic diction of Latin, and in this way could at once fix the tradition of the past and point out the way for the future... (An) examination of Virgil's reminiscences.. greatly strengthens one's belief in the continuity of Latin poetry and in the definite effort to create a poetical diction. (2)

Artificial diction, and the deliberate imitation of the language of distinguished predecessors, are here associated. Dr. Bailey's words might be applied to Dryden, mutatis mutandis. Both artifice and imitation (especially of the classical poets) are strong, if not indeed primary elements in the specifically poetic diction of Dryden and the English Augustans. Dryden himself declared his debts to the dictio Virgiliana; and he bears as much responsibility as does Milton, for the artificial and heavily latinate colouring of Augustan poetic language. What I wish to illustrate here is that, in some instances, Dryden borrowed his poetic phraseology from

Notes, p. 79.

- 1.) Foot-notes to the next few pages, since they consist
- 2.) chiefly of lists of line-references, and would weight
- 3.) these pages heavily without greatly assisting the reader,
- 4.) are relegated to the end of the chapter, pp. 99-100.

Virgil, or built imitatively on the Virgilian model; and that, although many of his phrases are valueless excrescences or colourless embellishments, others have a poetic freshness and imaginativeness which is their justification.

In the first place, Dryden built up a large but not very varied stock of poetic circumlocutions on which he drew at need. These phrases fall readily into large groups, since certain themes called again and again for embellishment. To take

(I)

three illustrations:-

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. liquid Deep (pelago) | liquid Way (coelum) |
| liquid Empire (aequora) | crystal Flood (annem, gurgite) |
| liquid Field | watry Lists |
| liquid Plains (aequora) | watry Reign (immensi maris) |
| liquid Realms (imperium pelagi) | watry Rode (|
| liquid Store (liquentia mella) | watry Track |
| 2. flow'ry Plain | rural Realm |
| sylvan Reign | woody Shades (nemora alta) |
| sylvan Scenes (viridem..silvam) | woodland Progeny (silvestria virgulta) |
| 3. callow Care (progeniem) | young Succession (progeniem) |
| gen'rous Kind (pecori generoso) | breathing Subjects (winds) |
| sinking Kind (generis lapsi) | more ignoble Throng (tota armenta) |
| winged Nation | scaly Nations of the Sea profound (maris immensi prolem) |
| Airy Nation (innumerae gentes) | |
| hellish Nation (dira gente) | |
| laborious Kind | |
| wing'd Inhabitants of Air (volucrum) | |

These three representative groups of stock phrases, which persist ad nauseam in Augustan poetry to the end of the eighteenth century, are derived from the example of Virgil. For the first group, in which watry and liquid are decoratively used, there is adequate precedent in Virgil, who applies liquidus, for example, to nox, mel, iter, aer, aether, fons, lacus, unda. As a model for sylvan and woody, there are Virgil's silvestrem musam, silvestrem animam (of trees), silvestres truncos, silvestri arbore, silvestribus baccis, silvestris labrusca. For generic phrases involving kind, nation, et cetera, the Virgilian sources are countless; genus, for example, is used for all sorts of poetic classification, often with the qualifying epithets which Dryden gives his English equivalents. In many of these poetic phrases, as the examples serve to illustrate, Dryden is translating a concrete word or phrase in Latin by an elegant circumlocution. He found great difficulty in providing sufficient variants for the recurring phrases in his original, and in translating Virgil's inexhaustible stock of poetic words. All that he does in introducing many of these circumlocutions

and decorative phrases is to extend Virgil's practice, in order to give colour and elegant variety to the language of his translation; and this soon becomes a pernicious habit. For the age of Dryden, there was a poetic virtue in recurrent decorative phrases; the practice had the authority of the classical poets, and, as Mr. Tillotson has pointed out, there is in neo-classical poetry a solid substratum of expected and predictable language and imagery, consonant with the Augustan love of generalisation and respect for convention. Dryden's poetic periphrases cannot, however, be justified on such grounds. If they make any appeal to modern readers, that appeal springs from the freshness and originality with which the poet vitalises this apparently tedious convention. By no means all his phrases are conventional and moribund.

For example, the rather tiresome type of phrase involving abstract words like species, race, and nation, is sometimes neatly put to comic use. Virgil's exaltation of the life of the hive to the level of human society in Georgics IV appealed strongly to Dryden's sense of humour; and in both the Georgics and the Aeneis he applies the pompous and conventional generic phrase to animal and bird life with sly discrimination and art. Virgil's tum variae inludant pestes is heightened humorously to 'sundry Foes the Rural Realm surround'; the mock-heroic account of the bees is coloured by weighty phrases like 'th'Industrious Kind', 'the winged Nation' and 'the young Succession'; and the contrast in Aeneid I between three fine stags and the remainder of the herd (tota armenta) is emphasised, again with the suggestion of a smile, in Dryden's 'the more ignoble Throng'.

If Dryden is sometimes guilty of translating a freshly concrete Latin word by a diffuse and conventional phrase, yet he contrives on the other hand to translate some recurrent words and phrases discriminatingly by a variety of synonyms. His treatment of fons is an instructive example. Fons is an extremely common word in Virgil, and the obvious poetic translation is fountain, which was repeatedly used in neo-classical English verse of both natural and artificial springs. Dryden translates it as fountain in ~~the~~ lyrical song of Gallus in Eclogue X, and gives 'Veline Fountains' for fontes Velini; but where fons is the place used for sheep-washing, he varies with the more appropriate Brook. The fontes in the pine-woods become 'bubbling Springs'; and swans sail, with dignity, on a 'Flood' or a 'watry Rode'; pastoral

Notes, p. 81.

1.) See page 99.
2.)

lawns are sweetened by 'mossy Springs'; the fons which provides an ideal site for bee-hives is appropriately translated as 'living Stream'; and, in contrast, fontem (1) Timavi is vigorously rendered a 'raving' river 'rowling down the Steep'. Here there is more than elegant variation; Dryden tries to vary his diction aptly to his context.

In the second place; a major element in the vocabulary of the Virgil is latinism, which I take to include Latin derivatives used in their original, classical senses, and direct borrowings from the vocabulary of Virgil. On his own admission, provoked by adverse criticism, Dryden drew as heavily on the vocabulary of his original as he dared --- sometimes because the quality of the Virgilian diction defied translation into a thinner, sharper language; and sometimes for love of a good Latin word which deserved to be transmitted to English with only superficial alteration.

Many of the Latin uses and turns of phrase in the Virgil are merely conventional. Whether they are taken over from the original (the result of lazy literalism), or whether they are introduced by the translator, they are part of the established quasi-classical vocabulary of the higher and more ornate types of verse in Dryden's day, and they have no special poetic value to commend them. Such are:- (2)

confess (reveal)	generous Wine (abundant)	rosie Morn
conscious Night	genial Bed	revolving Fate
conscious Bed	genial Heat	revolving Moon
conscious Gods	genial Seed	revolving Year
excursion (military: <u>excursus</u>)	plow the deep (aequor arandum)	sublime (aloft)
generous Horse (well-bred)	rosie Light	take a prospect (petit prospectum)

Such words and uses, which might be multiplied a hundred fold, are part of the stock poetic vocabulary, and perform a function not dissimilar to that of the decorative circumlocution. It is of course difficult to be certain of how many latinisms of this type had gone into cold storage in mid-seventeenth century poetry, and how far, on the other hand, they retained some measure of pleasing quaintness and unexpectedness for Dryden's contemporary readers. For a modern reader, the indiscriminate repetition of a once-fresh or unusual word is sufficient to wither its poetic fragrance; to an Augustan reader, the venerable ancestry and the rich associations of classical

Notes, p. 82.

I. See p. 99.

... are weakened by 'weary springs'; the form which provides an ideal site for
 ... is approximately translated as 'living ... contrast, ...
 ... is vigorously rendered a 'living' river. See the ...
 ... in more than elegant variation; Dryden tries to vary his list of ...
 ... in the second place; a major element in the vocabulary of the ...
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 ... as he did on -- sometimes because the quality of the Virgilian diction defined
 ... translation into a sterner, sharper language; and sometimes for love of a good Latin
 ... word which deserved to be transmitted to English with only superficial alteration.
 ... of the Latin case and tense of phrases in the Virgil are merely conventional
 ... which they are taken over from the original (the words of Latin literature),
 ... or whether they are introduced by the translator, they are part of the established
 ... quasi-classical vocabulary of the English and more general types of verse in Dryden's
 ... day, and they have no special poetic value to command their own ...

(3)

conscience (Latin)	generous (Latin)	conscience (Latin)
conscience (Latin)	generous (Latin)	conscience (Latin)
conscience (Latin)	generous (Latin)	conscience (Latin)
conscience (Latin)	generous (Latin)	conscience (Latin)
conscience (Latin)	generous (Latin)	conscience (Latin)
conscience (Latin)	generous (Latin)	conscience (Latin)
conscience (Latin)	generous (Latin)	conscience (Latin)
conscience (Latin)	generous (Latin)	conscience (Latin)
conscience (Latin)	generous (Latin)	conscience (Latin)
conscience (Latin)	generous (Latin)	conscience (Latin)

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 ... of a quasi-classical or unusual word is sufficient to attract the poetic traveler
 ... to an Augustan reader, the word is poetry and the rich associations of classical

words and uses helped to preserve much of their freshness and force in English verse. On the other hand, a great deal of sheerly conventional latinisms is apparent wherever one looks in the poetry of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and the Virgil has a sufficient stock of conventional words which can have had but slight effect on the imaginations of those who first read them.

Dryden clearly regarded a rich Latin element in his translation as essential, both to maintain the atmosphere of the original, and to preserve the dignity of the heroic style. Much of the classical colouring in his diction is deliberate, calculated to startle and delight as much by its novelty as by its associations. The novelty of his Latinism is sometimes irritating in its excessive fancifulness, and sometimes, apt, imaginative, and mildly exciting; it is seldom the result of an idle transference of Latin words and phrases from the original without bothering to find English translations for them.

(I)

There is an unnaturalness, a stilted artificiality, about such phrases as:-

dependent Lamps (<u>dependent lynchi</u>)	obtest his Clemency (<u>rogantes</u>)
protended Spear	fatal Fabrique (<u>fatalis machina</u>)
polish'd Elephant (<u>sectoque elephanto</u>)	hollow Fabrick (<u>fabricata m.</u>)
unremembring of (<u>immemores</u>)	prescious of Ills
obtend and empty Cloud (<u>ventos obtendere inanes</u>)	
the Hearer on the Speaker's Mouth depends (<u>pendetque iterum narrantis ab ore</u>)	
prone to the Wheels, and)	
his left Foot protends) .. <u>pronus pendens in verbera telo.. proiecto..pede laevo</u>	

Some of Dryden's latinism is pedantic, and it leads him into obscurities. For example in 'his death with double Vengeance to restore', Dryden is using 'restore' in the sense 'repay in vengeance', imitating Virgil's Dii talia Graiis instaurate, pio si poenas ore reposco. Dryden has 'dismal Famine', 'dismal Rumour'; and since the first phrase translates obscoenamque famem, and the second refers to the death of Dido, he is clearly returning to the Latin sense of dismal (dies mali), although by Shakespeare's time the word had weakened to 'fearful', and the general sense of it in Dryden's time was merely 'gloomy'. His imitation of collectus ('drawn together') in 'collected Night involves the Skies' (in nubem cogitur aer) does not at first sight seem to be more than unnecessarily prosaic. For Virgil's plurima perque vias sternuntur inertia passim corpora.., Dryden has the utterly misleading 'The Streets are fill'd with frequent Funerals': 'frequent' is a latinism translating plurima, and

Note, p. 83.

I. See p. 99.

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both to maintain the atmosphere of the original, and to preserve the dignity of
the heroic style. Much of the classical coloring in his diction is deliberate,
calculated to excite and delight as much by its associations as by its associations.
The novelty of his Latinisms is sometimes striking in the excessive fancifulness
and sometimes apt, imaginative, and slightly exciting; it is seldom the result of
an idle familiarity of Latin words and phrases from the original source, but
to find English translations for them.

(1) There is an unattractiveness, a stilted artificiality, about such phrases as:

different name (government name)
profoundly seen
colossal impact (republican eloquence)
interlocking of (transfers)
obscure and empty (vague obscure phrases)
the center on the speaker's (point of view)
grove to the music (and)
his left foot proceeds (.. progress begins in various fields, principles, made leave)

Some of Dryden's Latinisms are poetic, while others are prosaic. For example
in his death with double language to restore, Dryden is using 'restore' in the
same 'copy in response', 'restoring Virgil's III Aeneid's instructions, etc. at
poems are restored, 'distant scenes', 'distant scenes', and since the
phrase translates obscurely, and the second refers to the death of Elio,
he is clearly returning to the Latin sense of disce (discipline), although by Shakespeare's
time the word had passed to 'learn', and its general sense of 'to learn'
Dryden's time was merely 'study', his translation of collocatus ('draw together') is
'collected right involves the disce (discipline) does not at first sight
seem to be more than unattractively prosaic. For Virgil's discipulus also means
discipulus in the strictly classical sense. The phrase 'The Greeks are
filled with frequent humors', 'freedom' is a Latinian translation, and

'Funerals' has the Virgilian sense, 'dead bodies', translating corpora. Such examples of pedantry, however, are comparatively rare in Dryden. Much more important is the group of latinisms which carry over from the original a store of valuable poetic connotation, which must be understood if we are not to miss much of the richness and colour of Dryden's diction.

One of Dryden's commonest adjectives in the Virgil is living, and it translates or takes over the associations of Virgil's vivus. The general sense of vivus is 'fresh', 'moving', or 'natural' as opposed to 'artificial'. Virgil applies it to rocks, streams, vegetation, sculpture, and human passion, with a variety of secondary senses; and Dryden is sensitive to its numerous applications. He adds it, without the authority of the original, to give colour and vitality to such diverse things as the air of Elysium, the light of dawn, glimmering embers, rocks, and flame. This is not the overworking of a stock epithet, but the careful application of it with all the richness of the Virgilian connotations in mind. Dryden takes the vivid adjective ardens, and uses it not only of the eyes, as Virgil does, but of the lustrous, burning skin of the snake. Again, in the first Georgic, Virgil's maximus anguis, the custodian of the Hesperides, is described in one of Ruæus' notes as a draco; and Dryden makes him a spiry Dragon. Spiry was current in the seventeenth century, but as an adjective from spira (stem, taper). Dryden blends with this meaning the sense of the Latin spira, 'a snake's coil'. Some of his phrases are certainly not English; but they have an attractive peculiarity which presses the reader to grasp their Latin connotations, and which at the same time does not offend the sense of poetic propriety. Erected is unnatural in a phrase like 'with erected Eyes and Hands', for Virgil's simple and direct suspiciens coelum; but in Dryden's picture of the herons which, stirred by the signs of approaching storm, leave the water's edge and soar high with 'erected Flight', the two Latin senses of erectus, 'raised' and 'roused, excited' are suggestively worked together. Again, it is precious and forced to translate Virgil's description of the setting sun --vultu varios errare colores-- as 'various Colours erring on his Face'; the Latin sense of errare is unusual enough in English contexts to make 'a Storm of Strokes.. errs about their Temples' almost burlesque; but 'fix'd and erring Stars' and 'the Winds and Errors of the Sea' are fine phrases, in which the poetical associations of the word are

'Punatain' has the Virgilian sense, 'dead bodies', 'transmuting corpse'. Such ex-
(1)
amples of pedantry, however, are comparatively rare in Dryden. Much more important
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Notes, p. 84.

- 1.) See p. 100.
- 2.)

richness and colour of Dryden's diction.

One of Dryden's commonest adjectives in the Virgil is living, and its transference
or takes over the associations of Virgil's vivus. The general sense of vivus is
'fresh', 'newly', or 'natural', as opposed to 'artificial'. Virgil applies it to
trees, streams, vegetation, sculptures, and human passions, with a variety of second
ary senses; and Dryden is sensitive to the numerous applications. He takes it, with
out the exclusivity of the original, to give colour and vitality to such diverse
things as the air of Elisium, the light of dawn, glimmering vapours, rocks, and
flames. This is not the overworking of a stock epithet, but the careful application
of it with all the richness of the Virgilian connotation in mind. Dryden takes it
vivid adjective alens, and uses it not only of the eyes, as Virgil does, but of
instruments, turning skin of the snakes. Again, in the first Georgic, Virgil's maestus
gurgitis, the water of the Hyperborean, is described in one of Lucretius' notes as
frigus; and Dryden takes him a rigid dragon. Silvius was current in the seventeenth
century, but as an adjective from silva (Latin, forest). Dryden blends with this use
ing the sense of the Latin silva, 'a snake's coil', 'form of his gresses and coils'
ly may facilitate; but they have an attractive beauty which presses the reader
every fresh Latin connotation, and which at the same time does not offend the ear
of poetic propriety. frigidus is translated in a phrase like 'with erected nose and
hands'. For Virgil's simple and direct maestus gurgitis and in Dryden's phrase
of the hero's which, stirred by the signs of approaching storm, saw the water's
edge and soar high with 'erected flight'. The two Latin senses of erectus, 'raised
and 'erected, excited', are suggestively worked together. Again, it is maestus and
forced to translate Virgil's description of the setting sun -- maestus gurgitis
colores -- as 'various colours swirling on his face'; the Latin sense of erectus is
usual enough in English contexts to make 'a form of gresses' and 'the wind and storm'
Temple; almost palpable; but 'erect' and 'erect stars' and 'the wind and storm'
of the sea; are fine phrases, in which the poetical associations of the word are

(1)

given free scope.

Virgil's Amazons carry crescent shields --- lunatis peltis; Dryden has 'lunar Shields'. Lunaris ('moony') is cognate with lunatus ('moon-shaped'); but Dryden uses 'lunar', I think, where the more accurate 'crescent' would have fitted his line equally well, in order to give a suggestion of light and colour to the picture of the Amazon warriors with their white breasts and bright golden belts. He was, as we shall see, peculiarly aware of the poetic suggestion of moonlight (see infra, p. 122). Again, Dryden speaks of the great wind which would destroy the world if Æolus did not curb its power, as the 'driving Soul'. He is imitating such phrases as the Virgilian ignes animaeque and Lucretius' ventorum.. paces animasque secundas; and the connotations of the English word 'soul' are valuable here, intensifying the notion of a wind of cosmic force. Athene is, in Dryden, a 'fierce Virago': the general sense of 'virago' in English, from mediaeval times, is 'shrew'; but here Dryden restores to it its Latin sense of 'female warrior'. In such a deliberate latinism, he is trying to turn the tide of semantic change. 'Virago' is successful, and it was taken over by Pope as a poetic term; but there is more doubt of the success of 'vomits' in 'the crested Helm, that vomits radiant Fires', translating flammasque vomentem. Virgil, it is true, uses vomere in the strong physical sense of belching flames from the belly, but clearly with some poetic propriety, although the associations of the word in Latin were not always poetic; but the English 'vomit' has strong suggestions which have a decidedly unpoetic colouring; and Dryden cannot avoid here the charge of impropriety. (2)

Poetically, the latinisms in the Virgil are a characteristic mixture of good and bad. Some of them are mere transpositions of Virgilian phrases, with little effect except perhaps that of a conventional classical veneer; some are daring and not always well-advised adaptations which surprise, bewilder, and seldom please; and others again carry with them the poetic quality of the Latin, and enrich Dryden's diction.

Notes, p. 85.

I. AEn., I, 67, Dryden 101; I, 141, Dryden 200; VIII, 688, Dryden 923.

In his translation of nefas Dryden is of course wide of the mark. Antony's association with Cleopatra was regarded as abominable by the Romans, and Virgil's nefas expresses his revulsion at the Roman general's relations with a barbarian woman.

(5)

rich Dryden's diction.

He is no mere renovator, content to leave in his translation such phrases as he does not feel required to turn into English. He is not only a translator, but a heroic poet; and he selects and disposes his innumerable latinisms through his work with freedom and boldness. It is this pervasive and diversified element of latinate vocabulary and classical connotation, embroidered through the texture of the Georgics and the Aeneis in general independence of the original, which gives epic colouring to Dryden's style, and makes his translations heroic in their own right, however far they differ from their Latin originals.

There are several elements in the style --and particularly the diction-- of the Virgil which run counter to the rigidly conventional theory of epic: comic and satiric intrusions in the Aeneis, where the original gives no authority for them; lapses into a familiar style and a colloquial diction, despite the strictures of critical theory; and the careful but quite resolute employment of technical and scientific words to suit the poet's purposes.

Dryden takes liberties with the sustained gravity of the Aeneid. His comic and satiric additions and changes are sudden, and usually short. They do not more than disturb the calm surface of the heroic style for a moment or two; but such moments are, on occasions, sufficiently alarming. Some of these additions are merely new satiric emphases in contexts which easily support them; or they are developments of implicit touches of satire in the original, which Virgil's lofty purpose and sense of poetic propriety restrain. For example, in Aeneis I, Juno's contempt for the Trojans is emphasised by Dryden's translation of gens inimica mihi as 'a Race of wandering Slaves'; and Neptune's scornful reference to AEolus is heightened by Dryden's additional phrase, 'the Jailor of the Wind'. Some are flashes of sarcasm: Virgil exclaims nefas! at Cleopatra's faithlessness at Actium, and Dryden bluntly mutters 'Fool that she was'.^(I) A more sustained satiric heightening is to be found in the speech of Drances in the council chamber; Dryden gives Virgil's rhetorical outbursts a satiric edge which emphasises the bitterness of the speaker:

scilicet ut Turno contingat regia coniunx,
 nos animae viles, inhumata inflataque turba,
 sternamur campis. etiam tu, si qua tibi vis,
 si patrii quid Martis habes, illum aspice contra
 qui vocat.

Notes, p. 86.

I. AEEn., XII, 371-5, Dryden 570-80.

2. Ibid, VIII, 186-7 (vana superstitio veterumque ignara deorum)
Dryden 246-9; VII, 521, Dryden 724 (cf. Cymon and Iphigenia,
399 ff); IV, 184 ff, Dryden 270.

collected in some countries...
was never since...
examined...
of...
and...

Mankind, it seems, is made for you alone;
 We, but the Slaves who mount you to the Throne:
 A base ignoble Crowd, without a Name,
 Unwept, unworthy of the Fun'ral Flame:
 By Duty bound to forfeit each his Life,
 That Turnus may possess a Royal Wife.
 Permit not, Mighty Man, so mean a Crew
 Shou'd share such Triumphs, your undoubted Due;
 Rather alone your matchless Force employ;
 To merit what alone you must enjoy. (I)

Occasionally Dryden draws out latent similarities between the situations of the AEneid and the troubles of his own time, with a short satiric expansion --- a literary exercise which was to become increasingly popular in the next half-century. Evander, describing his religious ceremonial to AEneas, explains in terms which carried strong associations for Dryden's first readers, that:

These Rites, these Altars, and this Feast, O King,
 From no vain Fears, or Superstition spring:
 Or blind Devotion, or from blinder Chance;
 Or heady Zeal, or brutal Ignorance.

When the Italian war breaks out, Virgil says that the indomiti agricolae rush to arms. Dryden, whose contempt for ill-disciplined and worthless militia is revealed more than once in his poetry, converts these good husbandmen to 'Clowns, a boistrous, rude, ungovern'd Crew'. A modern touch is added to Virgil's account of Fame in AEneid IV: Dryden gives 'Court Informers.. and Royal Spyes' to Fame as assistants in her work.

(2)

Some of Dryden's satirical additions are much less in harmony with the original than these; the old poet, practised in satire and comedy, smiles quietly and drily over the pages of a majestic original, which again and again just avoids expressing a humour which its content implies for him. Dryden did not take the character of AEneas quite seriously at times; and when the prince, whose pietas was not without an element of pompous self-satisfaction, explains to Dido how well he organised the affairs of his city of Pergamae, and how efficiently he arranged marriages, laws, and housing distribution, Dryden cannot resist the temptation to expose AEneas' conceited zeal in his tones:

connubisque arvisque novis operata iuventus
 iura domosque dabam...

AEneid, III, 136
 -137

And I myself new Marriages promote,
 Give Laws; and Dwellings I divide by Lot. III, 188-9

Notes, p. 87.

1. AEn., VIII, 293 (Dryden); VIII, 670, Dryden 886-90; VIII, 360-I, Dryden 479 (cf. Flatman, The Review, 1673, vi:--

From liberal Arts to the litigious Law,
Obedience, not ambition, did me draw;

I see no rhetoric at all
In them that learnedly can bawl,
And fill with mercenary breath the spacious hall.
(Saintsbury, Caroline Poets, Oxford, 1921, iii, 303).

2. Lives, ed. G.B. Hill, Oxford, 1905, i, pp. 58-9.

Cf. Hobbes' Answer to Davenant; Blackmore, Essays upon Several Occasions, 1716, i, 128; Spence, Essay on Pope's Odyssey, 1726, pp. 127 ff.

For a comprehensive collection of neo-classical statements on improprieties of diction in the heroic poem, see H.T. Swedenberg, The Theory of Epic in England 1650-1800, University of California Publications in English, 15, 1944.

Cf. G. Tillotson, The Poetry of Pope, Oxford, 1938, 86 ff.

Translating Evander's account of the flight of Cacus from Hercules, in which the fugitive hurled himself precipitately down into his cave, Dryden drily observes that he did not 'stay for stairs'. Virgil's Aeneas sees, on the shield he receives from Venus, a picture of the infernal regions and secretosque pios, his dantem iura Catonem; this Dryden turns quietly to burlesque:

Hung on a Rock the Traitor; and around,
The Furies hissing from the neather Ground.
Apart from these, the happy Souls, he draws,
And Cato's holy Ghost dispensing Laws.

Again, Virgil's comment, in describing the pastoral scene which was later to be the site of Rome, is turned to sudden satire by Dryden's characteristic choice of a strong verb:

passimque armenta videbant
Romanoque foro...

They view'd the ground of Rome's litigious Hall;
Once Oxen low'd, where now the Lawyers bawl. (I)

This satiric element in the Aeneis, although it thrusts itself on the reader's attention by its unexpectedness, is comparatively slight. My illustrations are all but exhaustive; and they do no more than to emphasise that Dryden was no more capable of sustained dignity and complete propriety in the heroic style, than he was in the less august styles of his other translations.

A corollary to these occasional satiric thrusts is Dryden's intrusive colloquialism. Dr. Johnson was restating a common-place of neo-classical literary theory when he declared that

Language is the dress of thought.. The most heroick sentiments will lose their efficacy, and the most splendid ideas drop their magnificence, if they are conveyed by words used commonly upon low and trivial occasions, debased by vulgar mouths, and contaminated by inelegant applications. (2)

Dryden's critical passages on the heroic style, and on Virgil particularly, are in general harmony with the traditional view that epic excludes low, common-place, or colloquial language, and an ignoble familiarity of style.

There is, nevertheless, more than an occasional drop from the majesty of the epic in Dryden's Aeneis. Some of these familiar touches are clearly due to the translator's bad taste, and to his inability to resist occasional smart humour in expression, without proper respect for the context. To translate Virgil's phrase for

Notes, p. 88.

1. AEn., IX, 82, Dryden 94; II, 779, Dryden 1059; XI, 283-4, Dryden 434-8.

2. Essays, i, p. 70.

(1)

Cybele, deum genetrix Berecynthia, as 'the Grandam Goddess', is mere vulgarity; and 'great Comptroller of the Sky', for Virgil's regnator Olympi, is suspect, since the term 'comptroller' was in wide current use in Dryden's time for a household or government official. Dryden's Diomede, recalling Priam's might in battle, does not express himself with the dignity of a Greek general:

contulimusque manus: experto credite quantus
in clipeum adsurgat, quo turbine torqueat hastam

We met in Fight, I know him to my Cost,
With what a whirling Force his Lance he toss'd:
Heav'ns what a spring was in his Arm, to throw:
How high he held his Shield, and rose at ev'ry Blow. (I)

On the other hand, Dryden is often striving to give force and vividness to his poem by the use of vigorous colloquial expressions. When his natural vulgarity has been allowed for, there is still the possibility that he considered writing sustainably on an exalted level to be a severe strain on poet and reader, and that he deliberately lightened the burden by this means. He had declared long before, speaking of tragi-comedy, that 'a continued gravity keeps the spirit too much bent; we must refresh it sometimes, as we bait in a journey, that we may go on with greater ease'; and his lapses from the elevation of Virgil in the AEneis do provide refreshment, however much strict criticism may deplore them. The sudden chuckle which mocks the Olympian feast in the translation of Iliad I, is to be heard again in a similar passage at the end of AEneis I; during the feast which Dido provides for Aeneas and his company,

tum Bitiae dedit increpitans; ille impiger hausit
spumantem pateram et pleno se proluit auro I, 738-9

'Twas Bitias whom she call'd, a thirsty Soul,
He took the Challenge, and embrac'd the Bowl:
With Pleasure swill'd the Gold, nor ceas'd to draw,
Till he the bottom of the Brimmer saw. I, 1034-7

The enthusiastic zeal which Virgil just suggests in the verb proluit is fully brought out in 'embrac'd' and 'swill'd'; and here, as in so many passages of this kind, the humour of Dryden lies in the sudden contrast of phrases like 'thirsty Soul' and

Notes, p. 89.

1. On the evidence of O.E.D., 'silly' is not found with the sense 'pitiable' later than Otway, except in Scots; and the word was applied to 'weak' women until Dryden's time. The sense 'foolish' appears in Shakespeare and 17th century authors.
2. The earliest O.E.D. illustrations are drawn from the 1690s; and there are many examples of the phrase in Augustan prose. Cf. Spectator, 92: Gentlemen that make a figure at Wills'.

'swill'd the Gold' with the steady dignity of their contexts, and in the use of the colloquial word 'Brimmer' as a variation on 'Bowl' and 'Gold'. In impassioned speech, Dryden frequently drops into strong, familiar tones: seeing the fatal growth of Dido's love for Aeneas, Juno heatedly addressed Venus:

egregiam vero laudem et spolia ampla refertis
tuque puerque tuus (magnum et memorabile numen),
una dolo divum si femina victa duorum est IV, 93-5

High Praises, endless Honours you have won,
And mighty Trophies with your worthy Son:
Two Gods a silly Woman have undone. IV, 134-6

The blend of meanings which would be present to Dryden's first readers in 'silly' ---
(1)
weak, defenceless and foolish --- conveys, more subtly than at first it appears to, both Virgil's simple victa and Juno's irritation at Dido's infatuation. Another god who expresses irritation in spirited if uncelestial language is Mercury, who urges Aeneas to leave Carthage:

Tu nunc Karthaginis altae
fundamenta locas pulchramque uxorius urbem
exstruis? heu, regni rerumque oblite tuarum! IV, 265-7

Degenerate Man,
Thou Woman's Property, what mak'st thou here,
These foreign Walls, and Tyrian Tow'rs to rear? IV, 389-91

Dryden's Sinon, relating his adventures to the Trojans, speaks of his experience at court in terms which would suggest more modern court circles to Dryden's readers: he describes Ulysses' subtle efforts to win the popular affection and 'forge a Treason in my Patron's Name' (Virgil has simply the parenthetical haud ignota loquor), and he prides himself on having made a figure at court --- a phrase which was much
(2)
in fashion in the 1690s. The tones of Dryden's political satire, with its characteristic mixture of close, balanced writing and forceful familiar diction, are heard in his description of the courtier Drances:

largus opum et lingua melior, sed frigida bello
dextera, consiliis habitus non futilis auctor,
seditione potens... XI, 338-40

Factionous and rich, bold at the Council Board,
But cautious in the Field, he shun'd the Sword;
A close Caballer, and Tongue-valiant Lord.

Notes, p. 90.

1. AEn., XI, 512-14. Tongue-valiant is used again by Dryden, Iliad I, 337, quoted supra, p. 63. Cf. tongue-debate, Aeneis XI, 588. Milton's Samson wrathfully recalls Delilah's 'blandisht parlies, feminine assaults, tongue-batteries', and scorns Harapha as a 'tongue-doubtie Giant' (Samson Agonistes, 404, II81).
2. AEn., X, 901; IX, 588.
3. AEn., X, 699, Dryden 989; X, Dryden 157-8. Cf. Ceyx and Alcyone, 131: 'frothy white appear the flatted Seas'.
4. AEn., XI, 1184 (Dryden). Cf. Meleager and Atalanta, 140 (of a boar savaging). The word is a nasal form of race, which seems to have left literary English with Spenser (F.Q., V.v.II). Ranch'd appears in a description of battle in Chapman's Iliad, V, 856.

'Caballer' had strong associations of intrigue for Dryden's first readers; and
(1)
'tongue-valiant' was a conventional term of opprobrium.

Colloquial phrases have their effective place in accounts of battle. Palmus
(2)
is 'hamstring'd'; Nisus is 'born back, and bor'd' in a melee. 'Bore' was used in
racing slang in the later seventeenth century, meaning 'push out of the course';
and its use here, to describe the shouldering of horses in close combat, is entirely
apt. The derision with which one combatant turns on another is made more realistic
by a familiar phrase:

ubi nunc nobis deus ille (magister
nequiquam nemoratus) Eryx? V, 391-2

Where is our Eryx now, the boasted Name,
The God who taught your Thund'ring Arm the Game? V, 521-2

Dryden forsakes the strict canons of heroic diction, to draw on the vocabulary
of prose, dialect, and the arts and sciences. 'Flatted' is a prosaic word, applied
in Dryden's day to insipid spirits, or used as a crudely vigorous equivalent to the
modern 'flattened out'. Dryden uses it thus, in the Aeneis, when he speaks of a
warrior's face as 'flatted' in battle; but he also turns it to poetic effect. There
is a vigorous image half-concealed in the picture---

The Clouds dispel; the Winds their Breath restrain;
And the hush'd Waves lie flatted on the Main. (3)

Dryden uses the word 'ranch'd' -- with its onomatopoeic value -- to describe the
(4)
tearing of a shepherd's side by a wolf; ranch was, by his time, a dialect word.

Another 'common' word used well in a poetic context is 'snag'. The arms of the slain
enemy Mezentius are hung by Aeneas on an ingentem quercum, which Dryden translates
as 'naked Snag'. The word was in current use for a tree-stump, but with no poetic
aura about it, for it was also used of a tooth-stump; and something of the irony of
battle and defeat is conveyed by Dryden in the association of this harsh, mean word
with the shining spoils of a conquered warrior:

The Coat of Arms by proud Mezentius worn,
Now on a naked Snag in Triumph born,
Was hung on high; and glitter'd from afar:
A Trophy sacred to the God of War.

XI, 9-12

1. See supra, p. 22, note 5.
2. Cf. his preface to Annus Mirabilis (quoted p. 23, supra), and his blend in that poem of heroic style and sentiment, and a generous allowance of nautical terms for realistic description.
3. Milton had used larboard in poetry (Paradise Lost, ii, 1019-20); veer was not uncommon in figurative uses in poetry--Dryden, for example, uses it of altering character and feeling (Conquest of Granada, III, i.; Tyrannic Love, IV, i.)
4. AEneis, III, 440-2. Dryden's commentator Ruaeus annotates Virgil's obliquat sinus in ventum, &c., de re nautica, which probably suggested technical translation of the passage (Virgil, V, 15; Dryden V, 20-22). Lauderdale (Virgil, AEneid, V, 16) translates these lines in oration recta, with a suggestion of technicality.
5. AEn., IV, 562, Dryden 737. Cf. Arcadia, II, xxiv, 5; Tempest, I, ii, 198. Wast still required a note in Falconer's Shipwreck, in the eighteenth century, despite these literary uses. AEn., X, 300, Dryden 407: stretcher.
6. Dryden: AEn., IV, 376; V, 24. Cf. Ceyx and Alcyone, 351.

(I)

Addison's criticism of Dryden's nautical terms in the AEneis is misleading.

The technical element is not large, and the poet usually reserves these words for passages where they are particularly appropriate. His aim, in drawing on the vocabulary of the sea, is precision, aptness, and realism. For example, in AEneid III the priest Helenus gives AENEAS his sailing instructions; and Dryden translates these with language completely appropriate, despite Addison's distress, in the context:

ast ubi digressum Siculae te admoverit orae
ventus, et angusti rarescent claustra Pelori,
laeva tibi tellus et longo laeva petantur
aequora circuitu; dextrum fuge litus et undas.

III, 410-3

When parted hence, the Wind that ready waits
For Sicily, shall bear you to the Streights:
Where proud Pelorus opes a wider way,
Tack to the Larboard, and stand off to Sea:
Veer Starboard Sea and Land.

III, 523-7

Dryden is neither pretentious nor unnecessarily obscure: his technicalities are not recondite. He achieves a greater precision and realism by these terms than he would have done by non-technical translation. So also he translates contorsit laevas proram.. ad undas as 'to the larboor'd veer'd'; and brings obliquatque sinus in ventum to life in the form of a direct command from the ship's pilot:

e'er yet the Tempest roars,
Stand to your Tackle, Mates, and stretch your Oars;
Contract your swelling Sails, and luff to Wind. (4)

Precision is Dryden's aim when he describes ships fired and burning 'to the Wast'--- the middle of the upper deck; and in 'they tug at ev'ry Oar; and ev'ry Stretcher bends', Stretcher is introduced without warrant in the original, for technical colouring. (5)

In addition to these attempts to make his translation vivid by nautical terms in appropriate passages, Dryden uses technical words for poetic effect. Some are not successful. For example, he accurately translates Virgil's remigium alarum as the 'steerage' of Mercury's wings; but what is a legitimate application of a sea-term in Virgil, with the notion of 'liquid Air' behind it, becomes a strained conceit in Dryden because of the merely technical and prosaic associations of 'steerage'. Again, when Juno descends to the underworld to rouse Allecto, she 'shoots the Stygian Sound'. Shoots, which has no authority from the original, is a precise and attractive use of the nautical term meaning 'to pass successfully through dangerous straits'; (6)

1. AEn., VII, 450 (Dryden). Cf. a more fitting use in The Conquest of Granada (Summers, III, 133): the hero..

While tim'rous Wit goes round, or foords the shore;
He shoots the Gulph; and is already o're.

2. AEn., V, 533; Georgics, IV, 577 (Virgil 401).

3. Jonson, The Case is Altered, IV, iv; Aeneis, V, 1086, and VIII, 949; Art of Love, I, 600; Flower and Leaf, 196; AEn., IX, 513.

but the modern motion of shooting rapids is older than Dryden's time; and it has too strong a suggestion of violence and speed for apt description of Juno's progress. (1)

There are, however, some few nautical terms in the Virgil which have definite poetic value. For example, Palinurus rightly speaks, as a sailor, of the southing of the stars --- southing is a term in navigation meaning a difference in latitude due to southward movement; but when Dryden translates medios cum sol accenderit aestus in the lovely phrase 'when next the Southing Sun inflames the Day', he is metamorphosing a technical noun into a poetic adjective which, though strictly inaccurate, carries with it imaginative suggestions beneath its surface meaning. (2) In the storm in Aeneis I, a vessel is caught by mighty waves:-

The trembling Pilot, from his Rudder torn,
Was headlong hurl'd; thrice round, the ship was tost,
Then bulg'd at once, and in the deep was lost. I, 165-7

Bulge was a seventeenth century sea-term, meaning 'to strike rock violently, so as to damage the bilge, or ship's bottom'; but here the technical sense is effectively combined with the associations of swelling and breaking, and the word has a poetic force and propriety whether the reader is aware of its technical associations or not. Another technical word which is raised to poetry in the Virgil is scud. The substantive form is a nautical word for light cloud driven before the wind, and is so used in the Dryden-Davenant version of The Tempest. The verb form was used, before Dryden's day, in the general sense, 'to move briskly'----- Ben Jonson has a character who exclaims on a pretty girl, 'O how she scudded! O sweet scud, how she tripped! O delicate trip and go!'. Dryden's use of scud in sea-passages carries both the technical and the general connotations: ships in the Aeneis 'scud before the Wind, and sail in open Sea', and Cleopatra's ship at Actium is driven 'scudding through the Throng' by wind and waves. Elsewhere, even when Dryden uses the word in non-nautical contexts, he retains the associations of light, swiftly-moving cloud or ships -- in scudding Satyrs, scudding Fawns, and in the picture of Nisus and Euryalus scudding (3) silently away to the woods to escape their enemies in the night.

When one takes into account the frequent opportunities which the Aeneid offered to a translator who had no scruples in the free use of sea-terms, Dryden has clearly been restrained in his technical vocabulary. He has been careful to use, for the

Notes, p. 93.

1. There is one instance of a 'term of war' which is more technical than such phrases as rested Lance, walk'd the round, &c: in the search for Nisus and Euryalus, the enemy cavalry 'all Passages belay'--- a late example of a military term common in the 16th century, meaning 'to intercept with armed men' (AE., IX, 515).

2. Noyes, p. 1083; Wilkins, New World, Transactions of the Royal Society, 1669. For a poetical use, cf. Kynaston, Cynthiades, 1642:

neatly deck
With orient pearls thy whiter neck,
Which takes the species of thy naked Breast.
(Saintsbury, Caroline Poets, ii, p. 162).

most part, words which cannot have been too recondite for his readers. His nautical words are cautiously introduced, to add colour and realism to sea scenes or to the speech of sailors; and some of these, in addition to the salt flavour which they give to the poem, make some contribution to its imaginative quality.

It is interesting to note, in a poet whose relations with seamen and admiralty officials were probably less intimate than his acquaintance with soldiers and with military affairs, that his knowledge of the technical language of the army is, by comparison, extremely thin. There is no essential unreality, no suspicious vagueness about his descriptions of battle and warriors in the AENEIS, or indeed in his other translations or in the plays; but throughout the AENEIS, which is so largely concerned with military campaigns, there is a marked absence of the terms of war. (I)

Dryden uses some technical terms from the sciences in the Virgil --- not, as he uses nautical words, for increased realism or precision in description, but in a deliberate attempt to extend the range of the accepted epic vocabulary. Some of these words are unhappily selected. For example, Dryden translates Virgil's description of the echoing sounds of the hunt --- vox adsensu nemorum ingeminata remugit --- as 'Echo hunts along; and propagates the sound'. Propagate was used in scientific contexts by seventeenth century physicists: Hobbes is the earliest scientific author quoted in the O.E.D., and Boyle uses the word exactly in Dryden's sense in 1660 -- 'the sound was propagated from the Watch to the Ear'. Dryden's phrase is thus not, as it at first seems, a latinate conceit, but the poetic application of a technical term; and it smacks of pedantry. An even less familiar technical term is embedded in:

So when the Sun by Day, or Moon by Night,
Strike on the polish'd Brass their trembling Light,
The glitt'ring Species here and there divide;
And cast their dubious Beams from side to side. AEn., VIII,
34-37.

Professor Noyes, in his glossary, takes 'glitt'ring Species' in its general sense of 'sensible presentation, visible image'; but species is a term for the sun's reflected rays, current in Dryden's time; and here it is a pretentious technicality. (2)

I. Jeremiah; xlix, 34; Paradise Regained, IV, 202 ('quarter'd winds').

An astrological term in the Georgics may be noted here, since it is misread by the O.E.D. Dryden speaks of 'the starry Signs, where Saturn Houses' (I, 460). O.E.D. quotes this passage under HOUSE, in the sense 'dwell in, harbour'; but houses is clearly a verb form of the astrological term 'house' (cf. mansion). Cf. Congreve, Love for Love, II, iii.

2. Pseudo. Epi., VI, x (Works of Sir Thomas Browne, ed. Charles Sayle, Edinburgh, 1912, ii, p. 378. O.E.D. cites an astrological use (1690).

3. W.F. Jackson Knight, Roman Vergil, London, 1944, p. 169. Cf. Addison, quoted supra, p. 69.

Virgil, relating the growth of human science and art in Georgics I, tells how

navita tum stellis numeros et nomina fecit
Pleiadas, Hyadas, claraque Lycaonis Arcton, I, 137-8

which Dryden translates

Then Sailers quarter'd Heav'n, and found a Name
For ev'ry fix'd and ev'ry wandring Star:
The Pleiads, Hyads, and the Northern Car. I, 208-10

The quarters of Heaven, says Phillips in his New World of Words, are 'in Astronomy

the Intersections of the Spheres'; and although the term was lifted from mere tech-

nicality by the translators of the Bible in Jeremiah's phrase, 'the four winds from

the four quarters of heaven', Dryden is following Milton's example with a more scien-

tific use. This does not, however, detract from his poetic effect, since the word is

appropriate in its context of scientific history. Neither is there anything forcedly

technical in his second use of the word in the AEneis:

hic primum nova lux oculis offulsit et ingens
visus ab Aurora caelum transcurrenre nimbus IX, 110-11

First, from the Quarter of the Morn, there sprung
A light that sign'd the Heav'ns.... IX, 129-30

A scientific word which would appear to defy non-technical use, and yet is worked into the AEneis with peculiarly apt effect, is 'gibbous'. This word, meaning 'convex, protuberant', was used in seventeenth century geology and physiology; Browne speaks of 'gibbous or bunch-back'd' oxen in Pseudodoxia Epidemica, but even there the word has not lost its technical colouring. The physical appearance, sound, and suggestion of gibbous, however, contribute to the poetic quality of Dryden's lines:

A pointed flinty Rock, all bare, and black,
Grew gibbous from behind the Mountains Back:
Owls, Ravens, all ill Omens of the Night,
Here built their Nests, and hither wing'd their Flight.
The leaning Head hung threatening o'er the Flood:
And nodded to the left... VIII, 307-12

Finally, Dryden draws technical terms from agriculture to enrich the diction of the Eclogues and Georgics. In the Georgics, Virgil 'conquered Latin agriculture for poetry'. He does not avoid the technicalities of his theme; and Dryden, who is so

free in his use of technical words from other arts and crafts, does not attempt to reduce the precise detail of Virgil's descriptions of rural economy. Indeed, he is anxious lest his ignorance of agriculture may have made him 'mistaken in the use of

Notes, p. 95.

I. Dryden's note to Georgics II.

2. Georgics, II, 562 (cf. Virgil, I, 105); II, 103; II, 361; II, 105 (Virgil, 74, gemmae) and 325 (Virgil, 455).

3. Georgics, IV, 267; Virgil, IV, 163-4, and Dryden 239; Dryden, I, 200, and IV, 208.

4. Eclogues, IX, 31 (Dryden's Theocritus, III, 4).
Aeneis, VII, 867; cf. Hamlet's 'enseamed bed', and Professor J. Dover Wilson's analysis of the passage in his Hamlet, Cambridge, 1941, p. xxxviii.

5. Georgics, III, 283; Eclogues, III, 42; Georgics, III, 448, Dryden 683.

(I)

some technical terms. He does not, however, seek occasions for the introduction of abstruse technicalities; as with most other types of technical word, he uses his stores as sparingly as possible. Following Virgil with unrestrained enthusiasm, he might have made his translation unreadable; but he respected his reading public's ignorance of the rural trade.

Some of his words are precise terms in the craft of agriculture; and he tends to draw on Latin vocabulary rather than on English dialect. He uses persecute in the special Virgilian sense, 'to cut down, prune' (persequitur); inoculate (to engraft), which is not Virgilian, but a term from Latin prose works on husbandry which was taken over into the English horticultural vocabulary in the seventeenth century; translate, for 'transplant'; gem (Virgil's gemma, 'bud'), which remained technical long after Dryden's time. He goes to the English country-side for a few words which give his poetry a colouring at once technical and dialectal. He speaks, for example, of 'Gleans of yellow Thime' on the bees' legs, using a variant of gleanings which was a dialect form only (O.E.D.). Again, Virgil's bees purissima mella stipant, et liquido distendunt nectare cellas, which Dryden translates 'sweet Honey some condense, some purge the Grout'. The O.E.D. defines 'Grout' here as 'sediment, dregs'; but in 1700 the word was defined thus: 'In Leicestershire the liquor with malt infused is called grout'. This is more likely to be the sense in Dryden's line; it accords better with his references to honey as 'liquid Gold' and 'golden Liquor', and with his humanisation of the bees. (2)

A few of these technical terms are forced in poetry. Ridgling (a defective he-goat), a word borrowed by Dryden from Creech's Theocritus, is an unnecessarily technical and indeed inaccurate translation of Virgil's simple capro. In AENEIS VII, warriors scour their shields with 'Seam'; Dryden means 'fat', and might have said so, since seam in his day had the special meaning of 'hog's lard' or grease used in the wool trade. Beestings, an extremely technical word for post-parturitive milk, is used where milk would have sufficed; and 'mother'd Oyl' (mother was a technical word for 'lees') translates amurca, where dregs would have been clearer. (3)

One of Dryden's terms from animal husbandry, which has some poetic value, has been wrongly interpreted by the O.E.D. Virgil describes how young mares, made (4)

pregnant by the fresh winds (mirabile dictu),

saxa per et scopulos et depressas convallis
diffugiunt, non Eure, tuos, neque solis ad ortus,
in Borean Caurumque, aut unde nigerrimus Auster
nascitur et pluvio contristat frigore caelum. Georgics, III,
276-9

Dryden translates: Then fir'd with amorous Rage, they take their Flight,
Through Plains, and mount the Hills unequal height;
Nor to the North, nor to the rising Sun,
Nor Southward to the Rainy Regions run,
But boring to the West...

III, 434-8

The O.E.D. defines 'boring' in this passage as advancing 'like a boring tool'; but there is also a technical use of the word. Bailey (1731) states that among horsemen 'a horse is said to boar or bore, when he shoots out his nose as high as he can'; and this sense has an obvious application to the description of mares in heat. Both senses are present, I think, in Dryden's line; and the technical meaning gives vividness where the other suggests action.

