

JOHN DRYDEN AND ENTHUSIASM

THE CONCEPT OF ENTHUSIASM  
IN SOME MAJOR POEMS OF  
JOHN DRYDEN

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## THESIS ABSTRACT

This study endeavours to offer a coherent explanation of the unity of Dryden's works from a thematic perspective. It attempts to show the way in which John Dryden (1631-1700) made use of the concept of enthusiasm in some of those poems which have established him as a major poet in the English language. Chapter I defines the term enthusiasm within the context of Restoration and eighteenth-century philosophical, political and artistic thought, and the remaining chapters concentrate upon Dryden's response to enthusiasm. I have not discussed Dryden's translations for I have limited my study to his "original" verse, which, with the exception of his plays, has received the bulk of critical attention. Because the political, religious and artistic aspects of enthusiasm are the most important ones in Restoration thought as well as in Dryden's poems, I have examined those of his poems which emphasize one of these three facets in adjoining or separate chapters. This arrangement allows for a treatment of Dryden's works in a roughly chronological order since those poems which are chiefly concerned with political enthusiasm preceded those which deal with religious and artistic enthusiasm.

Critics of Dryden's poems frequently mention the importance of enthusiasm in his works, particularly in



Absalom and Achitophel in which divinely-appointed figures are besieged by a mob of frenzied republicans and religious fanatics. As I have tried to show, however, the concept of enthusiasm can be suitably applied to a number of poems which may at first appear to have no connection with the topic. Alexander's Feast, Religio Laici and particularly The Hind and the Panther express a concern with enthusiasm. It has sometimes been assumed that Dryden expresses only a negative opinion about enthusiasm, and, perhaps, this accounts for the critical assessment of Absalom and Achitophel from the perspective of enthusiasm by at least three critics: Ruth Wallerstein, Bruce King and Bernard Schilling. As a child of the Renaissance, as an artist and as a follower of rather anachronistic ideas, Dryden knew that enthusiasm did not have exclusively pejorative connotations, and his poems celebrate inspired figures, while, at the same time, they deprecate enthusiastic enemies of stable government, ecclesiastical authority and artistic prudence. Although there are few critical studies directly on this topic, I have noted the contribution of the critics who have been suggestive in this matter.

This study attempts to modify the idea that Dryden's poems are defensive efforts written to condemn the destructive forces of enthusiasm which he saw in his society. It argues that in those poems in which Dryden made some of his strongest denunciations of enthusiasm, he still voiced

his unqualified approval of truly-inspired figures including Charles II, the Catholic Church as represented by the Hind, the Christian artist, St. Cecilia and the poet himself. Even though Dryden's convictions changed during the last twenty-five years of his life, this struggle of an inspired figure against imprudent enthusiasts continued to dominate his verse. Close textual analysis of the poems establishes the pervasiveness of the topic in Dryden's work and joins the aesthetic aspects of his poems with the thematic.

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# I

## INTRODUCTION

This study proposes to show how enthusiasm influences and, indeed, infuses the major poems of John Dryden. Because the term enthusiasm has changed in meaning since the late eighteenth century to denote no more than avidity or strong feeling, it is necessary to begin this work with an examination of the term's importance and its definition in Dryden's own culture. Accordingly, the first section of this opening chapter explores the cultural significance of the term in Restoration England and concludes with a brief consideration of Dryden's response to enthusiasm. The second section of the chapter offers a technical definition of the word based upon primary sources and this part stresses those aspects of enthusiasm that are most prominent in the poet's own works.

### 1. Enthusiasm: A Cultural and Historical Background

Friedrich Heer, a modern German historian, contends in his Intellectual History of Europe that the great ideas of Western society shape all historical eras. "The history of Europe's great ideas is not linear," Heer says in the opening sentence of his book, "the most significant of them lie like overlapping rings across the spiritual map of Europe."<sup>1</sup> One of the most important generalizations we can make about Western history is that "there has always been

a struggle between 'above' and 'below' in Europe's inner history. The 'upper' culture of Christianity, educated humanism, and rationalism has struggled against a 'lower' culture of the masses."<sup>2</sup> For the greatest part of Europe's history, established power has been able to maintain command over underground movements. To be sure, rebellious opposition challenged the authority of the "upper" culture throughout Europe's history, but only in the last two centuries has it effectively overthrown the traditional upper culture. The modern revolutionary movements, although more successful than their spiritual predecessors, erupted with the same violence and exhibited the same zeal as the earlier agitations. The new rebellions whether they were "rationalist or irrationalist, spiritualist or naturalist, they were marked by great fanaticism and enthusiasm."<sup>3</sup>

From Heer's point of view, the English Restoration of 1660 returned the "upper" culture to power after a period in which control had originated from "below." The Puritan rebellion, according to Heer, shares a spiritual kinship with revolutions in modern continental Europe: "The English Revolution was the prototype of the three great European revolutions: The French Revolution, the 'German movement' (of Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, the Romantics, up to Marx and Nietzsche) and the Russian Revolution (from the Raskolniki and Dostoevsky to Lenin). Like the Russian Revolution, it was the attempt of spiritualistic sects to build the kingdom

of God on earth. The dark underground of the folk-soul erupted in anxiety and hope of salvation."<sup>4</sup>

In 1660 Cromwellian experimentation with parliamentary procedures was halted and the wild religious sectarianism which prevailed in the 1640's was severely curtailed by the new government. Puritanism, the driving force behind political and ecclesiastical change, demanded more authority from "below" as shown by its insistence on greater control of clerical appointments and church services by individual congregations.<sup>5</sup> William P. Holden, in his study of anti-Puritan satire in pre-Interregnum England, distinguishes between the Anglican and dissenting views of power in terms akin to those used by Heer:

By the Puritan view, no officer of the church was legitimate if he lacked the approval of the lay members of the church; and, what was to prove more important, church members were enjoined to disobey a civil officer who plainly went against God's plan and order. To the Anglican, not only power but social order came from above. The ultimate source for the power might be the crown, or the bishop (in the sense of a royally appointed officer), or some other source removed from the confusion and passion of popular opinion. But the source must be above; it must not be the 'mere popularity' of the Puritans.<sup>6</sup>

After the Restoration, orthodox clerical and political leaders took stringent measures to return power to its proper seat--above the clamour of the fickle populace.

Many important aspects of Restoration life confirm that Heer's thesis is valid for the seventeenth century in

England. Restoration man, grown weary of constant innovation in politics and religion, welcomed the return of the monarch who would ensure the public peace after twenty years of political tyranny and religious mania. Charles II ascended the throne as if nothing had happened since the death of his father. His reign was dated from the regicide of 1649<sup>7</sup> and the laws enacted by Charles I were put back into force.<sup>8</sup> The parliamentary decisions made by Cromwell were ignored and the experimentation of Interregnum politics ended.<sup>9</sup> Like the earlier Stuarts, Charles II claimed to rule by divine right, a doctrine which appeared in late seventeenth-century England "with vastly enhanced authority."<sup>10</sup> The writings of Bodin in France and Filmer in England bolstered the intellectual respectability of the royal claim, while the clergy popularized the doctrine among the people as Laud's followers had done in the 1620's and 1630's.<sup>11</sup> The official propaganda of the new regime, then, discredited the Puritan political legacy and attempted to make Englishmen contented with the Royalist ascendancy:

With the return of monarchy, Whitehall Palace was scoured and disinfected of the last taints of Puritanism. The nasal whine and sober dress of the godly gave way to careless laughter and gaudy plumes of the cavalier. A new Parliament, dominated by the Royalists, did all in its power to make it seem that the Interregnum had never been, even to dating the reign of Charles II from the death of Charles I. Regicides were executed; the bodies of Cromwell, Ireton and Bradshaw were dug up and hung in chains, non-conformists were persecuted; the sumptuary



laws of Cromwell's regime were repealed or ignored.<sup>12</sup>

By restoring episcopal power to the Church, Royalist statesmen and clergymen officially repudiated Puritan demands for flexible Church authority in order to drive every vestige of fanaticism and heresy from established religion.<sup>13</sup> Because religious disputes had thoroughly disrupted English life in the seventeenth century, it was essential to both Church and state that power be returned to traditional hands to maintain the seamless web of authority. James I had recognized the necessity for an integrated power structure in his noted pronouncement: "No Bishop, No King, No Nobility."<sup>14</sup> The repressive Clarendon Code, of course, included many provisions designed to harrass dissenters. The Corporation Act (1661) forced all municipal officials to "renounce the Solemn League and Covenant (which had bound the Long Parliament to Scottish-style Presbyterianism), to uphold the principle of non-resistance to the king and his government, and to take the sacrament of Communion according to the rites of the Church of England."<sup>15</sup> The Act of Uniformity (1662) demanded membership in the Church of England and strict acceptance of all the articles of faith in the Book of Common Prayer in order to qualify for political office, and the act made strict conformity of Anglican church services mandatory. The Conventicle Act (1664) forbade the clergy expelled by the Act of Uniformity

to preach to groups of more than five persons, and provided sanctions against anyone over sixteen years of age who attended these illegal conventicles. Finally, the Five Mile Act (1665) made it unlawful for an expelled clergyman to travel within five miles of a church or conventicle in which he had once preached.<sup>16</sup>

Although the four acts which constituted the Clarendon Code barred the traditional Catholic enemies from participation in the political life of Restoration England, the primary purpose of each stipulation of the Clarendon Code was to drive "a further nail in the coffin of Puritanism as a force in local government, religion, and society."<sup>17</sup> The legal process made the Anglican Church appear as a moderate institution, free from the extremes of Catholicism on the right and all other Protestant religions on the left. The conception of the Church as a great via media became even clearer than in the Elizabethan Settlement. Puritan demand for Church reform can be traced back to the early reign of Elizabeth I in the 1560's.<sup>18</sup> Within a hundred years, the reform movement was officially stigmatized by the church within which it had begun. "The Clarendon Code created British Nonconformity," as the modern British historian Maurice Ashley says, "but not, as has sometimes been said, dissent, for that, as we have seen, dates from at least the beginning of the [seventeenth] century."<sup>19</sup>

Although legislative action by itself assured the Anglican Church of a favoured place in English society, clergymen took steps of their own to make Anglicanism preferable to Catholicism and to radical Protestantism. One of the most important reforms urged by conservative Anglicans was the simplification of pulpit rhetoric, especially that inflammatory kind of speaking which sparked religious enthusiasm and civil disturbance. The attempt to banish extreme rhetoric from the Church reveals that the Anglican Church as well as the dissenting religions was infected with the fanatic temper. The propaganda, however, identified rhetorical extravagance with only the left-wing movements. Joseph Glanvill, who fought a life-long campaign against religious enthusiasm, saw a clear connection between extravagant preaching and rebellion when he wrote in 1677 that "notional preaching hath put many conceited people upon meddling with what they can never well understand, and so hath fill'd them with air, and vanity, and made them proud, phantastical, and troublesome; disobedient to their Governours, and contemptuous to their betters."<sup>20</sup> While Glanvill hoped to convince the clergy to adopt a plain style of preaching with his persuasive powers alone, Bishop Samuel Parker in his A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Polite (1670) advocated harsher constraints. Parker demanded that Parliament put an end to fulsome preaching by the enactment of a law that would punish transgressors by imprisonment.<sup>21</sup>

The content and the style of sermons changed in the Restoration to guarantee that earlier religious disputes would not be revived in England. The old Puritan emphasis on the exegesis of difficult and obscure points of Scripture was replaced by a concerted effort to make the subject mindful of his duty to his king and country. Puritans thought "the intellectual element of religion"<sup>22</sup> of much greater importance than details about religious observances, vestments, and rituals. The Restoration emphasis on obedience, ritual strictness and ethical behaviour sapped the potency of the old Puritanism because "a moratorium on theological debate was not favourable to Calvinism, which flourished best in the bracing atmosphere of eager discussion."<sup>23</sup> Ironically, Puritans were denied their "intellectual" emphasis by the Anglican establishment which charged that dissenting religion had neither an intellectual content nor a reasonable basis. Joseph Glanvill's defence of the reasonableness of Anglicanism and the ignorance of enthusiasm initiated a war of words between himself and Robert Ferguson who defended the intellectual respectability of Presbyterianism.<sup>24</sup> The Anglicans disavowed reason as understood by Deists and atheists, but they also avoided the discussion of "hard points" of religious doctrine which dissenters thought indispensable. The Cambridge Platonists and the Latitudinarians were especially influential in steering the Church away from heated theological debates.