This survey of the technical vocabulary of the Virgil leads to these conclusions: Dryden did not acquiesce in the critics' condemnation of technicalities in poetry; but on the other hand he seldom approached the complexity or abstruseness of the metaphysical poets, who drew heavily on the vocabulary of astronomy, alchemy, and other sciences. He used technical words with caution, and respected the tastes of his readers, who would not regard extremely technical language in matters of the sea or the farm as a compliment to their wide interests, although the vocabularies of philosophy and general science were more properly within their reach. Dryden is not often pedantic or pretentious; and the technical element in his diction is usually subordinated to his poetic requirements. The terms of art and craft were selected for the most part to meet the demands of precise, detailed description; and on occasions they contribute not only to the realism and accuracy of his pictures, but to the quality of his poetry. The desire for precision, and the bold use of whatever words would give it, are in a poet preferable qualities to the orthodox Augustan generality, avoidance of 'low words' and 'terms of art', and consequent cultivation of polite circumlocutory 'elegances'.

Dryden's attempts to give colour to his heroic style, by calling upon reserves of language which were properly beneath epic level, are generally effectual. The great quality of the Aeneis is its persistent, driving energy of line and phrase. The essence of Virgil's style was beyond Dryden, as he well knew; but if he does not capture that for English poetry, he retells Virgil's story with freshness and power. If for the Virgilian gold he gives us something nearer the Homeric steel, that steel is often beautifully strong and clear. The alloy of colloquialism and exuberant humour does not detract from its strength; it lends colour and force to the poem, and must have made an even more forcible appeal to Dryden's contemporaries, whose ears were attuned to the undertones of current speech, than it does to us.

--- 5 ---

What picture of Dryden's style and poetic character, with its merits and its weaknesses, does the great mass of his verse translation give us? In the first place, Dryden does not emerge as a poet of delicacy and grace in expression. He is too plain, direct, and restlessly progressive to be able to handle the curiosa felicitas of Horace, or the highly finished and richly detailed descriptive style of Virgil; and he is so far from being 'one of the gentle bosoms' that he mars the portrayal of human passion and pathos in Ovid, Homer and Virgil by clumsy exaggeration and meretricious ornament. Nor, again, has he a highly developed sense of the richness and suggestion of language; the imaginative convolution of words and images in Virgil is beyond him. The cruder and less subtle composition of his poetic character is an obstacle to the effective translation of a whole range of classical poets, from Horace and Theocritus to Virgil and Lucretius, despite his competent scholarship and his insight into the essential merits of their styles.

He has, however, many virtues of his own; and his paraphrastic method in translation throws them into prominence. He is acutely aware of the problems of style and diction, in every kind of poetry; and he tries conscientiously to deal with these problems in an uninhibited, experimental spirit, setting aside the rigid rules of the critics and boldly cross-fertilising a wide variety of poetic genres,

from the heroic to the familiar, in a persistent attempt to create a poetry which is vivid, vital, and fresh. His fundamental characteristic, which is apparent in his successes and failures alike, is an immense energy of mind and expression; and his own central problem, in the art of poetry, is the proper control and canalisation of that energy. This problem is made more acute for him, at every turn, by two inevitable predilections --- a love of the novel and startling in imagery, partly inherent, and partly encouraged by the current doctrine of fancy and the example of Ovid and others; and a constant temptation to laugh or to be familiarly comic. His taste for excessively bold and striking imagery enables him to heighten his comedy and adorn his compliments; but in the simply delicate, graceful kinds of writing, or in a style which demands sustained dignity, it betrays him. His love of the comic, his sense of the ridiculous, and his capacities as a familiarly-spoken and easily colloquial poet, equip him well as a satirist; if he cannot manage the indignatio and the quasi-heroic thunder of Juvenal, he has a different but no less effective satiric style of his own. Further, if he is defective as a heroic poet, incapable of writing for long stretches on an elevated level, he has sufficient ability in the epic style to make him a master of the mock-heroic when his humour intrudes.

His energy vitalises all his translation. It gives briskness to his translation of Horace, an irresistible force and finality to the satires, an exciting power to Homeric invective, and a muscular, masculine assertiveness and a bounding life to his epic narrative and description. It is a sufficient compensation for those faults of excessive fancy and coarse or insensitive expression, which it partly provokes; and it provides him with resources of humour, forcefulness and vivid colour in description which are peculiarly his own.

FOOTNOTES TO PAGES 79-84.

Page 79.

- I. The following references include and supplement the illustrations given: in each reference, the first figure is to Virgil's text, the second to Dryden's:-

Watry, liquid, &c:- Georgics, I, 29, 38; II, II, 16; II, 199, 274. AEneid, I, 34, 52; I, 138, 198; I, 154, 223; III, II, 18; III, 268, 350; V, 235, 305; V, 502, 667; VI, 83, 129; VIII, 943 (Dryden); X, 198, 286; X, 229, 325; XI, 495, 749.

Sylvan, woody, &c:- Georgics, I, 189, 274; III, 393, 603; AEneid, III, 24, 34; III, 46 (Dryden).

Generic phrases:- Georgics, I, 73, 113; I, 414, 562; I, 420, 567; II, 21, 28; III, 50, 84; III, 72, 116; III, 541, 806; IV, 37, 53; AEn., I, 28 (Dryden); I, 201 (Dryden); I, 185, 261-2; III, 235, 308; III, 361, 463; VI, 179, 262; VI, 706, 958.

2. AEneid, X, 272; Georgics, IV, 101; AEn., VII, 699; VII, 217; VI, 202; Georgics, II, 200; III, 529; IV, 18; AEn., VII, 760; Georgics, I, 410; AEn., V, 859.
3. Georgics, II, 51; II, 302; II, 183; Eclogues, I, 2; III, 70; V, 7.
4. AEn., I, 539, 743; Georgics, III, 243; II, 262; III, 264; III, 480; IV, 223.

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2. Georgics, I, 181, 264; IV, Dryden 53, 73, 78; AEn., I, 185, 261-2.

Page 81.

- I. Eclogues, X, 42, 64; AEn., VII, 517, 720; Eclogues, III, 97, 151; Eclogues, I, 39, 53; Georgics, II, 200, 274; Eclogues, VII, 45, 66; Georgics, IV, 18, 23; AEn., I, 244, 334.
2. Dryden:- Georgics, I, 135, 403; II, 439 (cf. Sigismonda, 711). Georgics, I, 371, 572 (cf. Hind & Panther, I, 512, and II, 703; Palamon, II, 9; Theodore, 208). Georgics, III, 119 (Virgil 75-- cf. Quintilian, generosus equus). AEn., V, 322; Eclogues, V, 109; Georgics, II, 2; Eclogues, VIII, 23; AEn., IX, 386 (IV, 468; cf. Sigismonda, 231; Marvell, Last Instructions, 579; Denham, Cooper's Hill, 247). AEn., I, 436; X, 269; II, 803; Georgics, III, 49 (cf. Annus Mirabilis, stanza xix; Cymon, 280; Palamon, III, 80; Medall, 81; Hind & Panther, I, 99). Georgics, IV, 283. AEn., I, 256. AEn., III, 642, 681. Georgics, I, 332; AEn., I, 354; I, 574; VI, 974; VII, 478; X, 936. AEn., V, 83; IV, 182; VII, 34; X, 341; III, 682; V, 139.

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- I. AEn., I, 726, Dryden 1015; II, 19, 237, 45 (Dryden 45, 311, 58); III, 595 (Dryden; cf. Pope, Odyssey, XXI, 10); IV, 79, Dryden 113; VI, 754, 1020; X, 82, 126; X, 586-7, 825; XI, 101, 242; XI, 242 (Dryden--- cf. Virgil, VI, 66).

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1. Dryden, AEn., II, 128 -- Virgil, VI, 530. AEn., III, 470 (Virgil 367): 'dismal day', with something of its Latin sense, is Spenserian (F.Q., II, vii, 26), and is last quoted by O.E.D. from 1618; and the last O.E.D. quotation of dismal (fatal) is 1632. Obscoenamque gives the clue to Dryden's sense of dismal: for although the normal 17th century sense of obscene was 'filthy, foul' (e.g., Paradise Lost, I, 408, 'the obscene dread of Moab's Sons'), Dryden translates obscoenus as 'obscene' where Virgil clearly means ill-omened; and in one place he translates it as 'baleful' (AEn., XII, 1265, Virgil 876). He also knew Cowley's Dauides, where there is a note (to Bk. II, 818) on obscoenus.

AEn., V, 20, Dryden 28 (cf. Virgil's se collegit in arma, XII, 491); II, 364, 493 (cf. Virgil, IX, 491, funus lacerum: funus is 'violent death' in Virgil, at, e.g., AEn. VI, 429; IX, 526; Ecl., V, 20).

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1. Virgil, AEn., III, 688; I, 167; II, 719; Georgics, II, 27; AEn., VI, 848; I, 721 --- Dryden, AEn., V, 962; Georgics, I, 342; AEn., VII, 547; VI, 324; I, 78; Georgics, II, 193. AEn., II, 210, 277; II, 475, 645; V, 648, 845 (cf. Theodore, 121; Palamon, I, 283). Georgics, I, 244, 334. AEn., XII, 196, 292; V, 487 (Dryden); Georgics, II, 212; III, 642. Georgics, I, 452, 604; Mencis, V, 579-80; I, 1044; VI, 715.

2. Dryden: AEn., I, 691 (Virgil 490); Eclogues, II, 59 (Virgil 45); Eclogues, X, 33; AEn., 1008 (Virgil 720) -- cf. Pope's Messiah 49, fleecy care; AEn., I, 89 (Virgil, VIII, 403, and Lucretius V, 1230); AEn., III, 716 (Virgil 544) -- cf. Rape of Lock, V, 37; AEn., VIII, 822 (Virgil 620) -- cf. Virgil, AEn., VIII, 259, and Georgics, II, 462.

IV

FABLES FROM CHAUCER AND BOCCACCIO

- 1. Dryden's approach to Chaucer and Boccaccio.
His concern with character and passion. The elevation and satiric inversion of character.
- 2. Dryden's additions: commentary --- emphasis --- satiric expansion --- poetic figure and conceit.
- 3. Vivid detail and energy.
The supernatural element.
Dryden's descriptive delicacy, and sensitiveness to light and shadow.

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- I. Essays, ii, 256; ii, 266-7.

VI

TABLES FROM BEAUCHAMPEL AND BOGGS

1. The author's approach to the study of the character and the relation of the character to the character of the character.

2. The author's approach to the study of the character and the relation of the character to the character of the character.

3. The author's approach to the study of the character and the relation of the character to the character of the character.

--- I ---

The Fables volume of 1700 is largely a miscellany of verse translations from classical and mediaeval sources. I have dealt with the versions of classical poets which Dryden included in this volume, as part of the large collection of translations from Latin and Greek; but the tales from Chaucer and Boccaccio deserve special consideration. Dryden's attitude to the task of translating classical poetry was reverential: although he never practised literal 'metaphrase', he regarded the general sense of the original as sacrosanct, and tried to carry that sense over into English verse with as little alteration as possible in style and tone. He approached Boccaccio and Chaucer much more critically. His task there was not the faithful reproduction of an ancient poetry in an English style and diction worthy of the great originals, but the revision and refinement of old tales in accordance with the poetic standards of the later seventeenth century. Chaucer is recast, polished and redecorated, to satisfy modern tastes; and Boccaccio's plain prose of statement is metamorphosed into elevated narrative verse.

Chaucer's language, says Dryden, admits no defence. The thorough modernisation of an author whose language is obsolete is justified in the interests of what he has to say:

The words are given up as a post not to be defended in our poet, because he wanted the modern art of fortifying.

When an ancient word for its sound and significancy deserves to be revived, I have that reasonable veneration for antiquity to restore it. All beyond this is superstition. Words are not like land-marks, so sacred as never to be removed. I grant that something must be lost in all transfusion, that is, in all translations; but the sense will remain which would otherwise be lost, or at least be maimed, when it is scarce intelligible, and that but to a few. (I)

Thus far, Dryden is not proposing more than the transfer of his author from an old language to a new one. Unlike a good classical poet, however, Chaucer is not an artist of sufficient quality in style or diction to deserve close, sympathetic translation, with a constant respect for the delicacies and subtleties of his work. He is 'a rough diamond, and must first be polished ere he shines'. This point of view affects Dryden's attitude to the content of the tales:

Notes, p. 103.

1. Essays, ii, p. 265.
2. Essays, ii, p. 248.
3. The Decameron (anonymously translated; but Professor H.G. Wright is developing a case for Florio as the author), 1620, 1625, 1634, 1657, 1684. Le Maçon: Le Decameron de Maistre Jean Bocace Florentin, 1545, and thereafter into the eighteenth century. I am indebted to Professor Wright and Dr. Josef Raith for information on these translations.

I hope to discuss the influence of the 1620 translation on Dryden's versions in the Oxford English Texts Dryden which I am preparing for The Clarendon Press. Briefly, Dryden seems to have been affected by the moral emphasis in the 1620 version; he derives some hints of character from the 1620 story of Sigismonda (Sigismonda, lines 241-4, 255-8, 270-76, 288-90, 305 ff); and there are occasional echoes of the phraseology of 1620 (e.g., Sigismonda, lines 81-2, 209, 354-65, 634, 733).

4. I quote from the quarto edition of 1684, which was probably that used by Dryden.

I have not tied myself to a literal translation; but have often omitted what I judged to be unnecessary, or not of dignity enough to appear in the company of better thoughts. I have presumed farther in some places, and added somewhat of my own where I thought my author was deficient, and had not given his thoughts their true lustre, for want of words in the beginning of our language. (1)

His approach is freely interpretative; he takes up what Chaucer has to say, without much respect for the way in which he says it, and presents this material in a fresh and suitable seventeenth century poetic dress.

Dryden has little to say on Boccaccio in the Preface to the Fables. He does, however, associate Boccaccio with Chaucer, as refiners of their mother-tongues; Dante began to 'file' the Italian language in verse, before Boccaccio's time; 'but the reformation of their prose was wholly owing to Boccace himself, who is yet the standard of purity in the Italian tongue'.⁽²⁾ It has hitherto been assumed that Dryden worked only from Boccaccio's Italian; but there is good evidence that he also made use of the free prose version of The Decameron (1620), which is derived, not from the Italian, but from Antoine le Maçon's translation into French (1545).⁽³⁾ Le Maçon speaks highly of Boccaccio's prose style in his dedicatory epistle; and the English translation of 1620, describing Boccaccio on the title-page as 'the first Refiner of Italian Prose', has a prefatory lamentation that earlier versions of stories from The Decameron have not been 'beautified with his sweet Stile and Elocution of Phrase, neither savouring of his singular Moral Applications'.⁽⁴⁾ It is very probable that Dryden was interested in the description of Boccaccio as a 'refiner'; and the complaint that Boccaccio had not as yet been given a graceful English dress was an open challenge to a versatile and experienced translator and improver like Dryden. The direct, unpretentious simplicity of Boccaccio's prose appealed to him; and he tried to carry over as much of the clear outline and the strong, progressive narrative of the original as possible. He is not, in these tales from The Decameron, an improver of mediaeval crudeness and naiveté. The gulf to be bridged is not, as with modernising Chaucer, that which divides the old-fashioned from the new, but that which separates prose from poetry; and in bridging that gulf, with no checks or cautions from his original, Dryden takes a free hand.

One of the most striking features of all Dryden's tales from Chaucer and Boccaccio is his interest in human character. When he wrote these tales, he had behind him a long experience as a dramatist; and as a political satirist, he had developed the art of subtle, concentrated character-sketch. This prolonged concern with character prevented him from accepting a tale on the merits of its plot and action alone; and he devotes much attention to the interaction of thought, feeling, and external circumstance. He does not attempt to impose the subtle characterisation of the tragic drama on his stories; but he tries to depict the emotions and the mental operations of his characters as fully as he can within the framework of the narrative.

His concern with character, especially in the critical situations of Palamon and Arcite, and in Boccaccio's romantic tales, has a direct effect on Dryden's style. Exalted passion, histrionic behaviour and melodramatic expression are features of the heroic play and the heroic poem, as Dryden saw them; and the tone of some of these fables is sufficiently close to the heroic to admit highly coloured descriptions of feeling, and highly declamatory expression. In The Knight's Tale, Chaucer describes the growth and fortunes of a chivalric love in the terms of the amour courtois convention, and his accounts of the development and flux of emotion in Palamon and Arcite are by no means prosaic or restrained. The lovers experience desire, despair, anger and grief, with all the traditional violence of mediaeval erotic theory. Working from this, Dryden transforms his knights into heroes of the Restoration stage, with all the extravagant passion, melodramatic action and enflamed rhetoric of heroic drama. Compare, for example, the two accounts of Palamon's distress when Arcite is set free:

Upon that oother syde Palamon,
 Whan that he wiste Arcite was agon,
 Swich sorwe he maketh that the grete tour
 Resouneth of his youlyng and clamour.
 The pure fettres on his shynes grete
 Weren of his bittre, salte teeres wete.

K.T., I279-80

For when he knew his Rival freed and gone,
 He swells with Wrath; he makes outrageous Moan;
 He frets, he fumes, he stares, he stamps the Ground;
 The hollow Tow'r with Clamours rings around:
 With briny Tears he bath'd his fetter'd Feet,
 And dropp'd all o'er with Agony of Sweat. I, 444-9.

Notes, p. 105.

1. Cf. Palamon and Arcite, I, 40-46 (Chaucer, 896-904), 213-5, 354-7 (Chaucer, II87-9), 522-3 (Chaucer I359-60), 556.

2. Palamon and Arcite, III, 794-9 (Chaucer, 2765 ff).

There are numerous examples of the detailed analysis and extravagant expression of emotion or thought in the seventeenth century heroic or romantic poem, in Saintsbury's Caroline Poets, Oxford, 1905-21. For specimens from Chamberlayne's Pharonnida, which Dryden knew, see vol. i, pp. 42 (I, iii, 220ff), and I59 (III, iv, 32 ff).

3. Wordsworth, Letter to Scott, Nov. 7th, 1805 (Lockhart, Life of Scott, chap. xiv).

Cf. Scott, Works of Dryden, 1808, xi, p. 403; Mark Van Doren, The Poetry of John Dryden, Cambridge, 1931, pp. 237-8.

Dryden's lines I58-62, I73-6, 229-32, 245-51 have no warrant from Boccaccio.

Dryden's inclination to elaborate emotional passages with vivid figure sometimes produces fine poetry in this kind; Chaucer continues on Palamon:

Therwith the fyr of jalousie up sterte
 Withinne his brest, and hent him by the herte
 So woodyly that he lyk was to biholde
 The boxtree or the asshen dede and colde. K.T., I299-I302

Dryden translates: The Rage of Jealousie then fir'd his Soul,
 And his Face kindl'd like a burning Coal:
 Now cold Despair, succeeding in her stead,
 To livid Paleness turns the glowing Red.
 His Blood scarce Liquid, creeps within his Veins, (I)
 Like Water which the freezing Wind constrains. I, 464-9

The influence of the psychology of the heroic drama on Dryden's Palamon and Arcite is not always fortunate. In the dying speech of Arcite, for example, Chaucer achieves noble expression of strong feeling by a simplicity of tone which transcends the rhetoric in which the speech is set. Dryden expands with reflective comment; and the hollow booming of stage rhetoric takes the place of the exquisitely moving 'what is this world? what asketh men to have?':

Vain Men, how vanishing a bliss we crave,
 Now warm in Love, now with'ring in the Grave!
 Never, O never more to see the Sun!
 Still dark, in a damp Vault, and still alone!
 This Fate is common; but I lose my Breath
 Near Bliss, and yet not bless'd before my Death. (2)

The same anxiety to heighten the passion of his characters is to be seen in Dryden's Sigismonda and Guiscardo, and in Cymon and Iphigenia. The desires of Sigismonda and Guiscardo are, in the Italian, sufficiently fleshly; but Dryden inflames and annotates the quiet, matter-of-fact prose statement of Boccaccio with a gusto which has distressed many critics --- Wordsworth considered that the heroine's (3)
 character had been degraded 'by making her love absolute sensuality and appetite'. More interesting than this illustration of Restoration salacity, however, is the treatment of the character of Tancred. Boccaccio's Tancred, angry though he is at the behaviour of his daughter, remains a doting, selfish father, driven by grief and a sense of outrage to a bloody revenge of which, in the end, he repents. Dryden, gathering up hints from the 1620 translation of this story, and probably also re-

Notes, p. 106.

- I. The 1620 translator emphasises the cruelty and rage of Tancred. It is possible that Dryden knew something of the Elizabethan tragedy, Tancred and Gismunda, 1591 (Dodsley's Old English Plays, ed. W.C. Hazlitt, 1874, vii, especially pp. 61-5). In this play, Tancred appears as a blood-lusty revenger, expressing himself with declamatory fury.
The conception of Tancred as at once grief-stricken, revengeful, and calculating, enraged with his daughter and violently prejudiced against Guiscardo, owes a good deal, I believe, to an episode in Chamberlayne's Pharonnida (Saintsbury, Caroline Poets, i, pp. 136-9 (III; ii, lines 76 ff)). Correspondences between Dryden's poem, the play, and Pharonnida, emphasise the relationship between Dryden's Tancred and the traditional stage tyrant.
2. Lines 240ff, 255 ff; 288-90; 303-8 (Cf. Pharonnida, III, ii, 123-8; Paradise Lost, I, 619-21, Satan's tears).
3. Lines 333-8. Cf. ll. 5-6; Absalom & Achitophel, 267-9; and Aureng-zebe, I, i. The application of sun-images to monarchy goes back at least as far as Shakespeare's Richard II.
4. Lines 569-70; 594-6; 609-II; 606-8.

collecting other versions, transforms Tancred into a raving tyrant, violent in
 (I)
 grief and savagely cruel in anger. In the original, Tancred discovers the lovers,
 and retires from the chamber dolente a morte; in Dryden, he restrains his emotions
 and turns to policy, 'meditating' his prey like a hungry lion and brooding in secret
 on the execution of his revenge. This sinister calculation is, however, temporary:

The sullen Tyrant slept not all the Night,
 But lonely walking by a winking Light,
 Sobb'd, wept, and groan'd, and beat his wither'd Breast;

and when he finally goes to reprove his daughter, he sobs uncontrolledly, in the
 distraught manner of heroic drama:

piangendo le comincio a dire...
 But all at once his Grief and Rage appear'd,
 And Floods of Tears ran trickling down his Beard.
 O Sigismonda, he began to say;
 Thrice he began, and thrice was forc'd to stay,
 Till Words with often trying found their Way:
 I thought, O Sigismonda... (2)

He speaks much more violently than does Boccaccio's tyrant, of the wretched servant
 to whom Sigismonda has given herself so cheaply; and he laments the desolation of
 old age in rhetorical figurative terms, echoing one of Dryden's stock dramatic
 images:

But I, expecting more, in my own wrong
 Protracting Life, have liv'd a Day too long.
 If Yesterday cou'd be recall'd again,
 Ev'n now would I conclude my happy Reign:
 But 'tis too late, my glorious Race is run,
 And a dark Cloud o'ertakes my setting Sun. (3)

With this heightened, melodramatic sorrow, Dryden elaborates the complementary
 picture of Tancred as a bloody tyrant. He delights in cruelty: Guiscardo's heart
 is torn out 'to glut the Tyrant's Eyes'; and Tancred, like a Renaissance villain,
 chooses the cup in which to send the heart to Sigismonda 'with cruel Care':

Now, though the sullen Sire had eas'd his Mind,
 The Pomp of his Revenge was yet behind,
 A Pomp prepar'd to grace the Present he design'd. (4)

The story of Cymon and Iphigenia gave Dryden interesting human material to subtilise and develop; and his two central characters are greatly elaborated. He takes considerable care over the psychology of the brutish idiot Cymon: he fills out Boccaccio's picture of the thoughtless bumpkin taking an aimless stroll, emphasises the reactions of Cymon's dull mind to the unexpected sight of the sleeping Iphigenia, and elaborates the metamorphosis of the idiot into a fully human, (I) adoring and aspiring lover. Boccaccio's bald account of Cymon's exciting but irresponsible efforts to secure Iphigenia for himself clearly did not satisfy Dryden: a cultured and chivalrous lover does not behave like a ravisher and a pirate. The character problem is to some extent solved, by Dryden's portrayal of Cymon as a man whose elevated and stormy passion accords with the miraculous and violent metamorphosis of his mind and heart:

And tho' he lov'd perhaps with too much Fire,
His Father all his Faults with Reason scan'd,
And lik'd an error of the better Hand;
Excus'd th'excess of Passion in his Mind,
By Flames too fierce, perhaps too much refin'd. 235-9

Cymon stands here in close relationship to the lovers of the heroic drama, with their excessive passion and concomitant hectic activity. He is 'stormy Cymon'; he talks assertively of making Iphigenia his own by force --- 'Love taught me Force, (2) and Force shall Love maintain'; and his whole conduct is aggressive and heroically incautious. This new emphasis on heroic violence and daring -- a love for love, or the world well lost-- gives Dryden opportunities in a style in which he exulted. Rhythm, imagery and energetic diction together throw into relief the character of the swashbuckling hero:

Fierce was the Fight, but hast'ning to his Prey,
By force the furious Lover freed his way;
Himself alone dispers'd the Rhodian Crew,
The Weak disdain'd, the Valiant overthrew;
Cheap Conquest for his following Friends remain'd,
He reap'd the Field, and they but only glean'd. 284-9. (3)

Fierce Pasimond, their passage to prevent,)
Thrust full on Cymon's Back in his descent.)
The Blade return'd unbath'd, and to the handle bent.)
Stout Cymon soon remounts, and cleft in two
His Rival's Head with one descending Blow. 597-61

Note, p. 108.

I. Professor Noyes, following Wieruszowski, Untersuchungen über John Drydens Boccaccio-Paraphrasen, Bonn, 1904.

2-333

Force was the light, but leaning to the left,
by force the lantern later from the left.
himself alone directed the English crew.
The ship's deck, the will of the crew,
strongly for the English friends remain.
is seen in the light, and they are only seen in the light.
force is shown, their names to prevent.
force was the light, but leaning to the left,
by force the lantern later from the left.
himself alone directed the English crew.
The ship's deck, the will of the crew,
strongly for the English friends remain.
is seen in the light, and they are only seen in the light.

Iphigenia, too, is given new life in Dryden's version; but it is not the exotic vitality of the character of heroic drama. In Boccaccio, she is a colourless figure --- the vaguely defined occasion and goal of Cymon's hot passion and piratical conduct; and Dryden has succeeded in converting her into a clear-cut, interesting and to some extent realistic character. He brings Iphigenia forward into the foreground as a lady who loves the ardent Cymon early in the story, and therefore has little objection to being abducted by him. Some have suggested that he does this because he feels that the conduct of Cymon, as it is described in the original, requires some moral justification. I think, however, that some justification for Cymon's behaviour is provided in his own violent, uncompromising, and passionate character, which brings him into line with the extravagant heroes of the drama; and that Dryden elaborates Iphigenia's character simply in order to make her more vital and interesting. She is not merely a devoted lover who remains faithful in her misfortunes, and by her love tempts Cymon to the desperate deeds by which he may repay her devotion; she is Dryden's half-satirical conception of woman --- beautiful, fascinating, fickle, unpredictable. Her attitudes and conduct are portrayed with the cynical, enthusiastic power of the Restoration satirist. Cymon recovers her from the ship which is taking her off to marriage in Rhodes:

While to his Arms the blushing Bride he took,
 To seeming Sadness she compos'd her Look;
 As if by Force subjected to his Will,
 Tho' pleas'd, dissembling, and a Woman still. 308-II

.
 Faintly she scream'd, and ev'n her Eyes confess'd,
 She rather would be thought, than was distress'd. 320-2I

When Fate takes her away from him again,

Her secret Soul to Cymon was inclin'd,
 But she must suffer what her Fates assign'd;
 So passive is the Church of Womankind. 422-24

During the storm at sea, she 'wearies all the Saints' with womanish lamentations and prayers, and curses her beloved Cymon because his unlawful abduction has brought the wrath of Providence upon them:

Then impotent of Mind, with alter'd Sense,
 She hugg'd th' Offender, and forgave th' Offence,
 Sex to the last.

349-50; 366-68

Notes, p. 109.

- 1. Probably an allusion to Henry VIII's first marriage. Cf. Hind and Panther, I, 361-9, where Henry's lead in marital indulgence is satirically celebrated. Nun's Priest's Tale, 61-4.
- 2. Lines 71-80; 67-70; 81-6; 91-2; 435 ff.

202-11

230-31

472-24

202-23; 212-24

Dryden's expansions of the characters of Cymbn and Iphigenia illustrate two tendencies which are constant and complementary in all his poetry: the elevation of character to a heroic level, and, at the other extreme, the sudden satiric inversion of character. The heroic and the satiric are twin elements in his finest writing, never long apart. Their fusion in Absalom and Achitophel was his happiest experiment in verse; and when he came to modernise Chaucer's tale of Chanticleer and Pertelote, he seized delightedly on the opportunity which Chaucer gave him of repeating that experiment. With the brilliant humanisation of the animals and bees of the Georgics behind him, Dryden develops the human qualities in Chaucer's poultry and in the fox; and the heroic and satiric threads intertwine. Chanticleer, like Kings in the poet's own experience, had 'six Misses... beside his lawful Wife':

But make the worst, the Monarch did no more
Than all the Ptolemeys had done before:
When Incest is for Int'rest of a Nation,
'Tis made no Sin by Holy Dispensation. (I)

Partlet, despite her husband's lordly infidelity, was ever a chaste and humble wife, resolved to fulfil the doctrine of passive obedience, 'and let him work his wicked Will'. Together they lived a life of ardent passion, mutually respectful, and delighting in the civilised arts of music, study, and cultured conversation. Dryden develops Chaucer's emphasis on Chanticleer's magnificent self-satisfaction. Taking his cue from Chaucer's declaration that the cock was 'real as a prince is in his halle', he mock-heroically compares Chanticleer with adulterous monarchs; Dame Partlet rebukes him for cowardly and unchivalrous conduct, unworthy of his lady's love, and for his plebeian interest in dreams, which signifies 'a Cock of Dunghill-kind'; the poet sings of Chanticleer in the terms of chivalry, as the devoted knight of Venus; and the fox flatters him as a country gentleman of celebrated descent. He is monarch of all he surveys, expressing his lordship and his pride in grandiloquent couplets which recall the exalted and highly finished set speeches from the plays:

Thus numb'ring Times, and Seasons in his Breast,
His second Crowing the third Hour confess'd.
Then turning, said to Partlet, See, my Dear,
How lavish Nature has adorn'd the Year;
How the pale Primrose, and blue Violet spring,
And Birds essay their Throats disus'd to sing:

1. Cf. lines 651-8. Chaucer, C.T., B, 4374; Dryden lines 57-66, 128-9, 138-9, 688, 610, 613-5.
2. Lines 620-38. Scott points out the pun in Brennus and Belinus and in the vilification of Reynard as 'Subverter of the Gallic Reign' at line 501 (Works of Dryden, 1808, xi, p. 343).
3. Lines 480-85. Cf. the satiric portraits in Absalom & Achitophel, 581-659. It is worth noting that Dryden's Fox leaps boldly into the yard and lies in hiding, as Milton's Satan 'overleaps the bounds' of Paradise to spy on Adam and Eve (ll. 491-8; Paradise Lost, iv, 181 ff).
4. John Dryden, Cambridge, 1950, p. 81.

All these are ours; and I with pleasure see
 Man strutting on two Legs, and aping me!
 An unfledg'd, Creature, of a lumpish Frame,
 Indew'd with fewer Particles of Flame:
 Our Dame sits cousing o'er the Kitchin-fire,
 I draw fresh Air, and Nature's Works admire:
 And ev'n this Day, in more delight abound,
 Than, since I was an Egg, I ever found. 453-6 (1)

The Fox describes Chanticleer's father to him in terms which derive their exquisite comedy from the fanciful extravagance of the mock-heroic:

So sweetly wou'd he wake the Winter-day,
 That Matrons to the Church mistook their way
 And while he pain'd his Voice to pierce the Skies,
 As Saints in Raptures use, would shut his Eyes.
 By this, in Song, he never had his Peer,
 From sweet Cecilia down to Chanticleer;
 Not Maro's Muse, who sung the mighty Man,
 Nor Pindar's heav'nly Lyre, nor Horace when a Swan.
 Your Ancestors proceed from Race divine:
 From Brennus to Belinus is your Line;
 Who gave to sov'raign Rome such loud Alarms,
 That ev'n the Priests were not excus'd from Arms. (2)

In Dryden's account of the Fox himself, the satiric manner of Absalom and Achitophel is revived. The sarcastic condemnation of hypocrisy in this sketch of 'Saint Reynard' and the manipulation of the couplet balance for satiric effect, recall Dryden's satire on the dissembling knavery of the sects in Absalom:

A Fox full fraught with seeming Sanctity,
 That fear'd an Oath, but like the Devil, would lie,
 Who look'd like Lent, and had the holy Leer,
 And durst not sin before he say'd his Pray'r:
 This pious Cheat, that never suck'd the Blood,
 Nor chaw'd the Flesh of Lambs, but when he wou'd, }
 Had pass'd three Summers in the neighb'ring Wood... (3)

In the Nun's Priest's Tale, Dryden owes much to the Chaucerian mock-heroic. But generally in the mediaeval tales, he sets himself independently to elaborate and complicate character in a way which will broaden the scope of the tale, enrich the style, and diversify the interest beyond the mere unfolding of a story. The Fables (4) volume, as Professor Nichol Smith has recently emphasised, is made up to ensure the maximum amount of variety and contrast in its items; and this desire for pleasing variety and diversity is clearly indicated also in the characterisation and style of each tale.

Dryden allowed his mind to play freely round the situations in which his characters are placed, and on their dialogue. One of the characteristics of neo-classical poetry, in contrast with that of the Elizabethans or the Romantics, is a constant predilection for didactic or reflective commentary. The stories of Boccaccio and Chaucer are not, for Dryden, self-sufficient. As a poetic dramatist, with a lofty conception of the philosophical and didactic functions of poetry, he had exercised himself in the art of reflective commentary on dramatic situations and on character; and it is in this, more than anything else, that his dramatic sense becomes blurred and weak, and he reveals his capacities as a theatrical poet rather than as a dramatist. But this tendency to didactic or philosophical elaboration, although it slows down and devitalises his plays, adorns and enriches his narrative poetry. Chaucer provided Dryden with a fine example of interwoven action and commentary, and of the poetic expansion of dialogue in rhetorical argument and illustration; and Dryden, who always regarded it as part of a translator's licence to draw out and supplement recurrent features in his original, takes every opportunity of continuing the process which Chaucer has begun. The plain and directly narrative prose of Boccaccio is raised to the level of this weighted and decorated narrative verse style. The 1620 translator of The Decameron shows a tendency to comment and analyse, and Dryden takes some of these expansions over into his versions, considerably elaborated; but the real source of the rhetorical, reflective and sententious element in all the mediaeval stories in the Fables is Dryden's own conception of narrative style, supported by the example of Chaucer.

Dryden's natural manner is strongly emphatic, whether he is describing, satirising or arguing in verse. He adds freely to Chaucer, where he thinks that Chaucer has 'not given his thoughts their true lustre, for want of words in the beginning of our language'; and many of these additions are less important as elaborations of Chaucer's content, than as attempts to point, emphasise and round off statements and arguments which seemed inadequately or clumsily expressed in the original.

Notes, p. 112.

1. A full analysis of Dryden's additions in Palamon, illustrating the extent and variety of his new material, is given by W.H. Williams, Palamon and Arcite and the 'Knightes Tale', M.L.R., ix, 1914, pp. 161-72, 309-23. Professor Williams' analysis includes much that is only incidental to the work of translating Chaucer in a modern idiom; but much also is of more general value.
2. Lines 509-22, 531-51.
3. Lines 61-8, 139-48, 396-404 (cf. Lucretius, De rerum nat., iv, 1218-22; I, 1021-8; iv, 1209-12).

(I)

The Palamon is packed with new material of this kind. Chaucer's Arcite, for example, complains in exile that

ther nys erthe, water, fyr, ne air,
Ne creature that of hem maked is,
That may me helpe or doon confort in this. I246-8

Dryden lifts this complaint to a higher rhetorical plane, and gracefully elaborates it:

Fire, Water, Air, and Earth, and Force of Fates
That governs all, and Heav'n that all creates,
Nor Art, nor Nature's Hand can ease my Grief;
Nothing but Death, the Wretches last Relief. I, 414-7

Dryden reinforces the nobility and the pathos which Theseus' queen and ladies see in the strife of Palamon and Arcite, with additional general comment in his characteristic balanced, rhetorical style:

Greet pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
That evere swich a chaunce sholde falle;
For gentil men they were of greet estaat,
And no thyng but for love was this debaat.. I75I-4

What Eyes can suffer this unworthy Sight!
Two Youths of Royal Blood, remown'd in Fight,
The Mastership of Heav'n in Face and Mind,
And Lovers far beyond their faithless Kind:
See their wide streaming Wounds; they neither came
From Pride of Empire, nor desire of Fame:
Kings fight for Kingdoms, Madmen for Applause;
But Love for Love alone; that crowns the Lover's Cause. III,
316-23

Sometimes Dryden's elaborations, where they concern themes which are specially interesting or congenial to him, develop into considerable digressions. The marked didactic and argumentative element in Chaucer's Nun's Priest's Tale, for example, encouraged Dryden to expand and digress: he discourses on dreams for fifteen lines, in a vein which runs back to the critical doctrine of imagination --- 'Dreams are but Interludes, which Fancy makes; ... a Medley of disjointed Things' --- and the theme of predestination and free-will in the tale invites two long argumentative additions. The theme of love, the analysis of woman's character, and the discussion of true gentillesse in The Wife of Bath's Tale attracted Dryden, and he elaborates his material, sometimes learnedly, and sometimes satirically.

Satiric expansion is frequent. Here, as in his other work, Dryden is always ready on the slightest provocation to colour his accounts of character and situation

- I. Chaucer, C.T., D, 873-9; Dryden, 34-9.
- Dryden, 49-56. Dryden's use of 'pasterns' is slang. Cf.
- Fletcher, Humorous Lieutenant, I, iii: 'Let me see your leg; she treads but low in the pasterns'.

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1781-4

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with dashes of satire. The salt of satire, an essential ingredient in almost all Dryden's poetic recipes, is added to authors like Ovid and Virgil, whom Dryden translates with at least a fitful anxiety to be true to the tone of the original; and in the free, paraphrastic and 'refining' technique which he employs in the mediaeval poems, he indulges his roguish love of incidental satire to the full.

Sometimes Dryden simply illuminates his original with a brief satiric flash, turning off a comment or a point in the argument with unexpected sharpness or a quiet smile. The prevailing satiric tone of The Cock and The Fox is sustained mock-heroic; but Dryden, having raised his poultry to human level, and endowed them with the gift of exalted rhetoric in even richer measure than Chaucer does, jocularly makes them drop again at intervals into crude colloquial satire. Partlet, for example, despite her learning and her intimacy with a chivalrous, highly-bred cock, reviles doctors in unexpectedly vehement terms:

And though there lives no 'Pothecary hear,
I dare for once prescribe for your Disease,
And save long Bills, and a damn'd Doctor's fees. I68-70

(Purges).. not correct, but poyson all the Blood,
And ne'er did any but the Doctors good.
Their Tribe, Trade, Trinkets, I defy them all,
With ev'ry work of 'Pothecary's Hall. 404-7

Dryden approaches the essentially serious tale of the Wife of Bath in a rather flippant mood. Chaucer's slyness in the introduction, where he refers to the apparent harmlessness of the lymytour, is drawn out by Dryden in more obvious humour; and Dryden, typical of his time, retells Chaucer's story of the rape which opens the story, in a diction and tone which betray his less censorious attitude to the crime:

And happed that, allone as she was born,
He saugh a mayde walkynge hym biforn,
Of which mayde anon, maugree hir heed,
By verray force, he rafte hire maydenhed. (C.T., D, 885-8)

It happen'd as he rode, a Damsel gay
In Russet-Robes to Market took her way;
Soon on the Girl he cast an amorous Eye,
So strait she walk'd, and on her Pasterns high:
If seeing her behind he lik'd her Pace,
Now turning short, he better lik'd her Face.
He lights in hast, and, full of Youthful Fire,
By Force accomplish'd his obscene Desire. (I)

Note, p. 114.

- I. Dryden was probably encouraged here by Chamberlayne's example: the tyrant in Pharonnida (III, ii, 140 ff) speaks thus of his daughter's lover:

thou
Transfer'st the glory of our house on one,
Which, had I not warm'd into life, had gone,
A wretch forgotten of the world, to the earth
From whence he sprung..

158-70

404-7

(5.1., 5. 885-

(1)

In this light spirit, Dryden illuminates his story with bright sparkles of humour, and with little gleams of that volatile, incidental satire which always indicates that he is thoroughly enjoying himself. The wiles and weaknesses of women are his chief target; and in the inset tale of Midas' gossip wife, he concentrates all his playful fire. In Chaucer's story, Midas tells his wife the secret of his ears because 'he loved hire moost, and trusted hire also'; in Dryden,

One must be trusted, and he thought her fit,
As passing prudent; and a parlous wit.
To this sagacious Counsellor he went...

I67-9

The Thing she knew she was oblig'd to hide;
By Int'rest and by Oath the Wife was ty'd;
But if she told it not, the Woman dy'd.

I79-81

Thus full of Counsel to the Fen she went,
Grip'd all the way, and longing for a vent:
Arriv'd, by pure Necessity compell'd,
On her majestick mary-bones she kneel'd:
Then to the Waters-brink she laid her Head...

I89-92

In the tales from Boccaccio, Dryden's incidental satire is stronger and graver, and reflecting the general tone of his poems, is not so close to a genial humour as it is in the Chaucerian tales. In Sigismonda and Guiscardo, the sombre tragedy of the story, and the exalted passion and dignity of the central contention between the heroine and her father, preclude light, almost frivolous satiric digression or sparkle. For example, Dryden heightens and intensifies Tancred's expression of contempt for Guiscardo:

ma tra tanti, che nella mia corte n'usano, eleggesti Guiscardo, giovane di vil-
lissima condizione, nella nostra corte, quali come per Dio, da picciol fanciullo
infino a questo di allevato

Then what indignant Sorrow must I have,
To see thee lie subjected to my Slave!
A Man so smelling of the Peoples Lee,
The Court receiv'd him first for Charity;
And since with no Degree of Honour grac'd,
But only suffer'd where he first was plac'd;
A grov'ling Insect still; and so design'd
By Nature's Hand, nor born of Noble Kind:
A Thing by neither Man nor Woman priz'd,
And scarcely known enough to be despis'd.

315-24 (I)

Dryden gives the over-wrought Sigismonda a brief and justifiable opportunity of scorning kings who fail to reward loyal service; and he turns aside, as narrator,

Notes, p. 115.

1. Lines 551-6 (there is a suggestion of personal resentment of ill-treatment from the government in Dryden's lines); and lines 596-605 (cf. To My Honour'd Kinsman, John Dryden, 142 ff; Cymon, 399-408).
2. Cymon, see supra, p. 108; Theodore, lines 414-5, 70-71.

to express that contempt for the hireling soldier which appears more than once in
 (1)
 his last poems. In Cymon and Theodore, a return to the theme of woman's character
 brings a lighter vein of satire; and in Cymon particularly, Dryden's indulgently
 humorous attitude to feminine instability is fully expressed in the character of
 (2)
 Iphigenia. In Cymon, as in Sigismonda, he attacks the militia-man and peace-time
 soldier; but the comparatively light tones of Cymon provoke a less vicious satire:

The Country rings around with loud Alarms,
 And raw in Fields the rude Militia swarms;
 Mouths without Hands; maintain'd at vast Expence,
 In Peace a Charge, in War a weak Defence;
 Stout once a Month they march, a blust'ring Band,
 And ever, but in times of Need, at hand:
 This was the Morn when issuing on the Guard,
 Drawn up in Rank and File they stood prepar'd
 Of seeming Arms to make a short essay,
 Then hasten to be Drunk, the Business of the Day. 399-48

Dryden adorns his tales with poetic conceit and figure --- the inevitable consequence of calling in the aid of a licensed fancy in the task of improvement and refinement. For some of this new decoration, little can be said. The description of the noon-day heat in The Flower and the Leaf, for example, is tasteless extravagance:

The Ladies gasp'd, and scarcely could respire;
 The Breath they drew, no longer Air, but Fire;
 The fainty Knights were scorch'd... 379-81

Dryden's conceit ruins Chaucer's lovely lines on the rising sun, so bright

That all the orient laugheth of the light,
 And with his stremes dryeth in the greves
 The silver droppes hangynge on the leves Knight's Tale, I494-6

And soon the Sun arose with Beams so bright,
 That all th'Horizon laugh'd to see the joyous Sight;
 He with his tepid Rays the Rose renews,
 And licks the dropping Leaves, and dries the Dewes. II, 39-42

Chaucer says that the red figure of Mars so gleams in the standard of Theseus that 'alle the feeldes glyteren up and doun'; Dryden, heightening this and making it more explicit, destroys the effect of diffused and reflected brilliance:

Ev'n the Ground glitter'd where the Standard flew,
 And the green Grass was dy'd to sanguin Hue Palamon, I, II3-4

Note, p. II6.

I. Lines 260-62. Cf. Aeneis V, II5-6, where Virgil's simple statement that the golden serpent incendebat (1.88) is poetically expanded:

Thus riding on his Curls, he seem'd to pass
A rowling Fire along, and singe the Grass.

The Country rises round with low
And low in fields the rude little swarms;
Mowles without number; and the
In Peace a Quail; in War a weak
Scout once a Month they march, a blustering Band,
And ever, but in times of Need, at hand.
This was the host when leading on the Guard,
Brew up in Rank and File they stood prepar'd
Of seeming Arms to make a great array,
Then hasten to be back, the business of the Day.

308-48

Byden shows his taste with poetic conceits and figures -- the inevitable
reference of calling in the aid of a licensed lady in the task of improvement in
refinement. For some of this new decoration, little can be said. The description
the noon-day heat in the flower, and the leaf, for example, is certainly extravagant

The ladies pass'd, and scarcely could resist;
The breath they drew, no longer Air, but Fire;
The fainty knights were scorched...

370-81

Byden's conceit-runs through the lovely lines on the rising sun, so bright

Light's Tale

And soon the sun arose with beams so bright,
That all the world might see the joyful sight;
He with his virgin have the love renew'd,
And flicks the drooping leaves, and raises the down.

II, 33-43

Chaucer says that the red figure of Mars as placed in the standard of Theseus is
like the ladies gathered up and down; Byden, heightening this and making it
explicit, destroys the effect of distance and reflected brilliancy:

Even the ground glitter'd where the Standard flew,
And the green Grass was dy'd to purple hue.

Paradise, I,

In The Flower and the Leaf, however, the same conceited notion is repeated with a daring beauty: for the plain statement in the original, that the trappings of the steeds were 'wyde and large; that to the ground did hong', Dryden has:

The Trappings of their Steeds were of the same;
The golden Fringe ev'n set the Ground on Flame,
And drew a precious Trail... (I)

In this instance, Dryden is not imposing a decorative conceit on his description, but extending an image which is proper to the style of the picture. Not all his conceits are improper in their contexts. Extravagance is apt and justifiable in descriptions of the supernatural --- for example, Dryden expands Chaucer's account of the fairies in The Wife of Bath's Tale with

... where the jolly Troop had led the round,
The Grass unbidden rose, and mark'd the Ground. 5-6

The romantic and courtly tale of Emily and her lovers gains from such graceful exaggeration as

... she sung and caroll'd out so clear,
That Men and Angels might rejoice to hear.
Ev'n wond'ring Philomel forgot to sing,
And learn'd from her to welcome in the Spring. Palamon, I, 197-200

The high tragedy of Sigismonda, with its violent passions, is rightly embellished according to the canons of Dryden's poetic art, with vivid and extravagant figures. Sigismonda, looking at Guiscardo's heart in the golden cup, declares in the luxury of her grief:

... since I have thee here in narrow Room,
My Tears shall set thee first afloat within thy Tomb; 674-5

and the poet continues, emphasising the heroic excess of sorrow:

She said: Her brimfull Eyes, that ready stood,
And only wanted Will to weep a Flood,
Releas'd their watry Store, and pour'd amain,
Like Clouds low hung, a sober Show'r of Rain;
Mute solemn Sorrow... 681-5

Notes, p. 117.

- 1. III, Lines 582-601; Chaucer, 2601-7.
- 2. E.g., II, 196-7; II, 200-2; III, 623-8.
- 3. Lines 331-6, 339-48.

(I)

the fainter in the life of Bath's late wife

The green anthesis rose, and earth's ground
... where the joyful troop had led the round

3-6

The romantic and courtly tale of Emily and her lovers gains from such passages

as

... the sun and earth's out of cheer,
That her and Anselm might rejoice to hear,
Her wondrous Chaucer found to sing,
And found from her to welcome in the Spring. Parson's I, 181

The high tragedy of Ugolino, with its violent passions, is rightly embellished

according to the canons of Byronic poetry and with vivid and extravagant figures

Ugolino, looking at Ugolino's heart in the action and declares in the first

of her trial:

... since I have thus been in narrow room,
My tears shall not thus first elude within my tomb; 374-5

and the poet continues, emphasizing the heroic excess of sorrow

She said: Her princely eyes, that ready weep,
And only wanted will to weep a flood,
Behold their wavy tress, and how's it stain,
Like Ugolino's low head, a sober show of pain;
None e'er saw sorrow...

374-5

A conspicuous feature of Dryden's mediaeval tales, and that which makes them the most attractive items in the Fables, is the new and highly individual spirit of his narrative. He brings to these tales a delight in vivid detail, and an exultant energy. In one long passage -- the description of the combat in Palamon and Arcite -- he abandons the vigorous concrete detail of the original for a generalised, abstract account of his own; but with this one exception, he finds an outlet for his exuberant enthusiasm, and his delight in action, through the elaboration of detail. The descriptions of battle in his Palamon illustrate, in several places, Dryden's dissatisfaction with the progressive brevity and simplicity of Chaucer; he sustains the power and action of the mediaeval narrative, and fills it out with supplementary detail. In Sigismonda and Guiscardo, he hurls the two lovers into each other's arms with a violence and an emphatic detail in description which runs almost to burlesque: Sigismonda

At once invaded him with all her Charms,
 And the first Step he made, was in her Arms.
 The Leathern Out-side, boistrous as it was,
 Gave way, and bent beneath her strict Embrace:
 On either Side the Kisses flew so thick,
 That neither he nor she had Breath to speak.
 they took their full Delight,
 'Twas restless Rage, and Tempest all the Night.

I57-64

In Cymon and Iphigenia, the excitement of the story is intensified, and the hectic daring of Cymon's piratical adventure is supplemented and reflected, in Dryden's vividly elaborated description of the storm; and the final battle at the wedding-feast is forcefully dramatised:-

... occorre lor Pasimunda, il quale con un gran bastone in mane al romor traeva: cui animosamente Cimone sopra la testa feri, e ricise gli ele ben mezza, e morto sel fece cadere a' piedi. Allo ajuto del quale correndo il misero Ormisda, similmente da un de' colpi di Cimone fu ucciso: ed alcuni altri, che appressar si vollono, da' compagni di Lisimacho, e Cimone sediti, e ributtati in dietro furono. Essi, lasciata piena la casa di sangue, di romore, e di pianto, e di tristizia...

Fierce Pasimond, their Passage to prevent,
 Thrust full on Cymon's Back in his descent,
 The Blade return'd unbath'd, and to the Handle bent:)

1. Lines 79-80, 90-99; 300-309, 325-7.

2. 'Drydens Stil ist ein beständiges Spiel mit den Bildern, ihre Spiegelung und Widerspiegelung, ist beständiges Werden und Wachsen'. Jünemann, Drydens Fabeln und ihre Quellen, Hamburg, 1932, p.5.

Jünemann's monograph analyses the design and style of Dryden's mediaeval tales with some penetration; but the value of his work is reduced by the dubious theory of the baroque which he imposes on Dryden. He does, however, rightly emphasise the part played by pictorial description in these poems.

(8)

Two readers here, and request all the light
They took their full delight
That neither he nor she had breath to speak
On either side the kisses flew so thick
And best beneath her sweet embraces
The lastest kisses, as it was
And the first sleep he made, was in her arms.
As once invaded him with all her charms.

(8)

The blade returns to the hand, and so the hand bends;
The hand bends, and the blade returns to the hand;
The hand bends, and the blade returns to the hand;

Stout Cymon soon remounts, and cleft in two
 His Rival's Head with one descending Blow:
 And as the next in Rank Ormisda stood,
 He turn'd the point; the Sword inur'd to Blood
 Bor'd his unguarded Breast, which pour'd a purple Flood.)
 With vow'd Revenge the gath'ring Crowd pursues,
 The Ravishers turn Head, the Fight renews;
 The Hall is heap'd with Corps; the sprinkled Gore
 Besmears the Walls, and floats the Marble Floor. 597-608

This delight in slaughter is revealed again in the story of Theodore and Honoria. The horrible picture of pursuit and blood-lust is preceded by a brilliantly developed description of the setting and atmosphere of melancholy solitude and apprehension; on the horror itself Dryden lavishes all his skill in the portrayal of violent action; and, insatiable, he repeats the whole description at the second appearance of the ghosts, where Boccaccio is content with il cavaliere.. faccendo quelle, che
 (I)
altra volta avea fatto.

Dryden's pictorial imagination was strongly developed in some directions, as his versions of Ovid and Virgil show; and in these tales he had ample opportunity for using it. The elaboration of argument, dialogue, and commentary is balanced by
 (2)
 a rich concrete description. Perhaps as a result of his theatrical experience, he pays much attention to setting, and to the atmosphere which setting can be used to provide for action and the interplay of character. For example, he emphasises the remoteness and the gloom of the secret entrance to Sigismonda's chamber: the cave was dug through a steep mountain rough with trees, and it led to a passage down through the earth 'by many a winding Way' to the room, lit only by a rift

... which from the Mountains Height
 Convey'd a glimm'ring and malignant Light,
 A Breathing-place to draw the Damps away,
 A Twilight of an intercepted Day.

115-8

In this description, the difficulties of the lovers, the romance of their secret love, and the enveloping sense of peril and doom are all suggested in imaginative terms. In Theodore, again, the beauty of the hero's surroundings and the growing sense of approaching horror, are woven together. For Boccaccio's ora avvenne, che venendo quasi all' entrata di maggio, essendo un bellissimo tempo, Dryden has the graceful and musical --

Notes, p. II9.

- I. Lines 88-96. Burton, on whom Dryden drew heavily, quotes Plutarch on the terror caused by imminent danger: 'praesertim ineunte periculo, ubi res prope adsunt terribiles'; and he illustrates the violent fears aroused when 'hearing, sight, and those other senses are all troubled at once, as by some earthquakes, thunder, lightning, tempests, &c' (Anatomy of Melancholy, I, ii, iv, 3). To this notion Dryden gives poetic form.
2. Palamon, II, 540-3, 546-7, 571-5, 619-22.

(1)

(2)

118-8

The Spring was in the Prime; the neighb'ring Grove
 Supply'd with Birds, the Choristers of Love:
 Musick unbought, that minister'd Delight
 To Morning-Walks, and lull'd his Cares by Night;

60-63

and while Boccaccio's hero simply walks on until he comes to an infino nella pigneta where the shrieks of the phantom lady strike upon his ears, Dryden's Theodore is given a much more elaborate natural background, drawn with sensitive care, and rich in suggestion:

'Twas in a Grove of spreading Pines he stray'd;)
 The Winds, within the quiv'ring Branches plaid,)
 And Dancing-Trees a mournful Musick made.)

78-80

While list'ning to the murm'ring Leaves he stood,
 More than a Mile immers'd within the Wood,
 At once the Wind was laid; the whisp'ring Sound
 Was dumb; a rising Earthquake rock'd the Ground:
 With deeper Brown the Grove was over-spread,)
 A sudden Horror seiz'd his giddy Head,)
 And his Ears tinckled, and his Colour fled.)

(I)

(2)

Dryden elaborates the descriptions of the temples of the gods in Palamon and Arcites and he opens the account of the temple of Mars, which appealed to his love of the grim and horrible, with a sensitive extension of Chaucer's rather bare lines:

.. the grete temple of Mars in Trace,
 In thilke colde, frosty regioun
 Ther as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.
 First on the wal was peynted a forest,
 In which ther dwelleth neither man ne best...

I972-6

For that cold Region was the lov'd Abode,
 And Sovereign Mansion of the Warriour-God.
 The Landscape was a Forest wide and bare;
 Where neither Beast nor Humane Kind repair;
 The Fowl, that scent afar, the Borders fly,
 And shun the bitter Blast, and wheel about the Sky.
 A Cake of Scurf lies baking on the Ground,
 And prickly Stubs, instead of Trees, are found...

II, 528-35

Dryden here, by the additions of pictorial detail, at once vivifies the account of the temple, and increases the suggestion of an uninhabitable wilderness of death. In a very different, but no less effective style, Dryden lingers over the first description of Emily in her garden, and marks out the grace and loveliness of the girl in a leisurely, precise detail which we hardly expect from his pen. Chaucer's

Emily is described, prettily enough, in the simple, conventional generalities of mediaeval romance portraiture:

.. in the gardyn, at the sonne upriste,
She walketh up and down, and as hir liste
She gadereth floures, party white and rede,
To make a subtil gerland for hire hede. K.T., C.T., A.
1051-53

For his heroine, Dryden sketches in a seventeenth century garden of formal and elaborate design, with 'Fresh Flow'rs in wide Parterres, and shady Walks between'; and here Emily took her way to the 'Garden-Walks':

At ev'ry Turn she made a little Stand,
And thrust among the Thorns her Lilly Hand
To draw the Rose; and ev'ry Rose she drew,
She shook the Stalk, and brush'd away the Dew:
Then party-colour'd Flow'rs of white and red
She wove, to make a Garland for her Head. I, 191-6

The Johnsonian view that Dryden had more argumentative force and weight than poetic sensibility dies hard. His thunder and his majestic energy are generally appreciated; and it has been too often assumed that a masculine force in thought and expression precludes imaginative delicacy. Dryden had many moods and tones of voice; and his poetic virtues do not culminate in thunder and lightning, or in the slash of the satiric sword. There are two related aspects of his descriptive poetry in the Fables which have not received the attention they deserve from critics, who have been preoccupied with Dryden's wit and muscularity: these are his excellence as a poet of the lighter and more delicate kind of supernatural, and his sensitiveness to the contrasts of light and shadow.

The Flower and the Leaf is a poem which, for all its beauty, has many immaturities of style, and is loaded with conventional phrases and tags which relegate it to a place well below that of Chaucer's Juvenilia. In modernising this poem, Dryden had every opportunity for heightening and polishing. His most important alteration, in content and style alike, is the expansion and refinement of the supernatural element in the tale, with an unexpected grace which entitles him to a place with the best fairy poets of his century. In the original, a lady all in white 'with semblance ful demure' appears and tells the poetess that the festivities she has

been watching are in honour of Diana, goddess of chastity. Dryden turns away from his original here, and introduces a sustained and beautiful account of the fairy world to which the merry-makers belong. The clarity, purity, and energetic directness of his diction are here pressed into new service:

Our Souls, not yet prepar'd for upper Light,
Till Doomsday wander in the Shades of Night;
This only Holiday of all the Year,
We priviledg'd in Sun-shine may appear:

At other Times we reign by Night alone,
And posting through the Skies pursue the Moon:
But when the Morn arises, none are found;
For cruel Demogorgon walks the round,
And if he finds a Fairy lag in Light,
He drives the Wretch before; and lashes into Night. 484-95

This investment of the lords and ladies of the mediaeval vision in the garments of faery is Dryden's central change; and its implications alter the whole colour of the poem. The poet walks out into the moonlit countryside, and strikes a path which seems marked by fairy feet; he enjoys 'the sweet Possession of the Fairy Place', 'all Elysium in a spot of Ground'; and the dancing ladies, graceful and courtly in the mediaeval poem, assume with their supernatural character a new delicacy and a strange, romantic lightness:

And as she danc'd, a Roundelay she sung,
In honour of the Lawrel, ever young:
She rais'd her Voice on high, and sung so clear,)
The Fawns came scudding from the Groves to hear;)
And all the bending Forest lent an Ear.)
At ev'ry Close she made, th' attending Throng
Reply'd, and bore the burden of the Song:
So just, so small, yet in so sweet a Note,
It seem'd the Musick melted in the Throat.
Thus dancing on, and singing as they danc'd,
They to the middle of the Mead advanc'd:
Till round my Arbour, a new Ring they made,
And footed it about the secret Shade.

192-204

In the same style, Dryden elaborates the supernatural element in The Wife of Bath's Tale. The perplexed knight in Chaucer's story comes upon a company of fairies dancing 'under a forest syde'. Dryden develops this, emphasising the strangeness of the place, the supernatural light of the moon, and the ethereal dance. The knight rode. ----

1. Religio Laici. The High Priest's spell in The Indian Emperor appropriately opens with an invocation to the moon:

Thou Moon, that aidst us with thy Magick Might,
And ye small Starrs, the scattered Seeds of Light,
Dart your Pale Beams into this gloomy Place,
That the sad Powers of the Infernal Race

May read above what's hid from Humane Eyes,
And in your Walks, see Empires fall and rise... Summers, i, 289.

2. Flower & Leaf, ll. 25, 34, 93-112: Dryden, 34-6.

3. lines 450 ff.

122-123

As Fortune led him, by a Forest-side;
 Lonely the Vale, and full of Horror stood,
 Brown with the shade of a religious Wood:
 When full before him at the Noon of Night,
 (The Moon was up, and shot a gleamy Light)
 He saw a Quire of Ladies in a round,
 That featly footing seem'd to skim the Ground:
 Thus dancing Hand in Hand, so light they were,
 He knew not where they trod, on Earth or Air.

210-18 (Chaucer
 990)

This imaginative awareness of the romance of moonlight is evident in more than one of Dryden's poems. He was not, like his disciple Pope, an enthusiastic lover of rich, bright colour-patterns. In translation, he was bound in some degree by the colour language of the original, and he added little of his own; in his original poems, colour words are sparse and in the main conventional. Little of the subtlety of colour in the painting of his time is reflected in his poetry. His description, however, is not shaded in a negative grey. He was attracted, not so much by colours, as by light and shadow, flame and moonlight, and the thrilling contrasts of gleaming light against the dark. He was a moon-struck poet. One of the finest passages in all his verse opens with an image of 'the borrow'd Beams of Moon and Stars'; the dim light of the moon, and the shadowy world where moonlight and darkness meet, symbolised romantic mystery, uncertainty, and the supernatural for him. Much of the loveliness of Dryden's The Flower and the Leaf, and of the remote, unreal, magical atmosphere which involves it, is created by the imagery of moonlight which he weaves through the story. The mediaeval poetess says that she rose 'about the springing of the day' and walked out into the wood where she saw her vision. There is, however, some confusion in her account; for although she speaks of trees throwing out their branches against the sunlight, she singles out the nightingale as the sweetest of all the birds she hears. Dryden does not resolve this confusion on the time of day: he embellishes the description of gay birds and flowers; and, although most of his poem is clearly set in daylight, the imagery of moonlight recurs. It is on the moonlit scene that he lavishes his poetry. In the evening, the birds renew their notes as though their day-time singing had been a mere rehearsal; the company of lords and ladies make merry then, dancing 'by Star-light and the friendly Moon', for they are people of the night, posting through the dark sky all but once a year, and 'the Stars and shining Moon' attend their sports.

Notes, p. 123.

1.) } These notes are appended, p. 126.

2.)

3. Palamon, I, 467; AEneid, vi, 320.
Ceyx and Alcyone, 301; Hind and Panther, ii, 659; AEneis,
vii, 41; Theodore, 92; Wife of Bath's Tale, 212; AEneis, viii,
565.

The only colour for which Dryden shows strong preference is the red of blood and flame; he delights in the scarlet horrors of battle in his versions of Ovid and Virgil, and in his heroic plays; and the imaginative appreciation of living, flashing flame which he shows early, in Annus Mirabilis,⁽¹⁾ appears again and again in his poetry. His love of fire, however, is less a delight in colour, than an aspect of his general sensitiveness to all varieties of light, from the flash of lightning and weapons to the soft glimmer of the moon. Images of gleaming, glittering, or faintly glimmering light are everywhere in his poetry; and they contribute especially to the poetic suggestion of descriptive passages in the Aeneis and Fables.⁽²⁾ Light requires darkness to throw it into relief; and the contrast between darkness or shadow, and light thrown against it, is I think the basis of Dryden's delight.

The change from night to day, for example, calls forth poetry. In Chaucer's Knight's Tale, Palamon sets off for the temple of Venus 'er day bigan to sprynge'; in Dryden's version, this phrase opens out into a full, dignified and beautiful picture:

'Twas ebbing darkness, past the Noon of Night:
And Phosphor on the Confines of the Light
Promis'd the Sun...

Chaucer 2209;
Dryden, II, 119-21

Light and shadow are thrown imaginatively together in Dryden's poetic use of dusky :

Thick as the College of the Bees in May,
When swarming o'er the dusky Fields they fly,
New to the Flow'rs, and intercept the Sky.

Flower & Leaf,
218-20

Aether with Sulphur blended alters hue,
And casts a dusky gleam of Sodom blue.

Wife of Bath's Tale,
433-4

The association of gleaming light and blueness occurs again in the Fables, where cold despair in the heart of the jealous Palamon turns the 'glowing Red' of his face to 'livid Paleness' --- livid carrying its literal sense 'blue', as in Virgil's vada livida. Again, brown is a favourite word with Dryden, with its suggestion of dark shadow. A cave, dark night, shadowy groves, and the dusky air are 'brown'; but Dryden always throws light against the gloom. Shadows provide the romantic background against which the fairies dance in the moonlight in The Wife of Bath's Tale, and across which there comes the lurid horror of the phantom knight and his screaming victim in Theodore and Honoria. The same contrast is implied in the account

Notes, p. 124.

1. Palamon, iii, 589, 592, 602.
2. The style of seventeenth century portrait-painting seems to have influenced Dryden's descriptive techniques only in general design and disposition: there is a suggestion of the portrait-painter's style in Dryden's picture of Emetrius, with his amber-coloured ringlets shining against the sun 'in graceful negligence' (Palamon, iii, 72-3); and there are similarities between Dryden's description of the sleeping Iphigenia, divinely beautiful, erotically attractive, gracefully but formally reclined beneath the trees (Cymon, 91 ff), and the ladies of later Stuart portraiture, richly half-clad and draped with artistic negligence in formal pastoral settings.
3. See W.C. Curry, Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences, New York, 1926, pp. 130 ff.

of the battle in Palamon and Arcite, where the rival cavalry 'darkling.. join ad-verse' in smoke and turmoil, and struggle till the next gust of wind 'restores the day'. In the dust and smoke, the battle goes on:

The Knights unhors'd, on Foot renew the Fight,
The glitt'ring Fauchions cast a gleaming Light. (I)

In the duel between Palamon and Arcite, Chaucer finely says, 'the hrighte swerdes wenten to and fro': this is given added violence and a savage glitter in Dryden's

Like Lightning flash'd their Fauchions to and fro, K.T., 1700;
And shot a dreadful Gleam... Palamon, II, 244-5

Dryden preserves Chaucer's heraldic brightness of colour in the description of Chanticleer; but he does not follow Chaucer in the vivid colouring of the portraits of the two knights, Lygyrge and Emetrius, in The Knightes Tale. Vivid contrasts in the plumage of a cock, especially in a mock-heroic context where the bird's gaudiness illustrates his comic magnificence, is all very well; but the whole portrait tradition of Dryden's time, when shadow and subtlety of colour were more important than brilliant colour contrasts, was opposed to a vividness in the colouring of human features which borders on the lurid. (2) Dryden was not of course aware of the (3) influence of the mediaeval science of physiognomy on Chaucer's portraiture here, and the glaring contrasts must have seemed to him simply naive or meretricious. Chaucer's Emetrius, for example, has 'citrin' eyes and a sanguine colour:

A few frakenes in his face yspreynd,
Bitwixen yellow and somdel blak ymeynd. 2169-70

This Dryden tones down to:

His Nose was aquiline, his Eyes were blue,
Ruddy his Lips, and fresh and fair his Hue;
Some sprinkled Freckles on his Face were seen,
Whose dusk set off the Whiteness of his Skin. II, 74-77

On the other hand, Dryden does not hesitate to heighten or point Chaucer's colour contrasts in contexts where light is played off against shadow or darkness:

of the battle in Paradise Lost, where the rival cavalry 'darkling' join and

Notes, p. 125. 'vortex' in smoke and tumult, and struggle till the victors

I. Cymon, lines 546, 573-6, 588.

(1) ... of some ... the light ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

Of alabastre whit and reed coral,
An oratorie, riche for to se,
In worshipec of Dyane of chastitee

Knights Tale, 1910-12

Within the Wall, of Alabaster white,
And crimson Coral, for the Queen of Night. Palamon, II, 464-5

The cruell Ire, reed as any gleede,
The pykepurs, and eek the pale Drede

Knights Tale, 1997-8

There the Red Anger dar'd the pallid Fear. Palamon, II, 563.

In the setting of revelry and feasting in Cymon and Iphigenia, light and shadow play their part. Lysymachus and Cymon, for example, plan their attack when 'cheerful Torches guild the jolly Night'; they ascend the stairs to the banqueting hall in shining garments, with coats of mail beneath; and when they rush into the hall, overthrowing the feast in smoke and confusion, 'the Palace gleams with shining Swords'.^(I) The element of brightness and glitter is small; but the whole scene of merriment, dismay and bloody turmoil gains much, in colour and vividness, from these occasional suggestions of light.

These are the most important differences between Dryden's mediaeval tales and their originals, in style, and in content where the content has a direct bearing on style. He completely transformed Boccaccio's stories: the direct, purposeful Italian prose has become a leisurely, decorated, and often highly imaginative poetry, with careful and sometimes subtle characterisation, delicate description, and spirited narrative. The matter-of-fact objectivity of the Italian, who allows the interest of his story to make its own direct impact, has given place to an energetic enthusiasm and concernment. Dryden is engrossed in his tales. In the Chaucerian poems, much of the directness and simplicity, the concrete clarity and brevity, has gone. Although Dryden, in the main, worked close to his originals in content, he made no effort to imitate the style and diction of Chaucer; these are completely his own. Taken together, the mediaeval fables illustrate his inimitable power in argument and in the description of action; his sense of situation and character, and his love of psychological analysis; his peculiar facility in heroic and satiric, mock-heroic writing; and, in his descriptions and pictorial imagery, a romantic sensitiveness to suggestion and atmosphere.

NOTES, p. 123.

I. Dryden's sensitiveness to fire and flame developed under Virgil's influence. In his first and most sustained description of fire in Annus Mirabilis, in which Virgil is his acknowledged master, he draws heavily on the Latin for the fanciful personification of violent, active, raging flame. Dryden's fire is horribly alive: it feeds in silence; walks upright through the streets; leaps at its prey like a wild beast loosed from prison; wades about the city, eating its way against the wind (stanzas 217 ff). Virgil's poetry is rich in descriptions of living, eating, active flame (e.g., Georgics, II, 306-II, IV, 260-63, III, 565; Aeneid, II, 758-9, VI, 730, VIII, 97 and 391-2).

2. The sixth Aeneis well illustrates Dryden's imaginative treatment of light and shadow. In the Sibyl's description of the sacred grove and the golden-boughed tree, the dominant note is shadowiness, and against it, the shining gold. Dryden intensifies the shadows: arbore opaca..umbrae becomes 'thick Woods, and gloomy Night'; sylvam immensam is 'gloomy Grove'; in the shadows, the boughs gleam, 'lurking Gold' (Virgil, lines 136, 186; Dryden, 208, 273, 218). The two elements in Dryden's picture are more, however, than glitter and background shadow; something of the poetic contrast and paradox of Coleridge's 'shadowy in the moonlight shone' (Christabel, 60) is brought out in Dryden's juxtaposition of opposites:

(pinguem dives opacat ramus humum	195
(Whose glitt'ring Shadow guilds the sacred Ground	285
(discolor unde auri per ramos aura refulsit	204
(Thro' the green Leafs the glitt'ring Shadows glow	297

The contrast is made again in Aeneis, VI, 660--- 'his refulgent Arms flash'd thro' the shady Plain'; and in Dido's

hoary Simples, found by Phoebe's Light,
With brazen Sickles reap'd at Noon of Night. AEn., VI, 743-4

V

D R Y D E N A N D T H E A R T O F S A T I R E

1. Dryden's historical position as a verse satirist.
 2. His critical views--- verse satire as an art.
 3. Satire a species of heroic poetry--- heroic style and heroic character .
 4. Latinism in Absalom and Achitophel--- the Biblical element.
 5. "Fine raillery" --- the range of Dryden's satiric art.
 6. Some technical devices --- paragraph and couplet.
- Conclusions.

Absalom and Achitophel ... will be found to comprise all the excellences of which the subject is susceptible: acrimony of censure, elegance of praise, artful delineation of characters, variety and vigour of sentiment, happy turns of language, and pleasing harmony of numbers; and all these raised to such a height as can scarcely be found in any other English composition.

JOHNSON: Life of Dryden.

How easy is it to call rogue and villain, and that wittily!
But how hard to make a man appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave, without using any of those opprobrious terms!
This is the mystery of that noble trade....

DRYDEN: Discourse concerning.. Satire.

Note, p. 128.

I. Cf. Corbyn Morris, An Essay towards fixing the True Standards of Wit, Humour, Raillery, Satire, and Ridicule, (1744); in Augustan Reprints Series, I, Essays on Wit, Michigan, 1947, pp. 49-50:

There are .. combinations of Wit, Humour, Raillery, Satire, and Ridicule.. like various Notes in Music, sounding together, and jointly composing one exquisite Piece of Harmony; -- Or like different Rays of Light, shining together in one Rainbow .. When the Judgment is thus capable of parting, and easily assigning the several Quantities, and Proportions of each, it heightens our Pleasure.. but they are often so intimately mix'd, and blended together, that it is difficult to separate them so clearly...

1. Satire a species of heroic poetry... and heroic character
2. Latin in speech and diction... the biblical element
3. "The raillery" --- the range of Hayden's satiric art
4. Some technical devices --- paragraph and sentence construction

Attention and diction... will be found to comprise all the excellences of which the subject is susceptible: correctness of grammar, elegance of phrase, artificial delineation of characters, variety and vigour of sentiment, happy turn of language, and pleasing harmony of numbers; and all these raised to such a height as can scarcely be found in any other English composition.

JOHNSON: Life of Dryden.

How easy is it to call tongue and witling, and that which the poet has said to him a man, a fool, a blackguard, or a knave, without using any of those oppositions which... This is the mystery of that noble trade...

WITNESS: A course concerning... Satire

----- I -----

The satiric temper, which expresses disapprobation of men, their personalities, habits, and institutions, pervades many literary kinds; and the fire of satire flashes fitfully or glows persistently in the work of all sorts of poets and prose writers. The temper of some men makes them consistently satiric in their writing; the temper of most men provokes them to satire in certain moods or under certain circumstances. It is the pervasiveness of the satiric attitude which gives to satire an extensive range and variety of tones, unparalleled in any other literary mode. The satiric element in Dryden's poetic character is perpetually seeking expression, thrusting its way through into almost every category of his verse. Satire flickers in his epistolary verse; it gives point and sparkle to his didactic writing, and to the argument and reflection of his dramatic dialogue; and it shines out, with multi-coloured brilliance and power, in his political poems. His mind and imagination are alive to the satiric potentialities of occasions, situations, characters, and even poetic styles; and his voice assumes a satiric quality with natural and impressive ease, whatever the level and the theme of his poetic conversation may be. In examining Dryden's formal satires, we are considering the best and most sustained examples of a characteristic and essential mode of expression, which reaches fulness, concentrated weight and finish in the complex artistry of a specifically satiric verse-form. His satiric manner does not become less elusive, however, when it is given free artistic scope. It is kaleidoscopic. Dryden slashes and jibes in blunt colloquialism; he chuckles or smiles slyly in graceful ironies; he condemns and destroys with a majestic thoroughness in lofty rhetoric. The range and tonal variety, and the restless, experimental modulations, make Dryden's satiric style difficult to analyse with accuracy; but some analysis is necessary, for the success of that style depends largely on his tonal harmonies and contrasts. (I)

Dryden is a highly individual, perpetually experimental artist. He is also a professional poet, meeting the needs of the hour and serving the interests of his patron of his party. He entered the field of formal satire as a champion in specific

Notes, p. 129.

I. Prominent personalities of the time were characterized again and again in both verse and prose. Shaftesbury, for example, was satirised in Hudibras (1678); a verse 'character' appeared in Absalom a few years later; and a third verse portrait followed a little later in Duke's Review (published 1717) -- see H. Macdonald, Dryden Bibliography, p. 309, note 2. Dryden had ample precedent, and constant stimulus, for this aspect of his satiric art.

For an account of the character-writing of the time, see D. Nichol Smith, Characters of the Seventeenth Century, Oxford, 1918.

pitched battles. While, however, it is necessary to bear in mind the historical occasion of his satires, the literary setting and the artistic intention are, in each poem, of primary importance. Dryden is working with an established art form for artistic as well as political or personal ends; and the political or other external occasion provides the stimulus for artistic experiment.

Dryden pours new wine into old bottles: he works with accepted poetic forms, extending their range and trying to improve their quality. The formal satire which the Elizabethans, in imitative zeal, introduced from Latin literature, had become fairly well established by Dryden's time; and the later decades of the seventeenth century provided new opportunities for perfecting this literary mode in English. In the first place, neo-classical enthusiasm had passed from the Renaissance imitation of styles and the use of classical authors as source-books for literary embellishment, to the study of classical forms --- epic, lyric, epistle, social verse and formal satire. Secondly, general social conditions invited satiric comment. Feeling ran high in politics and religious controversy in the middle and latter part of the century: opinions were widely various and often violently in conflict, on social matters of major importance; and despite the attempts of Charles II and James II at autocratic government, the atmosphere of court and political life was sufficiently different from that of the Tudor period, for bold speech and the free expression of opinion to be a comparatively safe habit. The times may have been less spacious than those of Elizabeth; but they were somewhat easier for independent spirits to live in. Thirdly, the Restoration period was the beginning of the era of the professional writer; and the professional writer tends naturally to show an interest chiefly in the personalities, manners and opinions which engage the public attention and offer potential targets to the satirist. Fourthly, the couplet had become recognised as the appropriate verse medium for satiric writing; and by the time of Dryden, the art of couplet verse had been brought to a high degree of technical finish by poets writing panegyric and occasional poetry. Finally, the satiric fashion of character or type portraiture, well exemplified in Latin literature, and imitated by the Elizabethans, had been exercised in prose by Earle, Overbury and others; and Butler and Marvell established links between the
(I)
'character' in prose and that in verse.

Note, p. 130.

- I. The address To the Reader, Absalom and Achitophel, 1681;
the Epistle to the Whigs introducing The Medall, 1682;
and the Discourse concerning.. Satire in the Juvenal, 1693.

When Dryden took to satire, then, the stage was set for him. The atmosphere of the times was favourable to the satiric plant; and there was a satiric tradition, from the Elizabethans to Marvell and Oldham, to be followed and enriched. Dryden was not an innovator in the writing of formal satire; he did not bind together a number of threads left loose by preceding generations, or inaugurate a completely new tradition. He continued an established tradition; but in bringing to that tradition his own distinctive poetic character, with all his qualities of mind and style, and with his varied experience as a professional poet, he gave to satire a new strength and a new set of standards. He raised English satire to the level of his Latin models, both in intrinsic excellence, and in reputation as a literary genre worthy of the attention of the best poets.

----- 2 -----

The documents for the study of Dryden's critical views on satire are the prefatory essays to the poems themselves, and the Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire which introduced his translation of Juvenal and Persius a decade after the appearance of the original satires. The Discourse has more than a merely retrospective value: it greatly elaborates the hints contained in the introductions to the satires; it reveals in critical terms the whole style and intention of these poems; and it sets forth a critical theory of satire based on a life-long study of and enthusiasm for the classical satirists. It may therefore, despite its date, be safely used as a theoretical basis for the examination of Dryden's original satires. The canons of satiric practice laid down by Dryden in the Discourse are triumphantly vindicated in his own work; and indeed, they go far towards explaining the differences between the Elizabethan and Jacobean satirists on the one hand, and those of the eighteenth century on the other, in attitude, technical skill and poetic quality.

In modern times, says Dryden, the term satire is applied 'only to invective poems'; 'to say satire, is to mean reflection, as we use that word in the worst sense; or as the French call it, more properly, médiance'. This definition is,

Note, p. 131.

I. Essays, ii, pp. 67, 62, 63, 75, 79-80, 83, 81.

With Dryden's statement that satire is too narrowly applied to mere invective, compare Ben Jonson on 'the wit of the old Comedy':-

... it was cleare that all insolent, and obscene speeches; jest(s) upon the best men; injuries to particular persons; perverse, and sinister Sayings. in the old Comedy, did move laughter... and scurrility came forth in the place of wit..

(Discoveries: Ben Jonson, ed. C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson, Oxford, 1947, viii, pp. 643-4).

however, too simple. Dryden turns to the classical satirists, and shows that the general development of satire has been away from a coarse and obscene invective, towards a highly polished and refined literary mode. In early Latin satire, Lucilius, using to advantage a language which was increasing in refinement, gave satire a graceful tone, and added 'more politeness and salt'; and later, Horace added new graces of his own. The Varronian satire, says Dryden, contained an element of philosophy; and although, at a later date, there are numerous distinctions to be made between the satiric styles of Juvenal, Persius and Horace, they are alike in being concerned with morality and philosophy -- 'satire is of the nature of moral philosophy, as being instructive'. The philosophy of the Stoics which is embedded in Persius' satires calls forth special praise: 'what he teaches might be taught from pulpits, with more profit to the audience than all the nice speculations of divinity.. There is a spirit of sincerity in all he says; you may easily discern that he is in earnest, and is persuaded of the truth which he inculcates'. This philosophical kind of satire is far removed from the mere invective poem. Far from being the medium of virulent abuse, satire is philosophical and corrective; and it is naturally most effective when it is generalised. Dryden gives preference to Horace over Juvenal, in his supreme power of copious and profitable instruction in general terms. Horace is 'teaching us in every line, and is perpetually moral'. Despite his emphasis on generalised satire, however, Dryden is in no danger of allowing this type of poetry to be devitalised by mere didacticism. Although, for example, he praises Horace's excellent moral teaching, he thinks Juvenal the more delightful poet; and therefore 'would willingly divide the palm betwixt them, upon the two heads of profit and delight, which are the two ends of poetry in general' (1)

Dryden's emphasis on the artistic delightfulness of satire was most timely; and it is of the first importance for a study of his whole poetic craft. Traditionally, the satirist claims a moral justification for his work; and the appreciation of formal satire has often been obstructed by too serious an interpretation of this claim. The precise part played by the didactic in any literary form is generally difficult to define, and in none so difficult as in satire; but a sympathetic reading of the best classical and modern satire does not, in my view, give much weight

Note, p. 132.

I. A. Melville Clark, The Art of Satire and the Satiric Spectrum, in Studies in Literary Modes, Edinburgh, 1946, p. 42. I owe much to Dr. Clark's general consideration of the nature of satire. Compare also:

'The satirist .. is under no obligation to his subject except to render it with the fullest art at his command, and satire can be as free from a real indignation or contempt as any other kind of poetry can be free from any precipitating cause, but the author's imagination and a desire to exercise it and his art' (ibid., p. 41).

to the notion that the primary aim of the literary satirist is moral and corrective. Satire has been described as the fine art of calling names; and although this description is not comprehensive, it does serve as a just antidote to the conception of satire as the artistic castigation of vice and the exposure of folly. The effect of good literary satire is not corrective, but delightful. There is in human nature a streak of malice, a pleasure in the observation of folly, and a tendency to laugh critically and uncharitably at others. This natural malice is not in itself satiric, but it underlies satire; and when artistic devices are employed to adorn, intensify, and refine the expression of that malice, the purely artistic motive tends to super-vene. The position of a critic of men and manners is necessarily one of assumed superiority; the satirist is free to comment on vice or foolishness, because he does not practise them. In assuming a superiority over his victim or his theme, he generally gives his criticism the sanction of moral concern. That concern is not, however, essentially sincere. The real moralist is, above all, constructive: he re-proves in order to correct; and although he may use satiric methods and devices to give sparkle or point to his style, the more he employs the essentially destructive techniques of satire, the less likely is he to realise his corrective intention. The literary satirist, on the other hand, has a primary loyalty to his art, rather than to the literal truth of his statements, criticisms, and portraits; and since art is not photographic, but thrives on the subtle distortion of reality, the first duty of the satirist is effective satire rather than accurate description. It has never mattered to the satirist, says Dr. A.M. Clark, 'to what lies he has stooped so long as he moralised his song. But was he in this false to the spirit of poetry?' The satirist must feel what he writes; he need not feel strongly on what he writes about. His sincerity is primarily that of the imaginative artist; and it is to this primary sincerity that Dryden's critical attitude points. (I)

He speaks with enthusiasm of the delight of satiric poetry. The pleasure which Horace gives is but languishing; Juvenal, on the other hand, gives Dryden as much delight as he can bear, and the Juvenalian style is a source of thrill and excitement to him -- not only in the bold, exhaustive treatment of his theme, but also

1. Dryden's estimate of Juvenal is set out ~~more fully~~, supra, p. 52.

2. Essays, ii, pp. 92-3. Dryden's Hind is a practitioner of this gentle art: she is like the generous lion who, confronted with a prostrate foe, 'walks over and disdains th' inglorious Prey'; she handles the weapons of satire with lofty pride and delicacy, and knows when to give over:-

This said, she paus'd a little, and suppress'd
The boiling indignation of her Breast;
She knew the vertue of her blade, nor wou'd
Pollute her satyr with ignoble bloud:
Her panting foes she saw before her lye,
And back she drew the shining weapon dry.

The Hind and the Panther, iii, 261 ff.

3. Essays, ii, p. 93.

in the sonorous majesty of his style and diction. Juvenal exemplifies the ideal
(1)
sublimity and intensity of satiric poetry. Style and content alike, in this type
of verse, may be justly elevated; and it is with this enthusiastic praise of the
loftiness of Juvenal in mind, that we must approach Dryden's own experiments in
a mode which he considered capable of greatness.

And yet, Juvenal's style has its limitations. It is sharp, pointed, declamatory
and full of a majestic indignatio; but this very elevation prevents the poet from
handling his material in the ideal satiric manner. For, when all has been said in
favour of the nobler style, with its direct, destructive declamation,

yet still the nicest and most delicate touches of satire consist in fine raillery...
'Tis not reading, 'tis not imitation of an author, which can produce this fineness;
it must be inborn; it must proceed from a genius, a particular way of thinking,
which is not to be taught.. How easy is it to call rogue and villain, and that
wittily! But how hard to make a man appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave, without
using any of these opprobrious terms! To spare the grossness of the names, and to
do the thing yet more severely... This is the mystery of that noble trade...
There is still a vast difference betwixt the slovenly butchering of a man, and the
fineness of a stroke 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. (2)

Satire is a refined art. Dryden is here not concerned with ethical questions, or
even with moral instruction embellished with magnificent rhetoric, but only with
'the fine art of calling names'. There is, of course, some inconsistency in his
critical theory; for although he has hitherto praised the satirist who writes in-
structively, for the correction of error and vice, he is now forced by the implic-
ations of his doctrine of artistic 'raillery' to recommend a less direct and con-
demnatory style. The declamatory castigation of vice is set aside, and the emphasis
is placed on the subtle exposure of folly and vice with a primary attention to
artistic rather than to moral efficacy. Dryden goes far towards a view of satire
in which moral rebuke has no significant place:

Neither is it true, that this fineness of raillery is offensive. A witty man is
tickled while he is hurt in this manner, and a fool feels it not. The occasion of
an offence may possibly be given, but he cannot take it. (3)

This attitude is to be seen in application, in what Dryden has to say of his char-
acter of Zimri in Absalom and Achitophel; and here his retrospective critical

Notes, p. 134.

1. Essays, ii, 93-4. This account of the reception of a satiric portrait by a victim marks the fundamental breadth of mind of the Restoration courtier-wit (modern scholarship is against the attribution of Poetical Reflections on .. Absalom and Achitophel. By a Person of Honour (1681) to a vengeful Buckingham; see H. Macdonald, Dryden Bibliography, p. 224).

The age was one in which personal satire went freely to and fro, without any considerable offence being taken, at least in court circles. Charles himself, for a monarch of absolutist inclinations, took a remarkably even and humorous view of witty lampoons directed against himself; and even the obscene Rochester came off lightly.

2. Essays, ii, p. 108.

3. It is true that Dryden praises Oldham's 'harsh Cadence of a rugged Line' (To the Memory of Mr. Oldham); but it is clear from the general drift of the elegy, and from Dryden's similar comments on Persius, that he regarded roughness as a feature of a young poet's style which he should outgrow. Dryden's general notion of satire is a complete rejection of the Elizabethan studied roughness and harshness.

4. Dr. A. Melville Clark, Studies in Literary Modes, Edinburgh, 1946, p. 37.

5. Sir Herbert J.C. Grierson and Dr. J.C. Smith, A Critical History of English Poetry, London, 1944, pp. 183-4.

essay of 1693 links up with his finest satirical practice in the early 1680s:

The character of Zimri.. is, in my opinion, worth the whole poem: it is not bloody, but it is ridiculous enough; and he, for whom it was intended, was too witty to resent it as an injury. If I had railed, I might have suffered for it justly; but I managed my own work more happily, perhaps more dexterously. I avoided the mention of great crimes, and applied myself to the representing of blind sides, and little extravagancies; to which, the wittier a man is, he is generally the more obnoxious. It succeeded as I wished; the jest went round, and he was laught at in his turn who began the frolic. (1)

----- 3 -----

Dryden declares that, in his long Discourse on satire, he has given only a bare hint 'in what verse and in what manner this sort of satire may be best managed. Had I time I could enlarge on the beautiful turns of words and thoughts, which are requisite in this, as in heroic poetry itself, of which the satire is undoubtedly a species'. It is unfortunate that he did not develop this notion of satire as a kind of heroic poetry much further. We may assume, however, that he is thinking here of the correspondences between the heroic style and the lofty satiric style which he discovers and admires in Juvenal; and that it is back to Juvenal that he looks, when he attempts the grand satiric manner in his own poetry. (2) (3)

He follows Juvenal in the free use of traditional rhetoric. The satirist is, of course, inevitably something of an orator; he is 'always conscious of an audience with which he has to establish relations', and he employs 'a variety of stylistic devices which originated in speech and still retain much of their public and oral character'. The manipulation of rhetorical techniques by formal satirists varies, however. Oldham, for example, uses them for brutal emphasis. Dryden, in contrast, adopts Juvenal's more subtle practice of turning rhetorical conventions to give a poetic grandeur to his satiric style, generally with mock-heroic effect. In Absalom and Achitophel, the style, diction and paraphernalia of epic are turned to satiric use. In this poem, (4)

Dryden has made a more effective use of Paradise Lost than in The State of Innocence. For here is a threatened rebellion, not in Heaven, but in England; and the dramatis personae on either side, not angels but politicians, are presented with a dignity, and in the greater figures a roundness, which only makes more telling the easy certainty with which the poet exposes the vanities, vices, and follies alike of individuals and the mob. (5)

Notes, p. 135.

1. The measure of Dryden's mock-heroic style here may be taken by comparing the passage with those lines in Donne's Elegie XVII, from which, I think, he derived his opening (Poems of Donne, ed. H.J.C. Grierson, Oxford, 1912, i, p.114, lines 38 ff).
2. E.g., Paradise Lost, iv, 48 ff.
3. Essays, i, pp. 210-211.

The poem opens, for example, with a portrait of Charles II as an absolute monarch of almost oriental character: 'God-like David' summons his concubines to his bed as slaves -- a witty falsification of the true relationships between Charles and his domineering mistresses which must have amused the Court-- and scatters his Maker's image through the land with a lordly and magnanimous promiscuity. Monmouth, presented as the noblest and fairest of the bastard offspring, is described in the high language of chivalry: his destiny moved 'by manly Beauty to Imperial Sway'; and

Early in Foreign Fields he won Renown
 With Kings and States allied to Israel's Crown:
 In Peace the thoughts of War he could remove,
 And seem'd as he were onely born for Love.
 What e'r he did was done with so much ease,
 In him alone, 'twas natural to please;
 His motions all accompanied with grace,
 And Paradise was open'd in his face.

23-30

In his soliloquies, Absalom takes his place beside the august heroes of Dryden's drama; for example:

Why should I then repine at Heavens Decree
 Which gives me no Pretence to Royalty?
 Yet oh that Fate, propitiously Inclined,
 Had rais'd my Birth, or had debas'd my Mind;
 To my large Soul, not all her Treasure lent,
 And then betrai'd it to a mean Descent.
 I find, I find my mounting Spirits Bold,
 And David's part disdains my Mothers Mold.
 Why am I scanted by a Niggard Birth?
 My Soul Disclaims the Kindred of her Earth:
 And, made for Empire, Whispers me within:
 Desire of Greatness is a God-like Sin.

361-72

There is here, as has often been pointed out, a suggestion of the exalted aspirations and the self-justification of Milton's Satan; but the passage, in content and dramatic tone, has a closer affinity with the heroic plays. The heroic character in Restoration drama conforms to the requirements of Aristotle. Dryden puts it thus:

As for a perfect character of virtue, it never was in Nature, and therefore there can be no imitation of it; but there are alloys of frailty to be allowed for the chief persons, yet so that the good in them shall outweigh the bad, and consequently leave room for punishment on the one side, and pity on the other. (3)

Many of Dryden's theatrical heroes are endowed with nobility of character and sentiment; but they possess a vastness of soul which urges them on to realise great

Notes, p. 136.

1. Cf. All for Love, where it is said of Antony, 'Virtues his path; but sometimes 'tis too narrow for his vast Soul' (Summers, iv, 194); and Conquest of Granada, where Abdalla praises Almanzor as a man of vast courage and boundless mind, 'rough as a storm, and humorous as wind' (Summers, iii, 35).
2. Lines 156-8. Cf. Congreve's The Mourning Bride, the portrait of Osmyn, Osmyn on Zara, and Zara on the King (Mermaid edition, London 1948, pp. 433, 453, 475).
3. History of his own Time, I, 1724, p. 646.

83-30

83-158

(3)

(8)

aspirations in the face of misfortune, provokes them to take great risks, and amounts to a sublime fault. In Aureng-zebe, for example, Indamora addresses Morat

thus:-

How you confound desires of good and ill!

.....
 Yours is a Soul irregularly great,
 Which wanting temper, yet abounds with heat:
 So strong, yet so unequal pulses beat,
 As Sun which does through Vapours dimly shine;
 What pity 'tis you are not all divine. (I)

Abenamar, praising Almanzor's lofty spirit, which urges him to make claims which might bring death to a lesser man, speaks of him as one who displays

No haughty boasting; but a manly pride;
 A Soul too fiery, and too great to guide:
 He moves excentrique, like a wandering Star;
 Whose Motion's just; though 'tis not regular. Summers, iii, 78

The link between this passage and Dryden's character of Achitophel is obvious; the Satanic Achitophel is 'Hells dire Agent', gifted with great virtues and cursed with grave faults, praised for his wit and power, daring greatly, and possessed of

A fiery Soul, which working out its way,
 Fretted the Pigmy Body to decay;
 And o'r informed the Tenement of Clay. (2)

The characters of Achitophel and Absalom belong to the tradition of the heroic drama. Absalom belongs to it more thoroughly, because his virtues and vices are at perpetual war in his heart; and he claims a measure of sympathy in that disharmony of an ignoble birth and an aspiring soul, which drives him to treason. Dryden raises to the heroic level not only the virtues, but the vices, of a man whose character Burhet succinctly sketches in these words:

Thus lived and died this unfortunate young man. He had several good qualities in him, and some that were as bad. He was soft and gentle even to excess, and too easy to those who had credit with him. He was both sincere and good natured, and understood war well. But he was too much given to pleasure and to favourites. (3)

It is this elevation of character to heroic heights, and the subtle emphasis on the 'alloys of frailty', which give Dryden full scope for complex and refined satiric portraiture. In conformity with the heroic lineaments of Absalom's character

Notes, p. 137.

1. Professor Verrall missed, I think, the pervasive mock-heroic strain in the loftier, panegyric passages of this poem; and this led him to the perverse view that "if we must classify the poem, it is best to call it an 'epyllion, or epic in miniature, comprising satiric elements'" (Lectures on Dryden, Cambridge, 1914, p.59).
2. Cf. Aureng-zebe (Summers, iv, 91 and 146); Prologue to His Royal Highness, 1682 (Sergeant, p.242); and supra, p. 106. See Caroline Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery, London, 1935, pp. 235-6; and Professor Dover Wilson's discussion of sun-imagery in King Richard II, Cambridge, 1939, p. xiii.
3. Cf. Summers, v, 132 and 264; Religio Laici, 400 ff.

in the poem, and with his soliloquised aspirations, Achitophel addresses him in panegyric tones: and here the slight distortion of the truth, and the flattery (I) of the speaker, carry rhetorical panegyric over into a mock-heroic satire:

Auspicious Prince; at whose Nativity
 Some Royal Planet rul'd the Southern Sky;
 Thy longing Countries Darling and Desire,
 Their Cloudy Pillar, and their Guardian Fire,
 Their second Moses, whose extended Wand
 Divides the Seas and shows the promis'd Land,
 Whose dawning Day, in every distant Age,
 Has exercis'd the Sacred Prophets rage,
 The Peoples Pray'r, the glad Diviners Theam,
 The Young mens Vision and the Old mens Dream! 230-39

.
 Believe me, Royal Youth, thy Fruit must be
 Or gather'd Ripe, or rot upon the Tree.
 Heav'n has to all allotted, soon or late,
 Some lucky Revolution of their Fate: 250-53

.
 Had thus Old David, from whose Loins you spring,
 Not dar'd, when Fortune call'd him, to be King,
 At Gath an Exile he might still remain,
 And Heavens Anointing Oil had been in vain.
 Let his successful Youth your hopes engage,
 But shun th' example of Declining Age.
 Behold him setting in his Western Skies,
 The Shadows lengthening as the Vapours rise. 262-69

The satire here is complex. The first layer is a refined, hardly explicit burlesque of the panegyric fashion: the hyperbole, the graceful figuration, the sagacious references to 'some Royal Planet' and the tide in the affairs of men, and the sun-imagery applied to David --- all these are characteristic of the august complimentary style of seventeenth century panegyric, given here a subtly burlesque colouring by their satiric context, and by their use in the midst of an exalted heroic dialogue which is really a discussion on the justification of high treason. Secondly, there is the skilful manipulation of Biblical imagery in the opening lines. This imagery is in harmony with the satiric use of Biblical persons and episodes throughout the poem; it serves, in its application to Monmouth, to satirise the exaggerated enthusiasm of the giddy multitude whom Dryden so intensely distrusted and disliked; and by its noble associations, and its extravagance, it prevents the real weakness and irresponsibility of Monmouth's character from being completely submerged in adulation. Thirdly, this elevated address implies satire on Achitophel, whose 'close Designs and crooked Counsels' lead him here into grandiloquent poetic flat-

in the poem, and with his condensed expressions, which address him in
general terms and have the right direction of the truth, and the literary

(1)

Notes, p. 138.