Their refusal to confront certain theological issues "because they were satisfied that discussion of such topics led to no good end"<sup>25</sup> and their emphasis on the ethical doctrines of Christianity, including the necessity to keep civil order, drained religion of much of its importance and power, but it also created a less fervid religious climate in England. In the Restoration "man was saved by good sense and reasonableness rather than by special Grace operating according to the arbitrary decree of Predestination."<sup>26</sup> The renewed emphasis on good works (at the expense of the justification by faith alone) meant that religion became more concerned with man's position in this world rather than in the next. Harold Fisch, commenting on this pre-eminence of political and social order over particular religious concerns in this period, says that "the Restoration of Charles II was greeted both in ecclesiastical and political spheres as an opportunity to achieve a region of calm weather after the upheavals of the Commonwealth. A less obsessive concern with the soul and with man's immortal destiny was the appropriate corollary of a political order which had eschewed all messianic aims and ambitions."<sup>27</sup>

Although science and philosophy scarcely qualify as propaganda instruments of the government and the church, Restoration devotees of the new learning were predominantly loyal Anglican citizens. The Royal Society (chartered by Charles II in 1662) attracted many Anglican clergymen to

its meetings, and its most famous spokesman, Thomas Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, made the society appear as orthodox and as royalist as possible in his apologetic The History of the Royal Society (1667). Christopher Hill says that following the Civil Wars, royalists were dismissed from Oxford, Puritan lecturers and ideas entered, and the university "became a leading centre of scientific activity."<sup>28</sup> An honest history of the Royal Society would acknowledge the Puritan contribution to the sciences during the Commonwealth, but Sprat, himself a student at Oxford in the 1640's,<sup>29</sup> views the previous twenty years as hostile to the ideas of Bacon and the new science. For Sprat the seventeenth century added another chapter to the history of the Dark Ages. Egyptian sages had concealed "their observations on Nature, and the Manners of men, in the dark Shadows of Hieroglyphicks; and to conceal them, as sacred Mysteries, from the apprehensions of the vulgar. This was a sure way to beget a Reverence in the Peoples Hearts towards themselves: but not to advance the true Philosophy of Nature."<sup>30</sup> Rome, overwhelmed by the impressive learning of the Greeks, added nothing new to the knowledge of the universe: "Amongst the Romans, the studies of Nature met with little, or no entertainment."<sup>31</sup> The Middle Ages were of course synonymous with ignorance to the Renaissance man, especially to the Renaissance Protestant. Like the Egyptian priests, the Roman Catholic clergymen put men "in a profound sleep. Of

the Universal ignorance of those times; let it suffice to take the Testimony of William of Malmsbury, one of our antient English Historians, who says, That even amongst the Priests themselves, he was a Miracle that could understand Latine."<sup>32</sup> In his evaluation of his own century, Sprat praises the peaceful Restoration at the expense of the earlier period:

But now since the Kings return the blindness of the former Ages, and the miseries of this last, are vanished away: now men are generally weary of the Relicks of Antiquity, and satiated with Religious Disputes: now not only the eyes of men, but their hands are open, and prepar'd to labour: Now there is a universal desire, and appetite after knowledge, after the peaceable, the fruitful, the nourishing Knowledge.<sup>33</sup>

The Puritan contribution to science, then, was ignored in the Restoration account of the new learning; the "upper" culture refused to assign any positive value to dissenting religion. Education in the earlier part of the century had emphasized training in formal debate.<sup>34</sup> This method of instruction is identified with the scholastic Catholics and with the Puritans, even though skill in disputation was stressed in Anglican as well as other institutions. Sprat praises the Restoration for fostering the philosophical attitudes found in the most enlightened cultures. Because they "establish't their Philosophy in the Walks, and Porches, and Gardens, and such publick places about their Cities," the Greeks achieved early eminence in

philosophy.<sup>35</sup> The Reformation "put men upon a stricter inquiry into the Truth of things" and the Restoration will destroy all the mental cobwebs that preclude true learning. One of the major obstacles to truth is the "Cloysterall life,"<sup>36</sup> the life lived by Egyptians, Schoolmen and religious extremists. Only when science is explored by men cooperating with each other is there any possibility of intellectual advancement.

Parallels can be made between the spirit of the Restoration Church and the Royal Society. Both were to be sociable institutions from which the dogmatic spirit of the enthusiast would be excluded. Sprat is careful to show that science, as an ally of religion, will lead men to orthodoxy. Both true religion and learning are creations of the modern age and each has endeavoured to be truthful to the facts of the natural world: "They both may lay equal claim to the word Reformation; the one having compass'd it in Religion, the other purposing it in Philosophy. They both have taken a like cours to bring this about; each of them passing by the corrupt Copies, and referring themselves to the perfect Originals for their instruction; the one to the Scripture, the other to the large Volume of the Creatures."<sup>37</sup> Because science and the Church have followed parallel courses in the modern world, it would be folly for a Christian to close his eyes to the learning gained by observation and experiment: "the way to reduce a real and sober sense of



Religion, is not to be endeavouring to cast a veil of Darkness again over the minds of men; but chiefly by allaying the violence of spiritual madness: and that the one extreme will decrease proportionally to the lessening of the other."<sup>38</sup> Elsewhere Sprat asserts that science will "moderate and reform, by abolishing the fury of Enthusiasm."<sup>39</sup> Such constraint on religious mania would not only put the Church on a more solid intellectual foundation, but it would also make men more loyal to their king.

Perhaps because many of the members of the Royal Society were clergymen, there was lively interest in reforming the language of philosophy as well as that of the pulpit.<sup>40</sup> Sprat's famous dictum that language ought to imitate the plainness of mathematics parallels the attempt by clergymen to impart religious truth in a less frenetic manner than had been the case in the preceding twenty years. The suggested mathematical model of language was designed to strip writing and public speaking of eloquent metaphors that had no factual basis. In his defence of science, Glanvill chastises the slavish dependence on imagination which nurtures philosophical and religious error:

Thus we are involv'd in inextricable perplexities about the Divine Nature, and Attributes; and in our reasonings about those sublimities are puzzled with contradictions, which are but the toyings of our Phancies, no absurdities to our more defæcate faculties. What work do our Imaginations make with Eternity and Immensity? and how are we gravell'd by their cutting Dilemmas. I'm confident

many have thus imagin'd themselves out of their Religion; and run a ground on that more desperate absurdity, Atheism. To say, Reason opposeth Faith is to scandalize both: 'Tis Imagination is the Rebel; Reason contradicts its impious suggestions.<sup>41</sup>

Although fear of religious enthusiasm is not the only explanation for the rise of modern prose style in the seventeenth century, we must assign a major role in the development of prose style to the fear of religious mania.<sup>42</sup>

Restoration literature reflects the concerns of the Restoration Settlement as art in all ages mirrors the culture from which it emerges. The theatre, a conservative institution under the aegis of the court, pilloried the values of the dissenter and the middle-class citizen who were thought to be sympathetic to Puritanism. Dryden's heroic dramas (like the plays of the Elizabethans) depict the turmoil of nations not governed by strong monarchical rule. Otway's Venice Preserved (1682), written in the aftermath of the Popish Plot, besides exposing the corruption of the Italian court, reveals the folly of plotting against legitimate authority. The comedies and satires of the period poke fun at the bourgeois citizen of even faintly republican sentiments and mock the pretenses to godliness in dissenting clergymen. In a recent book, The Ethos of Restoration Comedy (1971), Ben Ross Schneider Jr. argues that the ethic of the Restoration stage is to be understood as a battle between a courtly and a bourgeois, Puritan view

of life: "Thanks perhaps to 'the Whig view of history' we are not accustomed to viewing seventeenth-century history from a Royalist point of view. But Restoration comedy did. On the evidence of the plays, the king and his party did not soon forget what they had suffered at the hands of the Roundheads."<sup>43</sup> The courtier was suspicious of the new wealth of the citizen partly because his lifestyle seemed mean and uncourtly: "The dramatist made very much the same connection between trade and the Protestant ethic that Max Weber has observed, but without Weber's scientific detachment."<sup>44</sup>

Even the Glorious Revolution could not mollify the antagonism of dramatists towards dissenters. According to John Loftis,

The social assumptions of Restoration comedy which were related to political animosities, persisted long after the Revolution. Hatred of the dissenters as latter-day Puritans and of the business community which had supported Cromwell and which in its bustling prosperity was a threat to aristocratic privilege, this hatred determined the direction of satire in comedy for some two decades after 1688, animating personal rivalries depicted in the plays of, among others, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar.<sup>45</sup>

Congreve's *Lady Wishfort* in The Way of the World (1700), with her "Quarles and Prynne, and The Short View of the Stage, with Bunyan's works"<sup>46</sup> shows that the taste for ridiculing Puritans did not disappear after 1688. One strong piece of evidence that the habit of satirizing the Puritans persisted after the Revolution is the fact that "the comedy most frequently performed on the Restoration and early eighteenth-

century stage was Sir Robert Howard's Committee, even more [than John Wilson's The Cheats] aimed at the Puritans."<sup>47</sup> Satirical comment on dissenting religion, found at least as early as Shakespeare and Jonson, seems to have been popular in the Restoration theatre, in which dramatists gleefully exhibited stock characters for the purpose of laughter and derision.