1. Lines 351 ff.

2. For an account of James' relations with Monmouth during the
period with which Dryden's poem deals, and for a fair summary
of the fluctuations in James' popularity, see F.C. Turner,
James II, London, 1948, chaps. ix-xii.

230-25

250-28

260-32

The satire here is complex. The first layer is a reticent, hardly explicit but
feature of the general fashion: the hypocrite, the general hypocrisy, the
satire references to 'some Royal Prince' and the title to the alliance of man, and
the non-imagery applied to David -- all these are characteristics of the Augustan
literary style of seventeenth century satiric, given here a subtly disguised
coloured by their satiric content, and by their use in the midst of an excited
old dialogue which is really a discussion on the justification of the nation.
Secondly, there is the skillful manipulation of biblical imagery in the opening line.
This imagery is in harmony with the satiric use of biblical figures and episodes
throughout the poem; it serves, in its application to David, to satirize the
apparent enthusiasm of the fifty million who were taken as intensely distressed
deluded; and by its wide associations, and its extravagance, it prevents the
weakness and irresponsibility of David's character from being explicitly
ad in adulation. Thirdly, the elevated address implies satire on adulation, when
these lines and echoed Gough's 'and him now into grandiloquent words list'

tery and hypocrisy. This satiric manipulation of style, elevating characters and situations, and then mocking them in their false elevation without destroying the surface dignity and polish, is apparent in all the heroic passages in the poem.

(I)
 Dryden puts into Monmouth's soliloquy a noble eulogy of James, Duke of York; and although the intention here is probably in part to speak well of the heir to the throne, or to suggest that Monmouth had some scruples and was not riding altogether rough-shod over James, there is a clear vein of irony running through this employment of the panegyric style also. Dryden says, through Monmouth, that James is 'opprest with vulgar Spight'; but he must also have known quite well that the virtues which he gives to James were far from obvious to much more discriminating persons than the vulgar, and even to the King himself; for the poem was written to cover the period of James' enforced exile in Scotland, and of the general antipathy to James which provoked the two Exclusion Bills of 1679-81. Further, relations between Monmouth and James had seriously deteriorated during the later 1670s; and it is ironic to portray Monmouth here, either as generously attributing hypothetical virtues to James, or as hopeful of James' clemency in dealing with rebels. James was notoriously merciless to anyone who threatened the security and authority of the throne.
 (2)

In the other satires, Dryden's ironic use of the heroic and the rhetorical is not so subtly indirect. In The Medall, the satiric tone rises to elevation, not in mock-heroic style, but in direct attack; for example:

Almighty Crowd, thou shorten'st all dispute;
 Power is thy Essence; Wit thy Attribute!
 Nor Faith nor Reason make thee at a stay,
 Thou leap'st o're all Eternal Truths, in thy Pindarique Way. 91-4

But thou, the Pander of the Peoples Hearts,
 (O crooked Soul and Serpentine in Arts;)
 Whose blandishments a Loyal Land have whor'd,
 And broke the Bonds she plighted to her Lord;
 What Curses on thy blasted Name will fall!)
 Which Age to Age their Legacy shall call;)
 For all must curse the Woes that must descend on all.) 256-62

Notes, p. 139.

I. E.g., lines 1-4, 25-28, 37ff, 64-7, 94ff, 108-15, 130ff.

2. Cf. lines 100-104, 120-21, 181-2, 189ff.

Dryden did not, of course, 'develop' from the broader and more obvious style of Mac Flecknoe (1678) to the fuller and richer style of Absalom (1681); his satiric range and versatility remain unrestricted throughout, till the writing of the Fables. Different themes, and differences in the nature and gravity of the occasion, demand different stylistic techniques in satire.

rather touch-should over James, there is a clear vein of irony running through this

employment of the panegyric style also. Dryden says: though Montmouth, that

James is 'correct with vulgar bright'; but he must also have known quite well that

the virtues which he gives to James were far from obvious to much more discerning

and more persons than the vulgar; and even to the king himself; for the poet was writ

ten to cover 'the period of James' entrance into the world, and of the general

anxiety to know when James would be crowned the two Elizabeths died in 1603, 1609,

relations between Montmouth and James had certainly deteriorated during the latter

1670; and it is ironic to portray Montmouth here, either as generally attributing

hypocritical virtues to James, or as beautiful of James' character in dealing with

republic. James was notoriously notorious to anyone who threatened the country and

(5)

authority of the throne.

In the other satire, Dryden's ironic use of the heroic and the rhetorical

is not so subtly indicated in the title; the satire some times rises to elevation, and

in such heroic style, but in direct attack; for example:

Almighty Power, thou shouldest not all direct

Power in thy hands; 'tis thy advantage

Not to let such a power rest in a state

That leaves thee all the world to rule;

But thou, the Father of the world's desires,

Thou shouldst not let such power be in a state

That should be in a state to rule;

And thou, the Father of the world's desires,

Thou shouldst not let such power be in a state

That should be in a state to rule;

The irony which is an essential part of the developed mock-heroic style is more obvious in Mac Flecknoe than in The Medall. The narrow, heavily allusive political theme of The Medall restricted Dryden's stylistic range, and compelled grave treatment of grave issues. In Mac Flecknoe, he largely abandons strong hitting for a broad, easy, humorous mockery. Flecknoe, says the poet,

like Augustus, young
Was call'd to Empire, and had govern'd long; 3-4

and the portrait of the Ruler of Nonsense in a setting of imperial power and magnificence gives the poet ample scope for mock-elevation of style. Mac Flecknoe is closer to Absalom and Achitophel in general style, than is The Medall. Yet, whereas the high style of Absalom is exercised on apparently serious narrative, description, argument, and adulation, with a deep and persistent current of irony beneath, the style of Mac Flecknoe is more superficial, grand only in magnificent open mockery and parody. Much of the comedy lies in Dryden's adroit use of ornate diction on an essentially trivial theme; but although the heroic style is echoed and parodied at every turn of the poem, there is nothing of the sustained grandeur of Absalom, in which, for long passages, the reader is beguiled into accepting the surface dignity as in large measure serious. In Mac Flecknoe, the pseudo-dignity of Dryden's tones and rhythms is broken again and again by unsuppressed guffaws -- for example:

My warbling Lute, the Lute I whilom strung,
When to King John of Portugal I sung,
Was but the prelude to that glorious day,
When thou on silver Thames did'st cut thy way,
With well tim'd oars before the Royal Barge,
Swell'd with the Pride of thy Celestial charge;
And, big with Hymn, Commander of an Host,
The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets tost. 35-42

.
About thy boat the little Fishes throng,
As at the Morning Toast that Floats along. 49-50 (2)

The diction of Absalom and Achitophel, and to a lesser extent that of the other satires, is rich in elements which combine with the general sweep and dignity of Dryden's style to raise the poem far above blunt, direct, familiar invective and abuse,

Notes, p. 140.

- 1.)
- 2.) These notes, on account of their length, are relegated to page 158.
3. Lines 447ff; 136ff, a late example of the scientific illustration which Dryden used so freely in his early poems.
4. Lines 134 (cf. Georgics, ii, 404; Horace, Odes, II, i, 15-16); 108, 112-3, Shadwell vowing loyalty to Dullness as Hannibal swore to be the foe of Rome; 128-32; 110-11, 'lambent dullness plaid around his face', a satiric adaptation of Virgil's lambere flamma comas (Iuli) to Shadwell, the second Iulus (AEn., ii, 684); 37-40, recalling Aeneas' voyage up the Tiber and Cleopatra on the Cydnus (cf. Pope, Rape of the Lock, ii, I ff, 47 ff).
5. 'Lucid intervall' is an adaptation of the legal phrase lucida intervalla, the moments of sanity which occur during a period of lunacy; 'genuine' is used in the Latin sense, 'natural', 'native', and satirically echoes Cowley's famous lines--
There is a place deep wondrous deep below,
Where genuine Night and Horror o'reflow ...
(Davideis, i, 81-2)
which Dryden parodies at length later in Mac Flecknoe (70-77).
6. Lines 817 ff (II Samuel, xix, 32 ff); 882 ff (II Kings, xv, 5); 888 (II Samuel, xv, 37); 585 ff (Burnet, History of his own Time, I, 1724, 480; II Samuel, xvi, 5).
7. See supra, p. 137.

without detracting from its satiric strength or smothering its humour. The language of Absalom is loaded with latinisms and classical echoes, probable imitations or
(1)

reminiscences of Milton and Shakespeare, and a richer Biblical element than has been recognised by editors who have discussed the Biblical allusions and imagery of the poem. Dryden uses Latin constructions freely, and restores original classical meanings to Latin derivatives --- a common feature of his higher styles, of which the
(2)

Aeneis provides the best examples. He follows classical convention in the use of extended similes. Classical allusions and associations are frequent too, as we should
(3)

expect, in Mac Flecknoe; and the comedy of Dryden's mock-heroic style there is
(4)

heightened by the satiric juxtaposition of latinate and familiar words:

Sh---- never deviates into sense.
Some Beams of Wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through and make a lucid intervall;
But Sh----'s genuine Night admits no ray,
His rising Fogs prevail upon the Day.

20-24 (5)

The Biblical element in Absalom and Achitophel is naturally large and complex. In addition to the obvious use of names and circumstances drawn from the scriptural story of David and Absalom, there is a wealth of brief allusion and reminiscence embedded in the imagery and diction of the poem. Dryden has taken pains to make his tale as consistent and elaborate an imitation of the historical story as possible, and yet develop its application to contemporary politics with thoroughness and subtlety. The 'characters' of the old and hospitable Barzillai, Jotham the judge in Israel, and Hushai the friend of David, and the references to Shimei's cursing the King ('approving the late King's death in very indecent terms', as Burnet says of Bethel), are all examples of characterisation which is true at once to Jewish history and to the contemporary political scene. At a deeper level, Achitophel resorts to Biblical imagery to flatter Absalom, and the very extravagance of that imagery
(6)
(7) has a satiric value; and he refers to David's declining power in terms which clearly recall Milton's Satan, and at the same time subtly echo Isaiah's celebrated passage with implications which would be obvious to readers familiar with the political aspirations and manoeuvres of Charles II:

... like the Prince of Angels, from his height,
Comes tumbling downward with diminish'd Light; 273-4

I. Lines 600 (S. Mark, xii, 23); 601-4 (S. Matthew, xviii, 20);
2nd part, 338-9 (Ezekiel, xxxvii, 3); 649 (Exodus, xxxiv, 29-
35); 645 (Numbers, xvi, 8-9).

The 'Pageant Shew' of Absalom with 'Chariots, Horsemen, and
a num'rous Train' (lines 730 ff) blends a description of the
colourful progresses of Monmouth through England, with the
Biblical 'Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty
men to run before him.. Absalom stole the hearts of the men
of Israel' (II Samuel, xv, I and 6). There is a satiric hint
in the word chariot, which was applied in seventeenth century
England to a light four-wheeled carriage very unlike a vehicle
of war.

The scriptural element is maintained, if not indeed in-
creased, in Tate's second part of Absalom. His admiration for
Dryden's satire (ii, 1039 ff) is shown in a very practical way
by heavy borrowing from the first part: for example, compare
I. I ff and 2. I ff; I. 729 ff and 2. 190 ff; I. 159 and 2.
202; I. 373 and 2. 240; I. 752 and 2. 269; I. 447 and 2. 925 ff;
I. 854 and 2. 1129; I. 697 and 2. 1215.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou now cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God... (Isaiah, xiv, 12-13).

The Bible provided Dryden not only with his story, and with a wealth of secondary detail and colouring, but also with satiric material. Some of his less refined satire is drawn irreverently from Scripture, and obtains its effect by the satiric and startling manipulation or parody of phrases which have august associations. This is another aspect of Dryden's mock-heroic technique. For example, the Christian injunction to love one's neighbours is given a quiet satiric twist in the statement that the hypocritical Shimei 'lov'd his wicked Neighbour as himself'; and Christ's words, 'where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them', are impiously but effectively parodied in:

When two or three were gather'd to declaim
Against the Monarch of Jerusalem,
Shimei was always in the midst of them.

In the second part of the poem, Dryden repeats a famous question from Ezekiel, but he varies it in a very unbiblical phrase:

Can dry Bones live? or Skeletons produce
The Vital Warmth of Cuckoldizing Juice?

Corah had a Church Vermilion, and a Moses's Face -- an ironic allusion to the shining of Moses' countenance after he had received the Tables of the Law, since Oates was, in a tragic sense, a false prophet and perjurer, and the very antithesis of Moses. Again, Dryden says that Corah was a Levite, one of the tribe of 'God-almighties Gentlemen'; and this is not merely a sarcastic jibe at pretentious and lying zealotry, but a satiric adaptation of the words of Moses to the sons of Levi:

Seemeth it but a small thing to you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord? (I)

Scriptural allusions are fairly numerous in the other satires. The Biblical element in The Medall consists of no more than brief references and exempla worked into the

Note, p. 142.

I. The Medall, lines 73-4, 131; cf. II9, 19-20, II7 ff, 217-8.
Mac Flecknoe, 31-4.

When two of three were gathered in the
Against the monarch of the world
Christ was always in the mind of them.

On dry bones live? or Eilatana produce
The vital warmth of quackling dulcet?

(I)

Scriptural allusions are fairly numerous in the other satires. The biblical elements
in the Medall consists of no more than a few names and examples worked into the

texture of the poem --- the deceits of Shaftesbury are compared to the wiles of Delilah, for example, and the instability of popular opinion is epitomised in 'we loath our Manna, and we long for Quails'; but in Mac Flecknoe, the parodying spirit of Absalom is anticipated. Flecknoe hails Shadwell as the 'last great Prophet of Tautology', and turns the scriptural account of John the Baptist to satire:

Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way:
And coarsely clad in Norwich Drugget came
To teach the Nations in thy greater Name. (I)

These Biblical echoes in Mac Flecknoe and The Medall are sporadic, and none of them are either subtle or sustained. They do no more than to illustrate Dryden's readiness to turn the dignity of Scripture to satiric use, even when the theme of his poem is not, as it is in Absalom and Achitophel, consistently Biblical in appearance. Images and phrases are transferred from a revered and august source to a mock-heroic context to play their part in strengthening the satire by strong and unexpected contrast.

Thus far, I have been illustrating Dryden's manipulation of rhetorical, panegyric and heroic styles, coloured by classical, scriptural and other allusion, in imitation of the grand manner of Juvenal. The natural dignity of his tones and rhythms, and his power in grave and sustainedly exalted writing, are diverted into satiric channels to serve a new literary purpose. The width of his reading, his versatility as a stylist, and above all the robust humour of his mind, which is always ready to turn gravity into laughter, combine to create a new satiric technique. Dryden had certainly the direct force and brutality of expression to write satire in the manner of Marvell or Oldham, and the playful wit to emulate Butler; but it is from the fusion of these qualities with the poetic skills of a panegyrist and a practised heroic dramatist, that the brilliant mock-heroic satire of Absalom and Achitophel was created.

The conception of satire as a species of heroic poetry is a development from the example of Juvenal, stimulated by Dryden's inclination to the comic and the exalted: the notion of 'fine raillery' is much more his own. The doctrine that the subtlest and most artistic satire lies in 'fine raillery' is a corollary to his view of satire as essentially delightful; and his general attitude to formal satire as an art-form rather than as a literary instrument of correction, theoretically expressed in his Discourse on... Satire, is to be seen in practical application in Absalom and Achitophel. There is 'a sweetness in good Verse', he says in the address To the Reader, 'which Tickles even while it Hurts; and no man can be heartily angry with him, who pleases him against his will'. The poem has been written to please the moderate reader; and Dryden has deliberately avoided violent satire, and rebated his criticism '(where Justice would allow it) from carrying too sharp an Edge', although this moderation will draw protests from 'the Violent' on both sides. The portrait of Absalom, consequently, is a blend of approval and criticism --- 'besides the respect which I owe his Birth, I have a greater for his Heroick Vertues'; and the story of the rebellion is charitably inconclusive. Dryden hopes for the reconciliation of Monmouth and the King, and even for the amendment of Shaftesbury --- 'I have not so much as an uncharitable Wish against Achitophel, but am content to be accus'd of a good natur'd Errour; and to hope with Origen, that the Devil himself may at last be sav'd.. God is infinitely merciful'. The tone of the preface is one of plausible good-humour; and throughout the poem Dryden seeks to maintain that balance of criticism and approbation which underlies the art of what he later calls 'fine raillery': 'I have but laugh'd at some men's Follies, when I could have declaim'd against their Vices; and, other mens Vertues I have commended as freely as I have tax'd their Crimes'.

The technique of 'fine raillery' was applied with brilliant success in the two sketches of Achitophel and Zimri. That of Achitophel is perhaps more subtly balanced between praise and blame, especially with the additional lines of the second edition (180-91); but the portrait of Zimri is a better example of a pointed

Notes, p. 44.

I. Verrall, pursuing his theory that Absalom is not a sustainedly satirical poem, curiously asserts, without evidence, that if Dryden's praise of his own character of Zimri 'means that... the essential merit of Absalom and Achitophel lies in such passages, then it is an instance of Dryden's carelessness and habit of emphasising the theme of the moment. He did not think so in 1693, or when he wrote Absalom and Achitophel, or ever' (Lectures on Dryden, Cambridge, 1914, p. 61). This is wilful disbelief: the artistic method which underlies the whole character-art of the poem is epitomised in the account of Zimri.

2. History of his own Time, I, 1724, p. 100.

satiric style manipulated to contrast elements of virtue and vice in one character. Dryden's technique cannot be better illustrated than by setting this portrait of Zimri, which he himself regarded as a good example of 'fine raillery' and 'worth the whole poem',⁽¹⁾ beside the excellently succinct prose portrait of Buckingham in Burnet's History:

The first of these was a man of noble presence. He had a great liveliness of wit, and a peculiar faculty of turning all things into ridicule with bold figures and natural descriptions. He had no sort of literature: Only he was drawn into chymistry: And for some years he thought he was very near the finding the philosopher's stone; which had the effect that attendsonall such men as he was, when they are drawn in, to lay out for it. He had no principles of religion, vertue, or friendship. Pleasure, frolick, or extravagant diversion was all that he laid to heart. He was true to nothing, for he was not true to himself. He had no steadiness nor conduct: He could keep no secret, nor execute any design without spoiling it. He could never fix his thoughts, nor govern his estate, tho' then the greatest in England. He was bred about the King: And for many years he had a great ascendent over him: But he spake of him to all persons with that contempt, that at last he drew a lasting disgrace upon himself. And he at length ruined both body and mind, fortune and reputation equally. (2)

Some of Burnet's phrases are sufficiently like Dryden's, to suggest that he drew a little on the verse portrait in Absalom; but there is an essential difference between Burnet's straightforward statement and Dryden's satiric and artistic arrangement of the same basic material. Dryden's 'character' runs thus:

Some of their Chiefs were Princes in the Land:
 In the first Rank of these did Zimri stand:
 A man so various, that he seem'd to be
 Not one, but all Mankind's Epitome.
 5 Stiff in Opinions, always in the wrong;
 Was Every thing by starts, and Nothing long:
 But in the course of one revolving Moon,
 Was Chymist, Fidler, States-man, and Buffoon:
 Then all for Women, Painting, Rhiming, Drinking,
 10 Besides ten thousand Freaks that dy'd in thinking.
 Blest Madman, who cou'd every hour employ,
 With something New to wish, or to enjoy!
 Railing and praising were his usual Theams;
 And both (to shew his Judgment) in Extreame:
 15 So over Violent, or over Civil,
 That every Man, with him, was God or Devil.
 In squandring Wealth was his peculiar Art:
 Nothing went unrewarded, but Desert,
 Begger'd by Fools, whom still he found too late:
 20 He had his Jest, and they had his Estate.
 He laugh'd himself from Court; then sought Relief
 By forming Parties, but cou'd ne'er be Chief:
 For, spight of him, the weight of Business fell
 On Absalom, and wise Achitophel:
 25 Thus wicked but in Will, of Means bereft,
 He left not Faction, but of that was left.

Dryden's style --the disposition of his phrases, the balance of his lines, the quality of his diction, and the subtle emphases in his presentation of Zimri's character-- suggests, in the first place, that facile, ever-shifting and superficial versatility in Buckingham's interests to which Burnet refers in critical, but direct and non-satiric terms. This is done partly by epigrammatic summary (e.g., lines 3-4, 6) and partly by exaggeration. Notice the steady marshalling of bold, uncompromising words, which give force and emphasis to the portrait, and caricature in satiric tones Zimri's liveliness, volatility, and perpetual extravagance: 'always in the wrong'; 'Every thing... nothing'; 'ten thousand Freaks'; 'every hour employ'; God or Devil'; 'Nothing went unrewarded'. Again, the irrationality and the ludicrous contrasts in occupation, which are implied in Burnet's portrait, are pointed and epitomised in the conglomeration of lines 8-10, mocking the indiscriminating chaos of Zimri's mind.

Secondly, Dryden uses the balance of the line to make pointed satiric contrasts which Burnet's prose manages only in places, and with less edge (lines 5-6, 15-16, 18, 20, 25-6). In these contrasts, however, the tonal quality of the satire is not constant. The satirist's art involves a perpetual shift of focus, a change of tone and pitch, as the deliberate distortion of character develops. Lines 20 and 25-26, for example, are openly mocking; but there are, on the other hand, many subtle little ironies in the portrait. Lines 3-4 appear almost as a compliment, especially in the poetry of an age which was rich in brilliant virtuosity, until their implication is clarified in the next few lines; lines 11-12 are an ironic expression of envy; the parenthesis in line 14 is a whispered sarcasm; and in line 17 there is a slight ironic contrast between the derogatory squandring and the otherwise approving phrase, 'his peculiar Art'.

Thirdly --and here Dryden's principle of 'fine raillery' is most subtly applied-- he introduces an element of the pathetic, which has a satiric effect only within the pattern of ironies and sarcasms of which the portrait is largely made up. Zimri is a blest madman, whose irresponsibility is not entirely his own fault; if his fluctuating moods provoke him to railing, they also encourage him to praise;

and lines 19-26 are a blend of criticism, mock-pity, and an unexpected diversion of the satiric artillery towards the exploiters of Buckingham's harmless idiocy. In the suggestion that Zimri is the tool of cleverer and more knavish men, there is satire; for Dryden thus emphasises again the foolishness of Zimri himself. The tonal pattern of this portrait is complex. The opening gravity shifts to a hard-hitting criticism; that gives place to loud-laughtered mockery, refined and subtilised with touches of ironic dissimulation; and then, towards the end, the original gravity is in some measure restored with an admixture of mild pathos which is nevertheless in itself satiric. The 'fine raillery' of the portrait lies in the manipulation of the sharp-edged weapon of irony, which cuts incisively while it appears to smooth; in the selection of folly rather than serious crime as the satiric target, and the hearty ridicule of that folly in genial laughter and mimicry; and in the plausible shift from attack to defence, from criticism to apologia, and from mockery to mock-pity.

It is in this constant interaction of contrasting satiric tones, this tactical disposition of a number of poetic styles for a varied but concentrated satiric attack, that the excellence and power of the whole poem chiefly lie. The variety of tones in each portrait is extended throughout paragraphs and sections. The style of the opening passage, for example, is one of mock-heroic dignity; but immediately the poet leaves the elevated characters and virtues of David and Absalom, and turns to the Jews, he forsakes the majestic manner for strong, direct criticism on a lower level. His first observations on the Jews are made in a spirit more of sorrow and gravity than of anger:

The Jews, a Headstrong, Moody, Murm'ring race,
As ever tri'd th' extent and stretch of grace;
God's pamper'd People, whom, debauch'd with ease,
No King could govern nor no God could please;

45-49

but the tone drops steadily down through the long description of Jewish instability and folly until Dryden attacks the Popish Plot in heavy, sarcastic colloquialism:

Note, p. 147.

I. See, for example, the satire on Anne Hyde and Barbara Villiers, Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell, ed. H.M. Margoliouth, Oxford, 1927, i, pp. 142-3.

The hour, a handsome, bloomy, blushing face,
As ever wild the extent and stretch of grace;
God's generous people, whom he should bless,
No king could govern for us God could please;

43-44

But, when to Sin our byast Nature leans,
 The careful Devil is still at hand with means;
 And providently Pimps for ill desires:
 The Good Old Cause, reviv'd, a Plot requires,
 Plots, true or false, are necessary things,
 To raise up Common-wealths and ruin Kings.

79-83

The satire of the poem is on two distinct levels, with strong and deliberate contrasts between them --- the lofty one which carries the introduction, the characters of Absalom and Achitophel, and their epic debates and soliloquies; and the lower one which carries the strong, much less refined satire on the mob, the 'numerous Host of dreaming Saints', Shimei, Corah and the rest. Dryden's tone changes and changes again, as he shifts his attention from one type of set of victims to another.

Even his less refined satiric style, however, is subtler and more highly finished than that of his ablest contemporaries. For him, the highest form of satire may be 'fine raillery' and the mock-heroic; but, when the character of the victim or the nature of the theme calls for blunter, less dignified assault, he does not abandon art for mere noise and muscular force. Marvell and Oldham, effective both in verse satire, offer comparison with Dryden in his rougher and more direct style. Marvell's satires are, in style, effective chiefly in rollicking colloquialism and vigour of expression; and even in the Last Instructions to a Painter, which is less irresponsible than many of the others in language and rhyme-patterns, and is crammed with strong satiric comment on contemporary political life and personalities, his expression is too often crude, indecent, or revolting. He succeeds by (I) shocking. He makes occasional efforts to reach the mock-heroic; but the general level is too low to carry them off. Oldham, a superior satirist to Marvell, has a distinctive rhetorical power; but he, too, cannot drop into a familiar style without becoming unrestrained and crude; and his most impressive satiric technique is heavy, vigorous sarcasm. The testament form of Loyola's Will, the third of his Satyrs upon the Jesuits, offered excellent opportunities for irony and parody; but Oldham takes the way of Dunbar in The Testament of Mr. Andro Kennedy, and uses the device of the will only for hammer-blow satire and sarcasm. The following instructions of Loyola to his associates, a fair example of Oldham's manner, achieve

I. The Works of Mr. John Oldham, together with his Remains,
London, 1703, p. 50.

Cleveland is another, rather earlier, seventeenth century poet who displays impressive force and directness in attack, but lacks polish: see Saintsbury's remarks on Cleveland and Dryden, Minor Caroline Poets, iii, Oxford, 1921, pp. 9, 54.

their effect only by the force of the verse and the sheer farce of the injunctions:

Tell how blest Virgin to come down was seen,
 Like Playhouse-Punk descending in Machine:
 How she writ Billet Doux, and Love Discourse,
 Made Assignations, Visits, and Amours:
 How Hosts distrest, her Smock for Banner bore,
 Which vanquish'd Foes, and murder'd at Twelve Score.
 Relate how Fish in Conventicles met,
 And Mackrel were with Bait of Doctrine caught:
 How Cattle have Judicious Hearers been,
 And Stones pathetically cry'd Amen:
 How consecrated Hives with Bells was hung,
 And Bees kept Mass, and Holy Anthems Sung:
 How Pigs to th' Ros'ry kneel'd, and sheep were taught
 To bleat Te Deum, and Magnificat..

 With Shams like these the giddy Rout mislead,
 Their Folly, and their Superstition feed. (I)

When Dryden took to verse satire of the lower kind, he carried with him his mastery of rhythm and his genius for the artistic manipulation of the couplet form, however strong or familiar his expression. His conception of satire as a high form of poetic art safeguarded him from the mere crudity and abusiveness of his contemporaries. His is often coarse, slashing, and heavily destructive; he is rarely graceless.

Some of his victims in Absalom and Achitophel do not merit either the subtle 'raillery' or the quarter which he gives to Buckingham. The Saints and the mob, for example, are well and truly battered; but although the diction of this passage is simply that of common speech, and the blows come straight from the shoulder, undisguised by feinting irony, Dryden's mastery of the couplet measure gives his satire both grace and finish:

A numerous Host of dreaming Saints succeed;
 Of the true old Enthusiastick Breed:
 'Gainst Form and Order they their Pow'r employ,
 Nothing to Build, and all things to Destroy.
 But far more numerous was the Herd of such,
 Who think too little, and who talk too much.
 These, out of meer instinct, they knew not why,
 Adored their Fathers' God, and Property:
 And, by the same blind Benefit of Fate,
 The Devil and the Jebusite did hate:
 Born to be sav'd, even in their own despight;
 Because they could not help believing right.

Dryden had no good word for the despicable Shimei; but yet he does not pin him down under a load of versified abuse. Shimei is neatly and ingeniously tacked down with dart after dart of irony and sarcasm. The portrait ranges generously in tone, from chuckling ironies to harsh jibes; and although Shimei is mercilessly exposed as a hypocrite and a treasonable knave, Dryden demonstrates throughout that one may smile, and smile, and yet destroy. The sketch of Corah is a fine blend of irony, sarcasm, and sheer ridicule. Dryden begins by hailing Corah in mock-panegyric terms----

Yet, Corah, thou shalt from Oblivion pass;
Erect thyself, thou Monumental Brass; 632-3

--- and by suggesting, in the tones of a poetical apologist, that

... though his Birth were base, yet Comets rise
From Earthly Vapours, e're they shine in Skies.
Prodigious Actions may as well be done
By Weaver's issue as by Prince's son. 636-9

This irony is resolved into abusive physical description and open sarcasm:

Sunk were his Eyes, his Voice was harsh and loud,
Sure signs he neither Cholerick was, nor Proud:
His long Chin prov'd his Wit; his Saint-like Grace
A Church Vermilion, and a Moses's Face.
His Memory, miraculously great,
Could Plots, exceeding mans belief, repeat;
Which therefore cannot be accounted Lies,
For humane Wit could never such devise. 646-53

The satire rises again, not to the original restrained irony, but in a final burst of majestic ridicule --- the exposure is complete:

But where the Witness fail'd, the Prophet spoke:
Some things like Visionary Flights appear;
The Spirit caught him up, the Lord knows where:
And gave him his Rabinical Degree,
Unknown to Foreign University. 655-8

Even the portrait of Shadwell, in the second part of the poem, although it is coarsely destructive, and dwells too much on physical characteristics, has in some lines a peculiar poetic grace. Dryden satirises Shadwell again in The Vindication of the Duke of Guise; and there too he concentrates on Shadwell's gross bulk and

Note, p. 150.

I. Summers, v, p.316.

833-3

833-3

833-3

833-3

drunken habits, and declares that in Absalom he has contented himself 'with the
ridiculous part of him, which is enough in all conscience to employ one man'.^(I)
This ridicule, however, is illuminated with the extravagant light of a caricatur-
ist's imagination:

Now stop your noses, Readers, all and some,)
For here's a tun of Midnight work to come,)
Og from a Treason Tavern rowling home.)
Round as a Globe, and Liquored ev'ry chink,
Goodly and Great he Sayls behind his Link.

ii, 457-61

----- 6 -----

These are the most frequently recurring and most effective tones in Dryden's satiric style, woven together in ever-changing combinations and contrasts to make up the rich texture of his poetry. I turn now to some of the technical devices in that style. The frame on which Dryden's grander satiric manner is constructed is the paragraph; the majestic tones of the quasi-heroic style rise and fall, drive precipitately forward and ebb again, within the strong structure of each verse section. The opening of Absalom, for example, is a fine illustration of the confident distribution and control of tonal weight and rhythmic force. Couplet after couplet carries the tale gravely, sedately and yet powerfully forward; the pressure of the rhythm increases through the first six lines, and is gradually released into the broad, culminating rhythms and resonant phrases of

wide as his Command,
Scatter'd his Maker's Image through the Land, 9-10

which enforce, in sound and sweep, the generous eclecticism of Charles' 'vigorous warmth'. This management of rhythms and phrases over a large area of verse is characteristic of the higher level of satire in the poem; and it is used to great satiric advantage in the portrait of Achitophel. The character-sketch opens with a statement:

Of these the false Achitophel was first,
A Name to all succeeding Ages curst; 150-51

and this statement is then elaborated in a concentrated catalogue -- a veritable avalanche of criticism which sweeps all objection before it. Yet it is strongly controlled and directed by Dryden's mastery of line and phrase:

For close Designs and crooked Counsels fit,
 Sagacious, Bold, and Turbulent of wit,
 Restless, unfixt in Principles and Place,
 In Power unpleas'd, impatient of disgrace;
 A fiery Soul, which working out its way,)
 Fretted the Pigmy Body to decay:)
 And o'r informed the Tenement of Clay.)

I52-8

Here, as so often in Dryden's verse sections, the flow of the rhythm is neatly and securely dammed by the finishing triplet; and then it rushes on again for a few lines, released into a less constricted and regulated type of line --

A daring Pilot in extremity;
 Pleas'd with the Danger, when the Waves went high
 He sought the Storms; but, for a Calm unfit,
 Would Steer too nigh the Sands to boast his Wit

I59-62

--- before turning upon itself in the sudden change of attitude in

Else, why should he, with Wealth and Honour blest,
 Refuse his Age the needful hours of Rest?

I65-6

and passing on into a graver, calmer, more measured style of commentary and criticism.

Dryden's natural energy and exultation are called into play in the satires, as, with excited enthusiasm, he gathers the ammunition for his attacks; but his loyalty to the tactics of his art helps him to keep this energy under control. His control, especially in the calculated increase and subsequent release of emotional and rhythmic tension, is seen even better in his couplets than in his paragraphs. It is clear from scattered observations in his essays, as well as from his poetic practice, that Dryden found couplet verse not only convenient, but comfortable and satisfying. The closed couplet rhymes preserve a constant finish in a poem; and they contribute to the larger harmonies of the verse paragraph. The reader rests on the couplet, to enjoy its musical completeness; and that completeness is the poet's convenience as well as the reader's delight. Further, the decasyllabic measure has a technical and an aesthetic advantage over the shorter line; in it, says Dryden, the thought

Notes, p. 152.

1. Essays, i, p.13; ii, p.106.
2. For a thorough discussion of this and other stylistic features of Pope's poetry, see Professor Maynard Mack's essay on Wit and Poetry and Pope in Pope and his Contemporaries, Essays presented to George Sherburn, Oxford, 1949.

can turn on itself with greater ease in a larger compass. When the rhyme comes too thick upon us, it straitens the expression; we are thinking of the close, when we should be employed in adorning the thought. It makes a poet giddy with turning in a space too narrow for his imagination... (1)

The decasyllabic couplet was an admirable form for Dryden --- for his dignified movement, his delight in complete and satisfying statement in close compass, and his skill in the manipulation of stress and balance within single lines or two-line units.

The whole basis of his satiric technique is contrast --- a clarity and deliberateness in the contrast of tones, types of diction, and techniques of assault, which is one aspect of his artistic vitality; his best portraits derive their life and apparent realism from the subtle interplay of criticism and plausible approbation. In them, his satire moves from light to darkness, and back to light, restlessly opposing and balancing qualities and characteristics to produce a convincing pattern of light and shadow. His couplets, in both rhythm and diction, draw their life and power from the same source of contrast and surprise. One of the obvious merits of the heroic couplet, especially as it is perfected by Dryden and Pope, is the opportunity which it gives for the opposition and balance of idea and phrase; the caesura so divides the line, that when part has been given, part is anticipated with a rapid, keen expectancy, and is almost at once enjoyed with a sense of pleasing finality; and the setting of line against line in the couplet unit has a similar effect. This obvious metrical technique has its complement in the way in which Dryden works balance and contrast into the pattern of the couplet or the line, not only in idea but also in diction. Contrasts in content within the couplet are, of course, a constant feature of the satire of both Dryden and Pope: the natural balance of the line creates an atmosphere of expectancy and tension, and contrasts (2) in the subject-matter itself add a further and unanticipated shock of delight:

And rak'd for Converts even the Court and Stews	<u>Absalom</u> , I27
Was Chymist, Fidler, States-man, and Buffoon	550
Wits, Warriors, Commonwealths-men were the best: Kind Husbands and mere Nobles all the rest	571-2

Dryden is as skilful in the contrasts of words, as in the contrasts of the ideas which they express. He gives his reader mild shocks in diction as well as in imagery, shifting rapidly from the grand to the colloquial, surrounding noble polysyllabic phrases with groups of pattering short words, and contrasting native brevity with latinate breadth and weight. He lavishes all his skill in metrical balance, majestic expression, alliterative pattern, and mock-heroic irony, on the opening lines of Absalom and Achitophel; after ten lines, the tone begins to drop; but it is delightful to feel the contrast, during that decline in dignity, of the colloquial 'his father got him with a greater Gust' with rotund and majestic phrases like 'Numerous Progeny', 'Conscious Destiny', and 'Imperial Sway'. Again, while the poet speaks with ironic gravity of Corah's amazing gifts of prophecy, and our ears are attuned to 'Witness', 'Prophet', 'Visionary Flights', and 'Rabinical Degree', a sudden intrusive colloquial phrase puffs away the camouflage and reveals the true attitude of the poet to Corah in

The Spirit caught him up, the Lord knows where. 557

There is a contrast both in idea and in language, for comic effect, in

In his sinister Hand, instead of Ball,
He plac'd a mighty Mug of potent Ale; Mac Flecknoe, I20-21

and, conversely, an unexpected mocking majesty in the weighted second line of this couplet:

Heywood and Shirley were but Types of thee,
Thou last great Prophet of Tautology. ibid., 29-30

In the construction of the paragraph, Dryden orders and controls the ebb and flow of rhythmical power; certain couplets liberate or retain a greater rhythmical energy than others; but even within the couplet, Dryden manipulates the pressure which exerts itself on the prosodic frame. He varies and distributes that pressure, both in rhythm and in diction-- complementary elements in verse texture which cannot be properly separated. For example:

The sober part of Israel, free from stain,
Well knew the value of a peaceful reign;
And looking backward with a wise affright,
Saw Seams of wounds, dishonest to the sight:
In contemplation of whose ugly Scars,
They curst the memory of Civil Wars. Absalom, 69-74

Here the regulated slowness of the first four lines, produced by patterns of short words and marked stresses, is increased for the mind as much as the ear by 'dishonest', and works to a quiet climax in the heavy and sonorous 'contemplation', which holds the verse steady for a moment, and then releases it in the contrasted, emphatic abruptness of the final line. This controlled retention and release of force, by means of varied speeds, rhythms and diction, is put to excellent satiric use. For example:

A numerous Host of dreaming Saints succeed;
Of the true, old Enthusiastick Breed:
'Gainst Form and Order they their Pow'r employ,
Nothing to Build, and all things to Destroy *ibid.*, 529-32

The Solymaean Rout; well Vers'd of old
In Godly Faction, and in Treason bold *ibid.*, 513-4

Nor weigh'd or winnow'd by the Multitude,
But swallow'd in the Mass, unchewed and crude. *ibid.*, 112-3

The emotional and verbal energy underlying Dryden's satire expresses itself also in his frequent use of complicated alliterative and assonant patterns. Sometimes alliterative schemes are sustained and developed over a large verse section, to weight, enrich, and emphasise; and whole passages are bound together by complex harmonies of repeated sound:

In pious times, e'er Priestcraft did begin,
Before Polygamy was made a Sin;
When Man on many multiplied his kind,
E'er one to one was cursedly confin'd,
When Nature prompted and no Law deni'd
Promiscuous Use of Concubine and Bride;
Then Israel's Monarch, after Heavens own Heart,
His vigorous warmth did, variously, impart
To Wives and Slaves: And, wide as his Command,
Scatter'd his Maker's Image through the Land. *ibid.*, I-10

Here Dryden makes repeated use of m and n, in both stressed and unstressed syllables, to bind together the pattern of sound in each couplet, and to carry his verse forward from one couplet to another without losing cohesion; the recurrence of sound, moreover, especially in alliterating syllables, greatly enforces the clarity and precision of his expression.

Alliteration is often used to give greater vigour to a line:

His father got him with a greater gust *ibid.*, 20

or to bind phrases together-- 'seeming Friends, and secret Foes' (456); or to concentrate the emphasis at one point in the line -- 'Fretted the Pigmy Body to decay' (157). The emphasis of the alliterative phrase has satiric potentialities, which Dryden exploits to the full:

And <u>pro</u> vidently <u>P</u> imps for ill desires	<u>Absalom</u> , 81
As if <u>h</u> e <u>h</u> ad <u>b</u> een <u>b</u> orn of <u>b</u> eat <u>e</u> n Gold	ibid., 103
O <u>g</u> <u>f</u> rom a <u>T</u> reaso <u>n</u> <u>T</u> avern <u>r</u> owling home	ibid., ii. 459
Rhime is the <u>R</u> ock on which thou art to <u>w</u> reck, 'Tis <u>f</u> atal to <u>t</u> hy <u>F</u> ame and to thy <u>N</u> eck	ibid., ii. 485-486

The delicate comedy of Dryden's single line on Etherege is created almost entirely by the onomatopoeic suggestion of alliterating sounds:

Let gentle George in triumph tread the stage Mac Flecknoe, 151

and there is a similar fusion of sound and sense, though for a very different effect, in

The Jews, a Headstrong, Moody, Murm'ring Race
As ever tri'd th' extent and stretch of grace Absalom, 45-6

where the recurring m and r slow down, emphasise, and give extra body to the first line, and the sibilants and recurring r in the second produce a contrasting, almost onomatopoeic difficulty and stress in reading. The combination of alliteration, assonance, and controlled stresses, is seen to advantage in the description of Flecknoe blessing his son: here the marked caesura after 'brows' throws weight forward into the next line, where it is enforced by the sound pattern:

The Syre then shook the honours of his head,
And from his brows / damps of oblivion shed
Full on the filial dullness: long he stood... Mac Flecknoe,
134-6

Assonance and alliteration are frequently used with other satiric devices, especially to bind together, slow down, or weight the balance of the satiric couplet about a medial pause, which is one of the great secrets of Augustan verse satire. Alliteration stresses the balance and explicit contrast of the line in the

I. Essays, ii, p. 105.

For a summary of later seventeenth century strictures on the use of feminine rhyme, see E.N. Hooker, Critical Works of John Dennis, Baltimore, 1939, i, p. 434. Dennis approved of Dryden's double rhymes in the portrait of Zimri (Hooker, i, p.9); but generally the device provoked criticism.

When Middleton engaged Dryden to write a verse answer to a witty epistle from Etherege in Hudibrastic style, Dryden proved himself amusingly efficient in this low, burlesque manner; and he makes full use of feminine and comic rhymes: e.g., atone--at one; alike--artique; constitution --diminution; show--Plenipo; terse all--Rehearsal.

first of the following examples; and in the second, accentuates the caesura and slows down the measure by weighting two unstressed prefixes:

To raise up Common-wealths, and ruin Kings Absalom, 84
Unbrib'd, unsought, the Wretched to redress ibid., 190

Even in The Medall, which is far less rich and subtle in satiric effects than Absalom, Dryden uses alliteration with care and great force. In these examples, the sound pattern in the first line adds considerably to the force of the image; in the second, heavy, interwoven alliteration heightens the tone of Dryden's passionate invective:

A Vermin wriggling in th' Usurper's ear 31
 But thou, the Pander of the Peoples hearts,
 (O crooked Soul and Serpentine in Arts;)
 Whose blandishments a Loyal Land have whor'd,
 And broke the Bonds she plighted to her Lord 256-9

Another technical feature which adds to the flavour of Dryden's satiric style is feminine rhyme. He early censured the use of feminine rhymes, in the preface to Annus Mirabilis; but later he recognised the value of the device in burlesque, though not in higher kinds of satire. He praises Butler's 'low' satiric style, but his approval of feminine rhymes, which are of the first importance in that style, is not whole-hearted: they 'turn earnest too much to jest', and 'tickle awkwardly with a kind of pain, to the best sort of readers; we are pleased ungratefully, and if I may say so, against our liking'. Yet on occasions Dryden uses this device to give added lightness and merriment to his writing, where it is not out of harmony with the general tone of the passage. The style of the character-portraits which he contributed to the second part of Absalom and Achitophel, for example, is swashbuckling and colloquial, and here roughness or technical crudity is no blemish -- indeed, Dryden comes very near to the satiric manner of Butler or Marvell:

A Monstrous Mass of foul corrupted matter,
 As all the Devils had spew'd to make the batter ii, 464-5
 But though Heaven made him poor, (with rev'rence speaking),
 He never was a Poet of God's making ii, 474-5

To die for Faction is a common evil,
 But to be hang'd for Nonsense is the Devil. ii, 498-9

To conclude: Dryden had a genius for the deployment of a vast quantity of artillery and armour, and the direction of a combined fire which, made up of such diverse elements, destroys equally and utterly all along the line. His satiric method is never simple; he holds to his conception of satire as an art demanding all the skill and resources of the poet; and he uses the whole range of colours in the satiric spectrum. Panegyric, mock-heroic characterisation and narrative, argument, hammer-blow satire, irony, sarcasm --- all these are deployed to advantage. He had at his disposal a potent instrument in the heroic couplet, with which he felt completely and powerfully at ease, and on which he could ring so many changes. He had a gift for verse rhetoric, a robust sense of fun, and a capacity for working a strong, masculine utterance into the measure of the lofty line. These advantages, together with his conception of satire as a high kind of poetry, helped him to find a more complete expression of his art, and a fuller scope for his poetic versatility, in satire than in any other literary kind.

As long as satire was regarded as a form of verse which had its justification only in its moral and corrective effects, and so long as the satiric couplet was ignored by accomplished poets and resorted to only by men of ill-temper, malicious intention, private grudge or moral indignation, verse satire could never become in England a major literary kind worthy of the serious attention of artist or discriminating reader. The Elizabethan satirists brought the genre into shape and prominence in English; Dryden's predecessors in the seventeenth century did little except to keep it alive and vigorous; but it is to Dryden himself that it owes its establishment as a major literary kind, requiring no justification save that of art.

-----oooOooo-----

- I. The dialogue of Absalom and Achitophel recalls the epic debates in Paradise Lost; Achitophel is a shadow of Milton's Satan; and Milton offered some precedent, if any were needed, for the use of latinism in diction and syntax to dignify style. Dryden has at least two debts to Shakespeare:

(i) He wishes that Achitophel's character had been unblemished:

Or had the rankness of the Soil been freed
From Cockle, that oppresst the noble Seed (I94-5).

Here it seems likely that he is drawing not only the metaphor of cockle and seed, but the application to sedition, from Shakespeare's phrase in Coriolanus -- 'the Cockle of Rebellion, Insolence, Sediton' (III, i, 70).

(ii) The ambitious Absalom is 'too full of Angels Metal in his Frame' (310). This is a late example of the common Shakespearean quibble on angel -- a supernatural agent and a coin (e.g., Merry Wives, I, iii, 62; II Henry IV, I, ii, 189). The coin was referred to as the angel-noble as late as 1686. Dryden's phrase probably also quibbles on metal, again with Shakespearean precedent (e.g., Measure for Measure, I, i, 48; II, iv, 48).

It is possible also, in Absalom's references to his 'large soul', that Dryden is appositely echoing Shakespeare in King John: 'Do you not read some tokens of my son in the large composition of this man?' (I, i, 8).

2. E.g., lines 72 (cf. AEneid, vi, 497, 'truncas inhonesto vulnere naris'); 834, unequal Fates (inaequalis); 202, 324, 254. In the phrase 'popularly prosecute' (492) Dryden imitates the Latin populariter; he means 'winning public favour' (cf. Cicero, agendo .. populariter, Off., II, xxi, 73). Tate imitates Dryden in Part 2, with 'popularly low' (690).

VI

RHYME AND REASON :

RELIGIO LAICI AND THE HIND AND THE PANTHER

- 1. Dryden's love of argument and reflection---logic and the art of persuasion.
- 2. Religio Laici --- the 'legislative style'; rhetoric---satire.
- 3. The Hind and the Panther --- range of style and tone.
- 4. Conclusion: Dryden's 'sequaciousness'--- the dialectical and poetic appeal of these poems.

-----oooOooo-----

The favourite exercise of his mind was ratiocination... When once he had engaged himself in disputation, thoughts flowed in on either side: he was now no longer at a loss; he had always objections and solutions at command: 'verbaque provisam rem'-- give him matter for his verse, and he finds without difficulty verse for his matter.

JOHNSON: Life of Dryden.

BAYES. Reasoning; I gad, I love reasoning in verse.

The Rehearsal.

Such are the proud Designs of human Mind,
And so the vulgar Slaves are bound
To follow them, who have no other end
Than in the dust to see their ashes end.

Note, p. 160.

I. The Poetry of John Dryden, Cambridge, 1931, pp. 71-2.

JOHN DRYDEN

RELIGIOUS POETRY AND THE FATHER

- 1. Dryden's love of argument and religious life and the art of persuasion.
- 2. Religious Poetry -- the 'epicurean style'; history.
- 3. The Mind and the Father -- range of style and tone.
- 4. Conclusion: Dryden's 'epicurean style' -- the dialectical and poetic appeal of these poems.

The favourite exercise of his mind was rationalization... When once he had engaged himself in this kind of thought, he lived in an other world: he was now no longer at a loss; he had all ways objections and solutions at command; 'various questions' -- give him matter for his verse, and he finds without difficulty verse for his matter.

JOHNSON: Life of Dryden.

WIFE. Reasoning; I find I love reasoning in verse.

The Hebræads.

----- I -----

Disputation, as Johnson more than once declared, was one of Dryden's chief delights. In the rhetorical, emotive and imaginative style of poetic argument, and in the plainer, conversational and discursive manner of prose criticism, he is equally at his ease; and throughout the whole range of his verse, from the familiar epistle and the theatrical prologue to the heroic poem and play, he never misses an opportunity for argument and reflective or didactic commentary. He is not a mere versifier of syllogisms; of the stark, objective and devitalised manner of the logician, there is little in his poetry. He was, says Mr. Van Doren, 'most at home when he was making statements. His poetry was the poetry of declaration.. It is not to be inferred that he was without passion; few men have had more. But .. his passion was the passion of assurance. His great love was the love of speaking fully and with finality^(I).

Dryden's delight in argument and comment is a harmonious part of his total poetic enthusiasm; his ratiocinative poetry is not distinct in inspiration and attitude from his descriptive verse, his satire, or his dramatic poetry; and where argument or commentary is incidental (in narrative, for example), it takes on the colour and tone, and conforms to the general style, of the poem of which it is a part. The verse polemics in the translations of Homer and Virgil have all the exaltation and force proper to the heroic poem. In Absalom and Achitophel, the argumentative speeches of Absalom and his tempter are set out in all the trappings of heroic poetry, in accordance with the general style of the poem; and the very exaltation of tone plays a large part in the satiric effect (supra, pp. 135-8). In Annus Mirabilis, Dryden's meditative digressions have the sonorous gravitas proper to a slow-moving and dignified narrative in which 'both the Actions and Actors are as much Heroick as any Poem can contain':

Such are the proud Designs of human kind,
And so we suffer Shipwreck every where!
Alas! what port can such a Pilot find
Who in the night of Fate must blindly steer.

Note, p. 161.

I. Congreve, in his 'character' of Dryden, speaks of his retiring nature-- he 'abhorred intrusion into any society whatever' (Works of Dryden, 1717). Dryden says of himself that he is wanting in gaiety and humour and is 'sullen' in temper: 'My conversation is slow and dull; my humour saturnine and reserved' (Essays, I, 135, II6).

(1)

Such are the great beauties of human kind
 And so we strive to reach each other's mind
 Alas! what part can such a life find
 Who in the night of life must blindly steer

The undistinguish'd Seeds of Good and Ill,
 Heav'n, in his bosom, from our knowledge hides;
 And draws them in contempt of human skill,
 Which oft, for friends, mistaken foes provides. stanzas 35-6

The swift, concentrated argumentation in the prologues and epilogues has the epigrammatic point, the wit, and the light, conversational irresponsibility and banter which theatrical conditions demanded. In dramatic argument and meditation, the tones of the speaking voice are wedded to a quietly eloquent sententiousness of style admirably suited to the declamatory set piece:

When I consider Life, 'tis all a cheat;
 Yet, fool'd with hope, men favour the deceit;
 Trust on, and think tomorrow will repay:
 Tomorrow's falser than the former day;
 Lies worse; and while it says, We shall be blest
 With some new joys, cuts off what we possesst.
 Strange couzenage! none would live past years again,
 Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;
 And, from the dregs of Life, think to receive,
 What the first sprightly running could not give.
 I'm tir'd with waiting for this Chymic Gold,
 Which fools us young, and beggars us when old. Summers, iv, I29

Dryden is a poet whose mind runs readily and persistently from description and narrative, satire and dramatic dialogue, to reflection and argument. His tones become assertive, sententious or persuasive, as he indulges his love of idea and disputation; and tangential or decorative discussion seldom breaks the poetic pattern, because he always argues in poetic terms proper to his theme and his context.

There is something of a paradox in his character as a man and a poet. As a poet, he is robustly assertive, boldly and freely given to controversy on a wide range of topics, and mercilessly destructive in argument; as a man, he seems to have been retiring, silent, and rather morose. He was sometimes vacillating in principle and fluctuating in belief. In his critical views, he was experimental and often self-contradictory, not with the over-riding assurance of a Johnson, but through a persistent distrust of dogmatic finality. As a poet he is always forthright, strong, powerful in criticism and adulation alike, and passionately declaratory; as a man, he lived uncertain of almost all except uncertainty, and true less to principle than to art. Johnson rightly says that 'the favourite

1. Poetry Direct and Oblique, London, 1934, pp. 89-90.

2. E.g., Essays, i, pp. 260-261; Preface to Religion Laici, 'being naturally inclin'd to Scepticism in Philosophy, I have no reason to impose my Opinions, in a Subject which is above it'.

In The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, Michigan, 1934, Professor Louis I. Bredvold has analysed Dryden's life-long scepticism, traced its antecedents, and discussed its marked influence on his political views and his shifting religious allegiance.

exercise of his mind was ratiocination'; but he was not extreme in his devotion to reason. What he favoured was the civilised virtue of reasonableness, rather than reason itself. He deplored 'heady zeal', excess, and bigotry; and Dr. Tillyard properly emphasises, beneath the surface theological argumentation of Religio Laici, a belief in the virtue of 'taking both sides if need be, the belief in the virtues of tolerance and culture', as well as a delight in the exercise of the wits. (1) If there were principles to which Dryden remained loyal all his life, they were order, communal security, the graces of civilised living and the canons of good art. Philosophically, he was a sceptic; and his scepticism, his lack of philosophical assurance, is admitted in many places in his essays and poetry, with reference to problems of literary criticism, politics, philosophy and religion alike. (2) In the theological argumentation of Religio Laici and The Hind and the Panther, Dryden makes an eloquent and apparently logical appeal to reason, in support of a fideistic, anti-rationalist position which is in general accord with his own temperament and his philosophical scepticism. His love of argument and his belief in exercising the wits is not an unmodified faith in human reason.

He lacked the moral energy and the complete faith in rational enquiry, which together carry an argument through to a conclusion, wherever it may lead; and his militancy in argument is one of art, of tone, rather than of logically established conviction. He delighted in the artistic presentation of argument. This delight, and his distrust of mere logic, are together important for an understanding of the art of Religio Laici and The Hind and the Panther, the most completely and continuously 'ratiocinative' of his poems. The strength of his poetic arguments lies, not in the soundness of the subtlety of his logic, but in the tremendous assurance of his tones, the sway of his strong and asseverative rhetoric over the mind, and the calculated appeals to emotion, imagination and disposition which he clothes in the trappings of argument. Dryden's real approach to verse debate is indicated in his praise of Lucretius' expository style, in the preface to Sylvae which appeared between the publications of Religio Laici and The Hind:

exercise of his mind was 'relaxed'; but he was not relaxed in his devotion to reason. That he favoured the right is evident from his Notes, p. 163.

- I. Essays, i, pp. 259-60.
- 2. Lives, ed. G.B. Hill, Oxford, 1905, i, p. 442.

... in the exercise of his mind, he was not relaxed in his devotion to reason. That he favoured the right is evident from his Notes, p. 163.

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... in the exercise of his mind, he was not relaxed in his devotion to reason. That he favoured the right is evident from his Notes, p. 163.

If I am not mistaken, the distinguishing character of Lucretius (I mean of his soul and genius) is a certain kind of noble pride, and positive assertion of his opinions. He is everywhere confident of his own reason, and assuming an absolute command.. he seems to disdain all manner of replies and is so confident of his cause, that he is beforehand with his antagonists; urging for them whatever he imagined they could say, and leaving them, as he supposes, without an objection for the future. All this, too, with so much scorn and indignation, as if he were assured of the triumph, before he entered the lists. From this sublime and daring genius of his, it must of necessity come to pass, that his thoughts must be masculine, full of argumentation, and that sufficiently warm. From the same fiery temper proceeds the loftiness of his expressions, and the perpetual torrent of his verse... (1)

The logical development of Dryden's thought in Religio Laici and The Hind, though by no means incontrovertible, is often strong and impressive; he has done what he could to convince by means of that reason which he distrusted; but the real assault on the reader is made by artistic rather than logical artillery. The technique of verse argument is no more based on straightforward dialectic, than the art of verse satire is based on objective portraiture and criticism. A discussion of the art of these two poems is thus not a disproportionate concentration on style at the expense of the apparently primary question of content; art and argument are here essentially one; and a consideration of Dryden's tones and style as the most important aspects of his ratiocinative verse is, far from being an act of disrespect to a serious poetic apologist, the one fruitful approach to the work of a poet who sets art above logic, admires warmth and passion much more than he trusts reason, and thinks and argues in poetic terms.

----- 2 -----

Dr. Johnson said of Religio Laici that 'unhappily the subject is rather argumentative than poetical' and that Dryden 'intended only a specimen of metrical disputation'. He then praises this example of the 'middle kind of writing, which, though prosaick in some parts, rises to high poetry in others, and neither towers to the skies nor creeps along the ground'. The contradiction here simply points (2) the discrepancy between Dryden's theoretical intentions, as they are expressed in the preface to the poem, and his practical execution. In the preface, the poet

Note, p. 164.

I. See supra, pp. 3-4.

if I am not mistaken, the distinguishing character of literature (I mean of his soul and genius) is a certain kind of noble pride, and positive assertion of his opinions. He is everywhere confident of his own rightness, and he seems to disdain all manner of compromise. He is not content with being right, but he seems to believe that he is better than his fellow-men, and that he is entitled to be obeyed. He is not content with being right, but he seems to believe that he is better than his fellow-men, and that he is entitled to be obeyed. He is not content with being right, but he seems to believe that he is better than his fellow-men, and that he is entitled to be obeyed.

the logical development of Dryden's thought in the mind and the hand though by no means incontrovertible, is often strong and impressive; he has done what he could to convince by means of that reason which he distrusted; but the real assault on the reader is made by artistic rather than logical artistry. The technique of verse argument is no more based on straightforward dialectic than the art of verse satire is based on objective portraiture and criticism. A discussion of the art of these two poems is thus not a disproportionate concern; for the art of these two poems is thus not a disproportionate concern; for the art of these two poems is thus not a disproportionate concern; for the art of these two poems is thus not a disproportionate concern.

----- 2 -----

Dr. Johnson said of the mind and the hand that 'undoubtedly the subject is rather argumentative than poetical' and that Dryden 'intended only a specimen of rhetorical disputation'. He then praises this example of the 'artistic kind of writing, which though proper in some parts, rises to high poetry in others, and neither lower to the level nor sweeps along the ground'. The contradiction here simply points the discrepancy between Dryden's theoretical intentions, as they are expressed in the preface to the poem, and his practical execution. In the preface, the poet

says that he writes in the manner of the Horatian epistle, rather than in the heroic style, on the principle that 'the Expressions of a Poem design'd purely for Instruction, ought to be Plain and Natural, and yet Majestic.. The Florid, Elevated, and Figurative way is for the Passions... A man is to be cheated into Passion, but reason'd into Truth'; and he ends the poem with an exaggerated emphasis on the plainness of his style:

Thus have I made my own Opinions clear,
 Yet neither Praise expect, nor Censure fear:
 And this unpolish'd, rugged Verse I chose;
 As fittest for Discourse, and nearest Prose:
 For while from Sacred Truth I do not swerve,
Tom Sternhold's or Tom Shadwell's Rhimes will serve. 45I-6

In the preface and the conclusion, Dryden is suggesting that he sets forth his arguments in accordance with the current demands of the scientists, philosophers and preachers of the Royal Society tradition. Decorative writing and figuration belong to the persuasive art of rhetoric, which in Dryden's day had fallen into discredit as a vehicle for honest argument; and the poet seems anxious to bring his verses as near to the ideal naked naturalness of prose as the exigencies of rhyme will allow.
 (I)

In fact, however, Dryden's apology for being content with the style of a Sternhold or a Shadwell is no more than a parting jibe at two bad poets; his style is much less uniformly plain and matter-of-fact than he implies. He attempts to evolve a way of writing which is completely suited to his theme and his apologetic purpose, and is at the same time artistically more than versified logic. His style, it is true, is in general a talking style; but it is the manner, not of the controversialist, but of the orator. Religio Laici is packed with effective rhetoric; and on occasions Dryden rises to a sonorous dignity and beauty. In his preface, he describes plainness, naturalness and majesty as the three characteristics of the 'legislative' style of the poem; and the word 'legislative' is the key to those qualities of assertive power, dignity and rhetorical grace which he seems to be setting on one side in speaking of a plain and natural style, and yet does not contrive to keep out of the poem.

Since 'the Florid, Elevated and Figurative way is for the Passions', there is little room for fanciful extravagance in this verse style; and what there is has little to recommend it. On the other hand, Dryden's mastery of the couplet form, and his strong, uncompromising diction and tone, dismissing objections and forestalling counter-argument in a Lucretian assertiveness, have an extra-logical persuasive force. In defending the doctrine of the divine inspiration of Scripture, for example, Dryden selects a few points which are not logically indisputable, and builds them into a solid rhetorical mass which carries its own power of conviction:

Or, whether more abstractedly we look,
 Or on the Writers, or the written Book,
 Whence, but from Heav'n cou'd men, unskill'd in Arts,
 In several Ages born, in several parts,
 Weave such agreeing Truths? or how or why
 Shou'd all conspire to cheat us with a Lye?
 Unask'd their Pains, ungratefull their Advice,
 Starving their Gain and Martyrdom their Price.

I38-45

Here the appeal is almost as much to sentiment as to common sense; but the poet's chief weapon is his control of the verse medium. The cumulative effect of his carefully balanced rhetorical questions, and the weighted, declaratory couplet at the end, induce a sense of conviction in the receptive reader. The tones of the very opening passage are not those of a man working his way resolutely into a bald philosophical discussion; these lines are an excellent example of the simple grace, the harmonious richness of sound, the alliterative patterning, and the gravity of Dryden's best writing:

Dim, as the borrow'd Beams of Moon and Stars
 To lonely, weary, wand'ring Travellers,
 Is Reason to the Soul: And as on high
 Those rowling Fires discover but the Sky
 Not light us here; So Reason's glimmering Ray)
 Was lent, not to assure our doubtfull way,)
 But guide us upward to a better Day.)
 And as those nightly Tapers disappear
 When Day's bright Lord ascends our Hemisphere;
 So pale grows Reason at Religions sight;
 So dyes, and so dissolves in Supernatural Light.

I-II

The emphatic position of 'Dim'; the selection of 'glimmering Ray' and 'nightly Tapers' with their suggestion of half-light; the choice of an opening simile which

Note, p. 166.

1. The passage has a slight classical colouring: with 'rowling Fires' compare Lucretius' 'volverda micant aeterni sidera mundi' (v, 518), Metamorphoses, vi, 81 and xv, 665. The imagery of the opening lines, although probably recollected from Donne's BIAANATOS, may also be a reminiscence of Virgil's

Ibant obscuri sola sub nocte per umbram
perque domos Ditis vacuas et inania regna:
quale per incertam lunam sub luce maligna
est iter in silvis..

AEn., vi, 274-7.

had more force and realism in Dryden's day, when night travel was perilous, than it has now; the studied emphasis on affective words in that simile -- lonely, / weary, wand'ring; the sudden strong stress, for contrast, in 'Day's bright Lord' --- these combine with the heavy rhythm and the majestic sound of the passage, in making an appeal, at the very outset of the poem, to much more than the critical intelligence of the reader. Dryden has begun inauspiciously, if his design is really to reason his readers into truth without 'cheating into passion' and appealing to faculties other than thought.

The elevated simplicity of this opening passage is not maintained through the poem. It gives place, however, not to the even, direct rhymed argument which Dryden promises in the preface, but to a vigorous blend of rhetorical argument and persuasion with strong satire. The tones of the lay theologian and apologist are constantly giving way to the persistent satiric impulse. In the writing of Absalom and Achitophel, Dryden, in an important sense, 'found himself'; and the satiric heightening (or indeed transformation) of argument and critical commentary remained thereafter one of his most constant techniques. In Religio Laici, his method is asseveration and persuasion; he criticises, therefore, in the language of passionate concernment; and in such criticism satire has its place. The broad sweep of the introductory lines soon runs into familiar satire; we can see the change taking place:

Whether some Soul encompassing this Ball,
 Unmade, unmov'd; yet making, moving All;
 Or various Atom's interfering Dance
 Leapt into Form (the Noble work of Chance,)
 Or this great All was from Eternity;
 Not ev'n the Stagirite himself could see;
 And Epicurus Guess'd as well as he...

I6-22

The views of rival philosophers struggling to make 'finite Reason reach Infinity' are presented, not objectively, but in a mixture of serious summary, irony, and open sarcasm (for example, lines 42 ff); and although Dryden discusses the Arian controversy gravely enough in his preface, in the poem itself he dismisses the 'holy Bishop Athanasius' with a humorous, half-satirical smile:

Note, p. 167.

I. Cf. Hudibras, III, ii, 7-12:

So, ere the storm of war broke out,
Religion spawn'd a various rout
Of petulant capricious sects,
The maggots of corrupted texts,
That first run all religion down,
And after every swarm its own.

For though his Creed Eternal Truth contains,
 'Tis hard for Man to doom to endless pains
 All who believ'd not all, his Zeal requir'd;
 Unless he first cou'd prove he was inspir'd.
 Then let us either think he meant to say
 This Faith, where publish'd, was the onely way;
 Or else conclude that, Arius to confute,
 The good old Man, too eager in dispute,
 Flew high; and, as his Christian Fury rose,
 Damn'd all for Hereticks who durst oppose.

214-223

Incidental satire flickers round Dryden's praise of the immense bulk and learning of
 Simon's History:

A Treasure which, if Country-Curates buy,
 They Junius, and Tremellius may defy;
 Save pains in various readings, and Translations,
 And without Hebrew make most learn'd quotations.

Where we may see what Errours have been made
 Both in the Copiers and Translators Trade:
 How Jewish, Popish, Interests have prevail'd,
 And where Infallibility has fail'd.

240-43; 248-51

Towards the end of the poem, the destructive satire and the sheer ridicule of
Absalom return in full measure, with the old irritant of Dissent:

This was the Fruit the private Spirit brought;
 Occasion'd by great Zeal and little Thought.
 While Clouds unlearn'd, with rude Devotion warm,
 About the Sacred Viands buzz and swarm,
 The Fly-blown Text creates a crawling Brood,
 And turns to Maggots what was meant for Food. (I)

Here calm criticism has given place to virulent, figured satire of the sort in which Pope was later to excel; the poet intensifies emotion, vivifies contumely, and appeals to the imagination rather than to the mind. Satire will out; and even in the concluding lines, when he explains his choice of a style designed for instruction, Dryden cannot resist a parting satiric shot. He was, of course, inclined to digress satirically, given the least opportunity; but the element of satire in this poem is, at least in essence, a deliberate heightening and reinforcing of the argument in non-logical terms. Throughout the poem Dryden shows no love for the monochrome of continuous argumentation; his claim to set out his point of view in a plain and direct way is no more than the legitimate pretence of a poet whose real aim is to persuade by as many techniques of style as he can press into service.

Note, p. 468.

I. Lives, ed. G.B. Hill, 1905, i, pp. 444-5.

333-AIC

Simon's history:

A Treasury which is country-bourne day
They found, and therefore may help:
Have been in various readings, and translations
And without further more than 'd' notations
Where we say the first errors have been made
Both in the original and the translator's hand:
How various, regular, intervals have prevailed,
And were intelligible has said.

340-18; 340-2

Towards the end of the poem, the descriptive simile and the sheer violence of
Astonish return in full measure, with the old friend of Mankind:

This was the fruit the private Spirit brought;
Occasion'd by great Soul and little thought,
While Greats were left, with this devotion vain,
About the Sacred Volume pass and turn,
The fly-blown text creates a crawling brood,
And turns to maggots what was meant for food.

Here only criticism has given place to vivandant, figured simile of the sort in
which we was later to excel; the poet internalized emotion, vivified consciously,
and appeals to the imagination rather than to the mind. Nature will out; and even
in the concluding lines, when he explains his choice of a simile destined for the
attention, Dryden cannot resist a parting satiric shot. It was, of course, foolish
to digress satirically, given the least opportunity; but the element of satire
in this poem is, at least in essence, a deliberate juxtaposition and reinforcing of
the argument in non-logical terms. Throughout the poem Dryden shows no love for the
homotone of continuous argumentation; his claim to set out his point at row in
a plain and direct way is no more than the legitimate pretence of a poet whose re-
alm is to persuade by an easy technique of style as he can press into service.

--- 3 ---

When Dryden resumes religious controversy five years later, in The Hind and the Panther, his approach to the problems of verse argument has considerably altered. Both his intentions and his achievements in The Hind are more complex and more varied. He repeats the practice of providing the reader with a prefatory guide on the style which he has tried to use; but he has now abandoned his earlier pretence that verse apologetics demand a uniformly straightforward and prosaic treatment:

The first Part, consisting most in general Characters and Narrations, I have endeavour'd to raise, and give it the Majestic Turn of Heroic Poesie. The second being Matter of Dispute, and chiefly concerning Church Authority, I was oblig'd to make as plain and perspicuous as possibly I cou'd; yet not wholly neglecting the Numbers, though I had frequent Occasions for the Magnificence of Verse. The third, which has more of the Nature of Domestick Conversation, is, or ought to be more free and familiar than the two former.

Dryden shows here, as in every department of his writing, a regard for the propriety of style and theme. The style proper to this kind of poem has been seriously and methodically considered; the poet is artist as well as controversialist, and he has not confined himself to a bald statement of the pros and cons of his theme. He declares that The Hind 'was neither impos'd on me nor so much as the Subject given me by any man. It was written during the last Winter and the beginning of this Spring; though with long interruptions of ill health and other hindrances'; and it has all the appearance of leisurely and studied composition. In the first part, a subject-matter which naturally encourages plain, direct writing is deliberately enriched with art; in the second, Dryden again attempts 'the middle kind of writing' which he had tried experimentally in Religio Laici; and the style of the third part is designed to be familiar and colloquial. He does not, however, keep rigidly to this scheme. Dr. Johnson detected a lapse in the first part; Dryden, would, says Johnson, have succeeded in giving a majestic turn to his poem 'had not an opportunity of satire, which he cannot forbear, fallen sometimes in his way; and, similarly,

The second and third parts he professes to have reduced to diction more familiar and more suitable to dispute and conversation; the difference, however, is not very easily perceived: the first has familiar, and the two others have sonorous lines. (I)

I cannot serve my purpose better than by showing, in some detail, how accurate Johnson is in his criticism. Dryden admits that there is a variety of levels in the style of the poem; he ranges from the heroic to the familiar, to suit the changes in his subject-matter. That subject-matter, however, demands also a persuasive, satirical, or rhetorical presentation at every level of style, if the general apologetic intention is to be realised; and the requirements of strong and effective verse 'argument' cut across the purely formal distinctions of style which the poet makes in his preface.

In the first part, which Dryden endeavoured to give 'the Majestic Turn of Heroic Poesie', he rises at one place as near to the style of Milton as his own poetic talents will allow:

Thy throne is darkness in th' abyss of light,
 A blaze of glory that forbids the sight;
 O teach me to believe These thus conceal'd,
 And search no further than Thy self reveal'd;
 But her alone for my Directour take
 Whom Thou hast promis'd never to forsake!
 My thoughtless youth was wing'd with vain desires,
 My manhood, long misled by wandring fires,
 Follow'd false lights; and when their glimps was gone,
 My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
 Such was I, such by nature still I am,
 Be Thine the glory, and be mine the shame.

i, 66-77

On the other hand, many of his figures are markedly unheroic and familiar; and in description and criticism he runs easily into a low style of satire. The extended simile in which he describes the compromising attitude of the Panther -- 'mere mock Queen of a divided Herd'-- to authority, recalls the opening of Religio Laici, but it moves on a lower, much plainer level of style; the quiet majesty is absent:

Then, as the Moon who first receives the light
 By which she makes our nether regions bright,
 So might she shine, reflecting from afar
 The rays she borrowed from a better Star;
 Big with the beams which from her mother flow,
 And reigning o'er the rising tides below.

i, 501-507

The undercurrent of passionate concernment, which rises to the surface in such passages as the personal confession quoted above, quietly colours much of Dryden's

argument and statement with satire. Arguments are reinforced, not by repetitions and refinements or by examples (the normal methods of elaboration), but by rhetorical declamation and by pointed criticism of opposing points of view. When he discusses miracles, for example, Dryden's voice rises and grows sharp in rhetorical question and satiric comment, and steadies itself in assured declamation:

Could He his god-head veil with flesh and bloud,
And not veil these again to be our food?
His grace in both is equal in extent;
The first affords us life, the second nourishment.
And if he can, why all this frantick pain
To construe what his clearest words contain,)
And make a riddle what He made so plain?)
To take up half on trust, and half to try,
Name it not faith, but bungling biggotry.
Both knave and fool the Merchant we may call
To pay great sums and to compound the small.
Rest then, my soul, from endless anguish freed;
Nor sciences thy guide, nor sense thy creed.
Faith is the best insurer of thy bliss....

i, I34-8

Description also shifts to satiric comment and attack when Dryden's favourite target, Dissent, looms into view; the Presbyterian wolf appears

with belly Gaunt and famish'd face:
Never was so deform'd a beast of grace.
His ragged tail betwixt his legs he wears
Close clap'd for shame, but his rough crest he rears,)
And pricks up his predestinating ears.)
His wild disorder'd walk, his hagger'd eyes,
Did all the bestial citizens surprize.

i, I6I-7

This is not good satiric portraiture: it is too indiscriminate a blend of animal characteristics, physical appearance, and allegorical symbolism, and illustrates in little the weaknesses of Dryden's use of the beast-fable technique; and it does not belong to the higher, more refined type of satire which would have been proper to a poem designed to illustrate 'the Majestic Turn of Heroic Poesie'. There is more of his accustomed weight and power in the mixture of irony and sarcasm with which he describes Luther:

.. (the).. Arabian Prophet with delights
Of sense, allur'd his eastern Proselytes.
The jolly Luther, reading him, began
T'interpret Scriptures by his Alcoran;

Note, p. 171.

I. With this type of satire, Dryden's love of emphatic alliteration returns: e.g.,

pricks up his predestinating ears i, 165

Name it not faith, but bungling bigotry i 142

The full fed Mussulman goes fat to heav'n 377

Compare also:

And here and there you snap some silly soul iii, 414

With Garden-Gods, and barking Deities,
More thick than Ptolemy had stuck the Skies iii, IO46

The Jolly Farmer, reading him, began
To indurate his lungs by his Alsatian;
Of course, Alsatian his eastern Preselytes,
... (the) ... Arabian Prophet with delights

To grub the thorns beneath our tender feet
 And make the paths of Paradise more sweet:
 Bethought him of a wife, e'er half way gone,
 (For 'twas uneasy travailing alone,) (I)
 And in this masquerade of mirth and love,
 Mistook the bliss of heav'n for Bacchanals above. i, 375-87

If anywhere in the first part Dryden rises to the level of the rhetorical satire of Absalom and Achitophel, it is in his outburst on the English Reformation, to which he has worked up through a series of satiric passages of gradually increasing intensity:

a lawless Prince
 By luxury reform'd incontinence,)
 By ruins, charity; by riots abstinence.)
 Confessions, fasts and penance set aside;)
 Oh with what ease we follow such a guide!)
 Where souls are starv'd and senses gratifi'd!)
 Where marriage pleasures midnight pray'r supply,)
 And mattin bells (a melancholy cry))
 Are tun'd to merrier notes, increase and multiply.) i, 361-9

In the second part of the poem, Dryden drops into a fairly consistent familiar style in the conversation of the Panther and the Hind; he writes in the tones of amicable discussion, with less rhetorical art than he used in the first part. The core of this section is direct and natural verse writing; but at one extreme, there are occasional bursts of satire which are completely apt to this semi-dramatic type of disputation; and at the other, Dryden's tones grow emphatic, heavy and sonorous, and his style takes on a rhetorical dress very different from the merely 'plain and perspicuous', when he speaks of the Roman Church. The central task of the whole poem, indeed, is to set the Church in the best and clearest light; and Dryden properly and effectively enforces his apologetic here with restrained but moving rhetoric:

One in herself, not rent by Schism, but sound,
 Entire, one solid shining Diamond,
 Not Sparkles shattered into Sects like you,
 One is the Church, and must be to be true. ii, 526-9

Thus one, thus pure, behold her largely spread
 Like the fair Ocean from her Mother-Bed;
 From East to West triumphantly she rides,
 All Shoars are water'd by her wealthy Tides.
 The Gospel-sound, diffus'd from Pole to Pole,
 Where winds can carry, and where waves can roll.
 The self same doctrin of the Sacred Page
 Convey'd to ev'ry clime, in ev'ry age. ii, 548-55

In the rhythmical sweep and rhetorical power of this passage, we have Dryden at his best; his tones underline the theme of Catholic majesty; and the brilliance, unity and solidity of the Church are suggested in the imagery of the single diamond and the wide-flung ocean. The whole panegyric on the Church, extending to more than one hundred lines, has a sustained energy and exaltation which the poet has carefully calculated. It rises in bold and assured accents from the low level of controversy---

Now to remove the last remaining doubt,
That even the blear-ey'd sects may find her out,
Behold what heavenly rays adorn her brows,
What from his Ward-robe her belov'd allows
To deck the wedding day of his unspotted spouse } ii, 515-9

--- persists in august and triumphant tones which contrast strongly and deliberately with what has gone before; and closes with a description of the miraculous reactions of Nature to the paean of praise, which gives it the appearance of a revelation (ll. 649-52).

Dryden says in his preface that the style of the third part is, or ought to be, easier and more familiar than that of the other two. Some of his dialogue is indeed coarser and more freely colloquial than that of the second part; and the poet's bias is maintained in strong, blunt satire. The Hind, for example, has some tart and highly objectionable gossip on the illiâit relations of the Panther and the Wolf, and on the 'sons of Latitude' in the Anglican Church (lines 143 ff, 163 ff); and the portrait of 'King Buzzard', strong rather than graceful, belongs with the 'characters' of Shimei, Corah and the rest, rather than with the portraits of Achitophel and Zimri. This is Dryden's close, weighted, hard-hitting satiric style at its best:

Black-brow'd and bluff, like Homer's Jupiter,
Broad-back'd and Brawny built for Love's delight,
A Prophet form'd to make a female Proselyte. iii, II44-6

Prompt to assaile, and careless of defence,
Invulnerable in his Impudence,
He dares the World, and, eager for a name,
He thrusts about, and justles into fame.
Frontless and satyr-proof, he scow'rs the streets,
And runs an Indian muck at all he meets. iii, II83-8

In the typical sweep and rhetorical power of this passage, we have indeed at

his best; his tones underline the theme of Chaucer's and the brilliance

of the single dis-

the Church, extending to

and exaltation which the poet

accents from the low level

Note, p. 173.

I. Monks are 'crowing Chanticleers in Cloyster'd Walls' (iii, 1022, 1024); the phrase 'Chanticleer the white' is modelled on such Chaucerian phrases as 'Antigone the white', 'Antigone the shene' (Troilus & Criseyde, ii, 834, 887); the election of King Buzzard recalls the Parlement of Foules; and there is a good deal of astrological matter inset in Chaucerian style (e.g., iii, 511ff, 536, 598-600).

of controversy

How to remove the last remaining doubt
That even the bliss-ty'd score may find her out,
Hathid what heavenly rays adorn her brow,
What from his Waid-robe her below'd flows
To seek the wedding day of his unspotted spouse } ii, 511-5

--- persists in a great and triumphant tone which contrast strongly and deliberately
ly with what has gone before; and closes with a description of the miraculous re-

section of nature to the praise of praise, which gives it the appearance of a re-

velation (ii, 549-53).

Dryden says in his preface that the style of the third part is, or ought to

be, easier and more familiar than that of the other two. Some of his disciples

indeed sooner and more freely colloquial than that of the second part; and the

poet's diction is maintained in strong, blunt native. The Hind, for example, has

some very and highly objectionable words on the slight relations of the Panther

and the Wolf, and on the 'sons of Latitudes' in the English Church (lines 153 ff.

158 ff.); and the portrait of 'King Buzzard', strong rather than graceful, belongs

with the 'characters' of Shmel, Gosh and the rest, rather than with the portrait

of Achitophel and Saur. This is Dryden's close, weighted, hard-hitting satire

style at its best:

Black-brow'd and dim, like Homer's Jupiter
Broad-backed and brassy built for love's delight,
A Prophet form'd to make a female proselyte. } ii, 114-6

From to assyle, and careless of defence
Invulnerable in his impudence,
He bars the world, and eager for a name,
He thrusts about, and jostles into fame,
Frowless and easy-proof, he scours the streets,
And runs an Indian march at all he meets. } ii, 118-8

On the other hand, there are rhetorical catalogues which raise the tone of the whole section, and occasional lifts to a higher level of style. The inset fable of the doves and the poultry provokes Dryden's refined sense of the mock-heroic; and there are many hints of that subtly humorous approach to animal character, raising it boldly to human level in heroic terms, which Dryden developed later in the Georgics and in Chaucer's tale of Chanticleer. Dryden, I think, owes a good deal to Chaucer even at this date; he has Chaucer's gentle humout, which pervades the beast-fable:

(I)

The swallow, priviledg'd above the rest,
 Of all the birds, as men's familiar guest,
 Pursues the Sun in summer brisk and bold,
 But wisely shuns the persecuting cold:
 Is well to chancels and to chimnies known,
 Though 'tis not thought she feeds on smোক alone.

This merry Chorister had long possess'd
 Her summer seat, and feather'd well her nest:
 Till frowning skys began to change their chear,
 And time turn'd up the wrong side of the year. iii, 427-38

The blend of rhetoric, selected 'poetic' diction, and humanising humour in the picture of the swallow community looks forward to the style of Dryden's Georgics

IV:

Who but the Swallow now triumphs alone?
 The Canopy of heaven is all her own;
 Her youthfull offspring to their haunts repair;
 And glide along in glades, and skim in air,
 And dip for insects in the purling springs,
 And stoop on rivers to refresh their wings.
 Their mothers think a fair provision made,
 That ev'ry son can live upon his trade.

So thick they couple, in so short a space,
 That Martyn's marr'age offerings rise apace;
 Their ancient houses, running to decay,
 Are furbished up and cemented with clay;
 They teem already; stores of eggs are laid,
 And breeding mothers call Lucina's aid. iii, 566-84

The familiar style is greatly modified and refined in such passages as that; and Dryden sometimes leaves it far behind, striking out fine poetic word-pictures and sound patterns:

T'augment their woes, the winds began to move
 Debate in air, for empty fields above,
 Till Boreas got the skies, and poured smain
 His ratling hail-stones mix'd with snow and rain. iii, 618-20

Notes, p. 174.

I. The diction of the whole poem is much more complex and varied than Dryden's preface suggests. There are, for example, besides familiar words and phrases in the satiric passages, many classical uses and echoes of Latin literature:-- confess'd (i, 99); seed.. endu'd with souls (i, 17; cf. Tacitus' application of induere to the magnum animum, Ann, ii, 7); compress'd (i, 351-2; in the sexual sense common in Latin comedy); obnoxious to, emulous of, studious of (i, II --cf. P.Lost, ix, 1094; ii, 712; iii, 675).

Miltonic echoes are numerous: for example--- 'revolving many a melancholy thought' (i, 512; cf. P.L. iv, 31); 'long misled by wandering fires' (i, 73; cf. P.L. v, 177); 'after a grave Consult' (iii, 1108; P.L. i, 798); 'heroe's make, half humane, half divine' (i, 10; P.L. iii, 44); Christ the 'blessed Pan', 'mighty Pan' (i, 284; ii, 711; cf. Nativity Ode, st.viii); 'the fallen Crew' (i, 450; Nativity Ode, st. xxv, P.L. i, 51-- the associations are all apt for Dryden's reference to schismatics); 'Giant-Brood' (ii, 535; P.L. i, 576); 'sagacious Pow'r of Hounds, and Death' (ii, 5-6; cf. the Miltonic zeugma, e.g., P.L. i, 501-2).

2. Rehabilitations and other Essays, (Shelley, Dryden, and Mr. Eliot), Oxford, 1939, p. 9.

Like Snows in warmth that mildly pass away,
Dissolving in the Silence of Decay iii, I27I-2

Others our Hind of folly will endite,
To entertain a dang'rous guest by night,
Let those remember that she cannot dye,
Till rolling time be lost in round eternity. iii, I6-19

The Hind has affinities, in both diction and style, with Dryden's poems in the grand manner -- whether in seriously elevated passages or in the mock-heroic strain. Although the style of this poem is generally simpler, easier and less elevated than that of Absalom, for example, and follows the indications of its preface in the general tonal contrasts of the three sections, it is yet less plain and unvaried than that of Religio Laici. Its fabric of conversational argument and satire cannot conceal many a glint of the higher, latinate poetic manner, echoes of other poets, and deliberate rhetorical heightening when the poet's apologetic intentions demanded it. Here, as in Absalom, the broad contrast of tones and styles in a large poem serve the poet's main purpose admirably. Large contrasts in style are an important aspect of Dryden's whole poetic art; and it may be failure to realise this which misleads Mr. C.S. Lewis into making the curious assertion that The Hind is not a poem, but 'simply a name which we give for convenience to a number of pieces of good description ... which have all been yoked together by external violence'. That there is sometimes a lack of coherence in this poem I readily admit; the theme is too large and complex for Dryden, who had not a first-rate mind for extensive disputation on abstract subjects; and his choice of the beast-fable framework was not a happy one, especially since he complicated it with prolonged dialogue and subsidiary tales. Mr. Lewis, however, over-states his case.

----- 4 -----

In both Religio Laici and The Hind and the Panther there is much mere versified argument; Dryden recognised, as Professor Dobrée puts it, that 'English poetry, if it were to develop, must recover some of the properties of prose.. which..it was in danger of losing, those especially of clarity, directness of statement, im-

Notes, p. 175.

1. Variety of Ways; Discussions on Six Authors, Oxford, 1932, p.9.

2. The Poetry of John Dryden, Cambridge, 1931, p. 179.

(I)

mediacy of effect and of nervous strength and suppleness'; and of this, these two poems are good practical examples. On the other hand, there is a strong element of poetic logic in both. Dryden's arguments, considered by themselves, lack coherence and profundity -- he has not the breadth of mind and the eye for significant detail in argument which the apologist needs; and no reader with a serious interest in theological dialectic, either in Dryden's day or in ours, could be convinced by the reasoning in the directly argumentative parts of his poems, or by his choice of material for debate. But the illumination of argument by rhetoric, by occasional exaltation and by repeated satiric thrusts, provides a varied, colourful, and imaginative poetic pattern which makes its own appeal and carries a conviction of its own. Mr. Van Doren hints at the true line of approach to these poems: they cannot, he says, be exhibited with any success in fragments; their strength lies in what De Quincey called their "sequaciousness". They must be known in all their ins and outs before they can begin to impress a stranger with the variety yet continuity of their pattern'. Their essential unity is not formal, but stylistic. The darkness and light, the flats and the elevations, the subtle and calculated shifts in tone from the familiar and conversational through the satiric to the majestic, are the real sources of the appeal of Dryden's persuasive writing. These poems require a reader whose mind is kept open at all times both to dialectic and to poetry, if they are to make that total impact, which the poet intended, on mind, imagination, disposition and emotion. They illustrate Dryden's whole poetic character: his delight in reflection and controversy, in description and narrative, in satirical assaults and good-humoured mockery, in grave rhetoric and familiar banter, and in the artistic disposition of widely asserted styles in contrast with one another. In logical structure and in argumentation itself, they have many weaknesses which it is not my business here to discuss or defend; in style they are the product of bold and complicated experiments in a new type of verse argument, with all the poet's power and versatility drawn into commission.

-----O-----

VII

THE PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES

The theatrical function of Prologue and Epilogue---

shock-tactics-----variable conditions in the theatre,

and the principle of decorum. The panegyric style-----

mock-heroic-----colloquial allusion to contemporary

fashions and events-----satire-----the character-sketch.

-----oooOooo-----

BAYES. And I would fain ask your judgements, now, which of them would do best for the Prologue? For, you must know there is, in nature, but two ways of making very good Prologues. The one is civility, by insinuation, good language, and all that to...steal your plaudit from the courtesie of the Auditors: the other, by making use of certain personal things, which may keep a hank upon such censuring persons, as cannot otherways, A gad, in nature, be hindred from being too free with their tongues.

The Rehearsal.

THE PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES

Notes, p. 177.

1. On the general history of the prologue and epilogue, and the development of the vogue in the seventeenth century, see Miss Autrey N. Wiley, Rare Prologues and Epilogues (1642-1700), London, 1940, pp. xxiii-xxxviii.
2. An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber (1740), pp. 157, 115, 157; quoted by Miss Wiley, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxiv-v.
3. From the lists given by Miss Wiley, *op. cit.*, pp. 329 ff., Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Bracegirdle, Haynes and Betterton took the lead.

And I would have you judge
 which of them would be best for the Prologue
 you must know there is in nature, but two ways of
 making very good Prologues. The one is civilly
 to flatter the good language, and all that is
 your friend from the courtesy of the audience.
 the other, by making use of certain personal things
 which may keep a mark upon some certain persons
 as sacred otherwise, & can, in nature, be hindered
 from being too free with their company.

The Prologue

The two groups of original poems so far considered illustrate aspects of Dryden's persuasive style ----- the style of a poet writing for a community about the affairs and interests of that community, and employing a wide range of poetic techniques to praise, discuss, assert, ridicule and condemn. In the satires and the religious poems, Dryden appeals to the humour and the malice, the emotion, the imagination, and the sense of right in his readers, no less than to their reason. In nature and intention, his poetry is public; he writes to provoke certain critical attitudes, emotional dispositions and rational convictions in his readers. I turn now to another type of 'persuasive' poetry, which made new and rather different demands on the poet's resources and versatility ----- the dramatic prologues and epilogues.

The theatrical occasion and the dramatic function of this type of verse have two important effects on content and style. In the first place, the prologue, whatever its apparent theme, introduces a play; and the actor who speaks the epilogue is generally one who has just appeared on the stage in a dramatic role. The prologue and epilogue are therefore, in some degree, dramatic parts, intimately related to the theatrical performance itself. In the second place, the primary function of the actor in prologue and epilogue is to amuse, cajole, flatter or entreat the audience, coaxing it into a mood of tolerant and excited anticipation before the play begins, and leaving it with a sense of satisfaction and approval after the play is done. (1) The theatrical importance of prologue and epilogue is suggested by the anxiety of the actors, in Dryden's day and after, to be allowed to speak these prefatory and concluding pieces. Colley Cibber refers to prologue-speaking as 'one of the hardest Parts, and the strongest Proofs of sound Elocution' in the actor's business; he tells of the difficulty he had in persuading a dramatic company to allow him to speak his own first prologue; and when Dryden asked him, a few years later, to speak both the prologue and the epilogue to The Pilgrim, 'this so particular Distinction was look'd on by the Actors, as something too extraordinary'. (2) A glance at the records of the Restoration stage shows that some of the most celebrated actors of the day took a large share of the honour and the pleasure of speaking prologues and epilogues. (3)

Notes, p. 178.

I. Wiley, op. cit., p. xxiii.

2. ibid., p. 23.

The circumstances in which prologue and epilogue were spoken, and the character of the speakers themselves, naturally encouraged a dramatic style. The size of the Restoration theatre, production conditions (especially in comedy), and the fact that the skilled actor speaks his prologue or epilogue in the role of mediator between an apprehensive dramatist and a critical audience, demanded an intimate style; and the function of these pieces, as a defence of the play, made unpretentiousness, directness, good-humour and wit essential to success. Further, the attention given to prologues and epilogues in the theatre itself, and the closer criticism of the verses by wits and savourers of smartness and humour, when they appeared in miscellanies and on broad-sheets, encouraged the author to lavish care and poetic skill on the style and finish of his work. The prologues and epilogues of a good poet are often, for this reason, set pieces of considerable intrinsic merit, separable from the plays, and having their own clearly-marked characteristics and aims. Miss Autrey N. Wiley's summary of the purposes which prologues and epilogues served in the seventeenth century theatre gives some idea of the range of styles and tones in this type of verse:

The prologue was a petition, an organ of censure, an apology or excuse, a satire, a supplicatory address, a grace before a feast, a bill of fare, and a dedication; the epilogue, a plea for pardon, an excuse, an enquiry into censure, a guide to severer judgments, an entreaty for grace, a benediction, a piece of flattery, an arrant bribery, a satire, a petition, a glad flourish, and a swan's note. (1)

The Restoration dramatists, anxious to delight their audiences, often indulged in startling novelties. The Prologue to Crowne's Calisto (1674/5), for example, was an elaborate pageant which stretched almost to the extent of a court masque: 'the curtain is drawn up, and there appears a Nymph leaning on an Urne, representing the River Thames, attended by two Nymphs, representing Peace and Plenty.. On the opening of the Scene, lamenting voices are heard on both sides of the Theatre, at which, the Nymph of the River seems affrighted'. A great variety of pleasing surprises was provided for the audiences, from colourful episodes like Crowne's down to the farcical animal pieces epitomised by the comedian Haynes, who rode a donkey on to the stage and brought so much applause

Notes, p. 179.

1. Wiley, op. cit., pp. 198-203.

2. See Summers, iii, pp. 514-5, for the history of the jest.

3. The text of my quotations in this chapter is that of W.B. Gardner, The Prologues and Epilogues of John Dryden, A Critical Edition, New York, 1951.

4. Spectator, 341. Cf. Addison's letter to Tickell, praising a prologue for 'a Light Line to raise Mirth', Letters, ed. Graham, Oxford, 1941, p. 405.

and mirth from the audience that he took almost an hour over the Epilogue. Haynes was much given to the comic use of animals on the stage; and he also took great freedoms with his author's text, introducing 'pleasant Digressions' and omitting parts of the original script. Dryden knew the theatrical value of surprise and novelty in prologue and epilogue; and the vivacious Nell Gwyn came to his aid more than once. Her appearance as Prologue in the first part of The Conquest of Granada, 'maliciously and dramatically jesting with the audience 'under the pent-house of a hat as large as a cart-wheel' is a celebrated joke of the Restoration stage; and theatrical surprise is heightened by vigorous colloquial language in the Epilogue to Tyrannick Love, 'spoken by Mrs. Ellen, when she was to be carried off dead by the Bearers':

To the Bearer. Held, are you mad? you damn'd confounded Dog,
 I am to rise and speak the Epilogue.
To the Audience. I come, kind Gentlemen, strange news to tell ye,
 I am the Ghost of poor departed Nelly.
 Sweet Ladies, be not frightened, I'll be civil,
 I'm what I was, a little harmless Devil.
 For after Death, we Sprights, have just such Natures;
 We had for all the World, when humane Creatures;
 And therefore I that was an Actress here,
 Play all my Tricks in Hell, a Goblin there. I-I-O (3)

This Epilogue was deservedly popular in Dryden's time; and it was highly praised by Addison in his contention that a dramatic epilogue ought to make an audience merry. Dryden practised such shock-tactics infrequently, and with restraint, in comparison with the extravagances of some of his fellow-dramatists. He was too good an artist, and too anxious to take opportunities for the display of poetic versatility, to over-work this essentially trivial technique. Generally, his attitude to the writing of prologues and epilogues is more artistic and serious, however lightly witty some of the results may be.

The principle of decorum is applied in this, as in every other category of his work. The conditions in which his plays were produced were not invariable; his audiences had not always the same social and intellectual make-up; and different types of play called for a variety of styles in prologue and epilogue. The Prologue to The Indian Queen, for example, is really an integral part of the play

Notes, p. 180.

1. The Poetry of John Dryden, Cambridge, 1931, pp. 141 ff.
2. On this type, see Wiley, op. cit., pp. 116-25.
3. Works of Dryden, 1808, x, p. 313.

To the heaver, hold, ere you start, you damn'd confounded set,
I am to rise and speak the English.
To the Auditors, I come, kind Gentlemen, arrange news to tell ye,
I am the Guest of your departed Helly.
Sweet Ladies, be not frighted, I'll be civil,
I'm what I was, a little harmless Devil.
For after Death, we brighten, have just such features;
We had for all the World, when James Greatness;
And therefore I that was an Actress here,
Play all my Tricks in Hell, a Devil there. (3)

This dialogue was generally popular in Dryden's time; and it was highly praised by Addison in his contention that a dramatic epilogue ought to make an audience merry. Dryden proceeded such check-comics infrequently, and with restraint, in comparison with the extravagances of some of his fellow-dramatists. He was too good an artist, and too anxious to take opportunities for the display of poetic versatility, to over-work this essentially trivial technique. Generally his attitude to the writing of prologues and epilogues is more artistic and serious, however lightly witty some of the results may be.