The poetry of the last forty years of the seventeenth century shows a marked shift in theme, tone and diction from mid-century verse. Although we can speak of "cavalier" and "metaphysical" poetry (despite the imprecision of the two terms) in the early century, only the cavalier line of public and social verse matters in the Restoration. We can readily agree with Harold Love's assessment of post-1660 poetry, that "it does not often undertake the explanation of a private world or the anatomization of a particular personal experience, and when it does so will usually present its discoveries in a generalized, publicly accessible way."<sup>48</sup> In an era which considered it befitting to address the members of one's audience as fellow gentlemen, the private exploration of one's psyche and religious feelings became an unpopular topic for serious poetry. Even the Restoration lyric conveyed "'private' content...in 'public' expression as though (as was indeed the case) the personal thought was being adduced for the pleasure of a lively and sophisticated circle."<sup>49</sup> The major poetry in the earlier part of

the century possesses a private quality (manifest in the religious works of Vaughan and Donne, for example) or an earnestness about religious matters which is voiced by a speaker who combines the best features of the private and classical worlds. But in the Restoration, the public mode dominates. Religious poetry continues to be written but it is pale compared to Renaissance efforts. Harold Fisch finds a "thrilling earnestness" in Milton's poetic use of Scripture but much of Cowley's Davideis is "mere bombast" because his

use of the Bible as the subject of his poem is essentially an exercise in virtuosity comparable with his handling of Pindar's ode-form, and his address to the Holy Spirit is merely a witty translation, into Biblical terms, of the conventional invocation to the Muse. It is not intended as a call from the soul's depths because such depths are not particularly relevant to the kind of poetry Cowley wanted to write. Spiritual compulsion was very well but it was more important to be 'in good humor.'<sup>50</sup>

The end of first-rate Anglican religious poetry coincides with the decline of metaphysical verse. Poems about kings, gentlemen and public institutions could be better written in good, clear English than in the tortuous language that revealed the mazy landscape of the troubled religious conscience. Such earnestness about religion was better left to "fanatics" like Bunyan and the Quaker autobiographers, but the "autonomous 'inspiration'" which characterized the religious zealot was too barbaric for the classicist and courtier. Inspiration in art and extravagance in metaphor

was comparable to the falsely inspired rhetoric of the self-appointed clergyman who preached from his tub in the market-place. Indeed, James Sutherland assigns a high priority to the fear of enthusiasm in the creation of the Augustan poetic:

The very marked reaction from the Metaphysical poets is part of a wider movement of the human mind. But that aspect of the reaction which had its origin in a dislike of the eccentric and the peculiar, and of what may be called private thought and private feelings, may become more intelligible if it is related to the religious history of the period. The seventeenth century in England had proved a fertile ground for the growth of religious sects, most of which came into being because some individual had seen an inner light.<sup>51</sup>

Sutherland proceeds to discuss the hostility to the religious fanaticism of the Muggletonians, James Naylor, the Camisars and the Methodists, and concludes that religious excess and poetic extravagance were linked by "the more critical minds of the period," including the third Earl of Shaftesbury and Dryden.<sup>52</sup>

Like Sutherland, other modern literary critics believe that enthusiasm exercised an important influence over many areas of Augustan intellectual and imaginative literature. George Williamson has argued that the revolt against enthusiasm is a major reason for the cultivation of a more restrained prose style after the Restoration.<sup>53</sup>

R.F. Jones asserts that the sermon of the period was deliberately altered to purge it of the fanatical features of the

Puritan sermons.<sup>54</sup> J.E.V. Crofts, Oliver Elton, Francis Gallaway, Sophia Blaydes and Murray Rosten all find some connection between the fear of enthusiasm and the practice of a more "reasonable" or "rational" poetic after 1660.<sup>55</sup> Gallaway says that

The opposition to enthusiasm in religion paralleled the hostility to enthusiasm in poetry. At the Restoration a reaction against the rampant enthusiasm of the Puritans was certain. Men turned from inner light to experimentation, and from indulgence in imagination to the cultivation of reason....Much as Dissenters in religion were condemned for singularity, so eccentrics in art were disparaged as unnatural.<sup>56</sup>

The Restoration establishment endeavoured to create a public-minded nation in which obedience to the monarch predominated over wayward political opinions and the authority of the established church replaced the sovereignty of the individual conscience. Cooperation, not disputation, would guide philosophical and religious investigations and a charitable tolerance of others would replace the dogmatism of enthusiasts in religion and science. The market-place, the coffee house and the court would be better schools than the monastery, and the style of written communication would imitate the speech patterns actually heard in the best conversational circles. Because men had tired of civil wars fought for politics and religion, they could agree with Cowley, that 1660 marked the restoration of reason in England.<sup>57</sup>

According to official propaganda, business was going to be conducted as usual after the Restoration--as it had been before the 1640's. But the repressive and defensive tone of Restoration apologies suggests an underlying anxiety about the possibility of a complete reversal to the old ecclesiastical and political settlement. All had, indeed, changed, and much of the credit for the shape of the new order belonged to dissenting movements. J.R. Tanner argues that although the doctrine of divine right bolstered the authority of the restored monarch, "the doctrine of 'absolute power' which had been grafted on to it does not. Its place as influential political superstition is now taken by 'non-resistance' and this, as Gneist acutely remarks, is 'the Royalist theory on the defensive.'"<sup>58</sup> Parliament, to which English dissidents attached their hopes in the 1630's and 1640's, did not grant to the king the unilateral power of raising monies which Charles I had claimed as his right. In the Restoration the monarch would have to cooperate with Parliament in order to receive what he desired.<sup>59</sup> The tension between a divinely-inspired ruler and an empirically-minded parliament became increasingly severe in the 1670's and resulted in the Glorious Revolution which destroyed the claim to divine appointment and made politics a thoroughly secular affair.

The attempt to distinguish between Anglican and dissenting attitudes is problematic because of the closeness



of the two outlooks. Although the orthodox tried to make the restored Church thoroughly royalist, it cannot be forgotten that Puritan Anglicans, in their opposition to early Caroline government, contributed to the outbreak of civil war. Other similarities are even more striking. Cragg's authoritative Puritanism to the Age of Reason shows that the Calvinist doctrine of predestination enjoyed equal popularity with Puritan and non-Puritan Anglicans in the early part of the century, and that the doctrine became unacceptable to nearly all English denominations about the time of the Restoration.<sup>60</sup> The fiction that Anglican belief consistently rested on the combination of faith and good works, and that a vain belief in the election of the righteous circulated only among dissenting sects, is historically untrue even though Restoration figures like Dryden and Glanvill continued to believe it. The demand for the purification of prose style cannot be defended as an original Anglican idea, even though Glanvill said that it was. In fact, the dissenters first called for a simpler prose style and for a readable translation of the Bible in the early 1600's.<sup>61</sup> Even the repressive Clarendon Code, which has justly become famous and infamous, imitated in its tone and its particulars, the provisions of Commonwealth laws aimed against high Anglican practice.<sup>62</sup>

The orthodox establishment created a split in its own cultural outlook from the beginning of the Restoration.

The "upper" culture promoted the illusion that English life had really been returned to the halcyon period before the rebellious forces toppled legitimate authority, and at the same time, tried to replace "the medieval civilization shattered by the Puritans with one that would be both sounder, because conceived in full awareness of human needs, and truer, because tested at every stage by the infallible rule of common sense."<sup>63</sup> England was to be ultra-conservative and ultra-modern at the same time, and the tension created by this untenable arrangement moulded the social and religious disputes of the next twenty-eight years. Government, religion, philosophy and art had all been radically altered by the very forces that the Royalist spokesmen for these activities detested: "Thus in spite of the Restoration being, in theory at least, 'unconditional' neither King nor Parliament nor Church was left unscathed by the fire of revolution."<sup>64</sup> The Restoration, then, was formed by the battle between what Heer calls "upper" and "lower" cultures, the interpenetration of which created and altered a society which the Royalists regarded as immutable.

John Dryden (1631-1700) is the poetic arch-apologist for the Restoration. Dryden is not only the best poet in the period but he is also the most eloquent defender of the "conservative myth." L.C. Knights recently wrote that "In the literature of the post-Restoration period Dryden is the representative voice of the conservative establishment,"<sup>65</sup>

a claim that no student of the period would refute. Perhaps Dryden seems so representative of the Royalist position because some of his ideas were somewhat reactionary even in his own time. Throughout his career "his thought was in theology close to that of Aquinas and Hooker, in politics compounded of belief in regal divine right and the rectitude of the Clarendon Settlement...his thought is so conservative in cast that it antedates in numerous particulars the ideas of many of his predecessors in the century.<sup>66</sup>

Dryden's poems defend order against anarchy, and from the return of Charles II in 1660 until the succession of James II in 1685, the poet's outlook is consistently Royalist. Because he desired the patronage of the court, Dryden found it necessary to repudiate his own Puritan past, an action not at all unusual in the seventeenth century.<sup>67</sup> For example, on November 1, 1660, Pepys feared that an old friend of his, a Mr. Christmas, might expose his old Puritan leanings to Sir William Penn and Sir William Batten: "He [Mr. Christmas] did remember that I was a great roundhead when I was a boy, and I was much afeared that he would have remembered the words that I said the day the King was beheaded (that were I to preach upon him, my text should be: 'The memory of the wicked shall rot')."<sup>68</sup> Fortunately for Pepys, neither Mr. Christmas nor anyone else exposed the young naval clerk's background, but Dryden's enemies never forgot nor forgave the fact that the British Poet Laureate,

Historiographer Royal and spokesman for Charles II during the Exclusion Crisis, was not only a former employee in Cromwell's government, but also that he had actually celebrated the Lord Protector in an elegy.<sup>69</sup>

Dryden's public voice makes him a typical Restoration poet and his poetry both reflects and creates attitudes that we now regard as characteristic of the Stuart monarchy. Contrasting the differences in "originality" between Donne and Dryden as representatives of their eras, Alan Roper says that

In seventeenth-century terms, Dryden's invention, his finding of ideas and images, is usually less exciting than Donne's because it is, in twentieth-century terms, less inventive. Donne is a master of the private, Dryden of the public mode. With Donne we are aware of a new individual experience suggesting general relevance; with Dryden we respond to an original reworking or re-creation of matters of established general relevance.<sup>70</sup>

Because "Dryden's public perception has general relevance to other individuals as members of the public,"<sup>71</sup> he searches vigilantly for the insurrectionists who would return England to the chaos of the mid-century. These rebels were originally religious dissenters, but the revolutionary attitudes toward government with which they compounded their religious rebellion, exploded all over Europe from the 1550's to the middle of the next century so that the politics of these reformers could not be judged apart from their creeds.<sup>72</sup>

Dryden's best public poetry is written during and after the Exclusion Crisis which, according to the poet,

threatened to return civil war to England, and the "unoriginal" ideas that he held about stability and revolution formed the basis for his best work. The one term that best suits the kind of universal disorder that Dryden describes in his major poems is "enthusiasm," because, as Bernard Schilling explains, the term includes all the traits, ideas and attitudes that the defenders of the "conservative myth" found repugnant:

The constant fears lest personal energy as seen in the intellectual, emotional or imaginative faculties get beyond a safe control, converge finally upon the term "enthusiasm." From suggesting a high form of religious contemplation, "enthusiasm" finally draws to itself the meaning of all the accumulated fear-words of the conservative myth: passion, imagination, poetical inspiration, emotion, rhetoric, eloquence, and figurative language, and the various ways in which vanity brings on self-assertion--these and all their accompanying dangers that the late 17th century thought it had reason to fear seem implied by enthusiasm.<sup>73</sup>

Dryden's works share the same cartoon quality of the early satirists of Puritanism for the poet always portrays the loyal man as very, very good and the rebellious man as very, very bad. Before we can make further comment on the way in which Dryden uses the concept of enthusiasm, however, we must define the term as understood in his era.