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(and in this it is exceptional); it takes the form of a dramatic scene, with background music, and dialogue between an Indian boy and girl which runs on, in theme and style, into the first scene of the play itself. The Prologue to The Tempest, being an introduction to the new version of one of 'honour'd' Shakespeare's plays, is at once an author's *apologia* and a piece of literary praise; and it is accordingly written in gracefully turned and figured verse. Similarly, the Prologue to Aureng-zebe, which blends Dryden's critical justification of blank verse with a tribute to Shakespeare; the Epilogue to the second part of The Conquest of Granada, in which he contrasts the drama of 'the last age' with that of his own day; the Epilogue to Albion and Albanus, with its didactic comments on plain dealing; and the Prologue to Troilus and Cressida, 'spoken by Mr. Betterton, Representing the Ghost of Shakespeare' ----- all these require, in different degrees according to their theme, a style midway between august rhetoric and the directly familiar and colloquial. In the Epilogue to Love Triumphant, a farewell to the stage, the style rises from characteristic banter and playful satire to a rather more dignified level. Mr. Van Doren has classified the prologues and epilogues roughly, according to subject: (i) the celebration of theatrical occasions; (ii) compliments to distinguished audiences and visitors; (iii) literary criticism; (iv) introductions for young dramatists; (v) criticism of the audiences for their low taste; (vi) comments on the manners of town and theatre; (vii) 'those which seem to have been calculated to please through sheer brutal innuendo'; (viii) political topics; (ix) personal or controversial verses which take the audience into the poet's confidence. This classification of themes, by implication, emphasises the variety of approaches and styles in these poems.

Of the influence of audience on style, the best examples are Dryden's contributions to the vogue of prologues and epilogues spoken before the University of Oxford. Scott succinctly makes the point:

In the Oxford prologues... the audience furnished by that seat of the Muses, as of more competent judgment, are addressed with more respectful deference by the poet. He seems, in these, to lay down his rules of criticism, as it were under correction of superior judges; and intermingles them with such compliments to the taste and learning of the members of the university, as he disdains to bestow on the motley audience of the metropolis. (3)

Dryden pays eloquent and gracious compliments to the University, as the academy of criticism, and as a learned retreat which offers 'quiet and content of mind' far from 'noisefull Towns and Courts'. Compliments are greatly strengthened by comparisons; and the dignity of Oxford, the good taste of its academic critics, and the quiet graces of the scholarly life, are emphasised by vigorous contrast with the conditions in the London theatres:

(1)

No gaudy nothings here come in halfe drunke
 To eate China orange or make love to punke
 To fly at vizard maske, talk non-sense loude
 And with their noise outvye beare baiting crowde. (2)

The Learn'd in Schools, where Knowledge first began,
 Studies with Care th' Anatomy of Man;
 Sees Vertue, Vice, and Passions in their Cause,
 And Fame from Science, not from Fortune draws.
 So Poetry, which is in Oxford made
 An Art, in London onely is a Trade.
 There Haughty Dunces whose unlearned Pen
 Could ne'er Spell Grammar, would be reading Men.
 Such build their Poems the Lucretian way,
 So many Huddled Atoms make a Play,
 And if they hit in Order by some Chance,
 They call that Nature, which is Ignorance.

Prologue to the
University, 1673,
 24-35.

Dryden skilfully plays off two styles against one another, a technique which is seen at its best in the satires and ratiocinative poems. From direct satiric attacks on the baseness of town life and the crass tastes of London audiences, he rises into elegantly decorative compliment:

Converse so chast, and so striot Vertue shown,
 As might Apolle with the Muses own.
 Till our return we must despair to find
 Judges so just, so knowing, and so kind.

Epilogue to the
University, 1674, 29-32

- If His Ambition may those Hopes pursue,
 Who with Religion loves Your Arts and You,
 Oxford to Him a dearer Name shall be,
 Than His own Mother University.
 Thebes did His Green, unknowing Youth ingage,
 He chuses Athens in His Riper Age.

Prologue to the Uni-
versity, 1681?, 33-8.

These Oxford prologues and epilogues are exercises in concentrated panegyric; the poet forsakes truth in the service of art. Dryden sent Rochester copies of the 1673 Prologue and Epilogue, with the observation that their success shows 'how easy 'tis

to passe any thing upon an University; and how grosse flattery the learned will
(I)
endure'.

Eulogistic prologues and epilogues addressed to distinguished visitors to
(2)
the theatre were an established type of verse compliment from Elizabethan times;
and to this tradition Dryden, an accomplished panegyrist, makes a substantial
contribution. Here, as in the Oxford poems, a graceful and figurative style is
called for. Charles and his queen are hailed, in the Prologue to The Unhappy Fav-
ourite, as harbingers of peace (probably after the Oxford Parliament of 1681), and
the poet calls for national unity and contentment in a blend of rhetorical didact-
icism and figured compliment. The most beautiful of these addresses to royalty is
the Prologue To the Dutchess, on her Return from Scotland (1682). It opens with a
fine example of the mythological extravagance of seventeenth century panegyric:

When Factious Rage to cruel Exile, drove
The Queen of Beauty, and the Court of Love;
The Muses droop'd, with their forsaken Arts,
And the sad Cupids broke their useless Darts;

and it gradually rises in tone to slow, dignified, and gracefully measured rhetor-
ical adulation. Here Dryden's rhythmical control and his strong, pure, majestic
utterance are at their best:

For Her the weeping Heav'ns become serene,
For Her the Ground is clad in cheerfull green:
For her the Nightingales are taught to sing,
And Nature has for her delay'd the Spring.
The Muse resumes her long-forgotten Lays,
And Love, restor'd, his Ancient Realm surveys;
Recalls our Beauties, and revives our Plays.
His Wast Dominions peoples once again,
And from Her presence dates ~~his~~ Second Reign.

27-33

Distemper'd Zeal, Sediton, canker'd Hate,
No more shall vex the Church, and tear the State;
No more shall Faction civil Discords move,
Or onely discords of tee tender Love:
Discord like that of Musicks various parts,
Discord that makes the harmony of Hearts,
Discord that onely this dispute shall bring,
Who best shall love the Duke, and serve the King.

39-46

This finely-woven panegyric style is important for the appreciation of other types of prologue and epilogue. In many categories of his poetry, Dryden puts the verse rhetoric and the elevated style, of which he had constant command, to comic or satiric use; and he frequently uses the devices and the style of verse compliment, and the grander prologue manner, for comic and burlesque effects in the theatre. Decorative classical allusions, for example, are worked unexpectedly into the texture of a conversational piece: in the Epilogue to The Wild Gallant, the speaker prays that the poet shall be granted 'Leander's Destiny', in being spared if this play is bad, but in being drowned if he dares to make a second attempt; and, in the style of Mac Flecknoe, a Mercury in the Epilogue to The Indian Emperour brings satirical greeting from Phoebus:

To all his Sens by what e're Title known,
 Whether of Court, of Coffee-house, or Town;
 From his most Mighty Sons, whose confidence
 Is plac'd in lofty sound, and humble sence,
 Ev'n to his little Infants of the Time
 Who Write new Songs, and trust in Tune and Rhyme.

2-8

Extended simile, one of the most frequent adornments of the panegyric and of Dryden's most exalted prologue and epilogue style, is often skilfully manipulated to serve a satiric purpose in a familiar context. The progress of the young dramatist in his art is compared mock-heroically, in the Prologue to the Wild Gallant 'Reviv'd', with that of 'some raw Squire' whose progress runs from the seduction of the dairy-maid at home to the life of a city rake. In the Prologue to The Conquest of Granada (II), the poet prophesies that the theatre wits will guess at the plot of this sequel,

..... as when Vizard Masque appears in Pit,
 Straight, every man who thinks himself a Wit,
 Perks up; and, managing his Comb, with grace,
 With his white Wigg sets off his Nut-brown Face:
 That done, bears up to th' Prize, and views each Limb,
 To know her by her Rigging and her Trimm:
 Then, the whole noise of Fopps to wagers go,
Pox on her, 't must be shee; and Damm'ee no.

13-20

The leisurely development of the simile, with a wealth of colloquialism and inset dramatic mimicry, adds greatly to the comic effect; and, spoken by a vigorous

actor, this prologue would woo an audience into amused tolerance, for the resumption of the heroic play.

The most common variety of amusing comparison, in the prologues and epilogues is the sexual simile ---- a type which effectively bridges the gap between the figurative style and the wittily intimate, familiar manner which this type of verse generally required. The poet draws his material from the rich fund of sexual allusion and imagery provided by the comedy and the town life of his age. Thus, for example, the dramatist in the Prologue to An Evening's Love is compared to a husband who married his muse in ecstasy, and is now compelled, for decency's sake, after the honeymoon is over,

To strain himself, in complaisance to you:
To write in pain, and counterfeit a bliss,
Like the faint smackings of an after kiss;

8-10

and the whole poem is a tissue of witty, if coarse, sexual analogies. In the Epilogue to The Conquest of Granada (I), the fame of a dramatist is compared to the easily won and as easily lost affections of a 'little Mistriss of the town'; the old poet, who struggles on in the hope that his early success may return to him, is like an old lover who grows more fond as he grows impotent; and here again, sexual imagery is sustained throughout the poem. The audience at the ill-appointed theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields are humorously consoled with the arch observation that

The worse the Lodging is, the more the Love.
For much good Pastime, many a dear sweet Hug
Is stoln in Garrets on the humble Rugg.

Prologue for the Women, 8-10.

The sexual imagery and innuendo in these poems is not always in the foreground; Dryden provides much dubious comedy by an initial simile, with subsequent up-thrusts of sexual reference at later stages, so that the appetite and the attention of a seasoned audience is maintained to the end.

Dryden forges another intimate link between actor and audience, by his frequent references to current events and fashions, couched in lively colloquial language. He talks to the house in a way which implies (and therefore invites) the aud-

Notes, p. 185.

1. Prologue and Epilogue to The Wild Gallant, 'Reviv'd';
Epilogue to The Indian Emperour; Epilogue to The Con-
quest of Granada (I).

2. In the 1673 Prologue, an opening passage of high com-
pliment is followed by satire on the city poets; and
in the Epilogue, the satire becomes much more direct
and slashing, as Dryden turns to town entertainments.
Cf. the Oxford Prologues of 1674, 1680, and 1681.

ience's sympathy with his point of view, colouring and vivifying his allusions with the slang words of the initiated and with dramatic mimicry, and seducing his audience to acquiescence by a chatty intimacy of tone. The wild habits of the rake, who frequents the notorious district round Whetstones Park, and rollicks through the town at night, breaking windows and leading the watch a merry dance; the threat of the press-gang, and the incompetence of train-bands; the conversation of the coffee-house wits; the licentiousness of town society; the thinning-out of 'Fop-corner' by war (I) ----- all these, and much more, are drawn in to enliven and amuse. One example will serve to illustrate the blend of chatty reference to current events with a neatly turned, if familiar, satiric style:

Lord, how reform'd and quiet we are grown,
 Since all our Braves and all our Wits are gone:
 Fop-corner now is free from Civil War:
 White-Wig and Vizard ~~make~~ no longer jar.
 France, and the Fleet, have swept the Town so clear,
 That we can act in peace, and you can hear.
 'Twas a sad sight, before they march'd from home,)
 To see our Warriours, in Red Wastecoats, come,)
 With hair tuck'd up, into our Tireing-room.)
 But 'twas more sad to hear their last Adieu,
 The Women sob'd, and swore they would be true;)
 And so they were, as long as e're they cou'd:)
 But powerful Guinee cannot be withstood,)
 And they were made of Play house flesh and bloud.)

• • • • •
 Now they are gone, 'tis dead Vacation here,
 For neither Friends nor Enemies appear.
 Poor pensive Punk now peeps ere Plays begin,
 Sees the bare Bench, and dares not venture in:
 But manages her last Half-crown with care,
 And trudges to the Mall, on foot, for Air.

Prologue to
Marriage A-la-Mode,
 I-14; 18-23.

Here the careful manipulation of rhythm and phrase, and the balance of plain and colourless statement with sudden flashes of humour or satire, recall the style of Dryden's formal satire. Generally, however, he does not treat his theatre audience to the strong contrasts, the subtle turns of phrase and shifts of emphasis, which mark his best satiric style. In the Oxford addresses, he ensures the sympathy of the audience by turning from poetic compliments to the intellect, the taste and the judgment of the University, to a straight-from-the-shoulder ridicule of the base tastes and habits of the city. (2) The satiric method is direct and obvious; here is little more than a rapidly moving stream of witty dramatic talk, effective

100
mainly in its torrents of words, its kaleidoscopic pictures, and its intimate colloquialism:

Heaven for our Sins this Summer has thought fit
To visit us with all the Plagues of Wit.

A French Troop first swept all things in its way,
But those Hot Monsieurs were too quick to stay;
Yet, to our Cost in that short time, we find
They left their Itch of Novelty behind.

Th'Italian Merry-Andrews took their place,
And quite Debauch'd the Stage with lewd Grimace;
Instead of Wit, and Humours, your Delight
Was there to see two Hobby-horses Fight,
Stout Scaramoucha with Rush Lance rode in,
And ran a Tilt at Centaure Arlequin.
For Love you heard how amorous Asses bray'd,
And Cats in Gutters gave their Serenade.
Nature was out of Countenance, and each Day
Some new born Monster shewn you for a Play. Oxford Epilogue, 1673,
5-20

In a wealth of breezy references to the drama and the theatrical scene, Dryden throws off 'images which find a mirrour in every mind' in the audience. In the Epilogue to Aureng-zebe, he makes fun of the popular demand for spectacle; in the Prologue to The Kind Keeper, he deplores the deterioration of satire and comedy ---

Satyre and Humour the same Fate have run,
And Comedy is sunk to Trick and Pun.
Now our Machining Lumber will not sell,
And you no longer care for Heav'n or Hell;
What stuff will please you next, the Lord can tell. 6-10

The same note is struck, rather more gravely, by Shakespeare's ghost before Troilus and Cressida; and again, in a familiar style, in the Prologue to King Arthur.

Sections of the audience itself come in for witty comment, no doubt enforced by the gestures and the dramatic manner of the actor who spoke the verses. Dryden pokes fun at the jury of the wits who remain after the play is over; 'Bear-garden Friends' who mark the theatre seats with dirty feet, flirt with orange-girls during the play, and strut on the benches between acts; and the 'Pratlers in the Pit'

Who either have, or who pretend to Wit:
These noisie Sirs so loud their Parts rehearse,
That oft the Play is silenc'd by the Farce. (I)

Even this kind of direct ridicule is, on occasions, raised to mock-heroic level by tones which belong to the graver prologue style; and here, too, the poet gives the actor considerable scope for histrionics:

But you, loud Sirs, who tho' your Curls look big,
Criticks in Plume and white Vallancy Wig,
Who lolling on our foremost Benches sit,
And still charge first, (the true forlorn of Wit)
So may your Hats your Feretops never press,
Untouch'd your Ribbons, sacred ~~be~~ your dress;
So may you slowly to Old Age advance,
And have th'excuse of Youth for Ignorance.
So may Fop corner full of noise remain,
And drive far off the dull attentive train;
So may your Midnight Scowrings happy prove,
And Morning Batt'ries force your way to Love;
So may not France your Warlike Hands recall,
But leave you by each others Swords to fall:
As you come here to ruffle Vizard Punk,
When seber, rail and roar when you are drunk.

Epilogue ..at the
Opening of the New
House, 7-24.

Dryden carries one of the most successful devices of his formal satire --the character-sketch-- into his theatrical verses: the wit and the critic, the fop, the 'vulgar', and the play-going woman of high or low social caste, are all outlined satirically in poem after poem. He is at his best in this type of lightning portraiture, however, when he gives full scope to the dramatic abilities of his actors, letting them speak in tones which have the realistic colour and unevenness of everyday conversation, and run easily into mimic dialogue. He transfixes the talkative critic, in lines which catch the accents of speech through deliberately irregular rhythms and colloquialism:

Pox, sayes another; here's so great a stir
With a son of a whore Farce that's regular,
A rule where nothing must decorum shock!
Dam' me 'tis as dull as dining by the clock.
An Evening! why the devil should we be vex
Whither he gets the Wench this night or next?

Epilogue to An
Evening's Love,
17-22

In the Epilogue to Aureng-zebe, an out-door scene is brought to vivid life:

Bold Brittons, at a brave Bear-garden Fray,
Are rouz'd: and, clatt'ring Sticks, cry, Play, play, play.
Mean time, your filthy Forreigner will stare,
And mutter to himself, Ha gens Barbare!
And, Gad, 'tis well he mutters; well for him;
Our Butchers else would tear him limb from limb.

22-27

The Epilogue to The Duke of Guise is written almost entirely in the broken, half-finished phrases, the ejaculations, the sudden questions, and the slang vocabulary of everyday speech; for example:

A Trimmer cry'd, (that heard me tell this Story)
 Fie, Mistress Cooke! faith you're too rank a Tory!
 Wish not Whiggs hang'd, but pity their hard Cases,
 You Women love to see Men make wry Faces.
 Pray, Sir, said I, don't think me such a Jew;
 I say no more, but give the Dev'l his due.
 Lentives, says he, suit best with our Condition.
 Jack Ketch, says I, 's an excellent Physician.
 I love no Bloud-----. Nor I, Sir, as I breath;
 But hanging is a fine dry kind of Death.

23-32

Dryden's approach to the business of writing prologues and epilogues is essentially dramatic, whether he is praising a distinguished patron or audience, celebrating an occasion, explaining a critical principle which his play illustrates or winning the tolerant and expectant audience over to his side with broad comedy and burlesque. Pieces like those just quoted are virtually one-man theatrical comedy in miniature, when spoken by a lively and versatile actor; but even when Dryden passes from theatrical prologue to panegyrical address, he does not often forget his dramatic responsibility, and provides his actor with a highly coloured, majestic, and potentially dramatic rhetoric. He appreciates the preferences, humours, and weaknesses of theatre audiences of all sorts, with a thoroughness unsurpassed in English dramatic history; he appreciates the functions of prologue and epilogue, and the vitally important uses to which the convention may be put by a professional playwright who must please to live; and into his service, as he exploits alike his audience and his literary form, he presses a variety of styles ranging from the elevated to the familiar. In this category of his verse, as in the others I have discussed, he distinguishes himself by his readiness to draw, for his immediate practical needs, on his whole poetic stock. Everywhere there is the same confident handling of material and style, the same boldly experimental attitude, and the same tremendous verve.

VIII

PANEGYRIC AND ODE

- 1. Metaphysical influences on Dryden's early work --- the development of an individual style --- rhetoric, extravagance, and hyperbole.
- 2. Adulation and the Ideal --- the artistic basis of panegyric.
- 3. The three Odes --- Exaltation, extravagance, and power.

-----oooOooo-----

Who says that fictions onely and false hair
Become a verse ? Is there in truth no beautie ?

HERBERT::Jordan.

That Donnes Anniversaries were profane and full of blasphemies: that he told Mr. Done if it had been written of the Virgin Marie it had been something; to which he answered that he described the Idea of a Woman, and not as she was.

Ben Jonson to Drummond.

III

PARABOLICAL

Note, p. 190. Metaphorical influences on Dryden's style

I. The Poetry of John Dryden, pp. 116 ff; Essays, i, pp. 7 and 35.

2. Adaptation and the ideal -- the artistic basis of

3. The three ages -- Exaltation, extravagance, and

She says that fiction only will false truth
become a virtue? Is there in truth no beauty?

HERBERT: Jordan

That Donne's Anniversaries were poems and full of bliss
pleases: that he said Mr. Donne if it had been written of
the Virgin Marie it had been something; to which he
answered that he described the idea of a woman, and not
as she was.

Don Donne in Germany

----- I -----

Much of Dryden's poetry was written to celebrate public occasions grave and gay, and to laud the merits and achievements of public persons. Compliment and adulation were not incidental elements in his work, but a large and important function of the professional writer and poet laureate; and the style of his panegyric, elegiac, and otherwise commemorative poetry deserves full consideration. Whatever Dryden turned his hand to in verse, he tried to do well. Poetry was his profession, but it was also his art; and a study of his panegyric verse reveals not only the skill with which he praised to live, but also the rapid emergence of a distinctive personal style. The other categories of his poetry which I have been considering all illustrate the manipulation and transformation of established art forms by a unique poetic personality, with its own preferences, characteristic tones, powers, and weaknesses; and in panegyric too, Dryden worked at a common and long-established type of verse, and gave it something of his own character. He turned easily to praise. If satire is 'the fine art of calling names', panegyric is the fine art of calling nice names; and this poet, whose characteristics are strength, exalted boldness and majestic exaggeration, turns to praise, with those gifts of style and that sense of artistic responsibility with which he turns to blame.

One of Dryden's models in panegyric was, as Mr. Van Doren points out, the 'even, sweet, and flowing' Waller who 'first made writing easily an art'; but Waller's achievement was primarily in a neat, witty, accomplished middle style with which Dryden seldom contents himself when he is singing exalted praises. Again, the darling of his youth, the famous Cowley, oscillates in his panegyrics between a talking style and a noisy, rather hollow rhetoric. Dryden's debts to Waller and Cowley (and indeed to Ben Jonson) in the art of writing easily and wittily, are apparent in his poems of praise; but his chief master is Donne, or Donne at second-hand. It was Donne who drew learning and abstruse wit into the

Note, p. 191.

I. H. J. C. Grierson, Horne's Poetical Works, Oxford, 1912, pp. xiv and xx.

admission were not incidental elements in his work, but a large and important

function of the professional writer and poet laureate; and the style of his work

artistic, and otherwise commendable poetry deserves full consideration

However, Lyden turned his hand to the verse, he tried to do well. Poetry was his

profession, but it was also his art; and a study of his penultimate verses reveals

not only the skill with which he grasped the form, but also the rapid emergence

of a distinctive personal style. The other categories of his poetry which I have

been considering all illustrate the manipulation and transformation of established

art forms by a unique poetic personality, with its own preferences, characteristics

tones, powers, and weaknesses; and in Lyden's case, Lyden worked at a common

and long-established type of verse, and gave it something of his own character.

He turned easily to praise. It came in the line of calling names, 'name-

giving is the line art of calling names; and this poet, whose characteristics

are strength, excited boldness and artistic exaggeration, turns to praise, with

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Waller and Cowley (and indeed to Ben Jonson) in the art of writing easily and

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Donne at second-hand. It was Donne who drew learning and elaborate wit into the

Notes, p. 192.

I. Lines 27-8 (cf. Virgil, Georgics, i, 242-3); 33-6.

2. Animals which do not reproduce, says Browne, live longest; 'For the generation of bodies is not merely effected as some conceive, of souls, that is, by Irradiation, or answerably unto the propagation of light, without its proper diminution; but therein a transmission is made materially from some parts, with the Idea of every one; and the propagation of one, is in a strict acceptation, some minoration of another'. Pseudo-Epi., iii, 9 (Works, ed. Sayle, Edinburgh, 1912, i, p. 342).

3. Stanzas 5, 12, 18, 25, 34.

Dryden draws heavily on the language of astrology, and applies his terms conceitedly. But the technical vocabulary of this science was good poetic currency long before Dryden's time; and its conceited application had become a tedious quasi-'metaphysical' convention. ⁽¹⁾ Of a less obvious and well-worn type is the imagery of the closing passage. Hastings' widow is exhorted, in an intricate conceit, to conceive and bring forth the 'Ideas' of her dead husband's virtues by wedding his disembodied soul with 'greater than Platonick love': this conception, says the poet, will bring forth

An Issue which t'Eternity shall last,
Yet but th'Irradiations which he cast. 97-8; 105-6.

'Irradiations' did not become an astronomical term until the nineteenth century; but in seventeenth century physics it was applied to physical or spiritual light, and to the emission of fluid from an active centre. The link between the notion of the transmission of ideas in procreation, and the 'irradiation' or propagation of light, is to be found in Sir Thomas Browne; and Browne's difficult passage is, ⁽²⁾ I think, the source of Dryden's conceits. The elegy on Hastings is the work of a young poet writing in a pretentiously recondite tradition, and resolved to adorn his poetry with the trappings of scientific learning. Much of this material is inept, forced, and tasteless; and it illustrates that absorbed, uncritical quest for an imagery at once learned and unusual which is a common weakness of mid-seventeenth century poetry.

The scientific strand in the imagery of the verses On the Death of Oliver Cromwell is rather more complex in texture and colouring. Dryden has begun to draw on a variety of sciences. The astrological convention remains; but Cromwell's political manoeuvres are described in metaphors from medicine; and there are ⁽³⁾ figures from physics and physiognomy.

Astraea Redux is very sparsely adorned with the imagery of stars and planets; Dryden turns now to physiology for some images of very dubious taste and quality. He compares the painstaking labours of General Monk, for example, to the operations of the Creator in forming Man; and Monk's care in handling difficult and variable people is described in the language of digestion:

How hard was then his Task, at once to be,
 What in the body natural we see;
 Mans Architect distinctly did ordain
 The charge of Muscles, Nerves, and of the Brain.
 Through viewless Conduits Spirits to dispense,
 The Springs of Motion from the Seat of Sense.
 'Twas not the hasty product of a day,
 But the well ripened Fruit of wise delay.

• • • • •
 Our healthful food the Stomach labours thus,
 At first embracing what it strait doth crush.
 Wise Leeches will not vain Receipts obtrude,
 While growing Pains pronounce the Humors crude. I63-74

Here too, Dryden is writing in a worn and debilitated tradition. All is grist to the poetic mill; but his use of scientific material is decorative and illustrative, the result of a forced and pretentious selection, rather than a natural, inevitable mode of expression.
 (I)

By 1667, his predilection for this type of poetic fancy is expending itself. In the Annus Mirabilis of that year, the influence of Virgil, Dryden's 'master', is very marked. Illustration and adornment are provided by classical echo and allusion, leisurely extended simile on the Virgilian pattern, and classical turns of phrase; and 'learned' imagery is sparse. What Dryden does retain of it, however, is so much at variance with the simpler, less strongly figured style which is the basis of the poem, that it stands out in high relief. What had been a powerful and effective mode of expression in the hands of Donne and his immediate followers, became a mere irritant in irresponsible hands. There is an abstruse, laboured smartness in the account of the English admirals hastening to sea:

Diffusive of themselves, where e're they pass,
 They make that warmth in others they expect;
 Their Valour works like Bodies on a glass,
 And does its Image on their Men project. stanza 53

Dryden's choice of imagery to emphasise the wonder which the navy provokes is not happy; the ludicrousness of his fancies, and their remoteness from reality, obstruct the very effect he wishes to produce:

To see this Fleet upon the Ocean move,
 Angels drew wide the Curtains of the Skies:
 And Heav'n, as if there wanted Lights above,
 For Tapers made two glaring Comets rise.

Notes, p. 194.

1. Stanzas 17-18. See also stanzas 13, 139, 166; 17, 246 (unctuous -- on which see a learned note in Davideis, iii, note 40); 139.

2. Spingarn, ii, pp. 59-60; iii, p. 16.

Whether they unctuous Exhalations are,
 Fir'd by the Sun, or seeming so alone;
 Or each some more remote and slippery Star,
 Which loses footing when to Mortals shown. (I)

Dryden did not persist, after the late 1660s, in this forced selection of poetic material. Fancy, says Hobbes, penetrates 'into the hardest matter and obscurest places'; true genius, says Wolseley, 'will enter into the hardest and driest thing, enrich the most barren Soyl, and inform the meanest and most uncomely matter'; but, at least so far as abstruse technicalities and scientific notions were concerned, this was not a doctrine which held unlimited sway over the early neo-classical poets, as it had done over the 'metaphysicals'. Dryden gradually outgrew the use of learned reference as a major means of embellishing panegyric poetry, and as a method of exciting astonishment and sudden delight in his readers. He never abandoned the habit completely --the ode on Mrs. Killigrew (1684) and the lines To .. the Dutchess of Ormond (1700), for example, show more than vestiges of it; but he evolved more effective methods of praise, and other less startling and inept types of fanciful imagery.

The essential function of both imagery and diction in panegyric is to exaggerate and emphasise. Although much of the scientific and philosophical imagery in Dryden's early poems is merely ornamental, some of it is introduced to heighten and to underline the poet's praise. The astronomical images and comparisons in the poems on Hastings and Cromwell emphasise the merits of Dryden's subjects; and to this extent, they are integral in the panegyric style. But as he matured, and his poetic voice settled down in its adult tones without fantastic efforts to mimic others, Dryden inclined more and more to rhetorical hyperbole and graceful extravagance. His capacity for immense, assured over-statement proved sufficient for his needs; he found he had little cause to drag fancies and smartnesses into his laudatory poetry from the pretentious novelties of the 'metaphysicals'.

----- 2 -----

Dryden has been severely censured for the extravagant adulation of his panegyrics, elegies, epistles, dedications, and the like. From one point of view, he

(1) Notes, p. 195.

1. Lives, ed. G.B. Hill, i, pp. 399-400.

2. The Poetry of John Dryden, p. 117.

was a time-server, a professional poet singing the praises of any who commissioned him, or who seemed to promise, by their position or wealth, some sort of remuneration. He was a magnificent and deliberate flatterer. 'In the meanness and servility of hyperbolical adulation', says Johnson, 'I know not whether, since the days in which the Roman emperors were deified, he has ever been equalled'. But to leave the matter there is too simple. The real key to Dryden's panegyrics is contained, I think, in an observation which Johnson makes (with derogatory intent), and in Mr. Van Doren's supplement to it. He appears, says Johnson,

never to have impoverished his mint of flattery by his expences, however lavish. He had all forms of excellence, intellectual and moral, combined in his mind, with endless variation... he considers the great as entitled to encomiastick homage, and brings praise rather as a tribute than a gift, more delighted with the fertility of his invention than mortified by the prostitution of his judgment. (1)

Dryden's official praise, says Mr. Van Doren,

rings with a round Roman grandeur. He writes as if he lived to praise, not praised to live. His lines speak contempt for all things small ----- small passions, small deeds, small wit. He is warm yet decorous; he is effectual because of his great confidence and his unremitting eloquence. And his resources are infinite. (2)

These two passages, taken together, throw a good deal of light on Dryden's poetic adulation. He could be, when he chose, a perspicacious realist: his comedies and his satires reflect a close observation and an open-eyed assessment of men and events. In this he affords but one illustration of the frank, lucid matter-of-factness, in many reduced to brutal insensitiveness to principles and ideals, which is one of the marks of his time. But on its other side, Restoration England was resolved to be, if not a nursery, then certainly a forcing-house for the much less worldly -- the exalted, ideal heroic virtues. The difference between the ideal and 'the spotted actuality' in the world about them must have been very apparent to Dryden and his contemporaries -- the satire, correspondence, and diary literature of the times leave no doubt of that; but the lamentable reality could be countered only by a persistent attention to the ideal. Dryden's awareness of the false chivalry, the empty heroics, and the pretence to principle in court and political circles, is epitomised in the sustained mock-heroic of Absalom and

Achitophel; but there is little essential artificiality, little suggestion of a mere elaborate pretence, in the best of his heroic drama. The poetic and the real are not the same thing for Dryden. Poetry can do better than nature ---a thesis of venerable reputation which Dryden sets out once more in the Parallel of Poetry and Painting. The artist, whether he works in paint or in words, should 'form to himself an idea of perfect nature';

thereby correcting Nature from what she actually is in individuals, to what she ought to be, and what she was created.. In portraits, the painter will not take that side of the face which has some notorious blemish in it.. for an ingenious flattery is to be allowed to the professors of both arts, so long as the likeness is not destroyed.

Though it must be an idea of perfection, from which both the epic poet and the history painter draws, yet all perfections are not suitable to all subjects; but every one must be designed according to that perfect beauty which is proper to him. An Apollo must be distinguished from a Jupiter, a Pallas from a Venus.. (I)

In poetry, then, lies the antidote to the imperfections and weaknesses of the real world. The poet's business is not necessarily to depict or comment on the actual; he is licensed by the very nature and tradition of his art, to raise and make perfect. Adulation becomes a justifiable art; and in its art lies its justification. Dryden's imperfect human subjects are elevated to the level of ideal exemplars, and his panegyrics are less hymns on individual persons, than hymns on the virtues which they exemplify --- mixed in reality with vice and weakness, but raised to perfection by poetry, which has more essential truth than nature. Restoration portrait-painting provides a significant parallel. The artist concerned himself, not with photographic realism, but with the creation of an ideal type-figure which elucidated and perfected the character and appearance of his actual sitter.

The Augustan interest in men and manners, the concern for civilised virtue, and the predilection for reflection and didactic comment, encouraged the artist to celebrate public characters and public occasions in poetry, and to raise these characters and occasions, imaginatively, to an ideal level, without any fundamental insincerity. Thus, in Dryden's laudatory poems, the dead Cromwell is the image of immense power, disciplined command, and military prowess; Mary of Modena is

Note, p. 197.

- I. To these examples might be added Dryden's adaptation of Chaucer's portrait of the poor parson to Bishop Ken, in the Fables. My argument for identifying Dryden's Good Parson with Ken will appear shortly in The Review of English Studies.

the ideal of beauty and grace; John Driden of Chesterton is the type of loyal and sagacious squirearchy; the Duke of Ormonde and his lady epitomise hereditary dignity, generosity, and courage; Mrs. Killigrew is the exemplar of the virtues and the arts which link earth and heaven; the Countess of Abingdon, as 'Eleonora',^(I) embodies all the sweetness, devotion, charity, and grace of ideal womanhood. The 'spotted actuality' is absorbed or transcended by the ideal which the poet's imagination creates against a background of reality; and in this transcendence, extravagance and hyperbolical compliment in figure and image play a major part. That Dryden flattered for his own practical ends is obvious; but flattery is not the whole tale, and will not, by itself, adequately explain either the content or the stylistic achievement of Dryden's best panegyric writing. His satiric portraits belong to a freer, broader and more colourful world than the real world of Restoration politics; verisimilitude there, we have seen, is abandoned for fidelity to the requirements of good art; and what is true of his satiric portraiture is no less true of his idealised eulogies. Art distorts, heightens, emphasises and simplifies, whether for praise or for blame.

Against such a background, Dryden's exaggerations and conceits, and the exaltation of his panegyrics, in both content and tone, are much more comprehensible. His hyperboles have a poetic function, and the critic's task is not to deplore their presence and their contribution to a sheerly fantastic and untruthful adulation, but to assess their value and propriety as essential elements in boldly artificial poetry. In such a test, much of Dryden's early conceited writing fails miserably. There is a persistent suggestion of strain in his selection of imagery and ideas, in the first forced flights of his fancy and in the poems celebrating the Restoration. Where, on the other hand, he concerns himself less with what in the mid-seventeenth century passed for wit, and more with imaginative overstatement, heightening the real into the wished-for ideal, and letting Fancy take care of herself, he is remarkably successful. The praise of Cromwell is magnificent, in its strong, bold figure and its elevated plainness; here is the true epitaph of a great leader:

His Grandeur he derived from Heav'n alone,
 For he was great, e're Fortune made him so;
 And Wars, like Mists that rise against the Sun,
 Made him but greater seem, not greater grow. Heroick Stanzas,
 6.

He fought, secure of Fortune, as of fame;
 Till by new Maps, the Island might be shown,
 Of Conquests, which he strew'd where-e'er he came,
 Thick as the Galaxy with Stars is sown. stanza 14

Nor dy'd he when his Ebbing Fame went less,
 But when fresh Laurels courted him to live:
 He seem'd but to prevent some new success,
 As if above what Triumphs Earth could give. stanza 33

In Astraea Redux, the exultation of an England restored to its monarch, and hopeful of a strong, ordered, prosperous reign, is expressed with dignified energy in terms which are bold, but not improperly exaggerated:

That Star, that at your Birth shone out so bright,
 It stain'd the duller Suns Meridian light,
 Did once again its potent Fires renew,
 Guiding our Eyes to find and worship you.
 And now times whiter Series is begun,
 Which in soft Centuries shall smoothly run;
 Those Clouds that overcast your Morn shall fly,
 Dispell'd to farthest corners of the Sky.
 Our Nation, with united Int'rest blest,
 Not now content to poize, shall sway, the rest.
 Abroad your Empire shall no Limits know,
 But like the Sea in boundless Circles flow. 288-299

In Dryden's fine lines on the King and his Chancellor, the compression and the constant shifts of focus which characterise the image-patterns of 'metaphysical' poetry are reduced, steadied, and broadened out: the exaggerated compliment, the extravagant images, and the 'wit' remain; but nothing is forced or improper to the theme of harmonious government. Here, too, Dryden is exploiting to advantage the potentialities of couplet balance and antithesis, as a strong scaffolding for the fanciful play of ideas and figures:

In open Prospect nothing bounds our Eye
 Until the Earth seems join'd unto the Sky:
 So in this Hemisphere our utmost View
 Is only bounded by our King and you.
 Our Sight is limited where you are join'd
 And beyond that no farther Heav'n can find.
 So well your Virtues do with his agree
 That, though your Orbs of different Breatness be,

His Grammar he derived from Henry's name
 for he was great, the fortune made him see;
 And Wals, like Mordaunt that time against the Sun,
 made him but greater seem to grow.
Note, p. 199.

I. The Poetry of John Dryden, p. 133.

Think as the Galaxy with Spores is seen,
 Will by now come, the Island might be shown,
 Of Copacabana, which he drew'd where'er he came,
 Not dry'd he when his Spiking beam went less,
 But when fresh laurels crown'd him for his verse,
 He seek'd but to prevent some new success,
 As if above what Triumpha Paris could give.

in Address before, the exaltation of an England restored to its mountains, and hope
 of a strong, ordered, prosperous reign, is expressed with dignified energy
 in terms which are bold, but not improperly exaggerated:

That Star, that at your Birth shone out so bright,
 If e'er the duller Sun Meridian light,
 His once again the potent fires renew,
 Guiding our Eyes to find and worship you,
 And now times whiter better as he goes,
 Which in our Centuries shall mostly show;
 Those Glories that overcast your Name shall fly,
 Dispell'd to farthest corners of the Sky,
 Our Nation, with united heart and breath,
 Not now content to praise, shall wish the best,
 Across your Empire shall no limits know,
 But like the Sea in boundless Circles flow.

In Dryden's time lines on the King and his Chancellor, the composition and the
 constant shifts of focus which characterize the image-patterns of 'metaphysical'
 poetry are reduced, smoothed, and pronounced with the exaggerated emphasis, the
 extravagant images, and the 'wit' retained, but nothing is forced or improper to
 the theme of patriotic government. Here, too, Dryden is exploiting to advantage
 the potentialities of couplet balance and antithesis, as a strong scaffolding for
 the fanciful play of ideas and figures:

In open prospect nothing bounds our Eye
 Until the Earth seems join'd into the Sky;
 So in this Hemisphere our utmost View
 Is only bounded by our King and you.
 Our Sight is limited where you eye join'd
 And beyond that no farther Henry's can find,
 So well your Virtues do with his agree
 That, though your Orbs of different greatness be

Yet both are for each other's use dispos'd,
 His to enclose, and yours to be enclos'd:
 Nor could another in your Room have been,
 Except an Emptiness had come between.
 Well may he then to you his Cares impart
 And share his Burden where he shares his Heart.
 In you his Sleep still wakes; his pleasures find
 Their Share of Business in your labouring Mind.
 So, when the weary Sun his Place resigns,
 He leaves his Light and by Reflection shines. To My Lord Chan-
cellor, 31--48

I referred in my previous chapter to the lovely blend of hyperbole, conceit, and graceful compliment in the address to Mary of Modena, who left such a dearth of beauty behind her when she went to Scotland, that

Love was no more when Loyalty was gone,
 The great Supporter of his awful Throne.
 Love could no longer after Beauty stay,)
 But wander'd northward to the Verge of Day,) Prologue to the
 As if the Sun and he had lost their Way.) Dutchess, 1682, 7-II

There is a similar delightful play of fancy, more sustained and less lyrical, round the beauty and charm of the Duchess of Ormonde, in the address which opens the Fables volume. Less satisfying is the long panegyric on the Countess of Abingdon, Eleonora. Mr. Van Doren, perhaps influenced by the fact that this poem was 'composed for a fat fee' in honour of a dead lady whom Dryden had never seen, deplores its 'threadbare piety' and lack of interest. Its fault lies, however, chiefly in its excessive length. The celebration of womanly virtue, unspotted by vice, is by no means beyond the reach of poetry; but virtues tend to be less colourful, varied, and interesting than vices, and Dryden has taken too long over his catalogue. Perhaps his finest poetic praise of a single person is given to his kinsman, John Driden of Chesterton. Fancoy plays a smaller part here than in any other of his panegyrics. Dryden is completely at ease in the evenly sustained elevation of solid virtues, which he manages by weighted generalisations on the right and the good, and by a restrained, judicious heightening of John Driden's character. In a letter to Charles Montague, asking for criticism of the poem, Dryden briefly declares his aim in writing of his cousin's virtues, at the same time throwing light on his whole approach to panegyric:

Notes, p. 200.

1. Letters, ed, C.E. Ward, p. 120. Compare Scott's appreciation of this poem, Works of Dryden, 1808, xi, pp. 71-2.
2. See supra, p. 25.
3. Essays, 1, pp. 267, 268.
4. Letters, ed. C.E. Ward, p. 72 (1693/4).

In the description which I have made of a Parliament Man, I think I have not only drawn the features of my worthy Kinsman, but have also given my Own Opinion, of what an Englishman in Parliament ought to be; & deliver it as a Memorial of my own Principles to all Posterity. (I)

----- 3 -----

The exaltation of tone, the confident extravagance and heightening, and the power of expression, which are together the essence of Dryden's mature panegyrical style, are most fully exemplified in one or other of the three great odes: To the Pious Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew (1686); A Song for St. Cecilia's Day (1687); and Alexander's Feast; or the Power of Musique. An Ode, in Honour of St. Cecilia's Day (1697). These three poems, following the tradition of the Pindaric Ode in which Cowley was the acknowledged master, illustrate at once Dryden's development of the elevated style in the light of his criticism of Cowley, and his mature approach to the task of celebrating an important occasion in worthy verse.

In the course of his life-time, Dryden changed his mind about Cowley's poetic talent. (2) In the Preface to Sylvae (1685), written just before the first of the three odes, he speaks critically of Cowley's performances in the Pindaric style. Cowley is acknowledged a 'happy genius' whom few could imitate; and 'as for the soul of.. (the Pindaric), which consists in the warmth and vigour of fancy, the masterly figures, and the copiousness of imagination, he has excelled all others in this kind'. On the other hand, Cowley's Pindarics want 'somewhat of the purity of English, somewhat of more equal thoughts, somewhat of sweetness in the numbers, in one word, somewhat of a finer turn and more lyrical verse'. (3) Writing to Dennis in the early 1690s about 'that which we call Pindarique', Dryden re-emphasises the importance of a true harmony of style and content in the ode, and the need for an ordered restraint in expression. The Pindaric, he says, was

introduced but not perfected by our famous Mr. Cowley; and of this, Sir, you are certainly one of the greatest Masters. You have the Sublimity of Sense as well as Sound, and know how far the Boldness of a Poet may lawfully extend. I could wish you would cultivate this kind of Ode; and reduce it either to the same Measures which Pindar us'd, or give new Measures of your own. For, as it is, it looks like a vast Tract of Land newly discover'd. The Soil is wonderfully Fruitful, but unmanur'd, overstock'd with Inhabitants; but almost all Salvages, without Laws, Arts, Arms, or Policy. (4)

(I)

The music of the Ode was, to Dryden, of great importance. He realised that Cowley had been right in borrowing from Pindar a striking, brilliant imagery; but the structural and rhythmical irregularity, in which Cowley and his followers delighted, was a serious blemish. The Pindaric Ode required a rich variety of rhythms and tones, but these contrasts and shifts had to be regulated with conscientious art. The passion for order which underlies Dryden's character, his literary criticism, and perhaps in some measure his religious opinions as well as his politics, works here towards a finer sense of form, of balanced thought, feeling, and imagery, in a complex type of verse. The essential features of the Ode, as Dryden describes it, are well-constructed form, with carefully managed alterations in tone, and subtly disposed contrasts in rhythm on a strong, continuous base; warm, vivid imagery; and a pure diction and a consistent level of thought.

Dr. Johnson, who was hyper-sensitive to lapses and improprieties in diction and imagery, praised the Ode on Mrs. Killigrew as the noblest in the language; and Scott, although 'sometimes affronted by a pun, or chilled by a conceit', felt Dryden's power here. The most thorough analysis of the poem is Dr. Tillyard's. He points out that, beneath the superficial theme -- Mrs. Killigrew's death, character, and excellence in 'the two sister arts of poesie and painting'. -- there lies Dryden's profound belief in decorum, the civilised virtues, and the graces of living. This belief, says Dr. Tillyard, is expressed in the Ode, by attributing to Mrs. Killigrew, as a person and as an artist, excellences which are beyond what she really possessed, but which it was proper for her to have. Dryden thus raises the actual to the level of the ideal, transforming what looks like extravagant grief and adulation into a hymn on ideal virtues and gifts. The real bases of the poem are not the character and lamentable death of Mrs. Killigrew, but the twin poles of earth and heaven, linked by the divine arts of painting and poetry; and that link is illustrated by what Dryden makes of the life and death of a virtuous woman gifted in these arts. The themes of earth and heaven are worked through the whole poem, each in turn or both together emphasised, and providing a constant contrast in subject from stanza to stanza. This interpretation is convincing; although Dr. Tillyard, I think, carries his analysis too far, in using the poem as a text for an essay on Dryden's attitude to art and civilised living.

To his theme Dryden brings all his skill in majestic rhythm and phrase, and all his sense of artistic arrangement. The opening stanza, addressing the dead lady and introducing the poet's praise 'in no ignoble Verse', has all the characteristics of an epic introduction. Nothing is plain or mundane; Mrs. Killigrew is the 'youngest Virgin-Daughter of the Skies' approached by a 'Mortal Muse'; and her present station is sublimely celestial:

Whether, adopted to some Neighbouring Star,
Thou rol'st above us in thy wand'ring Race,
Or, in Procession fixt and regular,
Mov'd with the Heavens Majestick pace;
Or call'd to more superior Bliss,
Thou tread'st, with Seraphims, the vast Abyss.

Dryden continues in this august style -- exalted, bold in imagery but not marred by the merely fantastic -- through the second and third stanzas, celebrating the poetic antecedents of Mrs. Killigrew, and the joy which was in Heaven at her birth, with a wealth of panegyric hyperbole; and then he introduces a contrast. The notes of exalted joy and praise turn to reviling, as Dryden contrasts the traditions of divine poesy with what his own age has made of it. But he does not drop to a lower tone; his rhythms become regular, and the swing of the satiric couplet is suggested here and there; but his condemnation is expressed in the lofty style of a great poet provoked to Juvenalian wrath. Ponderous diction, the binding alliteration, and the declamatory note, preserve the original majesty and power:

O Gracious God! How far have we
Prophan'd thy Heav'nly Gift of Poesy!
Made prostitute and profligate the Muse,
Debas'd to each obscene and impious use,
Whose Harmony was first ordain'd above,
For Tongues of Angels, and for Hymns of Love!
Oh wretched We, why were we hurry'd down
This lubrique and adult'rate age,
(Nay, added fat Pollutions of our own)
T'increase the steaming Ordures of the Stage?

Stanza 5, opening Dryden's account of the lady's character and accomplishments, is poetic summary and comment, sparsely adorned with figures and images; and the tone here is rather lower. But this stanza is a deliberate 'shadowing' in the

Notes, p. 203.

I. D. Nichol Smith, John Dryden, Cambridge, 1950, p. 78.

2. See Pepys' Diary, 12th February, 1666-7; M. Summers,

The Works of Shadwell, London, 1927, ii., p. 398 note.

Whether, adopted as some neighbouring Star,
Thou rest above us in thy wand'ring Race,
Or, in Procession first and regular,
Mov'd with the heavens Majestic pace;
Or call'd to more superior Bliss,
Thou tread'st, with seraphims, the vast Abyss.

O gracious God! how far have we
Prophan'd thy heavenly Gift of Poetry!
Made prostitute and prostitute the Muse,
Dedic'd to each obscene and impious use,
Whose Harmony was first ordain'd above,
For Tongues of Angels, and for Hymns of Love;
On wretched We, why were we hurly'd down
This Indign and abject Trade to
(Nay, added yet Pollution of our own)
To increase the steaming Vapours of the Stage?

Stanza 2, opening Dryden's account of the lady's character and accomplishments,
is poetic summary and comment, sparsely adorned with figures and images; and the
tone here is rather lower, but this stanza is a deliberate 'showering' in the

tone portraiture; for the majesty, resonance, and high conceit of the grand style soon return, and run through to the conclusion of the poem. There is one marked contrast in styles in the second part of the Ode -- ~~the~~ description of Mrs. Killigrew's rural painting. Here Dryden drops delightfully into the graceful lyrical measure which Milton had used so daintily in pastoral description; again he takes advantage of the variety of tones permitted in the Pindaric, and suits his rhythm and diction to his theme:

The Sylvan Scenes of Herds and Flocks
 And fruitful Plains and barren Rocks,
 Of shallow Brooks that flow'd so clear
 The bottom did the top appear;
 Of deeper too and ampler Floods
 Which as in Mirrors, shew'd the Woods;
 Of lofty Trees, with Sacred Shades,
 And Perspectives of pleasant Glades,
 Where Nymphs of brightest Form appear, }
 And shaggy Satyrs standing near, }
 Which them at once admire and fear... } stanza 6 (108-118)

Dryden experimented freely with metrical patterns in the Killigrew Ode; but, as Professor Nichol Smith remarks, 'the poem cannot escape the criticism, which has to be made of Pindaric odes in general, that the verse sometimes fails to show a clear reason for its changes'. The other two Odes were written for musical accompaniment; they are cantata libretti. Dryden's attempts to meet the demands of rather elaborate vocal and instrumental music produced rich, varied, and interwoven harmonies. In these two poems, he is again a professional poet celebrating a great occasion in lofty verse. His theme now is not ideal human character shadowed forth in the lives of great men and women, but 'heav'nly Harmony'; and the same august style is turned to praise the history and ideal quality of a great art. The significance of these St. Cecilia's Day poems for students of Dryden's style lies, structurally, in the stimulus which a musical setting gave to the poet's love of ordered pattern; and qualitatively, in the extent to which Dryden, in his last years, had evolved a pure and simply decorative style for high poetic praise.

The music for Dryden's Song for St. Cecilia's Day, composed by the court musician Giovanni Draghi, is extant in manuscript score which may be the composer's

Notes, p. 204.

- I. E. Brennecke, Dryden's Odes and Draghi's Music, P.M.L.A., xix, 1934, I ff. I am indebted to this article for much of what follows on the relationships of Dryden's two odes to cantata music.
2. Cf. Katherine Philips, L'Accord du Bien; Minor Caroline Poets, ed. George Saintsbury, i, p. 563.

autograph; and the relationship between Dryden's libretto and Draghi's music has
 (I)
 been fully analysed. The scoring is for five-part chorus (two trebles, alto, tenor
 and bass), and a five-part string orchestra with trumpets and flutes added in
 places. The theme of the Ode is the alpha and omega of 'heav'nly Harmony': the
 first stanza tells of the primacy of Harmony in the creation and composition of
 the world, when chaos was resolved into cosmos:

FROM Harmony, from heav'nly Harmony
 This universal Frame began;

.
 From Harmony to Harmony
 Through all the Compass of the Notes it ran,
 The Diapason closing full in Man. (2)

The last stanza celebrates the ultimate power of Harmony, which was the principle
 of creation, and will at the last day be the principle of dissolution:

So when the last and dreadful Hour
 This crumbling Pageant shall devour,
 The TRUMPET shall be heard on high,
 The dead shall live, the living die,
 And MUSICK shall untune the Sky.

In developing this exalted theme, Dryden offers his musician a simple, nobly
 harmonious, declamatory poem, with every opportunity for the grand eloquence of
 chorus and full orchestra. In the intervening stanzas, which link and elaborate
 the first and last in a gradual progression, from Jubal's 'corded Shell' to the
 'sacred ORGANS Praise', he rings a remarkable variety of changes on his metrical
 range, expressing in verbal and rhythmical terms the qualities of a wide selection
 of instruments --- the lyre, trumpet, flute, violin, and organ. Trumpet and drum
 excite war-like emotions; the flute sings, in dying notes, of hopeless love; the
 violin speaks sharply and boldly of 'depth of Pains and Height of Passion'; and
 the organ, greatest of all, produces

Notes inspiring holy Love,
 Notes that wend their heavenly Ways
 To mend the Choires above.

The theme of the Killigrew Ode --the link provided by the arts between earth
 and heaven-- is thus more simply and obviously repeated in this second poem; but
 here Dryden is writing with his attention fixed on the musical presentation of

his poem, and he gives the composer a strongly constructed framework of chorus harmony, set with a series of contrasted strophes, in which Draghi could range freely. Draghi, however, imposed on the poem a more complex musical superstructure than Dryden had anticipated; and there is an occasional violation of the poetic form by the music. Dryden had not catered for the variety of tones in recitative, air, duet, trio, and chorus. Nevertheless, it is clear that the requirements of libretto were uppermost in the poet's mind. The imagery of the Ode is of the simplest, and there is no straining after remote conceits or over-rich diction. The dignity of the poem lies, not in its language, but in its finely-wrought rhythmical pattern, holding together a variety of contrasts within the frame of sweeping sound made by the introduction and the close, and making an immediate impact through a simple, resonant, but comparatively neutral diction.

In the third Ode, Alexander's Feast, Dryden seems to have been much more successful as a librettist. So far as I have been able to discover, Jeremiah Clarke's music to this poem has not survived; but it is clear from the structure and style that Dryden had learnt something from the experiment with Draghi. Taking seriously his task as librettist, he has avoided the awkward complexity of the choral introduction to the earlier St. Cecilia's Day Ode; he divides his stanzas into recitative and aria, with a repetition of the aria as chorus, at the end of each stanza; and whereas Draghi in the earlier poem was left to shift for himself with aria and chorus, the composer in Alexander's Feast has had clearly marked out for him the carefully-balanced, short-lined, repetitive choruses, and the long-lined, dramatic ebb and flow of solo narrative and declamation. Repetition, balance, and echo are carefully worked into the texture of the Ode; they emphasise significant phrases in the drift of the poem, and ensure that, when these emphatic passages are re-inforced by the music, the effect will be logical and harmonious.

Dryden apparently spent time and labour on Alexander's Feast. There are two traditions concerning it. Johnson reports that Dryden took a fortnight to write and revise the poem; and there is, in Warton's Essay on Pope, a story that a

Notes, p. 206.

1. Lives, ed. G.B. Hill, i, p.388 and notes.
2. Letters, ed. C.E. Ward, pp. 93 and 98.
3. Van Doren, The Poetry of John Dryden, pp. 213-4; D. Nichol Smith, John Dryden, Cambridge, 1950, pp. 79-80.

friend of Dryden's paid him a visit one morning, and 'found him in an unusual agitation of spirits, even to a trembling' --- he had been up all night, working enthusiastically at this poem, and had finished it at one sitting'. Whatever the

(1)

truth here may be, Dryden did not respond lightly or irresponsibly to the request for a St. Cecilia's Day Ode; and he wrote to Tonson, after the publication of the

poem: 'I am glad to heare from all Hands, that my Ode is esteemd the best of all my poetry, by all the Town: I thought so my self when I writ it, but being old I

(2)

mistrusted my own Judgment'. Mr. Van Doren writes down Alexander's Feast as 'immortal ragtime', although he recognises its power and its 'responsive ringing

cadences': 'here is good nature on the grand scale'. Professor Nichol Smith, writing recently on the Odes, seems to regret that we are forced, in reading the

1687 poem, to think of the instrumentalists; we can read Alexander's Feast, on the other hand, 'without thinking that it was written to be performed; its word-

(3)

music is sufficient for us'. These two critics, coming to different conclusions on the Ode, make the same mistake in reading it. It cannot be read simply as a

poem, divorced from its musical accompaniment and exposition. Mr. Van Doren, over-looking its cantata form, naturally disposes of Dryden's elaborate play with

rhythms and cadences as mere virtuosity; and Professor Nichol Smith does some injustice to Dryden's work as a librettist. Handel's setting of the poem is a good

substitute for the lost original music; but Handel apart, Alexander's Feast has to be read in a strongly declamatory tone and in complete subjection to the poet's

rhythmical patterns. When this is done, many of the cadences cease to be puzzling irregularities and lapses in sound-quality, and thrust up something of their true

subtlety and resonance, as verbal complements to a complicated choral and solo cantata form.

In the wide range of tones which Timotheus employs, there are two finely lyrical passages, written with all Dryden's buoyancy and élan:

Bacchus ever Fair and Young
Drinking Joys did first ordain;
Bacchus Blessings are a Treasure;
Drinking is the Soldiers Pleasure;
Rich the Treasure,
Sweet the Pleasure;
Sweet is Pleasure after Pain.

stanza III.

Notes, p. 207.

(1)

I. Lives, ed. G.B. Hill, iii, p.227.

Mr. Van Doren (op.cit., pp 211 ff) gives an excellent account of the background of Alexander's Feast. To this may be added Dryden's use of the musical doctrine of affekt, which Mr. Ernest Newman summarises thus:

'The doctrine in its basic form was that each piece of music must and can express only one Affekt, one mind-state, one passion of the soul, and the first task of the performer was to understand the nature of this and render it.. in the way recognised as appropriate... (The player) shall seek out and understand the Affekt which the composer has embodied in the music, turning on to sadness, joy, or whatever the Affekt may be, the style of expression specifically appropriate to that Affekt. (Article on 'The Passions', Sunday Times, February 27th, 1949).

(2)

Sweet is Pleasure after Pain.
Sweet the Pleasure;
Rich the Pleasure;
Thinking is the Builders Treasure;
Pleasure Blessings are a Treasure;
Thinking lays the first ordain;
Pleasure ever fair and young

Softly sweet, in Lydian Measures,
 Soon he sooth'd his Soul to Pleasures.
 War, he sung, is Toil and Trouble;
 Honour but an empty Bubble.
 Never ending, still beginning,
 Fighting still, and still destroying,
 If the World be worth thy Winning,
 Think, O think, it worth Enjoying.
 Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
 Take the Good the Gods provide thee. stanza V.

The dominant note in the poem, however, is grandly declamatory. The setting is heroic -- 'the Royal Feast, for Persia won, by Philip's Warlike Son'; Timotheus sings in epic style of Jove 'sublime on Radiant Spires', and of Darius in tones which preserve the majesty of the Ode by sheer precision and rhetorical power:

He sung Darius Great and Good,
 By too severe a Fate,
 Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
 Fallen from his high Estate,
 And weltring in his Blood. stanza IV.

The final strains of violent ecstasy rise through Timotheus' impassioned 'Revenge, Revenge', to the concluding picture in the story ---- a narrative simply drawn, boldly coloured, its diction precisely selected to convey an impression of light and fierceness, and its grandly direct style stamped with the poet's thoroughness and strength:

Behold how they toss their Torches on high,
 How they point to the Persian Abodes,
 And glitt'ring Temples of their Hostile Gods.
 The Princes applaud with a furious Joy;
 And the King seized a Flambeau with Zeal to destroy;
 Thais led the Way,
 To light him to his Prey,
 And like another Hellen, fir'd another Troy. stanza VII.

This poem is the best illustration of what Johnson is thinking of, when he says that while Pope's odes are read with 'calm acquiescence', Dryden's are read 'with turbulent delight; Pope hangs upon the ear, and Dryden finds the passes of the mind':

Dryden wished that Cowley had shown, in his Pindarics, a greater evenness of thought and a greater purity of diction. From the faults which he censures in Cowley, he is himself not quite free. Scott objected to the antitheses, puns and

conceits in the Ode on Mrs. Killigrew with good reason. The recondite philosophical imagery of 'tradicianism' in the second stanza, the comparison of the queen with a remotely blazing ball of fire, and the distressing witticism in which the poet tells the dead lady's seafaring brother that by her death he is wrecked at home, all speak of an uncritical fidelity to the Cowleian tradition of 'wit-writing' in the ode, and detract from the gravity and majesty of the poem. The St. Cecilia's Day Ode of 1687, although much simpler, does not altogether escape. The reactions of the angel to Cecilia's organ music are too prosaically described---

An Angel heard, and straight appear'd
Mistaking Earth for Heav'n stanza VII

--- and the grandeur of the final passage is marred by that concise, antithetic smartness which constantly tempted Dryden:

The dead shall live, the living die,
And MUSICK shall untune the Sky.

In Alexander's Feast, however, Dryden has rejected the wit and sophistication of the Pindaric tradition --- with the possible exception again of the closing lines:

He rais'd a Mortal to the Skies;
She drew an Angel down.

He has sand-papered his style down to a bright, simple clarity of phrase and image, without losing any of his grandeur; for Dryden's grandeur lies, as the Aeneis shows, much more in majestic rhythms and sustained energy than in ornate diction. In this last Ode, he has succeeded in the difficult art of writing for elaborate music, with all the subtle deployment of contrasted cadences and tones which that implies, and in fulfilling, at the same time, the exacting demands of the high style, as he describes them in his praise of Virgil:

He is everywhere above conceits of epigrammatic wit, and gross hyperboles; he maintains majesty in the midst of plainness; he shines, but glares not; and is stately without ambition... propriety of thoughts and words are only to be found in him. (I)

IX

THE POETRY OF THE PLAYS

- I. Dryden's dramatic adaptations. Shakespeare -----
 Dryden modernises, simplifies, and decorates; The State of Innocence; Oedipus.

- 2. The epic and the heroic play: the exalted style--
 --- heroic character and passion ----- boldness
 of fancy ----- the extended simile and the epic
 tone.

-----oooOooo-----

THE POETRY OF THE PLAYS

Note, p. 210.

I. Essays, i, p. 144.

2. The epic and the heroic play: the extended style -- heroic character and passion -- of Iphigeneia -- the extended simile and the epic tone.

----- I -----

A thorough analysis of the style of Dryden's verse drama, its critical bases and its literary qualities, would involve an examination of the Restoration dramatic tradition, and of the conventions and techniques of the Restoration stage. Such an analysis lies beyond my capacities and my intentions. In this chapter, I confine myself to two broad aspects of Dryden's dramatic poetry which link the plays, in language and style, with his non-dramatic work: first, his adaptations of Shakespeare and others, which, like his verse translations and his modernised versions of Chaucer, tell us much of his attitude to style and diction, and illustrate that attitude in application; and second, his approach, as a heroic poet, to the writing of a heroic drama in which his critical opinions and his distinctive poetic character interact.

It cannot be seriously claimed that Dryden's adaptations of Shakespeare, or indeed any of the numerous Shakespearean adaptations in the Restoration period, approach the excellence of their great originals; though in All for Love at least, Dryden has produced, within the conventions of the heroic play, a tragedy which has a power and a distinction of its own. For my present purpose, the chief interest of these plays lies in their illustration of the Restoration ideals of poetic language and style, and of the marked differences between these ideals and the dramatic practice of earlier generations.

In his Preface to An Evening's Love, Dryden says that 'whenever I have liked any story in a romance, novel, or foreign play, I have made no difficulty....to take the foundation of it, to build it up, and make it proper for the English stage. And I will be vain to say, it has lost nothing in my hands'. Virgil, Terence, and Tasso are cited as examples of successful borrowers and imitators. Shakespeare himself worked with materials provided by predecessors; and although Ben Jonson's plots are sometimes his own, 'no man has borrowed so much from the Ancients as he has done'. The plot of a play, says Dryden, is like the raw materials of the smith or the watch-maker-- 'the price lies wholly in the workmanship';

A thorough analysis of the style of Dryden's verse drama, its critical

Notes, p. 211.

1. Essays, i, pp. 146-7.

2. Essays, i, pp. 146-7.

3. Summers, i, p. 272.

which link the plays, in language and style, with his non-dramatic works. First, his adaptations of Shakespeare and others, which, like his verse translations and his modernized versions of Chaucer, tell us much of his attitude to style and diction, and illustrate the attitude in adaptation; and second, his approach, as a heroic poet, to the writing of a heroic drama in which his critical opinions and his distinctive poetic character interest.

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and it is the supreme mark of the poet-craftsman that he takes over his story
 'and forms it with more care, by exposing only the beautiful parts of it to view,
 (I)
 than a careful lapidary sets a jewel'. As for the plot which the poet's source-
 book provides:

it is to be altered and enlarged with new persons, accidents, and designs,
 which will make it almost new. When this is done, the forming it into acts and
 scenes, disposing of actions and passions into their proper places, and beautify-
 ing both with descriptions, similitudes, and propriety of language, is the prin-
 cipal employment of the poet; as being the largest field of fancy, which is the
 principal quality required in him; for so much the word *poetria* implies. Judgment,
 indeed, is necessary in him; but 'tis fancy that gives the life-touches, and the
 secret graces to it; especially in serious plays, which depend not much on ob-
 servation. (2)

In the Dedication of The Indian Emperour, Dryden says: 'I have taken all the
 liberty of a Poet, to adde, alter, or diminish, as I thought might best conduce
 (3)
 to the Beautifying of my work'. The adaptation of an old plot, then, is légit-
 imate; and Mr. Montague Summers' introductions to the plays, despite his uncerit-
 ical partiality, provide a mass of evidence on Dryden's complex and ingenious
 treatment of sources. But the chief merit of the dramatist, in Dryden's view,
 lies in the poetic revision of his material, by means of figures, imagery,
 rhetorical ornament, and a poetic diction. It is fairly clear that he thinks of
 the diction of dramatic poetry, as of non-dramatic diction, as a species of im-
 posed or inwrought decoration, adorning the sequence of events and the repres-
 entation of character in beauty, and performing this function through the poet's
 lively imagination. We may expect, therefore, that there is behind Dryden's
 adaptations a conscious artistry, working in accordance with his own standards
 of poetic expression, and rhetorical and figurative ornament.

Neither Dryden, nor any of his contemporaries who revised or rewrote earlier
 plays, regarded the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists with superstitious vener-
 ation. Cowley declared in the 1668 Preface to his works that, if 'the care of re-
 planting' Shakespeare, Fletcher and Jonson were his, he would 'take the boldness
 to prune and lop away' parts of their work; and Davenant, who first taught Dryden

Notes, p. 212.

1. Dryden acknowledges Davenant's guidance in the appreciation of Shakespeare, in the Preface to The Tempest (Summers, ii, p.152). Davenant was granted production rights for nine Shakespearean plays and for others from the same period; he softened and sentimentalised plots, and chastened and modernised the language. On Davenant's commission, see Allardyce Nicoll, The Rights of Beeston and Davenant in Elizabethan Plays, R.E.S., i, 1925; and for a summary of his methods of revision, see A. Harbage, Sir William Davenant, Philadelphia, 1935, and A.H. Nethercot's Sir William Davenant, Chicago, 1938.

2. Dryden as an Adapter of Shakespeare, Shakespeare Association Pamphlet, 1922.

3. Pepys, Diary, 24th August, 1661; 27th November, 1661; 28th May, 1663; 31st August, 1668. Evelyn, Diary, 26th November, 1661.

4. See supra, pp. 18-19.

5. Essays, i, pp. 203, 224, 203.

to admire Shakespeare, contracted, when he received patents for the production of Shakespeare on the new stage in 1660, to revise the language of the earlier age, especially with regard to 'prophane, obscene, and scurrilous passages'.⁽¹⁾ The revisers worked with thoroughness. Professor Allardyce Nicoll, discussing their alterations of Shakespeare, points out that heroic elements were heightened; the craving for novelty and spectacle was met; language was simplified and brought up to date; parallels with the Restoration political scene were worked into the revisions; and there was, indeed, 'a senseless passion for any kind of alteration'.⁽²⁾ Even so, the revised Shakespeare did not always satisfy the new taste. Pepys saw Davenant's Hamlet on several occasions with apparent approval; but Evelyn felt that 'now the old plays begin to disgust this refined age, since his Majesties' being so long abroad'.⁽³⁾

The new standards of poetic expression in Dryden's time produced a conservative and critical attitude to Jacobean imagery, style, and diction.⁽⁴⁾ This criticism naturally takes a practical form in Dryden's adaptations of Shakespeare; and his methods are nowhere better set out than in the Preface to Troilus and Cressida. The language, he says, is so much more refined than it was in Shakespeare's time, that much of his phraseology is unintelligible; and of the words which we understand, 'some are ungrammatical, others coarse; and his whole style is so pestered with figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure';

... I will not say of so great a poet, that he distinguished not the blown, puffy style from true sublimity; but I may venture to maintain, that the fury of his fancy often transported him beyond the bounds of judgment, either in coining new words and phrases, or racking words which were in use, into the violence of a catachresis. It is not that I would explode the use of metaphors from passion, for Longinus thinks 'em necessary to raise it; but to use 'em at every word, to say nothing without a metaphor, a simile, an image, or description, is, I doubt, to smell a little too strongly of the buskin.

Yet, after all, because the play was Shakespeare's, and there appeared in some places of it the admirable genius of the author, I undertook to remove that heap of rubbish under which so many excellent thoughts lay buried .. I need not say that I have refined his language, which before was obsolete; but I am willing to acknowledge, that as I have often drawn his English nearer to our times, so I have sometimes conformed my own to his; and consequently, the language is not altogether so pure as it is significant. (5)

The passage of time, with changes in language, and in standards of propriety in both diction and figure, made revision necessary; but Dryden's modernisation is not thoroughgoing. He admits that he has retained poetically valuable expressions from Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida, despite their being out of date; and a similar moderation, in deference to the genius of his original, is expressed in the Preface to All for Love:

In my style, I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare; which that I might perform more clearly, I have disencumbered myself from rhyme... I hope I need not explain myself, that I have not copied my author servilely; words and phrases must of necessity receive a change in succeeding ages; but it is almost a miracle that much of his language remains so pure. (I)

Little need be said of Dryden's first experiment in dramatic adaptation, the version of Shakespeare's Tempest in which he collaborated with the arch-reviser Davenant. Davenant, says Dryden, 'as he was a man of quick and piercing imagination, soon found that somewhat might be added to the Design of Shakespear'. Dryden readily agreed to collaborate, and confesses, that 'from the very first moment it so pleas'd me, that I never writ anything with more delight'. He worked under Davenant's direction, and 'received daily his amendments'. The plot was considerably altered and complicated, and 'comical parts of the Saylor's' were introduced. In addition to these 'improvements' in the design of the play, a Fancy of the Drydenian kind has been liberated to dance ecstatically over Shakespeare's page. Prospero, for example, threatens the recalcitrant Ariel with imprisonment in the bowels of a remote volcano, where

At every Hick-up of the belching Mountain
Thou shalt be lifted up to taste fresh Air,
And then fall down again.

Summers, ii, 214.

The innocent Dorinda, looking out to sea on the first ship she has ever set eyes on, gives the poet a fine opportunity for exuberant fancifulness; the strange object appears to her as a gigantic ram:

All ty'd with Ribbands, ruffling in the wind,
Sometimes he nodded down his head a while,

Notes, p. 214.

I. See infra, p. 139.

2. Account of the English Dramatick Poets (1691), Spingarn, iii, p. 144.

the Preface to All for Love:

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Little need be said of Dryden's first experiment in dramatic adaptation, his version of Shakespeare's Tamper with Love in which he collaborated with the arch-reviser, Davenant. Davenant, says Dryden, 'as he was a man of quick and piercing imagination, soon found that somewhat might be added to the design of Shakespeare'. Dryden readily agreed to collaborate, and confesses, that 'from the very first moment it so pleased me, that I never writ anything with more delight'. He worked under Davenant's direction, and 'received daily his amendments'. The plot was considerably altered and complicated, and 'several parts of the Scylla' were introduced. In addition to these 'improvements', in the design of the play, a 'many of the Pythagorean kind has been liberated to dance coastally over Shakespeare's page. Prospero, for example, threatens the reconciliation with imprisonment in the bowels of a remote volcano, where

At every lick-up of the boiling Mountain
They shall be lifted up to taste fresh Air,
And then fall down again.

The famous Davenant, looking out to sea on the first ship she has ever set eyes on, gives the poet a fine opportunity for exuberant fancifulness; the strange object appears to her as a gigantic ram:

All ty'd with ribbands, rattling in the wind,
Sometimes he nodded down his head a while,

And then the Waves did heave him to the Moon;
 He clamb'ring to the top of all the Billows,
 And then again he curtsy'd down so low,
 I could not see him..

Summers, ii, I67

Further, there is some attempt to colour the play with the proper 'terms of art'; the opening storm scene is liberally enriched with nautical terms, and although many of these are recondite, they may be regarded as introduced for greater realism.

Of Dryden's two independent, and much more important, adaptations of Shakespeare, I take Troilus and Cressida first. This play, although it is later than All for Love, is closer to its original, and shows the range and character of Dryden's stylistic changes more clearly. He does little more than to adjust Shakespeare here for the Restoration theatre; and he does it to the satisfaction of his age. He added several new scenes, says Langbaine, and 'even cultivated and improv'd what he borrow'd from the Original'. Dryden tried to modernise Shakespeare's language and style, making the Elizabethan phraseology intelligible, and cutting away the 'rubbish' of figurative expressions with which the original is 'pestered'; and his version provides many striking examples of a bold reduction of Shakespeare's complex and difficult imagery. For example:

Shakespeare's Troilus: Pour'st in the open ulcer of my heart
 Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice;
 Handlest in thy discourse, O, that her hand,
 In whose comparison all whites are ink,
 Writing their own reproach; to whose soft seizure
 The cygnet's down is harsh, and spirit of sense
 Hard as the palm of ploughman... I.i.55 ff.

Dryden's Troilus: O Pandarus, when I tell thee I am mad,
 In Cresseid's love, thou answer'st she is fair;
 Praisest her eyes, her stature, and her wit..
 Summers, v, 37.

Shakespeare's Cressida: If I be false, or swerve a hair from truth,
 When time is old and hath forgot itself,
 When water-drops hath worn the stones of Troy,
 And blind oblivion swallow'd cities up,
 And mighty states characterless are grated
 To dusty nothing, yet let memory,
 From false, to false, among false maids in love,

And then the waves did leave him to the moon;
He clung to the top of all the willows,
And then again he craved to see him,
I could not see him.

Note, p. 215.

- I. For other examples of Dryden's reduction, compare Shakespeare, Troilus, I, iii, 75 ff, and Dryden, Summers, v, p. 34; Shakespeare, I, iii, 142 ff, and Summers, v, pp. 34-5; Shakespeare, I, ii, 308 ff, and Summers, v, p. 42; Shakespeare, II, iii, 122 ff, and Summers, v, p. 60.

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Shakespeare's Troilus:
 Four'st in the open view of my heart
 Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice;
 Her hand in thy discourse, O that her hand
 In those comparisons all which she liketh
 Writing their own reproach; to whose soft accents
 The cypher's bow is bent, and spirit of sense
 Hard as the gain of grammar...

Dryden's Troilus:
 O Pandarus, when I shall see I am dead,
 In Cressida's love, thou answer'st she is fair;
 Praise her eyes, her accents, and her wit.

Shakespeare's Cressida:
 If I be false, or swear a hair from truth,
 When time is old and hath forgot itself,
 When water-brags hath worn the stones of Troy,
 And blind oblivion swallow'd cities up,
 And mighty states charnel-houses are grates,
 To dust's addition, yet let memory
 From false, to false, more false maid in love,

Upbraid my falsehood. When they've said 'as false
As air, as water, wind or sandy earth..'
Yea, let them say, to stick the heart of falsehood,
'As false as Cressid'. III, iii, 96 ff.

Dryden's Cressida: If I am false, or swerve from truth of love,
When time is old, and has forgot itself,
In all things else, let it remember me;
And after all comparisons of falsehood,
To stab the heart of perjury in Maids;
Let it be said, as false as Cressida. (I) Summers, v, 64

It is clear from the comparative simplicity of Shakespeare's second passage, which not even Dryden's love of sustained, cumulative rhetoric persuades him to preserve entire, that what the adapter set himself to change was not only complexity or obscurity, but even the exaltation of dramatic speech through accumulated and quickly shifting images. He sits down to smooth, purify, simplify, and polish in a new poetic manner. Sometimes he alters or omits in deference to the Augustan standards of propriety and good taste. For example, where Hector asserts, in Shakespeare's play, that

There is no lady of more softer bowels,
More spongy to suck in the sense of fear,
More ready to cry out 'Who knows what follows?'
Than Hector is, II, ii, II ff.

Dryden modifies this strong language:

Yet there's no Virgin of more tender heart,
More ready to cry out, who knows the consequences,
Than Hector is. Summers,
v, 42.

Shakespeare's Troilus, longing for his love, cries in an abandoned ecstasy:

.. I stalk about her door,
Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks
Staying for waftage. O, be thou my Eharon,
And give me swift transportance to these fields
Where I may wallow in the lily-beds
Proposed for the deserver. O gentle Pandarus!
From Cupid's shoulder pluck his painted wings,
And fly with me to Cressid. III, ii, 8 ff.

Dryden concentrates this speech, incidentally losing nearly all its dramatic quality; he cuts its extravagance, and tones it down towards the prose passage which follows it:

.. I stalk about your doors
Like a strange Soul upon the stygian banks

Staying for waftage: O be thou my Charon,
 And give me a swift transportance to Elysium,
 And fly with me to Cressida.

Summers, v, 49

Again, Dryden omits figures and word-play which his audience would probably have found unintelligible, or at least distasteful and uninteresting. The word-play of the Restoration stage was less subtle than that of Shakespeare's time; and repartee depended less on innuendo and complicated paranomasia, than upon polished paradoxes and swift, witty rejoinders. Shakespeare's Pandarus, for example, jestingly rebukes Troilus and Cressida, in a torrent of vivid, colloquial, and disconnected metaphor and proverb (the disconnection, however, heightening the speaker's mercurial energy):

Come, come, what need you blush? shame's a baby. —Here she is now ... Come your ways, come your ways: an you draw backward, we'll put you i'th'fills.. Alas the day, how loth you are to offend daylight! an 'twere dark, you'd close sooner. So, so; rub on, and kiss the mistress. How now! a kiss in fee-farm! build there, carpenter; the air is sweet. Nay, you shall fight your hearts out ere I part you. The falcon as the tercel, for all the ducks i'th'river:go to, go to. (III, ii, 40 ff).

The Restoration appetite for improper suggestiveness was strong; but here Dryden, in the interests of intelligibility, cuts down the enthusiastic prurience and the complicated allusion of Pandarus:

Come, come, what need you blush? shame's a babie ... alas a day, how loath you are to offend daylight! -----(they kisse) that's well, that's well, nay you shall fight your hearts out ere I part you. ---so so---so so--- (Summers, v, p.62).

Dryden's treatment of Shakespeare's language follows two courses: he tries to bring the dialogue nearer to the modern idiom, and (a related principle) he reduces the flamboyant colouring and the bold originality of Shakespeare's diction. In modernising the idiom, he frequently drops, or replaces, words which had gone out of standard speech. For example:

<u>Shakespeare</u>	<u>Dryden</u>	<u>Shakespeare</u>	<u>Dryden</u>
<u>Rive in twain</u>	<u>cleave in two</u>	<u>plantage</u>	<u>flowing tides</u>
<u>by my head</u>	<u>by my honour</u>	<u>main opinion</u>	<u>common reputation</u>
<u>brown favour</u>	<u>brown complexion</u>	<u>pelting wars</u>	<u>paltry wars</u>
<u>commixtion</u>	<u>mixture</u>		

And give me a swift transference to his time
And fly with me to Orestes.

Notes, p. 217.

- 1.)
- 2.) For these references, see p.239.

3. The commentary in Mr. Montague Summers' edition provides many examples.

... Come, come, what need you blush? ...
... how low you are to offend daylight; ...
... how low you are to offend daylight; ...
... how low you are to offend daylight; ...

The Restoration ...
... in the interests of intelligibility, ...
... complicated situation of ...

... Come, come, what need you blush? ...
... how low you are to offend daylight; ...
... how low you are to offend daylight; ...

Byden's treatment of Shakespeare's language follows two courses: he tries to bring the history closer to the modern idiom, and (a related principle) he reduces the timorous colouring and the bold originality of Shakespeare's diction in modernising the idiom, he frequently drops, or replaces, words which had gone out of standard speech. For examples:

Byden	Shakespeare	Byden	Shakespeare
flowing robes	plumage	always in two	five in twain
common reputation	main opinion	by my honest	by my head
hasty wars	girding wars	brown complexion	brown favour
		mixture	commixtion

Peculiar Shakespearean words or uses are avoided: estimate and dignity of value becomes dignity and estimation; Love's thrice repured nectar is reduced to nectar; and my matter is so rash (urgent) is modified to I bring you Brother most un-
 (1)
welcome news.

Many of Dryden's alterations in diction, although carried out in the interests of intelligibility, involve a distinct loss of poetic colouring. Shakespeare's diction, especially in its heavy latinate element and its peculiar poetic uses, makes an important contribution to the total richness of the play; and it probably provided problems for even an Elizabethan audience, and the thrill of a colourful and suggestive obscurity which could not be resolved in the theatre. This richness is largely lost in Dryden's version. He omits such weighty and effective phrases as in hot digestion of this cormorant war, a gory emulation 'twixt us twain, and the dexter cheek and .. sinister. He reduces touch of consanguinity to touch of birth, despising many forfeits and subduements to scorning many forfeit lives, and primitive statue and oblique memorial of cuckolds to primitive cuckold. Shakespeare's vinewdest leaven is simplified to mouldy leaven;
 (2)
 and poor capocchia (dolt) becomes the much less effective poor wench.

All for Love, Dryden's adaptation of Antony and Cleopatra, provides interesting contrasts of a rather different kind. Here Dryden is working much less closely to his original; but although he describes the play as 'written in imitation of Shakespeare's Style', and tells us that he has drawn on Plutarch, Appian, and Dion Cassius for subsidiary material, he keeps a good deal closer to Shakespeare than Mr. Summers would have us believe. There are, despite considerable alteration to the plot, many parallels to Antony and Cleopatra; and, in addition, echoes of other Shakespeare plays, introduced to enhance this 'imitation' of Shakespeare's
 (3)
 style. All for Love is an attempt to retell the story of Antony and Cleopatra, not so much (like Troilus and Cressida) from the Shakespearean version, as in the Shakespearean manner; and the stylistic differences between Shakespeare's work and

Note, p. 218.

I. M. Sherwood, Dryden's Dramatic Theory and Practice, Yale, 1914, p. 10.

and Dryden's are a measure both of Dryden's failure to imitate Shakespeare's manner, and of his different approach to the writing of exalted poetic drama.

It has been rightly said of Dryden that his mind was 'critical, analytical, without being synthetic. .. Ideas, not men, interested him; the reflective matter of life, not life caught in the act.. The desire to make clear, to explain, to illustrate, pervades Dryden's treatment of passion. His characters analyse their emotions. You feel the author laboriously trying to think the feeling out'. This tendency is to be seen in Dryden's adaptations, not only in characterisation, but also in the diction and imagery which reflect or express character: and it draws him away from Shakespeare. His style in All for Love is not, like Shakespeare's, 'pestered' with images; and his verse is declamatory, expository, a verse of strong or graceful statement rather than of complex suggestion. In his characterisation, he tends to represent Antony's action and personality through commentary, rather than to reveal them in Antony's own speech. In Antony and Cleopatra, the character of the hero is dramatically outlined in the opening scene, in his own words, attitudes, and declared reactions to events; in Dryden's first act, Antony is largely described to the audience through the analytical commentary of other persons. The method, that is, inclines towards that of narrative or descriptive poetry, rather than to that of drama. Again, even when characters do speak for themselves, they delineate their feelings in rhetorical terms, where Shakespeare's draw out their passion laboriously into articulate speech. Dryden's Antony, for example, when his Restoration paramour heroically offers to breathe her last in his arms, exclaims:

Dye! Rather let me perish: looss'nd Nature
Leap from its hinges. Sink the props of Heav'n.
And fall the Skyes to crush the neather World.
My Eyes, my Soul, my all! Summers, iv, 2II

This is mere rhetorical extravagance, in which the speaker and his words are not quite fused. Dryden is straining, with a very different and in this respect inadequate type of exalted style, after Shakespearean passages in which the high poetic declarations of Antony full match his mind and character: for example,

Note, p. 219.

I. M.E. Prior, The Language of Tragedy, New York, 1947, p. 157.

On pp. 193 ff, Mr. Prior develops this point with detailed reference to All for Love.

My eyes, my soul, my all!
And fall the dyes to crown the heather world.
Lead from the hinges, sink the grope of heav'n,
Dye! Rather let me perish: loosing heathens

This is more rhetorical extravagance, in which the speaker and his words are not quite fixed. Dryden is uncertain, with a very different and in this respect in- adequate type of excited style, after Shakespearean practice in which the high poetic declensions of Antony fill with his mind and character: for example,

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
Of the ranged empire fall. Here is my space.
Kingdoms are clay..

Antony & Cleopatra,
I, i, 33-35.

The Cleopatra of Shakespeare, with all her violent passion, her volatile spontaneity, and her terrible temper --- 'by Isis, I will give thee bloody teeth, If thou with Caesar paragon my man of men' --- belongs to a different world from that of Dryden's heroine, who, rejected by Antony after the naval battle, sets about explaining herself thus:

How shall I plead my cause, when you, my Judge,
Already have condemn'd me? Shall I bring
The Love you bore me for my Advocate?
That now is turn'd against me, that destroys me;
For love, once past, is, at the best forgotten;
But oftner sours to hate: 'twill please my Lord
To ruine me, and therefore I'll be guilty...

Summers, iv, 213

Here the natural passion of Cleopatra is tempered and quietened by reflection; and this tendency to reflective commentary, or intrusive didacticism, is apparent everywhere in Dryden's heroic plays. 'The action is always managed in such a way as to produce the maximum number of dilemmas for the hero, so that each episode produces a crisis which the dramatist treats so as to display the expression of intense states of passion, or of sharp clashes in point of view..., or of the weighing of conflicting possibilities of choice, or of the persuasion of one character by another.'

(I)

It is this difference in general atmosphere and dramatic method which accounts for the difference between Dryden's imagery and Shakespeare's. In All for Love, the images are not essentially bound up with the emotions and total personalities of the characters who employ them, although they play a considerable part in unifying the elements of passion and conflict in the play. They set forth, elucidate, emphasise, or ornament ideas and situations. Such imagery, especially when its function is primarily decorative, serves the poet well in description; for example, in the lovely tribute to Cleopatra:

Her eyes have pow'r beyond Thessalian Charms,
To draw the Moon from Heav'n; for Eloquence,
The Sea-green Syrens taught her voice their flatt'ry;

And while she speaks, Night steals upon the Day,
Unmark'd of those that hear... Summers, iv, 237

Or Alexas to Cleopatra, on Dollabella:

He's handsom, valiant, young,
And looks as he were laid for Nature's bait
To catch weak Womens eyes.
He stands already more than half suspected
Of loving you: the least kind word, or glance,
You give this Youth, will kindle him with love:
Then, like a burning Vessel set adrift,
You'll send him down amain before the wind,
To fire the heart of jealous Antony. Summers, iv, 232

Consider, on the other hand, Alexas' account in Antony and Cleopatra, of how Antony sent a message to his love. It is romantic, richly coloured with an imagery which speaks eloquently of Antony's utter self-surrender to Cleopatra:

Last thing he did, dear queen,
He kiss'd ---- the last of many doubled kisses ----
This orient pearl
'Say, the firm Roman to great Egypt sends
This treasure of an oyster; at whose foot,
To mend the pretty present, I will place
Her opulent throne with kingdoms; all the east,
Say thou, shall call her mistress'. I, v, 39 ff.

Charmian's parallel account in All for Love is characteristically analytical --- a report of Antony's reactions to news of Cleopatra, with a grace and pathos of its own, but stripped of that grand imagery in which the gift of the pearl symbolises Antony's whole sacrifice. Dryden has failed to realise the essential function of Shakespeare's imagery, and he rejects it in favour of what is, superficially, a much more relevant picture of Antony's feelings and thoughts:

He fetch'd an inward groan, and ev'ry time
I nam'd you, sigh'd, as if his heart were breaking,
But shun'd my eyes, and guiltily look'd down;
He seem'd not now that awful Antony,
Who shook an Arm'd Assembly with his Nod;
But making show as he would rub his eyes,
Disguis'd and blotted out a falling tear. Summers, iv, 205-206

When to this divorce of feeling and imagery, inner experience and outward expression, there is added Dryden's predilection for superimposed poetic adorn-

ment, what is intended for drama becomes unconvincing, and sometimes ludicrously unreal, verse dialogue. Shakespeare's Antony, recoiling from the 'foul Egyptian', bursts out into a violent condemnation of the 'triple-turned whore', and throws into passionate speech the images which toss chaotically in his tortured brain; at the same point in the story, Dryden's Antony indulges his love of decorative verse, and expresses a gentlemanly generosity to Cleopatra which reflects little passion, less sincerity, and no dramatic verisimilitude whatever:

When I beheld you first, it was in AEgypt,
Ere Caesar saw your Eyes; you gave me love,
And were too young to know it; that I settled
Your Father in his Throne, was for your sake;
I left th'acknowledgment for time to ripen.
Caesar stept in, and with a greedy hand,
Pluck'd the green fruit, ere the first blush of red,
Yet cleaving to the bough. He was my Lord,
And was, beside, too great for me to rival,
But I deserv'd you first, though he enjoy'd you. Summers, iv, 2II

Again, Dryden retains something of Antony's great soliloquy, 'I will o'ertake thee Cleopatra'; but he rejects the strong and complex imagery which expresses the speaker's emotional intensity, and is therefore dramatically integral, for a simple combination of metaphor and simile which is little more than decoration. His Antony is finely rhetorical; but he has ~~no~~ agony of spirit:

So it must be, for now
All length is torture: since the torch is out,
Lie down and stray no further; now all labour
Mars what it does, yea, very force entangles Antony & Cleopatra
Itself with strength; seal then, and all is done. IV, xiv, 45 ff.

I'm weary of my part.
My Torch is out; and the World stands before me
Like a black Desert, at th'approach of night:
I'll lay me down, and stray no farther on. Summers, iv, 254-5

Perhaps the best example of a fine Shakespearean passage carried forward by Dryden, but far inferior despite all Dryden's majesty and magnificence, is the description of Cleopatra on the Cydnus. Dryden's actual reference to the queen is fuller and more constant than Shakespeare's; but in his bolder, more direct pictorial description, the rich suggestion of the original is largely lost:

Shakespeare's Enobarbus:

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
 Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
 Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
 The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,
 5 Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
 The water which they beat to follow faster,
 As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
 It beggar'd all description: she did lie
 In her pavilion, cloth-of-gold of tissue,
 10 O'er-picturing that Venus where we see
 The fancy out-work nature: on each side her
 Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
 With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
 To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
 15 And what they undid did.....
 The city cast
 Her people out upon her; and Antony,
 Enthroned i' the market-place, did sit alone,
 Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,
 20 Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,
 And made a gap in nature.

II, ii, 196-223

Dryden's Antony:

Her Gally down the Silver Cydnos row'd,
 The Tackling Silk, the Streamers wav'd with Gold,
 The gentle Winds were lodg'd in Purple sails:
 Her Nymphs, like Nereids, round her Couch, were plac'd;
 V Where she, another Sea-born Venus, lay.
 .. She lay, and leant her cheek upon her hand,
 And cast a look so languishingly sweet,
 As if, secure of all beholders hearts,
 Neglecting, she could take 'em: Boys, like Cupids,
 X Stood fanning with their painted wings, the winds
 That plaid about her face; but if she smil'd,
 A darting glory seem'd to blaze abroad:
 That mens desiring eyes were never weary'd;
 But hung upon the object
 XV 'Twas Heaven, or somewhat more;
 For she so charm'd all hearts, that gazing crowds
 Stood panting on the shore, and wanted breath
 To give their welcome voice.

summers, iv, 221

Dryden's silver Cydnus has not the reflected glory of Shakespeare's river, on which the barge burned gold. For Cleopatra's smiling, there is an Augustan abstract phrase (XII); and the smile has nothing of the subtle physical suggestion of Shakespeare's picture of her cheeks glowing in the caresses of the breeze (13-15). Dryden's panting crowds (XVI-XVIII) are an almost bathetic version of Shakespeare's magnificent extravagance in lines 19-21; Shakespeare rises grandly to this type of bold conceit, but Dryden only strains towards it. The plainer style of Dryden, despite his rich colouring, and his direct description (VI-IX), loses all the subtle sensuousness of Shakespeare's description. Dryden misses the voluptuous

The breeze she saw in, like a burnish'd limbeck
Burst on the water; the moon was beaten gold;

Notes, p. 223.

1. Works of Dryden, 1808, v, pp. 292-3.

2. Mr. M.E. Prior (op. cit., p. 167), illustrates
the close connection between the argumentative
poem and the dramatic debate, with reference to
Aureng-zebe and The Hind and the Panther.

3. Essays, i, pp. 184, 186-9.

Good grew, the good
With divers-colour'd lines, whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
And what they would did seem to do.

18

The city east
Her people out upon her, and anatomy
Marked out the water-places, did sit alone,
Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,
Had gone to gaze on Othello too.

20

11, 11, 100-233

And made a gap in nature.

Dryden's Antony

Her Gally down the River Cydnus tow'd,
The Tackling still, the Rowers way'd with Gold,
The gentle Winds were lodg'd in Purple sails;
Her Symples, like Parasels, round her Couch, were plac'd;

Y

Where she, another Par-born Venus, lay,
... The Jay, and lent her cheek upon her hand,
And cast a look so languishingly sweet,
As if secure of all beholders hearts,

X

Reflecting, she could tell: em Boye, like Quintus,
Stood fanning with their painted wings, the Winds
That play'd about her face; but if she smil'd,
A darting glory seem'd to blaze abroad;

XV

That none desiring eyes were never weary'd;
But hung upon the object
... 'Twas heaven, or somewhat more;
For she so charm'd all hearts, that fasting crowds
Stood panting on the shore, and wanted breath
To give their welcome voice.

Antony, iv, 221

Dryden's Antony has not the reflected glory of Shakespeare's river, or
which the barge bore Gold. For Othello's smiling, there is an Augustan restraint

phrase (XII); and the simile has nothing of the subtle physical suggestion of
Shakespeare's picture of her cheeks glowing in the caresses of the breeze (13-15)

Dryden's panting crowds (XVI-XVIII) are an almost pathetic version of Shakespeare
magnificent extravagance in lines 18-21; Shakespeare rises gradually to this type

of bold conceit, but Dryden only strains towards it. The plain style of Dryden,
despite his rich colouring, and his direct description (XIX), loses all the

subtle consciousness of Shakespeare's description. Dryden misses the voluptuous

significances in the references to the winds, love-sick with the perfumed sails (3-4), and the water amorous of the oars (5-7); although such subtleties should have appealed to him as a reader of Spenser's description of the Bower of Bliss, which is full of voluptuous movement. Scott, with some misgiving, prefers Dryden's passage to Shakespeare's, since it is 'flowery without diffusiveness, and rapturous without hyperbole. I fear Shakespeare cannot be exculpated from the latter fault ... it is by sifting his beauties from his conceits that his imitator has been enabled to excel him'. Scott, who was in much a late Augustan, and had a fuller sympathy with Dryden as a stylist, than with Shakespeare, underlines here a difference in descriptive technique between the two poets; and that difference is to a great extent the result of Dryden's deliberate policy.

These adaptations of Shakespeare illustrate a number of important aspects of Dryden's dramatic style. A style which is weighted with imagery, or with peculiar and not readily intelligible expressions, is not, for Dryden, effectively dramatic. The seventeenth century conception of imagery and 'poetic' diction as ornament, encourages Dryden to adorn the thoughts and sentiments of his characters, often without sufficient attention to the dramatic effect of such decoration. This conception of imagery as ornament, divorces thought from expression, and action from dialogue, to the detriment of the play. Finally, thought and feeling are often analysed or elaborated in a style which belongs to reflective or philosophical poetry rather than to the drama, in which thought, feeling, character, and action are synthesised and balanced in stage dialogue.

The close connection in Dryden's mind between ornate poetry and poetry written for dramatic performance, is well demonstrated in his operatic version of Paradise Lost, The State of Innocence. He attempts to dramatise Milton's poem with all the trappings of the heroic drama. In the Preface, he defends a high, rhetorical, image-laden style. Figures of various kinds are to be worked judiciously into poetry, 'as heightenings and shadows are in painting'. A lofty poem requires bold imagery and description, and the licence of 'speaking things in verse, which are beyond the severity of prose'. Dryden's enthusiastic applic-

ation of this doctrine is unfortunate. 'Imaging is, in itself, the very height and life of poetry'; but the persistent vigour with which he works on this laudable principle results in strained excess and irresponsible impropriety. Adam's lines to Eve proceed from sophisticated sentimentality and complacency, to a fantastically decorated foolishness:

When to my Arms thou brought'st thy Virgin Love,
 Fair Angels, sung our Bridal Hymn above:
 Th'Eternal, nodding, shook the Firmament,
 And conscious Nature, gave her glad consent.
 Roses unbid, and ev'ry fragrant Flower,
 Flew from their Stalks, to strow thy Nuptial Bower:
 The furr'd and feather'd kind, the triumph did pursue,
 And Fishes leapt above the Streams, the passing Pomp to view.
Summers, iii, 437-8

At the other extreme of style, Dryden's characters argue with themselves, and with one another, in a manner which is plain, not in the majestic simplicity of the Homeric epic, but in a fluent prosiness. In the easy conversation of the debate in Hell, there is no hint of the Miltonic 'Arch Angel ruind'. Eve anticipates her ascension into Heaven, not in the high rhetoric of the 'fairest of all creatures, last and best, Of what Heav'n made', but in the scheming mutterings of a lady from Restoration comedy:

Take me not Heav'n, too soon; 'twill be unkind
 To Leave the partner of my bed behind.
 I love the wretch; but stay, shall I afford
 Him part? already he's too much my Lord.
 'Tis in my pow'r to be a Sovereign now;
 And, knowing more, to make his manhood bow. Summers, iii, 452

Dryden shows a total inability to follow Milton, even in dialogue. If he succeeds in any part of this play, it is in the argumentative passages on free-will and kindred topics; and there are places where he anticipates the didactic and satiric styles in which he later excelled. Adam, disillusioned by Eve, becomes something of the Augustan satirist, and at the same time something very far from Dryden's conception of the hero:

Notes, p. 225.