## 2. The Augustan Definition of Enthusiasm

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, enthusiasm was a technical term that denoted the mistaken belief

that one was inspired by God. Enthusiasts, Hobbes says in his Leviathan (1651), are deluded people, who, mistaking the false impressions of their imaginations for truth, "presently admire themselves; as being in the speciall grace of God Almighty, who hath revealed the same to them supernaturally, by his Spirit."<sup>74</sup> An early dictionary, Blount's Glossographia (1656), gives substantially the same definition of an enthusiast as Hobbes: "Enthusiasts or Enthusiaststs, a Sect of people that thought themselves inspired, with a Divine spirit, and to have a clear sight of all they beleaved, etc."<sup>75</sup> Henry More (the Cambridge Platonist and one of the most important writers on the topic) says in his Enthusiasmus Triumphatus (1661) that "Enthusiasme is nothing else but a misconceit of being inspired. Now to be inspired is, to be moved in an extraordinary manner by the power or Spirit of God to act, speak, or think what is holy, just, and true. From hence it will be easily understood what Enthusiasm is, viz. A full, but false, perswasion in a man that he is inspired."<sup>76</sup> Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690) which defines enthusiasm in much the same way as these earlier writers, shows that the meaning of the term had stabilized by the second half of the century. The enthusiasts believe that every foolish picture that enters the imagination "is an illumination from the spirit of God, and presently of divine authority: and whatsoever odd action they find in

themselves a strong inclination to do, that impulse is concluded to be a call or direction from heaven, and must be obeyed; it is a commission from above, and they cannot err in executing it."<sup>77</sup>

These four representative definitions of enthusiasm and enthusiast agree that the religious zealot asserts that he has received a communication directly from the supernatural world. This foolish contention arises from the total dependence on the imaginative faculty or the fancy. More says "it is the enormous strength of Imagination...that thus peremptorily engages a man to believe a lie."<sup>78</sup> Glanvill explains that although the imagination presents only simple images to our mental sight, we complicate and entertain these pictures until they appear lifelike and true:

Hence we may derive the Vision, Voyces, Revelations of the Enthusiast; the strong Idea's of which, being conjur'd up into the Imagination by the heat of the melancholized brain, are judged exterior Realities; when as they are but motions within the Cranium.<sup>79</sup>

Locke attributes the rise of enthusiasm to the extreme laziness of some men who rest contented with the evidence from their own minds, and will not use their reason to acquire knowledge:

Immediate revelation being a much easier way for men to establish their opinions, and regulate their conduct...it is no wonder that some have been very apt to pretend to revelation, and to persuade themselves that they are under the peculiar guidance of heaven in their actions and opinions, especially in those of them which they cannot account for by

the ordinary methods of knowledge and principles of reason.<sup>80</sup>

Critics of enthusiasm, then, contend that the enthusiast's imagination and his "inner light" of the soul replace all the other mental faculties for obtaining knowledge. Because many popular religious leaders came from the lower classes and often attracted large numbers of poorly educated members to their folds, immediate social experience confirmed the boorishness and ignorance of the enthusiast that had been asserted in philosophical arguments. Butler, for example, describes the "new light" of the Independent tailor, Ralpho, as "A Liberal Art that costs no pains/ Of study, Industry, or Brains."<sup>81</sup>

If the enthusiast had been simply a forlorn and withdrawn figure, probably not much attention would have been paid to him. But the extensive bibliography of seventeenth-century works on the subject of Puritan excesses demonstrates that he was considered a major problem by writers of the period.<sup>82</sup> Because the religious viewpoint saturated every area of seventeenth-century life, enthusiasm could not confine itself to solitary and innocuous havens. Thinking himself to be an instrument of God's will, the enthusiast believed that his mission was to erect the heavenly kingdom on earth. Possessed with the conviction of infallibility and righteousness, the enthusiast endeavoured to establish a theocracy governed by the elect.



Convinced that the time had come for the ascendancy of the Saints, Thomas Venner, a wine cooper, led the last and most violent of the Fifth Monarchy uprisings against the government in January, 1661, when the coronation of Charles II had become inevitable.<sup>83</sup> Although unsuccessful, this little revolt was remembered for a long time, and, because it pitted ordinary citizens against established power, it gave the appearance of a minor class war.

Although there was agreement about what enthusiasm was, there was no consensus about who an enthusiast was. Everyone could agree that the Quaker, James Nayler, who rode through Bristol on a horse in 1656, while women placed palms in front of him and chanted hosannas in salutation to this new Messiah, was an enthusiast, but the identity of other groups was more difficult.<sup>84</sup> One of the problems that makes final pronouncement about the religious affiliations of seventeenth-century figures so difficult is the extreme diversity and flux of belief. Conversions were very common: Dryden was Puritan, Anglican and Catholic; Pepys was Puritan and Anglican. Men who supported Cromwell in the 1650's worked for the Restoration court in the next decade. A rather amusing account of the array of religious beliefs--and then, among only Anglicans--is provided in Reverend Alexander Ross's Pansebia:

Some reject scripture, others admit no other writings but scripture. Some say the devils shall be saved...others that there are no

devils at all....Some will have Christ a body only in Heaven, some everywhere, some in the Bread, others under the Bread, others about the Bread, and others that Christ's Body is the Bread or the Bread is His Body....The main causes of these distractions are pride, self-love, ambition, contempt of Church and Scripture, the Humour of Contradiction, the Spirit of Faction, the Desire of Innovation...the Want of contempt of Authority, Discipline, and order in the Church....<sup>85</sup>

Anglican heterodoxy is one of the chief problems in the determination of the identity of other groups because it is supposedly from the norms of the Anglican Church that the rebellious dissented.

The identification of enthusiasts has proven difficult for modern writers about mid-century Puritanism. In his study of Puritan literary achievement, Lawrence Sasek says that Puritans were never united by any body of beliefs, and that, after 1642, the similarities between Puritans became even more divergent.<sup>86</sup> Harold Fisch is just as perplexed as Sasek:

Contemporary attempts at definition [of Puritanism] seem to have been as contradictory as our own....No one I think would deny the title to the right wing and centre of the parliamentary in the Revolution of 1642-46, that is to the Presbyterians and the Independents, but a difficulty arises with some of their opponents, ministers of the episcopal party who were often good doctrinal Calvinists, or with some of the revolutionary Puritans to the left of centre such as the Levellers, Diggers, Quakers, Antinomians who were very far from doctrinal Calvinism or any Protestant orthodoxy whatever.<sup>87</sup>

Although a modern student of the period is confronted with an apparently hopeless morass of contradictions and confusions in trying to identify Restoration sectarians, there are some useful guidelines that can help us to understand how the concept of enthusiasm was employed by a particular writer or groups of writers. First, there is a common vocabulary applied to enthusiasm which includes such terms as "inner light," full of wind, full of the spirit, puffed up, dogmatic, heated, splenetic. Secondly, and equally important, is the fact that members of the "upper" culture were never very careful in their application of the term:

It must be remembered that one of the well-springs of inspiration for disreputable stories of the Puritans was the habit of the right to fail to make differences in the left....Limited to eccentricities of worship in the sects, the charge of extremism could have been supported very well. But there was no good reason for confining the propaganda within the limits of accuracy; indeed, propaganda serves better if it disregards to an extent the facts.<sup>88</sup>

Restoration historians generally agree that the threat from crazed religious groups decreased sharply in the period, but Restoration Royalists treat the sectarian with the same scorn as conservative writers had in the earlier part of the century.<sup>89</sup> Commenting on the rise of the Methodist movement in the mid-eighteenth century, Hoxie Neale Fairchild says that the new religious leaders were greeted with the same abuse as James Nayler:

Since the days of Samuel Butler, puritan enthusiasm had been continuously reprehended--sometimes solemnly, more often satirically. The literary tradition was maintained even when enthusiasm had almost reached the vanishing point....[N]ow [in the 1730's] the fanatical spirit which had wrought such a havoc a century ago appeared to have revived in good earnest, and the familiar devices of anti-Puritan polemics were brought to bear upon it with renewed zest.<sup>90</sup>

Fairchild says that in the mid-eighteenth century enthusiasm was nothing more than a vague term of abuse signifying "an excessively inward, individualistic, and emotional type of religious experience,"<sup>91</sup> and this definition is equally serviceable for the Restoration. An enthusiast was anyone who a particular writer said was "enthusiastic." Because of the activities of Nayler, all Quakers were declared enthusiasts and hence insane. Similarly, Cromwell's example had stigmatized all Independents as enthusiastic--tyrannical and gloomy like their former leader. And Thomas Venner's insurrection had discredited all millenarians as enthusiasts bent on anarchy.

Although only one group in the seventeenth century called itself "enthusiasts,"<sup>92</sup> the Restoration Royalists were all-inclusive in their employment of the term. Samuel Butler distinguishes between the Independent Ralpho and the Presbyterian Hudibras by attending to detailed differences of their respective religious groups, but Butler's searing invective is designed to persuade his reader that the conservative and liberal dissenter are equally mad. Because

of the militancy of both Puritans and enthusiasts, the term "enthusiasm" covered not only the Naylers and Venners with its widening umbrella, but any Restoration man who agitated for social or religious reform and because of the political upheaval of the mid-century Puritans, the political flavour of anti-sectarian literature increased.<sup>93</sup>

This indiscriminate application of the term enthusiasm is nowhere more pronounced than in the works of John Dryden. Dryden's poems make many references to previous historical periods because the dissenting spirit is a feature of every age. It is this vague "spirit" of dissent that characterizes enthusiasm for Dryden. Political dissent in the 1680's is the same as the enthusiasm of the 1640's. "Loyal" Whigs who wished to limit the power of Charles II continue the efforts of the earlier dissenters who dethroned and martyred a king in order to build a sectarian heaven in England's green and pleasant land. To Dryden, the dissenters, dangerous as ever, are still trying to establish a theocracy in England like that of Calvin and Beza in Geneva. Louis I. Bredvold, discussing the Tory opposition (including Dryden's) to the Whigs, says that

The close connection between Whiggism and Dissent did not escape anyone; Tory pamphleteers were never weary of proclaiming that the new Saints of '79 were intent on repeating the history of '42. Dryden went much further than this facile parallel; he made up his mind about the fundamental political tendency of the Sects-- among which he included the Presbyterians of England and Scotland and the Huguenots of France--

from their very origin. He read extensively in modern history, and this reading confirmed in him a conviction that these Sects were factious and rebellious by nature and in principle.<sup>94</sup>

History taught Dryden that in every nation in which dissent gains a foothold, there inevitably follows rebellion against the monarchy: "The Doctrines of King-killing and Deposing, which have been taken up onely by the worst Party of the Papists...have been espous'd, defended and are still maintain'd by the whole Body of Nonconformists and Republicans."<sup>95</sup> Because sectarians and Whigs appeared democratic to Dryden, both parties were discredited through guilt by association.