- I. We know from Dryden's remarks in The Vindication of The Duke of Guise, that he was responsible for the first scene of OEdipus, all Act IV, and the first half of Act V.
2. For an exhaustive analysis of Sophocles' plain style in this play, see F.R. Earp, The Style of Sophocles, Cambridge, 1944.
3. This noisy and unrestrained torrent of words and images is characteristic:

Why from the bleeding Womb of monstrous Night,
Burst forth such Myriads of abortive Stars?
Ha! my Jocasta, look! the Silver Moon!
A settling Crimson stains her beauteous Face!
She's o'er all Blood! and look, behold again,
What means the mistick Heav'ns, she journeys on?
A vast Eclipse darkens the labouring Planet...
Summers, iv, 370.

On womens virtue, who too much rely,
 To boundless will give boundless liberty.
 Restraint you will not brook; but think it hard
 Your prudence is not trusted as your guard:
 And to your selves so left, if ill ensues,
 You first our weak indulgence will accuse.

• • • • •
 Add, that she's proud, fantastick, apt to change;
 Restless at home; and ever prone to range:
 With shows delighted, and so vain is she,
 She'll meet the Devil, rather than not see. Summers, iii, 456-7

In this opera, three of Dryden's recurrent weaknesses are revealed at their worst: his love of the fanciful, without any consistent critical effort to adapt his style to his material; a tendency to drop into the prosaic, when the theme and general tone demand something higher; and a readiness, wherever the opportunity presents itself, to digress in didactic or satiric comment, and to analyse thought and feeling undramatically.

Lastly, there is the version of Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus, in which Dryden collaborated with Lee. ⁽¹⁾ Despite some acknowledged debts to Corneille and Seneca, Dryden and Lee claim that since 'Sophocles indeed is admirable everywhere we have follow'd him as closely as possibly we cou'd'. In the Preface, Dryden speaks hardly of Seneca's pompous expressions and pointed style, and of his 'Philosophical notions, more proper for the Study than the Stage'. In view of this criticism, and of the authors' claim to be loyal to the Greek, a terse, plain, vigorous style might be expected. ⁽²⁾ This expectation is disappointed, in Dryden's work as well as Lee's. Lee's part is violently rhetorical. The Greek play, sufficiently terrible, is transformed into a blood-play in the Jacobean tradition: ⁽³⁾ the reader sups full of horrors.

With such a collaborator as Lee, wallowing in blood and violence, and filling out the original with leisurely decoration, it is not surprising that Dryden gives free rein to his most flamboyant and richly rhetorical style, and to his love of ornament. He opens the play with a fiercely phrased account of portents which out-Shakespeares the Shakespeare of Caesar and Antony and Cleopatra; and he follows Lee's example in horrid imagery, though with less uncontrolled energy of phrase. The cry of the demented Oedipus reads like a burlesque of Macbeth:

Ha! again that scream of woe!
 Thrice have I heard, thrice since the morning dawn'd
 It hollow'd loud, as if my Guardian Spirit
 Call'd from some vaulted Mansion, Oedipus!
 Or is it but the work of melancholly?
 When the Sun sets, shadows, that shew'd at Noon
 But small, appear most long and terrible;
 So when we think Fate hovers o're our heads,
 Our apprehensions shoot beyond all bounds,
 Owls, Ravens, Crickets seem the watch of death,
 Nature's worst Vermine scare her God-like Sons.
 Echoes, the very leavings of a Voice,
 Grow babling Ghosts, and call us to our Graves:
 Each Mole-hill thought swells to a huge Olympus.. Summers, iv, 400

Dryden's ornamental style suits Sophocles ill. Sophocles' beautifully quiet and moving comment on the death of Polybus -- 'King Polybus is dead .. A little shift of the scale, and old men sleep' (δρικρὰ παλαιὰ ἑώρατ' εὐνάσειε ἔοπή) --- is expanded tastelessly:

Of no distemper, of no blast he dy'd,
 But fell like Autumn-Fruit that mellow'd long:
 Ev'n wonder'd at, because he dropt no sooner.
 Fate seem'd to wind him for four-score years;
 Yet freshly ran he on
 Ten Winters more:
 Till, like a Clock worn out with eating Time,
 The Wheels of weary life at last stood still. Summers, iv, 404.

Dryden's account of the blinding of Oedipus is not, despite his violent efforts, more terrible than that of Sophocles -- and indeed he falls short of the horror of 'a storm of blood for rain, and hail of clotting gore' in the original; but the scene of stormy rhetorical passion in which Jocasta reacts to the discovery of her sin is in a very different style from that of Sophocles, and misses the brief, silently dramatic 'and after that --I know not how-- she died' (χῶπος μὲν ἐκ τῶνδ' οὐκέτ' εἶδ' ἀπόλλυται).

At its best, Dryden's verse is fuller and much slower than that of the original, with his characteristic digression and reflection which retards the interacting of character and event, and slows down the dramatic progression. Many of the passages in this play, setting aside outbursts of undramatic hysteria in crises of passion, are ruined by extravagance, or by the poet's inability to see

Notes, p. 227.

- 1. See the interesting if over-simple description of the 'baroque' in G. Highet, The Classical Tradition, Oxford, 1949, pp. 289 ff.
- 2. Essays, ii, pp. 37-8.

Pydan's ornamental style and Sophocles'...
 moving comment on the death of Polybus -- King Polybus is dead... A little bit
 of the scale, and old man sleep! (Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*)
 is expanded fantastically

Of no distinction, of no blast he dy'd
 But fell like Autumn-fruit that mellow'd long;
 Ev'n wonder'd at, because he dy'd no sooner;
 Fate seem'd to wind him for four-score years;
 Yet freshly ran he on
 Ten winters more;
 Till like a Clock worn out with eating Time,
 The Wheel of weary life at last stood still.

Pydan's account of the blinding of Oedipus is not, despite his violent efforts,
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 scene of stony rhetorical passion in which Oedipus resorts to the discovery of
 her sin is in a very different style from that of Sophocles, and whereas the
 slightly dramatic 'and after that -- I know not how -- she died' (Pydan's *Oedipus Rex*)

At the best, Pydan's verse is fuller and much slower than that of the origi-
 nal, with his characteristic digression and reticence which retards the inter-
 action of character and event, and slows down the dramatic progression. Many of
 the passages in this play, setting aside incidents of dramatic hysteria in
 scenes of passion, are ruined by extravagance, or by the poet's inability to see

where he should leave off. Sophocles is hardly dealt with. Only occasionally does the true Dryden, loftily simple and final in expression, emerge even darkly:

For all the Elements, and all the Pow'rs
Celestial, nay Terrestrial and Infernal,
Conspire the rack of out-cast Oedipus;
Fall darkness then, and everlasting night
Shadow the Globe; may the Sun never dawn,
The Silver Moon be blotted from her Orb;
And for a Universal rout of Nature
Through all the inmost Chambers of the Sky,
May there be not a glimpse, one Starry spark,
But Gods meet Gods, and justle in the dark.
That jars may rise, and wrath Divine be hurl'd,
Which may to Atoms shake the solid World. Summers, iv, 4I4

Oedipus and The State of Innocence supplement the evidence of the adaptations of Shakespeare, in illustrating the rhetorical declamation and the highly-coloured, fancifully decorative imagery which Dryden considered the essential poetic vestments for these revised plots, if they were to be fitted for the Restoration stage. On the one hand, where the Shakespearean plays are concerned, diction is refined to meet the critical demands of the time, and imagery is reduced, simplified, and formalised; the dramatist's aim is polished grace, dignity, and elegant embellishment. On the other hand, as in so many categories of baroque art, the strong passion which is essential to high poetry demands full expression; and that expression is achieved often at the cost of both dignity and dramatic propriety, through a flamboyant imagery and violent rhetoric. These characteristics, which a comparison of the adaptations with their originals throws into relief, may be more fully analysed and accounted for by considering Dryden's critical approach to poetic drama, and his original work in that field.

----- 2 -----

For long Dryden played with the idea of writing a heroic poem 'which would have taken up my life in the performance of it'; and he declared that he was prevented from executing his design only by lack of patronage, and ultimately by old age and want. But although he never wrote his epic, he practised the heroic style in a remarkable variety of poetic kinds, throughout his life. He took

Notes, p. 228.

1. Essays, i, p. 101; cf. i, pp. 150-51, ii, pp. 157, 159; and Hobbes, Answer to Davenant, 'the heroique poem narrative is called an epic poem. The heroique poem dramatic is tragedy'.
2. Essays, i, pp. 101-2; ii, pp. 159, 143, 160.
3. Essays, ii, pp. 190ff; i, p. 15.

the artistic responsibilities of the heroic poet seriously, no less in heroic drama than in the epic; and although he wrote as a professional dramatist for a theatre which he had in large measure to satisfy on its own terms, he was consistently an artist in this, as in every other department of his work, writing in fidelity to the traditions and standards of good art to serve the needs and interests of his time.

In his critical essays, Dryden stresses three aspects of the heroic poem and play: the rigid unity and formal coherence of the action; the nature of the epic hero; and the general character of the heroic style. In the Essay of Dramatick Poesie, he declares that the epic and the heroic play belong to the same poetic genre; they have, as their common aim, 'a just and lively image of human nature, in its actions, passions, and traverses of fortune'; their end is 'the delight and benefit of mankind'; and their characters are essentially great and noble. (1) A distinction is to be made, however, between the characters of epic and those of the heroic drama. The difference lies, not only in the fact that drama presents character through dialogue and action, and gives therefore a livelier picture of human nature than the epic does, but also in the divergent aims of the two kinds of writing, and the effects of those aims on character. For the epic confronts us with a hero whose magnanimity, constancy, and virtue gain our admiration, and 'form the mind to heroic virtue by example'; but while the epic hero is an object of admiration, the hero of the drama is an object of pity, and thus 'the Epic Poem is more for the Manners, and Tragedy for the Passions'. (2)

This distinction between the portrayal of ideal conduct in the epic, and the dramatic representation of ideal passion in the heroic play, is an important one; it helps to explain the apparently un-epical rhetoric and highly-coloured imagery of Dryden's stage heroics. In writing of Virgil's full picture of the love of Dido and Aeneas, he distinguishes very clearly between the leisurely and subtly-wrought style of Virgil, and the 'wit of dialogue or discourse, and consequently of the drama', which is one of Ovid's chief arts. (3) The broad methods of the epic poet allow a richer imagery and a diction of subtler significance than is practicable in the drama:

Notes, p. 229.

I. Essays, ii, pp. 165-6.

2. Summers, vi, p. 21.

in his critical essays. In his essays, he stresses three aspects of the heroic poem: the right unity and formal coherence of the action; the nature of the hero; and the general character of the heroic style. In the Essay of Dramatic Poesy, he declares that the epic and the heroic play belong to the same poetic genre: they have, as their common aim, 'a just and lively image of human nature, in its actions, passions, and traverses of fortune; their end is the delight and benefit of mankind; and their characters are essentially great and noble. A distinction is to be made, however, between the characters of epic and those of the heroic drama. The difference lies, not only in the fact that drama presents character through dialogue and action, and gives therefore a livelier picture of human nature than the epic does, but also in the divergent aims of the two kinds of writing, and the effects of those aims on character. For the epic contemplates with a hero whose magnanimity, constancy, and virtue gain our admiration, and form the mind to heroic virtue by example; but while the epic hero is an object of admiration, the hero of the drama is an object of pity, and thus the tragic hero is more for the Mæcenas, and tragedy for the Pædasus.'

(3)

This distinction between the portrayal of ideal conduct in the epic, and the dramatic representation of ideal passion in the heroic play, is an important one. It helps to explain the apparently un-equivalent metaphors and highly-colored imagery of Dryden's stage heroines. In writing of Virgil's full picture of the love of Dido and Aeneas, he distinguishes very clearly between the intensely and subtly wrought style of Virgil, and the wit of dialogue or discourse, and consequently of the drama, which is one of Swift's chief errors. The broad methods of the epic good allow a richer imagery and a diction of swifter significance than is possible in the drama.

... the work of Tragedy is on the Passions, and in dialogue; both of them abhor strong metaphors, in which the Epopee delights. A poet cannot speak too plainly on the stage: for volat irrevocabile verbum; the sense is lost, if it be not taken flying. But what we read alone, we have leisure to digest; there an author may beautify his sense by the boldness of his expression, which if we understand not fully at the first, we may dwell upon it till we find the secret force and excellence. (1)
excellentes.

On these grounds, Dryden supports Segrais' view that the style of the epic 'is, and ought to be, more lofty than that of the drama'. Dryden's distinction between the epic style of Virgil, and the dramatic treatment of passion which he perceived in Ovid, was made early; and the passage I have just quoted was written at the end of his life, in 1697. The distinction may be taken as a basic one for the study of his work as a heroic dramatist.

Yet the style of the heroic plays, in spite of this distinction, is in general boldly and fancifully figured; and in 1690, in the Preface to Don Sebastian, Dryden speaks proudly of a style

somewhat more masterly arising to your view, than in most, if not any of my former Tragedies. There is a more noble daring in the Figures, and more suitable to the loftiness of the Subject; and besides this some newnesses of English, translated from the Beauties of Modern Tongues, as well as from the Elegancies of the Latin; and here and there some old words are sprinkled.... (2)

The inconsistency between this declaration, and Dryden's distinction between the styles of epic and heroic drama, is however rather superficial. There is a difference between the type of figuration and diction which he jettisoned in adapting the Shakespeare plays for the Restoration stage, and the type of decorative style with which he replaced these in his own versions. The 'strong metaphors' which we require leisure to digest in the epic, and the 'daring..Figures' of the drama, are not identical. Dryden's implicit contrast is between a rich, complex, and highly-wrought style, of which Virgil is the exemplar, and a smoother, less subtle style which may carry a good deal of ornament, so long as that ornament is 'suitable to the loftiness of the Subject', without being too involved for dramatic presentation. On the one hand, the conditions of the stage demand comparative simplicity and clarity; on the other, the association of the heroic play and the epic, and the emphasis on exalted passion in the drama, require a strong

Notes, p. 230.

1. The Rehearsal, ed. Montague Summers, London, 1914, pp. 10 (I, ii), 12 (I, ii), 54-5 (IV, ii), 61 (V, i).

2. Cf. Dryden's Prologue to The Rival Ladies, 7-12.

measure of poetic adornment -- 'the florid, elevated and figurative way is for the passions', says Dryden in the Preface to Religio Laici. It is the degree of elevation, richness, and complexity, which requires caution; and it is in just this moderation that Shakespeare, with his 'pestered' style, fails in Dryden's eyes as a dramatist.

Highly figurative and extravagant writing, often running into sheer bombast, has been one of the most frequently criticised faults in Dryden's dramatic writing from his day to ours. However composite may be the burlesque character of Bayes in The Rehearsal (1672), there are in this caricature many clear hits at Dryden; and a summary of the points of attack in the play will serve to mark the kind of criticism which Dryden invited from the 'judicious' in his own time. Bayes is very much the conscious artist; he declares that he writes 'for some persons of Quality, and peeculiar Friends.. that understand what Flame and Power in writing is'; he keeps a commonplace book as a reservoir of 'inventions'; and delights in the discovery of fine similes with which to adorn his work. He evolves his simile in vacuo, and then sets it into a dramatic context with effort and ingenuity: 'I have made, too, one of the most delicate and dainty Similes in the whole world, I gad, if I knew but how to applie it'. He rejoices in opportunities for verse argument, and for rhetorical outbursts of passion: 'Antithesis! Thine and mine... Reasoning! I gad, I love reasoning in verse... Simile! Now the Rant's acoming'. He likes fanciful mystery. A character in the play takes exception to the obscurity of a song sung by two kings in the clouds, and Bayes defends himself thus:

Plain? why, did you ever hear any people in Clouds speak plain? They must be all for flight of fancy, at its full range, without the least check, or controul upon it. When once you tye up spirits, and people in Clouds to speak plain, you spoil all. (1)

The Epilogue to The Rehearsal calls for an end of bombastic writing in drama:

Wherefore, for ours, and for the Kingdome's peace,
 May this prodigious way of writing cease.
 Let's have, at least, once in our lives, a time
 When we may hear some reason, not all Rhyme:
 We have these ten years felt it's Influence;
 Pray let this prove a year of Prose and Sence. (2)

Notes, p. 231.

1. Allardyce Nicoll, Restoration Drama, 1660-1700, Cambridge, 1923, p. 79. Professor L.C. Knights' suggestion that the boredom and the need for amusement in Restoration audiences explains the heroic heightening of emotion (Explorations, London, 1946, p. 147) is much too simple.
2. Essays, i, p. 150. Cf. Summers, i, pp. xl and xliii.
3. Essays, i, p. 148; Spingarn, iii, p. 236.
4. Supra, pp. 135-6.

Therefore, for our, and for the Kingdoms peace,
May this prodigious way of writing cease,
Let's have at least, once in our lives, a time
When we may hear some reason, not all rhyme;
We have these few years felt it's influence;
Pray let this prove a year of Peace and Sense. (3)

The criticism in this farce is directed, then, at artificial simile and fancy, undramatic argumentation, extravagant rant, and a bombastic 'prodigious way of writing'; and it is criticism which has been levelled at Dryden's plays ever since

The appeal of the heroic play, says Dryden in the Dedication of The Indian Emperour, is the appeal of noble passion and sentiment to noble audiences. This type of drama was not, in Dryden's day, utterly artificial, alien to cultured interests, and offering nothing for imitation. The age was very far from being truly heroic; but, as Professor Nichall says, 'it was not so cynical as to throw over entirely the inculcation of heroism'. These plays are of the same general type as the panegyrics: they reveal an ideal world of exalted passion, remote from the real world, but significant for that section of society which cultivates a superficial chivalry. They serve purpose like that of the heroic romances from which so much of their material is drawn; the 'Love and Valour' which Dryden prescribes as the true theme for heroic drama, is also the keynote of the romance. Realism in plot, character, or style, is not the dramatist's concern: 'thoughts may be exalted, and ... images and actions may be raised above the life' in the heroic play, says Dryden, just as Blackmore claims, for the epic poem, that no expression can be too magnificent, no thought too elevated, and that 'everything should appear great and wonderful'.

In discussing Dryden's satiric style, I pointed out that the notion of the 'soul irregularly great', often joining unequally 'a creeping fortune and a soaring mind', was an important characteristic of the hero in Dryden's plays. This view of character is important for more than Dryden's plots and dramatis personae. The story of the heroic play is one which is suited to the sentiments of noble minds, a lofty tale of love and valour; it involves men and women of powerful passion, exalted birth, and strongly assertive character; and it is therefore properly told in lofty and impassioned verse. If the style of these plays is to be fully appreciated, the emphasis on unusual but indubitably noble thought and action, and on the passion of the 'fiery soul', must be set beside the conception of tragic drama as a species of heroic poetry.

Note, p. 232.

I. C.V. Deane, Dramatic Theory and the Rhymed Heroic Play,
Oxford, 1931, pp. 146 ff, 159.

A distinction is often made between highly rhetorical dialogue and bombast. Mr. C.V. Deane, in an essay on the heroic play, maintains that bombast was an adjunct of violent action on the stage; that the two reached a climax together (in, for example, The Conquest of Granada) and declined together soon after; and that Dryden's most violent writing, like that of other dramatists of the time, was confined to this short climacteric. Mr. Deane points out that a desire for striking modes of expression, in reaction from conventional set speeches, is to be found in the Essay of Dramatick Poesie (1668); Dryden, retaliating to the criticism in The Rehearsal, defends exalted, fiery utterance in the essay Of Heroick Plays prefixed to The Conquest of Granada (1672); but there is a change of attitude in the Prefaces to All for Love and Troilus and Cressida (1678-9); and in Shadwell's Prologue to The Squire of Alsatia (1688), bombast is referred to as a thing of the past.

(I)

It is certainly true that violent rant plays a small part in Dryden's dramatic work, viewed as a whole; and in the worst example, Oedipus, ranting passages which may be due in part to the influence of Lee are offset by a calmer and smoother decorative style. On the other hand, exalted utterance which, in the form in which Dryden cultivates it, tends to become extravagant and bombastic in the crises of passion, is a constant feature of his plays; and the dangers of bombast, or some kindred impropriety of style, are always present. Mr. Deane unwisely quotes Dryden's Prefaces to the Shakespearean adaptations, as evidence of a change in attitude; but Dryden complained of one variety of complex writing in Shakespeare, only to replace it by another which, if more fully suited to Restoration tastes, is much less essentially undramatic. There is, as Mr. Deane suggests, a climacteric in the ranting habit; but the tendency to enflame dramatic style with extravagances and flamboyant images never left Dryden. Professor Nichol Smith suggests that Dryden was deliberately writing with his tongue in his cheek, for 'pit, box, and gallery'; and he quotes from the Dedication of The Spanish Friar (1681):

Notes, p. 233.

1. D. Nichol Smith, John Dryden, Cambridge, 1950, pp. 29-30.

2. See Allardyce Nicoll, Restoration Drama, 1923, pp. 134-5, for a discussion of the ways in which the heroics of the rhymed play continue, in Dryden and others, down to the end of the seventeenth century.

(1)

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I remember some Verses of my own Maximin and Almanzor which cry Vengeance upon me for their Extravagance .. All I can say for those passages, which are I hope not many, is, that I knew they were had enough to please, even when I writ them: But I repent of them amongst my Sins; and if any of their fellows intrude by chance into my present Writings, I draw a stroke over all those Dalilahs of the Theatre... (1)

But Dryden did not abandon these Dalilahs; and indeed his repentance is not altogether serious. The complicated interaction of a widespread enthusiasm for stage heroics, and a critical theory of heroic drama which partly rose from that public enthusiasm and in part gave a literary imprimatur to it, preserved the heroic style, and its attendant excesses in imagery, diction, and tone, into Dryden's last plays. (2)

He was not simply indulging the bad taste of his audience --- which he pretends to deplore in 1681 --- as one of the painful necessities of a professional dramatist's existence. There was, as almost every category of his work shows, a natural disposition in his poetic character to a strong, vivid, and startling mode of expression. That disposition was encouraged and given credit by current theories of the poetic fancy and the exalted style; and here the heroic poem, and Dryden's experiments in the epic manner, provide evidence of the same kind. Dryden loved poetic violence, and that love is often indulged to advantage. Bold conceits and forceful diction give a colour and energy to the background of battle, against which his characters move; for example:

Four several Armies to the Field are led,
Which, high in equal hopes four Princes head:
Indus and Ganges, our wide Empires Bounds,
Swell'd their dy'd Currents with their Natives wounds:
Each purple River winding, as he runs,
His bloody arms about his slaughter'd Sons. Aureng-zebe, I, i; Summers, iv, 89.

... I sought
Where ranks fell thickest; 'twas indeed the place
To seek Sebastian: through a track of Death
I follow'd him by Groans of dying Foes,
But still I came too late, for he was flown
Like Lightning, swift before me to new Slaughters,
I mow'd across, and made irregular Harvest,
Defac'd the pomp of Battel, but in vain,
For he was still supplying Death elsewhere.. Don Sebastian, I, i;
Summers, vi, 32.

Notes, p. 234.

I. Cf. A.M. Clark, Studies in Literary Modes, Edinburgh, 1946, p. 195: The heroic plays 'are rather narrative than dramatic; rhetorical argumentation and declamation, extravagant conceits and similes, excessive epigram and antithesis, all smacking of the Metaphysical manner, were employed to give a dramatic effect by other than dramatic means'.

2, Purely dramatic requirements, and the influence of a strong, undramatic poetic tradition, often conflict in this way in authors who are not maturely or naturally dramatists --- e.g., in parts of Romeo and Juliet, and the point in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde where the hero, on the verge of consummating his love, pauses to sing a hymn to Venus (III, 1254 ff).

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Dryden loved poetic violence, and that love is often indulged to advantage.
Bold conceits and forceful diction give a colour and energy to the background of
battle, against which his characters move; for example:

Four several armies to the field are led,
Which high in equal hopes for Britain stand:
And larger, our wide Empire bounds
Swell'd with their strength, with their native courage
Each purple River winding, as he runs,
His bloody arms about his conquer'd shores
Sings, IV, 88.

I thought ...
Where ranka fell thickset; 'twas hatched the place
To seek Sebastian through a track of death
I follow'd him by streams of dying foes,
But still I came too late, for he was flown
Like lightning, swift before me to new slaughter,
I now'd return, and made irregular harvest,
Before the pomp of battle, but in vain,
For he was still supplying fresh elsewhere.

Don Sebastian, I, 1;
Singers, 27, 88.

Dryden's boldness is much less effective, however, when it runs fancy-free through his dialogue at critical stages in the action. His characters are too often rhetoricians, amplifying and adorning their thoughts and feelings; as in the adaptations of Shakespeare, his figuration is not the product of the concentrated passion or thought of a noble, imaginative character in a crisis, but mere superimposed ornament. In the bloody central scene in Amboyna (1673), when Towerson comes on his betrothed Ysabiada bound and cruelly raped, he draws his sword upon her ravisher; but pauses long enough to grace his revenge with poetry:

No, Villain, no; hot Satyr of the Woods!
Expect another entertainment now.
Behold revenge for injur'd chastity,
This Sword Heaven draws against thee,
And here has plac'd me like a fiery Cherub, (2)
To guard this Paradise from any second Violation. IV, i; Summers,
iii, 388.

This slowing of the action, and the reduction of dramatic tension for the sake of an often rather dubious poetic ornament, is unfortunate enough here; but it becomes pernicious and ludicrous in critical places where characters analyse their own distraught feelings. Morat in Aureng-zebe, for example, indulges, even at the point of death, in subtleties and conceits:

Enter Morat staggering, and upheld by Souldiers.

Morat: She lives! and I shall see her once again!
I have not thrown away my life in vain.
(Catches hold of Indamora's Gown, and falls by her: she sits.
I can no more; yet, ev'n in death, I find
My fainting body byass'd by my mind.
I fall toward you; still my contending Soul
Points to your breast, and trembles to its Pole. V; Summers, iv,
152.

Muley-Moloch, Emperor of Barbary, describing his oppression of mind, runs to a most un-imperial simile in the midst of his introspections:

A kind of weight hangs heavy at my Heart;
My flagging Soul flyes under her own pitch;
Like Fowl in air too damp, and lugs along,
As if she were a body in a body,
And not a mounting substance made of fire. Don Sebastian, IV, i;
Summers, vi, 89

Dorax, in the same play, is a mighty soldier who delights in violent action and descriptions of battle:

I spitted Frogs, I crush'd a heap of Emmets,
 A hundred of 'em to a single Soul,
 And that but scanty weight too; the great Devil
 Scarce thank'd me for my pains; he swallows Vulgar
 Like whip'd Cream, feels 'em not in going down. I, i; Summers,
 vi, 31.

In death, however, Dorax changes his tune; his vivid forcefulness disappears, but his predilection for imagery persists, in an undramatic and unconvincing piece of self-analysis:

... I'm strangely discompos'd:
 Quick shootings through my limbs, and pricking pains,
 Qualms at my heart, Convulsions in my nerves,
 Shiv'rings of cold, and burnings of my entrails
 Within my little World, make medly War;
 Lose and regain, beat and are beaten back
 As momentary Victors quit their ground.
 Can it be poyson! poyson's of one tencour,
 Or hot or cold! this neither, and yet both. III, i; Summers,
 vi, 77.

Dryden most nearly approaches the epic style in his plays, in the extended decorative simile. The epic simile is epic, not only in its length, but in its nature; its essential quality is the full description of a selected phenomenon which may resemble the poet's real subject in a few details only. It has a life and a poetic value of its own, apart from its relation to the theme which provokes it. The extended similes of Milton, it is true, differ from this, in illuminating the poet's real subject at many different points and in many subtle ways; but the simile which Dryden imitates, chiefly from Virgil, is of a simpler kind. The simile of classical epic has an immense decorative value; and it is upon this that Dryden lays hold. His extended comparisons are not, like Milton's or Shakespeare's, an integral part of the poet's developing theme; they are worked into the texture of the play as ornament. Graceful comparisons are the mark of a noble imagination: in The Rival Ladies, Gonsalvo tells Juliet ---

methinks I see
 Your Soul retir'd within her inmost Chamber,
 Like a fair Mourner sit in State, with all
 The silence Pomp of Sorrow round about her;

Note, p. 236.

I. Conquest of Granada (I), V; Summers, iii, 81. For other examples of ornamental simile, see Summers, i, pp. 191 and 241; ii, pp. 34 and 351; iii, p. 48; iv, pp. 46, 86, 335.

The silence of the room about her;
Your soul's retreat, and what her inward chamber
like a fair housewife sit in state, with all
revels I see

and Don Manuel observes that this language

does express a Man bred up
To worthier Ways than those you follow now. I, i; Summers, i, I44

Simile, developed at leisure, is a natural mode of expression for Dryden's heroic characters. In Tyrannick Love, St. Catherine speaks of the uncertain resolution of men confronted with death; Berenice comments on this, holding up the progress of the drama in a leisurely simile:

As some faint Pilgrim standing on the shore,
First views the Torrent he would venture o're;
And then his Imm upon the farther ground,
Loth to wade through, and lother to go round:
Then dipping in his staff, do's tryal make,
How deep it is; and, sighing, pulls it back;
Sometimes resolv'd to fetch his leap; and then
Runs to the Bank, but there stops short agen;
So I at once-----
Both heav'nly Faith, and humane fear obey.. IV; Summers, ii, 37I-2

Occasionally these full ornamental similes, although they detract from the dramatic tension, have a lyrical beauty of their own; and this is their justification. There is a precision, and also a vivid suggestion, in Cleomenes' lines on fitful and uncertain love:

For what I see, or only think I see,
Is like a Glimps of Moonshine, streak'd with red;
A shuffled, sullen, and uncertain Light,
That dances thro' the Clouds, and shuts again;
Then 'ware a rising Tempest on the Main. IV; Summers, vi, 370

This purely decorative comparison, although it was parodied in The Rehearsal, has a clear, independent poetic loveliness:

As some fair tulip, by a storm opprest,
Shrinks up; and folds its silken arms to rest;
And, bending to the blast, all pale and dead,
Hears from within, the wind sing round its head:
Unvail, my love; and lay aside your fears.
The storm that caus'd your fright, is past and done. (I)

Much of the epic quality in the plays is derived from Virgil, or developed from Virgil's example. The debt is especially marked in introductory expositions

Notes, p. 237.

1. Essays, ii, pp. 202-3.
2. Summers, i, p. 191.
3. Summers, iv, p. 86. Another aspect of Dryden's leisurely and non-dramatic filling-out is his inset didactic commentary, which has been often praised. See, for example, Summers, iv, 90 and II9; vi, 59 and I26.

As some faint lightning twinkling on the shore,
First views the torrent he would venture o'er;
And then his eye upon the farther ground
Lies to wade through, and farther to go round.
Then dipping in his staff, he's ready made
How deep it is; and, alighting, pulls it back;
Sometimes resolv'd to fetch the lead; and then
Lies to the bank, but there stops short again;
So I at once—

both heavy'sly falling, and persons sent away. . . IV; Summers, ii, 237

Occasionally these full ornamental similes, although they detract from the dramatic texture, have a lyrical beauty of their own; and this is their justification. There is a precision, and also a vivid suggestion, in Clarendon's lines on Effingham and uncertain loves:

For what I see, or only think I see,
Is like a glimpse of morning, streak'd with red;
A smould'ring sun, and uncertain light,
That denotes truth, the clouds, and shuts again;
Then 'twas a rising tempest on the main.

This purely decorative comparison, although it was included in the Rehearsal, has a clear, independent poetic loveliness:

As some fair tulip, by a storm oppress'd,
Shrinks up; and folds the stiffer stem to rest;
And, bending to the blast, all pain and heat,
Heard from within, the wind that blows the head;
Unvail, my love; and lay aside your fears.
The storm that caus'd your flight, is past and done. (I)

Much of the epic quality in the plays is derived from Virgil, or developed from Virgil's example. The debt is especially marked in introductory expostions

which set the tone of the play, and descriptive and narrative passages where the dramatic content is negligible. There the epic tone can be suggested without hindrance to action or the interplay of character. Dryden tries to answer the criticism levelled against Virgil, that he turns aside from the heat of action into digressive simile, pouring cold water into the cauldron when it is his business to make it boil. The Virgilian simile, he says, is placed in the decline of the action, rather than at its climax, so that it acts as a restorative on the reader. Although many of Dryden's similes in the plays do pour water on the heat of the action, there are some in which he tries to follow Virgil's example, embellishing his poetry where the tension of the play is relaxed. In The Rival Ladies, for example, a scene in which discussion and conversation have predominated is closed by a short soliloquy, in which Hippolito runs his thoughts on into an elaborate comparison. Again, in the midst of an insurrection in Don Sebastian, the exciting entrances and exits of messengers and military leaders are interspersed with reflection and talk; and there is a proper place for ornate simile in these periods of rest.

The leisurely style which Dryden adopts during the interludes in the action, or in preliminary expositions, has closer ties with the epic manner than the extended simile can, by itself, provide. His whole tone becomes epic; he lavishes descriptive detail in his speeches, selects and arranges his diction to give an impression of richness and colour, and in many places deliberately echoes classical epic for effect. Two examples will suffice. When The Conquest of Granada opens, the king is celebrating, 'with pomp and Sports'; and the brilliant colour of the scene, setting the whole tone of this exotic play, is finely conveyed in an elaborate description of a bull-fight which forms part of the festival. The picture might be drawn from the Aeneid or the Georgics; Dryden, in his most magnificent style, paints vigorous action, clashing arms and brilliant colour, and dashing chivalry. Again, at the beginning of Tyrannick Love, Maximin's fierce and triumphant assertion of his military success, and his orders to renew the assault, are followed by an officer's news that a prophet-magician has foretold misfortune to Maximin's army; and this messenger, in his

Notes, p. 238.

1. Dryden's debts to Virgil, and the epic tradition in general, have been well illustrated by Mr. R.A. Bowers in Dryden's Epic Manner and Virgil, P.M.L.A., lx, 1940, 119 ff. This article contains a detailed examination of four plays. The full annotation of the plays by Mr. Summers reinforces Mr. Bowers' notes. It may be noted that The Guardian (No. 110) ridicules Dryden for presenting oriental characters as well versed in classical and other polite learning.

2. Explorations, London, 1946, p. 134.

3. Cf. D. Nichol Smith, John Dryden, Cambridge, 1950, pp. 34-5.

broad and detailed description of the wizard, relaxes the aggressive tension of the scene, and casts a grimly mysterious cloud over the buoyant optimism of his general. Dryden's attempts to enrich, slow down, and add something of epic dignity to his dramatic style are not always unsuccessful.

Professor L.C. Knights believes that, in the verse plays, Dryden adopts 'canons of style that he would not have dreamed of applying ---apart from his Odes--- in his non-dramatic verse', and that this accounts for a discrepancy in style between the plays and the rest of his work. On the contrary, it is just because Dryden so closely associates the verse drama with the higher kinds of non-dramatic poetry, and attempts to blend the slow, deliberate, inwrought epic style with dramatic character and action, that his plays are generally stiff, and often lamentably undramatic. The colouring of his dramatic poetry is that of his panegyrics and his translations of Ovid and Virgil. There is in it the same fancy, with all its extravagance and occasional beauty, buoyed up by a rather dubious (but sometimes effective) theory of heroic character; and the same exalted and sustained rhetoric. Dryden was not devoid of dramatic sense; his comedy is, at its best, vigorous, rapid, and lively. But in the verse plays, he subordinates that dramatic sense to the canons of non-dramatic poetry; and he produces a result which is, in style, not unlike that of Marlowe's early plays. His verse drama, in general, shows the strengths, predilections, and fatal weaknesses which I have analysed in his other work: a free fancy, a view of the imagery and diction of poetry as superimposed decoration, and a delight in the vivid, violent, and startling.

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NOTE to p. 214.

- I. Davenant had been much at sea; and in his independent dramatic writing he made use both of his first-hand experience, and of his reading of the Elizabethan voyagers (see. R.R. Cawley, Unpathed Waters: Studies in the Influence of the Voyagers on Elizabethan Literature, Princeton, 1948, pp. 249 ff). It is by no means certain, however, that he introduced Dryden to the language of the sea. If Annus Mirabilis, which was written down in the country during the plague year, 1665-6, and published early in 1667, is an earlier composition than The Tempest (first performed on 7th November, 1667), Dryden had already declared himself in favour of the free use of nautical terms for realistic effect, before he collaborated with Davenant. It is at least likely that he took some part in the heavy technicality of the opening scene of the play.

NOTES, p. 217.

- I. Shakespeare's Troilus, I, i, 36, Dryden, Summers, v, p. 36; Shakespeare, I, ii, 101, Summers, v, 39; Shakespeare, I, ii, 260, Summers, v, 41; Shakespeare, II, iii, 95, Summers, v, 60; Shakespeare, I, iii, 367, Summers, v, 52; Shakespeare, III, ii, 178, Summers, v, 64; Shakespeare, IV, v, 123, Summers, v, 80; Shakespeare, II, ii, 54, Summers, v, 43; Shakespeare, III, ii, 19, Summers, v, 50; Shakespeare, IV, ii, 62, Summers, v, 68.

2. Shakespeare, II, ii, 6, Summers, v, 42; Shakespeare, IV, v, 23, Summers, v, 80; Shakespeare, IV, ii, 103, Summers, v, 75; Shakespeare, IV, v, 196, Summers, v, 81; Shakespeare, V, i, 60, Summers, v, 83; Shakespeare, II, i, 15 (the Folio reading, whinid'st perhaps puzzled Dryden), Summers, v, 55; Shakespeare, IV, ii, 31, Summers, v, 67 (the Folio reading chipochia, for which Theobald first conjectured capocchia, may have been a difficulty).

It may be noted here that Dryden does not follow the terms of Davenant's contract in thinning the grease of bawdiness; he sometimes even points and expands Pandarus' salacity. Compare, for example, Shakespeare, I, i, and Summers, v, pp. 26-7; Shakespeare, I, ii, 80ff, and Summers, v, 39; and the expansion of Shakespeare's I, iii, 260 ff, in Summers, v, 47. Summers, v, 76-7, is wholly Dryden's.

Notes, p. 240.

1. November 7th, 1805; quoted by Lockhart, Life of Scott, chapter xiv.

2. Selected Essays, London, 1932, pp. 308-9.

1. Shakespeare's Trifles, I, i, 88; Pydian, Summers, v, p. 33; Shakespeare, I, ii, 101; Summers, v, 33; Shakespeare, I, ii, 101; Summers, v, 33; Shakespeare, II, ii, 65; Summers, v, 33; Shakespeare, III, ii, 173; Summers, v, 33; Shakespeare, IV, v, 123; Summers, v, 33; Shakespeare, III, ii, 173; Summers, v, 33; Shakespeare, IV, ii, 65; Summers, v, 33.

2. Shakespeare, II, ii, 65; Summers, v, 33; Shakespeare, IV, v, 123; Shakespeare, IV, ii, 103; Summers, v, 33; Shakespeare, IV, v, 123; Summers, v, 33; Shakespeare, V, i, 60; Summers, v, 33; Shakespeare, II, i, 65; Summers, v, 33; (the folio reading, which it perhaps puzzled Pydian), Summers, v, 33; Shakespeare, IV, ii, 67; Summers, v, 33; (the folio reading, which which Thobald first conjectured apocrypha, may have been a diffusion.)
 It may be noted here that Pydian does not follow the terms of Pydian and contrast in claiming the grace of lawfulness; he sometimes even points and expands Pydian's selection, Compare, for example, Shakespeare, I, i, and Summers, v, pp. 28-7; Shakespeare, I, ii, 80; and Summers, v, 33; and the expansion of Shakespeare's I, ii, 80 ff. in Summers, v, 33; Summers, v, 76-7, is wholly Pydian's.

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Wordsworth wrote to Scott on Dryden's poetic character:

I admire his talents and genius highly, ----but his is not a poetical genius. The only qualities I can find in Dryden that are essentially poetical, are a certain ardour and impetuosity of mind, and an excellent ear. It may seem strange that I do not add to this, great command of language: That he certainly has, and of such language too, as it is most desirable that a poet should possess, or rather that he should not be without. But it is not language that is, in the highest sense of the word, poetical, being neither of the imagination nor of the passions... (1)

In general, modern critics have recognised Dryden's supreme abilities in verse satire and argument, and his 'ardour and impetuosity of mind'; but, while few have agreed with Arnold's extreme view that 'Dryden and Pope are not classics of our poetry, they are classics of our prose', few have disagreed with the implications of Wordsworth's letter and granted Dryden much of the poetic imagination, either in idea, in imagery, or in diction, which was a first essential with the Romantics. He is a powerful writer, exciting, and vital; but in the end there is too much mere statement, and too much plainness in him, for him to claim a place with the best poets.

Mr. T.S. Eliot has done much to counteract such criticism. 'The depreciation or neglect of Dryden', he says, 'is due not to the fact that his work is not poetry, but to a prejudice that the material, the feelings, out of which he builds, is not poetic'.⁽²⁾ This defence is based on a revaluation of the argumentative, satiric, and rhetorical elements in Dryden. Mr. Eliot affirms that the work of Dryden is poetic just where the Romantics thought it prosaic; and his appreciation of Dryden as a completely non-romantic poet is brought out in two comments on the language of his poetry:

(He) bears a curiously antithetical resemblance to Swinburne. Swinburne was also a master of words, but Swinburne's words are all suggestion and no denotation; if they suggest nothing, it is because they suggest too much. Dryden's words, on the other hand, are precise, they state immensely, but their suggestiveness is almost nothing.

Notes, p. 241.

1. Selected Essays, pp. 314-5, 316.

2. Essays in Criticism and Research, Cambridge, 1942, pp. 59-60.

From the perfection of such an elegy (the lines on Oldham) we cannot detract: the lack of suggestiveness is compensated by the satisfying completeness of the statement. (1)

There is at least one objection to this kind of critical defence: it does not take into account the intentions of the poet. It is true that Dryden delighted in 'stating immensely'; but he would have been distressed to find himself defended as a poet who excelled in statement rather than in suggestion. It is here that so much well-meant criticism of Dryden falls short: he does not fit into the poetic category where denotation is all, and connotation is nothing; and critics have been too ready to read back into Dryden that desire for undiluted clarity, precision, and finality of statement which is a characteristic of some types of eighteenth century verse. He lived through an age when the critical reaction from the fantastic and obscure, from poetic ellipsis and excessive connotation, was producing a simpler, clearer style; and he played his part in that reaction. On the other hand, his natural boldness and perpetual liveliness in poetry did not let him rest content with a direct, merely denotative manner of writing; and the magnificent obviousness of his diction is often illusory. Modern readers, looking back on Dryden over the nineteenth century Romantics, are conditioned to expect brilliant and suggestive novelty in the diction and imagery of poetry; and Dryden does not seem to satisfy that expectation. Neither Augustan nor Romantic avoided the conventional or artificial in diction; but the circumscribed, regulated artifices of the Augustan poets gave way, in the nineteenth century, to an uncontrolled freedom in poetic language which gets in the way of our sympathy with the Augustan style. Mr. Tillotson, taking the extreme example of Keats, succinctly expresses the difference between the poetic suggestion of the best Augustans and that of the Romantics; the Augustans, he says,

knew that a reader soon scrambles on to the level of a poem, and that when he has reached it, that level becomes his norm... In Endymion, everything is so exotic that, to provide a surprise, Keats has almost to burst a blood-vessel, In Gray's Elegy, the even tenor of the style gives to words like 'tinklings' the equivalent of an 'angelic strength'. (2)

from the perfection of such an essay (the lines on Oldham) we cannot detract: the lack of suggestiveness is compensated by the satisfying completeness of the statement. (1)

Note, p. 242.

I. George Kitchin, The Language of Poetry, 1922; unpublished D. Litt. thesis in Edinburgh University Library.

There is at least one objection to this statement: it does not take account of the fact that the poet who excelled in statement rather than in suggestion, it is here that no much well-earned criticism of Byron falls short: he does not fit the poetic category where denotation is all, and connotation is nothing; and critics have been too ready to read back into Byron that desire for undisturbed clarity, precision, and finality of statement which is a characteristic of some types of eighteenth century verse. He lived through an age when the critical reaction from the romantic and obscure, from poetic alliteration and excessive connotation, was producing a simpler, clearer style; and he played his part in this reaction. On the other hand, his natural boldness and perpetual liveliness in poetry did not let him rest content with a direct, merely descriptive manner of writing; and the magnificent opulence of his diction is often illusory. Modern readers, looking back on Byron over the nineteenth century Romantic, are surprised to expect brilliant and suggestive novelty in the diction and imagery of poetry; and Byron does not seem to satisfy that expectation. Neither Romantic nor Romantic avoided the conventional or artificial in diction; but the former, regarded as the Augustan poets gave way, in the nineteenth century, to an uncontrolled freedom in poetic language which gave in the way of our sympathy with the Augustan style. Mr. Tillyson, taking the extreme example of Keats, eloquently expresses the difference between the poetic suggestion of the best Augustans and that of the Romantics; the Augustans, he says, know that a reader soon ascends on to the level of a poem, and that when he has reached it, that level becomes his norm. In Indignation, everything is so exact that to provide a surprise, Keats has almost to burst a blood-vessel. In Gray's Stanzas, the even tenor of the style gives to words like 'tinkling', the equivalent of an 'angelic strength'. (2)

Here Dryden's conception of the language of poetry as a highly selective, ornamental dress, or final colouring, for the poet's thought ---as opposed to the modern notion of poetic language as the full and inevitable expression of thought--- is of the first importance. Poetic language was, for him, essentially 'made' language; and his own enthusiastic love of experiment and novelty, in diction no less than in general style, encouraged him to 'make' his poetic language much as he chose. It is the firm, durable groundwork of current vocabulary and idiom in his poetry which gives it a deceptively plain and obvious appearance. But in the occasional novelty, giving a new twist of meaning to a common word, dropping into colloquialism or rising into the heroic, introducing a word laden with venerable poetic associations or echoing the classical poets, Dryden's diction takes on a large measure of suggestion. He builds fundamentally in strong, graceful, beautifully sculptured stone; but he varies and adorns the smooth surface of his work with colour --- sometimes merely a suggested shadow, and sometimes the bold brilliance of mediaeval bosses and capitals rich in paint. That the number of potentially suggestive words in his vocabulary is comparatively small, is not important; a rather narrow range of novel words, old words used in new ways, and words carrying an aura with them from older poets, can vivify and change the whole texture of a poet's style, if he works carefully and subtly. Colour need not be thick, massy, and continuously patterned to be effective: the brilliance of a cathedral interior is due, not merely to the bright colouring of windows and hangings, but to the contrasts between that colouring and the great masses of monochrome stonework. The poet who touches a basically plain style with subtly disposed light, shade, and colour, may give a less cloying and more delicate impression of richness and suggestion than does a poet who scrapes his whole palette into every line. Language

is not marble, neither is it putty. Classical tendencies in the use of words would lean to the former, romantic to the latter. Those who prefer a hard material, a fixed and rigorous system of language.. may be likened to the sculptor and his marble; those who desire the widest liberty, like Keats, may in extreme cases reduce the language to the consistency of putty. (I)

Dryden, as a neo-classical poet, inclines to work in marble rather than in putty; but he fully realises the coldness and unresilience of marble, and works as freely as he can, within the limits of the classical tradition, for warmth, novelty, and colour. He is not constrained by any rigid doctrine of propriety in diction. He manipulates colloquialisms, archaisms, provincial and technical terms, and latinisms, with characteristic boldness, to give added power, light, vividness, or delicacy to his style. Again, his perpetual energy and his highly individual exaltation of tone create an atmosphere in his poetry which removes it, even at its most didactic or philosophical, far from mere 'statement'; the force and passion which thrust up into all his work in every poetic kind, give it a pulsing, thrilling freshness and vitality. The tempestuous ardour and glow of his style transform ideas, personalities, arguments, and situations into passionate and imaginative poetry.

The centrifugal force in Dryden's poetical career was his constant concern for the standards, techniques, and development of his art. From Dr. Johnson to Mr. Van Doren, critics have busied themselves in pointing out that there were certain poetic genres in which Dryden was at home, and others which made demands upon his mental, imaginative, and technical resources, which he could not meet; but, as important as his comparative success or failure in any one poetic kind, is his awareness of the variety of styles in the traditional forms of poetry, his constant interest in the potentialities of those forms, and his persistent experimentation with every sort of genre, style, and tone. In philosophy, he was often sceptical and disengaged; his critical views were in many respects tentative and fluid; but in his conception of the artistic function of the professional poet, and his delight in trials of poetic strength and resourcefulness, he remained constant. Despite deliberate distortions, contradictions, special pleading, and shifts in opinion as times and circumstances alter, his critical essays are the handbook to his poetry; and they illustrate his constant

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Note, p. 244.

I. Johnson, Lives of the Poets, Oxford, 1905, i, p. 469.

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The central force in Byrden's poetic career was his constant concern
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regard for good art, whatever the political, theological, or personal needs of the hour might be. He wrote as a professional poet, and supplied the needs of his time in political satire, religious controversy, the celebration of public characters and occasions, narrative verse and elegant translations for cultured readers, and the drama. To a large extent, the interests of his age provided him with his range and variety of poetic tasks, and encouraged his ingenuity and versatility. Ultimately, however, he met every fresh demand as a good artist, reconsidering the traditional techniques and conventions, undogmatically working out his own attitudes and methods for each task, and executing each with boldness and conscientious originality.

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