Although the civil wars and regicide in England provided Dryden with a well-known historical parallel for the events of the 1680's, the events in France a century earlier strengthened his belief in the continuity and similarity of all dissenting movements. "The worst Party of the Papists" is, of course, the Jesuits, and Dryden paralleled Jesuitical opposition to continental kings with that of the dissenters' agitation against British monarchs. France's Catholic League, responsible for the assassination of Henry III, invited comparison with the Covenanting League which had favoured the execution of Charles I. Because Charles II was related by marriage to the French royal house, the parallel of French and English conditions seemed even more convincing to Dryden.<sup>96</sup> Selma Zebouni offers an

intriguing historical explanation for the popularity of heroic drama in early seventeenth-century France and late seventeenth-century England:

England had fared well during the second half of the sixteenth century under Elizabeth I. The seventeenth century, however, was far from maintaining whatever stability had been achieved in the late Tudor period. In fact, when England called back Charles II after the Commonwealth, the country was in much the same mood as that of France in 1610. The English had their fill of wars, factions, and revolution. They craved order, security, and authority. The heroic tragedy, in its own way, tried to provide exactly these elements.<sup>97</sup>

Although most critics of the Restoration theatre would argue that heroic drama had its roots firmly planted in England, in Dryden's case, at least, Zebouni's argument is valid. As early as 1660, Dryden compared French and English rebellion in Astraea Redux, likening the trials of the new king, Charles II, to those of his "grandsire," Henry IV:

In such adversities to Sceptres train'd  
The name of Great his famous Grandsire gain'd  
Who yet a King alone in Name and Right,  
With hunger, cold and angry Jove did fight;  
Shock'd by a Covenanting Leagues vast Pow'rs  
As holy and as Catholique as ours:  
Till Fortunes fruitless spight had made it known  
Her blowes not shock but riveted his Throne.  
(ll. 97-104)

Dryden's lines unwittingly predict the opposition in the late 1670's against Charles II and contain in embryo the sort of historical parallelism that becomes a major feature of his most mature poems.

The main threat to the security of Renaissance England had been Catholicism and Spain, but with the defeat

of the Armada in 1588, the external hostilities had been stilled. Although Catholics were still suspected of plotting for the Pope (witness the Popish Plot) in the seventeenth century, the new and equally destructive sectarian movements had a greater ability to divide the country from within. For Dryden, the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis, inspired by mean-spirited sectarians, were the stratagems of those polluted by foreign ideas. The Englishmen who had imported radical Protestant ideas from Germany and Switzerland were exiled by Queen Mary, but they returned in the reign of Elizabeth I, determined to effect a continental reformation of Church and state in England. Dryden states that the British agitators are inspired by foreign rebels in the Preface to The Medall in which he charges that the Whigs have borrowed their ideas from the French Guisards, the Huguenot Poltrot, and from the ever-notorious Calvin as well as from the British writers, Milton and Buchanan.

This penchant for tracing the sources of contemporary religious and political ferment convinced Dryden that zealotry in every corner of Europe was dangerous. An international plot threatened the stability of every European nation, but since the open rebellion of the 1640's, dissent had become more devious and respectable in England. Out-right religious fanatics joined the Whigs, who used the new Puritans to advance their own political cause. Religious zealots and crafty politicians attempted to destroy the



king's power and usurp his place. Despite their pretence of love and loyalty to the king, Dryden detected the same boldness to the monarch in these new rebels as he had found in the mid-seventeenth-century Presbyterians.

This suspicion that religious zeal inflames political activism is a major theme in the writings of later defenders of the "conservative myth." Colley Cibber, spokesman for the "good old cause," is the instrument used by the goddess Dulness to establish her sovereignty over the kingdom of letters in Pope's Dunciad (1742).<sup>98</sup> Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790) concerns itself with the activities of Dr. Price and members of English nonconformist churches as much as with the recent events in France. Burke regards the new revolutionaries as the spiritual heirs of the seventeenth-century Puritans and not the architects of the British Constitution: "Doctor Richard Price, a nonconforming minister of eminence, preached at the dissenting-house of the Old Jewry" on November 4, 1790 and said there was no difference between the French Revolution and the English Bloodless Revolution.<sup>99</sup> But, says Burke, "These gentlemen of the Old Jewry, in all their reasonings on the Revolution of 1688, have a revolution which happened in England about forty years before, and the late French revolution, so much before their eyes, and in their hearts, that they are constantly confounding all the three together."<sup>100</sup> Elsewhere Burke compares the revolu-

tionaries with the Anabaptists in sixteenth-century Germany and warns that "we cannot be ignorant of the spirit of atheistical fanaticism"<sup>101</sup> promoted zealously by the radical writers of France. Like Dryden, Burke fears that the contemporary enthusiasts are plotting worldwide revolution: "They are busy throughout Germany, Spain and Italy have not been untried. England is not left out of the comprehensive scheme of their malignant charity; and in England we find those who stretch out their arms to them."<sup>102</sup>

Restoration and eighteenth-century writers considered enthusiasm to be a major problem of civilization. Meric Casaubon, in A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme (1655) dated the beginning of radical religious expression in pre-Socratic Greece when men were governed by divinations, visions, prophecies and imagination.<sup>103</sup> Sprat thought enthusiasm a persistent feature of Western history and excepted only the Greeks and a few countries of post-Reformation Europe from its pernicious influence. Sir William Temple stated in "An Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning" (1690) that bickering about religious matters had proved for ages a chief impediment to the progress of the arts and sciences:

Many excellent spirits, and the most penetrating genys, that might have made admirable progresses and advances in many other sciences, were sunk and overwhelmed in the abyss of disputes about matters of religion, without ever turning their looks or thoughts any other way. To these disputes of the pen succeeded those of the sword; and the ambition of great princes and ministers mingled with the zeal, or covered with the pretences of religion, has for

a hundred years past infested Christendom with almost a perpetual course or succession, either of civil or of foreign wars; the noise and disorders whereof have been ever the most capital enemies of the Muses, who are seated, by the ancient fables, upon the top of Parnassus, that is in a place of safety and of quiet from the reach of all noises and disturbances of the regions below.<sup>104</sup>

Swift's narrator in The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit (1710) says that "The most early Traces we meet with, of Fanaticks, in antient Story, are among the Egyptians, who instituted those Rites, known in Greece by the Names of Orgya, Panegyres, and Dionysia, whether introduced there by Orpheus or Melampus, we shall not dispute at present, nor in all likelihood, at any time for the future."<sup>105</sup> The universality of the enthusiastic spirit in man cannot be denied according to Swift's satirical speaker. For, as he says, he does

not remember any other Temper of Body or Quality of Mind, wherein all Nations and Ages of the World have so unanimously agreed, as that of the Fanatick Strain, or Tincture of Enthusiasm: which improved by certain Persons or Societies of Men, and by them practised upon the rest, has been able to produce Revolutions of the greatest Figure in History; as will soon appear to those who know any thing of Arabia, Persia, India, or China, of Morocco and Peru: Farther, it has possessed as Great a Power in the Kingdom of Knowledge, where it is hard to assign one Art or Science, which has not annexed to it some Fanatick Branch: Such are the Philosopher's Stone; The Grand Elixir; The Planetary Worlds; The Squaring of the Circle; The Summum Bonum; Utopian Commonwealths; with some others of less or subordinate Note; which all serve for nothing else, but to employ or amuse this Grain of Enthusiasm, dealt into every Composition....<sup>106</sup>

Burke restates the observations of Swift and other writers on the subject of enthusiasm when he writes pessimistically that "History consists, for the greater part, of the miseries brought upon the world by pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy, ungoverned zeal, and all the train of disorderly appetites, which shake the public with the same."<sup>107</sup>

The concept of enthusiasm provided Augustan writers with a major tool for connecting their contemporary problems with those of past civilizations. To the term they attached all the insurrections in religion, government and the arts. Religious zealotry, then, was only one aspect (although an important one) of a wider problem. Although Augustan commentators found modern sources for contemporary enthusiastic agitation in Geneva and among the Anabaptists in Germany, they discovered even earlier origins in Old Testament history. Hobbes's Leviathan justifies the sovereign's right to punish zealots by citing the example of Abraham who

when any of his Subjects should pretend Private Vision, or Spirit, or other Revelation from God, for the countenancing of any doctrine which Abraham should forbid, or when they followed, or adhered to any such pretender, to punish them; and consequently that it is lawfull now for the Sovereign to punish any man that shall oppose his Private Spirit against the Laws: For hee hath the same place in the Commonwealth, that Abraham had in his own Family.<sup>108</sup>

The covenant between God and Abraham continued with Moses

and was the basis for seventeenth-century rule, according to Hobbes. Although Peter Heylyn's History of the Presbyterians (1672) denies that the Presbyterian Church copies the Jewish Sanhedrin, his refutation of the idea indicates that it must have been a popular theory in his century.<sup>109</sup> Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel, which compares the action of contemporary Englishmen and Biblical Jews, shows that enthusiasm has early Judeo-Christian roots. The main opponent of the king, Achitophel, is a satanic figure who has England in his possession. In effect, Dryden traces enthusiasm back to the beginning of history when the arch-rival of God revolted against just rule.

Enthusiasm could explain much of the violence and instability of history, but seventeenth-century writers also tried to explain the cause of enthusiasm. Shakespeare's messenger in the second induction in The Taming of the Shrew anticipates the predominant seventeenth-century view about the reason for enthusiasm:

Your honor's players, hearing your amendment,  
Are come to play a pleasant comedy,  
For so your doctors hold it very meet,  
Seeing too much sadness hath congealed your blood  
And melancholy is the nurse of frenzy.<sup>110</sup>

Until about the middle of the seventeenth century, most writers attributed excessive zeal to possession by the devil. Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy is a transitional work because although it flatly denies that "the principal agent and procurer of this mischief [religious despair, melancholy,

superstition] is the devil," Burton's book says that the "ordinary engine by which he produceth this effect, is the melancholy humour itself, which is balneum diaboli, the devil's bath; and as in Saul, those evil spirits get in, as it were, and take possession of us."<sup>111</sup> For Burton, then, a supernatural agent takes possession of the unfortunate enthusiast, but this demon works by natural means.

After 1650, major writers on the topic increasingly discounted the influence of the devil as the cause of enthusiasm and discussed the phenomenon as a mental disorder. On the basis of his acquaintance with the Bible, Hobbes concludes that "I see nothing at all in the Scripture, that requireth a beliefe that Dæmoniacks were any other thing but Mad-Men."<sup>112</sup> The full title of Meric Casaubon's work--A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme as it is an Effect of Nature: but is Mistaken for Either Divine Inspiration, or Diabolical Possession--indicates the author's conviction that enthusiasm is only the result of natural causes. Like Shakespeare and Burton before him, Casaubon connects enthusiasm with melancholy,<sup>113</sup> and Henry More's Enthusiasmus Triumphatus denies that the devil is the ordinary cause of extreme zeal: "Things that are great or vehement, People are subject to suspect they rise from some Supernatural cause; inasmuch that the Wind cannot be more then ordinarily high, but they are prone to imagine the Devil raised it, nor any Plague or Disease, but God in an extraordinary

manner to be the Author of it."<sup>114</sup> More's work ends with an apology for not giving the devil a greater place in his study: "And further touching the Defectiousness in my Enumeration of the Causes of Enthusiasm, in that I omitted the Agency of the Devil, I answer, that his Causality is more vagrant, more lax and general then to be brought in here, where my aim was to indigitate the more proper and constant causes of that Disease."<sup>115</sup> More gives a clear and succinct description of how the disordered melancholic humour afflicts the sufferer:

The Spirit then that wings the Enthusiast in such a wonderful manner, is nothing else but that Flatulency which is in the Melancholy complexion, and rises out of the Hypochondriacal humour upon some occasional heat, as Winde out of an Aëlipila applied to the fire. Which fume mounting into the head, being first actuated and spirited and somewhat refined by the warmth of the Heart, fills the Mind with variety of Imaginations, and it makes the Enthusiast to admiration fluent and eloquent, he being as it were drunk with new wine drawn from that Cellar of his own that lies in the lowest region of his Body, though he be not aware of it, but takes it to be part Nectar, and those waters of life that spring from above. Aristotle makes a long Parallelism betwixt the nature and effects of Wine and Melancholy, to which both Fornelius and Sennertius do referre.<sup>116</sup>

More's account of enthusiasm contains many of the observations found in other works of the period. The emotions of the enthusiast are at a fever pitch because of the heat created by the diseased humour. His ideas, as Locke says, arise "from the conceits of a warmed or over-weening brain,"

and account for the frequent description of the enthusiastic sermon as "inflammatory."<sup>117</sup> The enthusiast is windy, puffed up with air like Swift's Aeolists in Tale of a Tub, and his language shows the same extravagance that Glanvill ascribed to the Puritan sermon. In the seventeenth century the old Platonic belief in divine possession or inspiration gives way to the empirical account of zeal and melancholy discussed in Aristotle's Problem XXX.I in which the philosopher says that many persons "because this heat is near to the seat of the mind, are affected by the diseases of madness or frenzy, which accounts for the sibyls, Bacis and all inspired persons, when their condition is due not to disease but to a natural mixture."<sup>118</sup>

Thus far this study has concerned itself with only the negative aspects of enthusiasm, the anti-social behaviour of fanatics bent on remodelling Church, society and the arts to their own liking. There is, however, another and equally important positive value that writers from 1660 to 1800 placed on enthusiasm. Modern critics submit that beginning with such writers as John Dennis and the third Earl of Shaftesbury early in the eighteenth century, men began to change their attitudes toward enthusiasm. Because of the unbearable rationality of the age, creative thinkers began to urge more ecstatic expression in the arts. "Save during the Restoration period," Gallaway says, "there was little direct opposition to the doctrine of inspiration,



except as it implied the necessity of waiting for moments favorable to composition. The rationalist Davenant regarded the claim of inspiration as a pious pretense. Dryden disliked the possible connection between it and the inner light of the fanatics. Temple rejected the possibility."<sup>119</sup>

Although poets like Gray, Collins, Smart and Cowper strike us as being more "enthusiastic" or "individualistic" than Dryden, we must beware of placing undue emphasis upon the supposed dislike of poetic inspiration in the Restoration. Despite late seventeenth-century attacks on imagination in intellectual and religious writings, Donald Bond says that Restoration writers never censured the poet for his use of the imaginative faculty:

But neo-classical theory is not so unqualifiedly hostile to the free play of imagination. The majority opinion...is that in the composition of poetry there are two essential elements--imagination to give to a poem life and spirit; and judgment by which the poet exercises discrimination in the selection of material. Undue stress upon either is deplored....We must distinguish between the warnings which seventeenth-century moralists direct against the free exercise of imagination...and the opinions which literary critics hold of this faculty. Furthermore, neo-classical "distrust" of imagination is in large part concerned not with criticism of imaginative literature...but with criticism of intellectual literature, (eloquence, philosophy, science, etc.).<sup>120</sup>

Socially conservative writers of the Restoration, while castigating the unlicensed zeal of a Quaker, could also commend the enthusiasm of the poet. Hobbes, a formidable opponent of the enthusiasm of religious fanatics,

says that "In a good Poem, whether it be Epique, or Dramatique; as also in Sonnets, Epigrams, and other pieces, both Judgement and Fancy are required: But the Fancy must be more eminent; because they please for the Extravagancy; but out not to displease by Indiscretion."<sup>121</sup> For Hobbes, then, fancy and judgment co-operate harmoniously, but because the poet is more than a philosopher, his imagination makes his thought more vivid than the prose writer's. Henry More thought that poets and religious enthusiasts were melancholic but "Betwixt whom this is the great difference, That a Poet is an Enthusiast in jest, and an Enthusiast is a Poet in good earnest."<sup>122</sup>

Poets and critics recognized that no one could write good verse without imagination and passion. Those who attempted to create poetry employing only abstract ideas and cold reason, like Thomas Traherne, succeeded only in writing some of the dullest work of the period. Although they detested writings which seemed to be merely the result of ungoverned fancy, poets also railed against those critics who denied them the freedom to exercise their imagination. Samuel Butler, in a defence of his own poetic licence, asked

Who ever wil Regard Poetique Fury  
 When it is once found Idiot by a Jury?  
 And evry Peart, & Arbitrary Fool  
 Canall Poetique Licence over-Rule?  
 Assume a Barbrous Tyranny, to Handle  
 The Muses, worse then Ostro-goth, or Vandal?  
 Make 'em submit to verdict & Report  
 And stand (or Fall) to th' orders of a Court.<sup>123</sup>

Butler could assail both the enthusiastic gibberish of the Presbyterians and Independents and the Draconian pronouncements of the dull critic because they over-emphasized the exclusive use of only one faculty of the mind which would have made the poet and his language a monstrosity.

Many of the major figures of the Restoration and eighteenth century commended an enthusiasm which arose from the nobler emotions of the mind and soul, while they exploded with wrath against those whose enthusiasm was merely private and seditious . Burke, for example, wrote approvingly of the sublime emotion in his A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful (1757) and yet reviled the destructive enthusiasm of the French revolutionaries. Cowley, too, wrote ecstatically of the future of the Royal Society while condemning the enthusiasm of Cromwell and religious sectarians. Peter Hughes claims that the combination of Heer's "upper" and "lower" cultural tendencies within the same writer creates the "diversity of eighteenth-century literature. The great figures and works of the age achieve their complexity in part by incorporating both cultural impulses in their works; through allusive satire, as in Dryden and Pope, through ventriloquism, as in Swift's Tale of a Tub, through introspection, as in Samuel Johnson."<sup>124</sup>

Although enthusiasm as a definition of religious (and, consequently, political) zeal does not enter the

English language until the seventeenth century, its older signification of poetic fury remains along with the newer definition throughout the Restoration.<sup>125</sup> Like Plato, the Restoration poets banish the extravagant visionary of whatever pursuit from the republic, but they agree with Plato in the *Ion* that the poet creates not merely by technique, but with the aid of some sort of divine frenzy.<sup>126</sup> The mad enthusiast in poetry, religion and politics (unlike the enlightened initiates) would be banished to the gallows or to bedlam where he would be treated as a psychiatric case according to the theories of Aristotle, Burton, More or Cheyne.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Friedrich Heer, *The Intellectual History of Europe*, trans., Jonathan Steinberg (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Heer, *The Intellectual History of Europe*, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Heer, *The Intellectual History of Europe*, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Heer, *The Intellectual History of Europe*, p. 361.

<sup>5</sup>Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714* (1961; London: Sphere Books, 1972), pp. 77-78.

<sup>6</sup>William P. Holden, *Anti-Puritan Satire, 1572-1642* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 6.

<sup>7</sup>Hill, *The Century of Revolution*, p. 171.

<sup>8</sup>Maurice Ashley, *England in the Seventeenth Century*, Vol. VI, *The Pelican History of England* (1952; Baltimore: Penguin, 1962), p. 121.

<sup>9</sup>Ashley, *England in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 121.

<sup>10</sup>G.R. Cragg, From Puritanism to the Age of Reason (1950; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 157.

<sup>11</sup>Although his Patriarchia remained unpublished until 1680, Sir Robert Filmer's ideas, as well as Bodin's, were widely known much earlier in political and intellectual circles. See Peter Laslett, ed., Patriarchia and other Political Writings of Sir Robert Filmer (Oxford: Blackwell's, 1949), p. 28.

<sup>12</sup>John Harold Wilson, The Court Wits of the Restoration: An Introduction (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), p. 3.

<sup>13</sup>Sir George Clark, The Later Stuarts, 1660-1714, Vol. X, The Oxford History of England (1934; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 23.

<sup>14</sup>Hill, The Century of Revolution, p. 78. See also Hill, p. 74 when he quotes Charles I: "As the Church can never flourish without the protection of the crown, so the dependency of the Church upon the crown is the chiefest support of royal authority." Hill may have added the "No Nobility" to James I's comment.

<sup>15</sup>Stuart E. Prall, The Bloodless Revolution, England 1688 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1972), p. 25.

<sup>16</sup>Prall, The Bloodless Revolution, pp. 25-27.

<sup>17</sup>Prall, The Bloodless Revolution, p. 24.

<sup>18</sup>Stephen Neill, Anglicanism (Baltimore: Penguin, 1958), p. 11.

<sup>19</sup>Ashley, England in the Seventeenth Century, p. 126.

<sup>20</sup>Joseph Glanvill, An Essay Concerning Preaching (1677) in Edward W. Tayler, ed., Literary Criticism of Seventeenth-Century England, Vol. IV, The Borzoi Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Literature (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1967), p. 355.

<sup>21</sup>R.F. Jones, "The Attack on Pulpit Rhetoric in the Restoration: An Episode in the Development of the Neo-Classical Standard for Prose," in Richard Foster Jones and others, eds., The Seventeenth Century: Studies in the History of English Thought and Literature from Bacon to Pope (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1951), p. 118.

<sup>22</sup>Hill, The Century of Revolution, p. 79.

- 23Cragg, From Puritanism to the Age of Reason, p. 32.
- 24Jackson I. Cope, Joseph Glanvill: Anglican Apologist (St. Louis: Washington University Press, 1956), p. 37.
- 25Cragg, From Puritanism to the Age of Reason, p. 77.
- 26Harold Fisch, Jerusalem and Albion: The Hebraic Factor in Seventeenth-Century Literature (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 256.
- 27Fisch, Jerusalem and Albion, p. 255.
- 28Hill, The Century of Revolution, p. 159.
- 29Hill, The Century of Revolution, p. 159.
- 30Thomas Sprat, The History of the Royal Society, eds., Jackson I. Cope and Harold Whitmore Jones (1667; facsimile rpt., St. Louis: Washington University Press, 1959), p. 5.
- 31Sprat, History of the Royal Society, p. 10.
- 32Sprat, History of the Royal Society, p. 13.
- 33Sprat, History of the Royal Society, p. 152.
- 34John R. Mulder, The Temple of the Mind: Education and Literary Taste in Seventeenth-Century England (New York: Western Publishing Co., Inc., 1967). See especially Chapter I, "The Educated Reader" and Chapter II, "Disputatiousness."
- 35Sprat, History of the Royal Society, pp.6-7.
- 36Sprat, History of the Royal Society, p. 19.
- 37Sprat, History of the Royal Society, p. 371.
- 38Sprat, History of the Royal Society, p. 376.
- 39Sprat, History of the Royal Society, p. 428.
- 40R.F. Jones, "The Attack on Pulpit Rhetoric in the Restoration," pp. 125-127. Jones says that members of the clergy included the archbishops of Canterbury and York and the bishops of Ely, London, Rochester, Salisbury and Winchester, p. 126.

<sup>41</sup>Joseph Glanvill, The Vanity of Dogmatizing, ed., Moody E. Prior (1661; facsimile rpt., New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 103.

<sup>42</sup>See R.F. Jones, "The Attack on Pulpit Rhetoric in the Restoration," pp. 111-142 and George Williamson, "The Restoration Revolt Against Enthusiasm" in Seventeenth-Century Contexts (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1969), pp. 203-239.

<sup>43</sup>Ben Ross Schneider, Jr., The Ethos of Restoration Comedy (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), p. 41.

<sup>44</sup>Schneider, The Ethos of Restoration Comedy, p. 41.

<sup>45</sup>John Loftis, "The Political Strain in Restoration Drama," in his, ed., Restoration Drama: Modern Essays in Criticism (1966; New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 230-231.

<sup>46</sup>William Congreve, The Way of the World in John Harold Wilson, ed., Six Restoration Plays (Boston: Riverside Press, 1959), p. 348.

<sup>47</sup>Schneider, The Ethos of Restoration Comedy, p. 45.

<sup>48</sup>Harold Love, ed., The Penguin Book of Restoration Verse (Baltimore: Penguin, 1968), p. 22.

<sup>49</sup>Boris Ford, ed., The Pelican Guide to English Literature, Vol. IV: From Dryden to Johnson (1957; Baltimore: Penguin, 1966), p. 81.

<sup>50</sup>Fisch, Jerusalem and Albion, p. 259.

<sup>51</sup>James Sutherland, A Preface to Eighteenth-Century Poetry (1948; New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 11.

<sup>52</sup>Sutherland, A Preface to Eighteenth-Century Poetry, p. 13.

<sup>53</sup>George Williamson, "The Restoration Revolt Against Enthusiasm," passim.

<sup>54</sup>See R.F. Jones, "The Attack on Pulpit Rhetoric in the Restoration," passim.

<sup>55</sup>J.E.V. Crofts, "Enthusiasm" in his Eighteenth-Century Literature: An Oxford Miscellany (1909; Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, Inc., 1966), pp. 127-150; Oliver Elton, "Reason and Enthusiasm in the Eighteenth

Century," in E.K. Chambers, ed., Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association, Vol. X (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924), pp. 122-136; Francis Gallaway, Reason, Rule and Revolt in English Classicism (1940; New York: Octagon Books, 1965), Sophia Blaydes, Christopher Smart as a Poet of his Time: A Re-Appraisal (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1966), especially Chapter III "Enthusiasm," pp. 47-69 which shows how Smart's reputation as a religious enthusiast prejudiced contemporary reviews of his work; and, Murray Rosten, Prophet and Poet: The Bible and the Growth of Romanticism (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), pp. 96-97 and passim.

<sup>56</sup>Gallaway, Reason, Rule and Revolt in English Classicism, p. 9.

<sup>57</sup>Alexander B. Grosart, ed., The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Abraham Cowley (n.d.; N.Y.: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), See Vol. II, 293, the Advertisement to "A Discourse Concerning the Government of Oliver Cromwell" which speaks of the return of Charles II as "the sudden restoration of reason, and right and happiness to us...."

<sup>58</sup>J.R. Tanner, English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century, 1603-1689 (1928; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 214.

<sup>59</sup>Tanner, English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century, pp. 214-215.

<sup>60</sup>See Cragg, Chapter II, "The Eclipse of Calvinism," From Puritanism to the Age of Reason, pp. 13-36.

<sup>61</sup>Lawrence Sasek, The Literary Temper of the English Puritans (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), pp. 37-47.

<sup>62</sup>Clark, The Later Stuarts, pp. 21-22.

<sup>63</sup>Love, ed., The Penguin Book of Restoration Verse, p. 24.

<sup>64</sup>Ashley, England in the Seventeenth Century, p. 122.

<sup>65</sup>L.C. Knights, Public Voices: Literature and Politics with Special Reference to the Seventeenth Century (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), p. 96.

<sup>66</sup>Earl Miner, Dryden's Poetry (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), p. xv.

<sup>67</sup>Cope, Joseph Glanvill: Anglican Apologist, p. 1.



<sup>68</sup>Robert Latham and William Matthews, eds., The Diary of Samuel Pepys (London: G. Belland Sons, Ltd., 1970), I, 280.

<sup>69</sup>For particulars about the life of Dryden, consult Charles E. Ward, The Life of John Dryden (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961).

<sup>70</sup>Alan Roper, Dryden's Poetic Kingdoms (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 20.

<sup>71</sup>Roper, Dryden's Poetic Kingdoms, p. 20.

<sup>72</sup>For an account of the religious strife in Renaissance Europe, consult Preserved Smith, The Age of Reformation (1920; New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1947) for an analysis of conditions in each European nation and for a discussion of the social and intellectual background of the period.

<sup>73</sup>Bernard Schilling, Dryden and the Conservative Myth (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 62.

<sup>74</sup>Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed., C.B MacPherson (Baltimore: Penguin, 1968), p. 141.

<sup>75</sup>Quoted from Abraham Philip Persky, "The Changing Concept of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," Diss. Stanford, 1959, p. 20.

<sup>76</sup>Henry More, Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, ed., M.V. DePorte, The Augustan Reprint Society, No. 118 (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), p. 2

<sup>77</sup>The Works of John Locke (1823; Aalen: Scientia Verlagsaalen, 1963) III, 150.

<sup>78</sup>More, Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, p. 4

<sup>79</sup>Glanvill, The Vanity of Dogmatizing, p. 99.

<sup>80</sup>The Works of John Locke, III, 149.

<sup>81</sup>Samuel Butler, Hudibras, ed., John Wilders (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 15.

<sup>82</sup>For a list of non-dramatic satire on the Puritans in the seventeenth century see Clarence M. Webster, "The Satiric Background of the Attack on Puritans in Swift's A Tale of a Tub," PMLA, L (1935), 210-223.

<sup>83</sup>Hill, The Century of Revolution, p. 150.

<sup>84</sup>Ronald Knox, Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion (1950; New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 161-166.

<sup>85</sup>Quoted from Malcolm Mackenzie Ross, Poetry and Dogma: The Transfiguration of Eucharistic Symbols in Seventeenth-Century English Poetry (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1954), p. 116

<sup>86</sup>Sasek, The Literary Temper of the English Puritans, p. 17.

<sup>87</sup>Fisch, Jerusalem and Albion, p. 117.

<sup>88</sup>Holden, Anti-Puritan Satire, 1572-1642, p. 42.

<sup>89</sup>Hoxie Neale Fairchild, Religious Trends in English Poetry, Vol. I: Protestantism and the Cult of Sentiment 1700-1740 (1939; New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), p. 121; Ashley, England in the Seventeenth Century, p. 127; Hill, The Century of Revolution, p. 151; Cragg, From Puritanism to the Age of Reason, pp. 35-36; 221.

<sup>90</sup>Fairchild, Religious Trends in English Poetry, Vol. II: Religious Sentimentalism in the Age of Johnson 1740-1780 (1942; New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), p. 118.

<sup>91</sup>Fairchild, Religious Trends in English Poetry, II, 118.

<sup>92</sup>C.E. Whiting, Studies in English Puritanism from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660-1688 (Toronto: Macmillan Co., 1931), p. 321. According to Whiting, the Enthusiasts were a minor sect associated with the Seekers and Ranters.

<sup>93</sup>Holden, Anti-Puritan Satire, 1572-1642, p. 60; Webster, "The Satiric Background of the Attack on Puritanism in Swift's A Tale of a Tub," 220.

<sup>94</sup>Louis I. Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden (1934; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966), p. 139.

<sup>95</sup>The Poems and Fables of John Dryden, ed. James Kinsley (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 281. All future citations from Dryden's poems and from the essays pre-fixed to them are taken from this edition.

<sup>96</sup>For a discussion of late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century conditions in France, see Donald Stone, Jr., France in the Sixteenth Century: A Medieval Society Transformed (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969). For a discussion of the impact of the French Civil Wars upon English political thought in the Restoration, consult Chapter VII of J.H.M. Salmon, The French Religious Wars in English Political Thought (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959).

<sup>97</sup>Selma Zebouni, Dryden: A Study in Heroic Characterization (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), p. 41.

<sup>98</sup>The Poems of Alexander Pope, ed., John Butt (1963; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), Book I, 165. All future citations from Pope are taken from this edition.

<sup>99</sup>Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, ed., Conor Cruise O'Brien (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), p. 93.

<sup>100</sup>Burke, Reflections, pp. 99-100.

<sup>101</sup>Burke, Reflections, p. 262.

<sup>102</sup>Burke, Reflections, p. 263.

<sup>103</sup>Meric Casaubon, A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme, ed., Paul Korshin (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1970), pp. 5-6.

<sup>104</sup>Samuel Holt Monk, ed., Five Miscellaneous Essays by Sir William Temple (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), pp. 66-67.

<sup>105</sup>Jonathan Swift, A Tale of a Tub, eds., A.C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith (1920; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 283.

<sup>106</sup>Swift, Tale of a Tub, p. 266.

<sup>107</sup>Burke, Reflections, p. 247.

<sup>108</sup>Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 501.

<sup>109</sup>See Preface, Aërius Redivivus: or the History of the Presbyterians (1672; facsimile rpt., Westmead, Farnborough, Hants: Gregg International Publishers, Ltd., 1969).

<sup>110</sup>Spoken by the Messenger, ll. 126-130.

111Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy, ed., Holbrook Jackson (1932; New York: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1968), III, 395.

112Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 146.

113Casaubon, A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme, p. A3<sup>v</sup> and passim.

114More, Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, p. 11.

115More, Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, p. 48.

116More, Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, p. 12. For a lucid account of the melancholic disorder, consult Chapters I to III of Lawrence S. Babb, The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642 (1951; East Lansing Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1965).

117The Works of John Locke, III, 150.

118Rhetorica ad Alexandrum, eds. and trans., T.E. Page, E. Capps, and W.H.D. Rouse (London: Wm. Heinemann, Ltd., 1937), p. 163.

119Gallaway, Reason, Rule and Revolt in English Classicism, p. 97.

120Donald F. Bond, "Distrust of Imagination in English Neo-Classicism," PQ, XIV (1935), 55. For a thorough and well-organized consideration of seventeenth-century writers who defended and attacked the imagination see Bond's article "The Neo-classical Psychology of the Imagination," ELR, IV (1937), 245-264 in which the author argues that only the rationalist thinkers of the period, but not the empiricists like Hobbes, disparaged the value of the imagination.

121Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 136.

122More, Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, p. 14.

123"Upon Critics Who Judge of Modern Plays Precisely by the Rules of the Antients," in Tayler, ed., Literary Criticism of Seventeenth-Century England, p. 359.

124Peter Hughes, "Language, History & Vision: An Approach to 18th-Century Literature" in Peter Hughes and David Williams, eds., The Varied Pattern: Studies in the 18th Century (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, Ltd., 1971), p. 79.

<sup>125</sup>Persky, "The Changing Concept of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," pp. 15-16.

<sup>126</sup>The Great Dialogues of Plato, trans. W.H.D. Rouse (1956; Toronto: Signet Books, 1963), pp. 16-18.

## II

### DRYDEN'S RESPONSE TO ENTHUSIASM: AN OVERVIEW

In this chapter I would like to examine the importance of enthusiasm as revealed in Dryden's critical essays and occasional works because these writings consider many of the same features of enthusiasm as a political, religious and artistic phenomenon that I have discussed in the first chapter. Although the details in the essays change, Dryden's major observations on art and society remain remarkably consistent over a period of nearly forty years. A consideration of these writings, then, provides a useful preparation for the study of "enthusiasm" in the poetry because Dryden incorporates the major arguments found in the prose into his poems.

Dryden's essays give a good deal of attention to both the pejorative and the positive aspects of enthusiasm. Everyone knows that Dryden opposed the kind of enthusiasm that leads to social upheaval, but his defence of an enlightened sort of artistic enthusiasm needs some illustration. Throughout his career, Dryden defended literary works that approach the divine, the sublime and the enthusiastic. Like Samuel Johnson, Dryden admired ambitious efforts that attempted more than mere correctness, and his criticism praises the general aspects of a work far more often than it cavils about minor indiscretions. Although intel-

lectual writings of the period frequently show a distrust of any kind of poetic imagination, Dryden never agreed that a work of art was distinguished by its bare photographic picture of society. Poets were not to be yoked by the plainest and barest prosaic demands of the day, nor were they to be restricted to only the most common and pedestrian of ideas.

Knowledge by itself does not make a poet, but according to Dryden, no man could be a poet unless he were educated:

A man should be learned in several sciences, and should have a reasonable, philosophical, and in some measure a mathematical head, to be a complete and excellent poet; and besides this, should have experience in all sorts of humours and manners of men; should be thoroughly skilled in conversation, and should have a great knowledge of mankind in general.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, poetry did not merely add fancy window dressing to ideas that had been expressed in prose. In his Preface to The State of Innocence (1674), Dryden pleaded for a special "poetic licence" that set the poet apart from the prose writer:

I promised to say somewhat of Poetick Licence, but have in part anticipated my discourse already. Poetick Licence I take to be the liberty which poets have assumed to themselves in all ages, of speaking things in verse which are beyond the severity of prose. It is that particular character which distinguishes and sets the bounds betwixt oratio soluta and poetry.  
(Malone, I,ii,410-411)

In opposition to those who demanded that the poet clip his imaginative wings, Dryden asserted in the same preface

that the life blood of a poem was its imagery.

Imaging is, in itself, the very height and life of poetry. It is, as Longinus describes it, a discourse, which by a kind of enthusiasm, or extraordinary emotion of the soul, makes it seem to us that we behold those things which the poet paints, so as to be pleased with them, and to admire them. (Malone, I,ii,408)

Such statements as these separate Dryden from writers like the Cambridge Platonists and Thomas Traherne who believed that the function of poetry was to present true Platonic ideas devoid of the concrete pictures which only images create. In a late essay, A Parallel of Poetry and Painting (1695), which served as an introduction to his translation of Du Fresnoy's De Arte Graphica, Dryden reiterated his claims that imagery was the major characteristic of poems.

Dryden's defence of poetic enthusiasm in 1675 is consistent with his other writings. In the letter to Sir Robert Howard that accompanied the publication of Annus Mirabilis (1667), Dryden stated that the imaginative faculty of the author brought poetry to life:

The composition of all Poems is or ought to be wit, and wit in the Poet, or wit writing ...is no other than the faculty of imagination in the writer, which, like a nimble Spaniel, beats over and ranges through the field of Memory, till it springs the Quarry it hunted after; or, without metaphor, which searches over all the memory for the species or Idea's of those things which it designs to represent. (Kinsley, p. 46)

The poet proceeds to say that the real genius of heroic and historical poems resides in "the delightful imaging of persons, actions, passions, or things." (Kinsley, p. 46)



Dryden argues in the Defence of the Essay of Dramatick Poesy (1668) that the test of good poetry is not its factual accuracy but its power to move the passions of men:

'Tis true that to imitate well is a poet's work; but to affect the soul, and excite the passions, and, above all, to move admiration (which is the delight of serious plays), a bare imitation will not serve. The converse, therefore, which a poet is to imitate, must be heightened with all the arts and ornaments of poesy; and must be such as, strictly considered, could never be supposed spoken by any without premeditation.<sup>2</sup>

In the same essay Dryden adds that blank verse is unsuitable for heroic plays because it is too close to ordinary conversation: "But I will be bolder, and do not doubt to make it good, though a paradox, that one great reason why prose is not to be used in serious plays is because it is too near the nature of converse." (Watson, I, 114)

The 1672 essay Of Heroic Plays: An Essay (affixed to the first edition of The Conquest of Granada) defends the use of what appeared to some people to be extravagant dramatic devices. Dryden argues that because an heroic play is based on an heroic poem, the dramatist ought to employ the imaginative features of the epic. The playwright attacks Lucan for writing like a philosopher instead of a poet in his Pharsalia:

Lucan used not much the help of his heathen deities, there was neither the ministry of the gods, nor the precipitation of the soul, nor the fury of a prophet, (of which my author speaks), in his Pharsalia: he treats you more like a philosopher, than a poet,

and instructs you, in verse, with what he  
 had been taught by his uncle Seneca in prose.  
 In one word, he walks soberly afoot, when he  
 might fly. (Watson, I, 160)

"For my own part," Dryden says in defense of the supposed moral laxity of Almanzor, "I declare myself for Homer and Tasso, and am more in love with Achilles and Rinaldo than with Cyrus and Oroondates." (Watson, I, 165) Dryden also defends the use of the "enthusiastick parts of poetry" in serious works and he claims that the artist is superior to both the reasoners (in the Keatsian sense) and the clergy:

For my part, I am of opinion that neither Homer, Virgil, Statius, Ariosto, Tasso, nor our English Spenser could have formed their poems half so beautiful without those gods and spirits, and those enthusiastic parts of poetry which compose the most noble parts of all their writings....[A]n heroic poet is not tied to a bare representation of what is true, or exceeding probable: but that he may let himself loose to visionary objects, and to the representation of such things as depending not on sense, and therefore not to be comprehended by knowledge, may give him a freer scope for imagination....[T]he whole doctrine of separated beings...may better be explicated by poets than by philosophers or divines. For their speculations on this subject are wholly poetical; they have only **their** fancy for their guide, and that, being sharper in an excellent poet than it is likely it should be in a phlegmatic heavy gown-man, will see farther in its own empire, and produce more satisfactory motions on those dark and doubtful problems. (Watson, I, 160-161)

Dryden pleads in this essay for the same liberty in the use of spirits in heroic plays as he did in his Preface to Tyrannic Love two years earlier, in which he said that "Whether there are such beings [spirits] or not, it concerns

not me; 'tis sufficient for my purpose that many have believed the affirmative; and that these heroick representations, which are of the same nature with the epic, are not limited but with the extremest bounds of what is credible." (Watson, I, 142)

The Dedication to Amboyna (1673) restates Dryden's conviction that the poet's task involves a heightening of ordinary life. In an almost embarrassingly slavish praise of Lord Clifford of Chudleigh, Dryden tells his patron that until now he has paid him the greatest compliment by remaining silent about the nobleman's virtues. Dryden then explains in a passage which departs from the adulation of the earlier sections of the essay and which repeats the poet's observation on the ability of a poet to move an audience that silence "is that noble passion to which poets raise their audience in highest subjects, and they have then gained over them the greatest victory, when they are ravished into a pleasure which is not to be expressed in words." (Malone, I, ii, 380) The ability of poetry to produce the je ne sais quoi reaction is reiterated in the Preface to Religio Laici in which Dryden concludes that "a Man is to be cheated into Passion, but to be reason'd into Truth." (Kinsley, p. 282)

In the Dedication to Aurengzebe (1676) Dryden apologizes to the Earl of Mulgrave for having written many frivolous and unsuccessful plays, and states his intention

to make "amends for many ill plays, by an heroick poem."  
 (Malone, I,ii,425) Dryden believes that the proper work  
 of a poet should be in the major genres, not in tawdry  
 and farcical exercises, and he assures Mulgrave that at  
 least the characters in his tragedy "are the nearest to an  
 heroick poem." (Malone, I,ii,427)

The Preface to All for Love (1678) contains one of  
 the poet's many defences of the English drama and of  
 Shakespeare, and it criticizes the French for their timidity  
 in poetic execution. Dryden says that the correctness of  
 the French makes their plays insipid because

their heroes are the most civil people  
 breathing; but their good breeding seldom  
 extends to a word of sense. All their wit  
 is in their ceremony; they want the genius  
 which animates our stage; and therefore  
 'tis but necessary, when they cannot please,  
 that they should take care not to offend.  
 (Watson, I, 224)

Unfortunately, says Dryden, many English critics and poets  
 follow the French example:

But for my part, I desire to be tried by the  
 laws of my own country; for it seems unjust  
 to me that the French should prescribe here  
 till they have conquered. Our little son-  
 neteers who follow them have too narrow souls  
 to judge of poetry. Poets themselves are the  
 most proper, though I conclude not the only  
 critics.  
 (Watson, I, 225)

In his adaptation of Antony and Cleopatra, Dryden declares  
 himself a follower of Shakespeare and believes that he has  
 caught some of the genius and passion of his master: "In  
 my style I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare;

which that I might perform more freely, I have disencumbered myself from rhyme." (Watson, I, 231) Whereas Dryden had formerly rejected the use of blank verse because it was too close to pedestrian speech, he now eschews rhyme in his new play because it is poorly suited for capturing the elevated spirit of England's master dramatist.

The Preface to Don Sebastian (1690) defends the same freedom of the poet to go beyond the certainties of the philosopher and the historian that he claimed in The Conquest of Granada:

This groundwork the history afforded me,  
I desire no better to build a play upon it.  
For where the event of a great action is  
left doubtful, there the poet is left master.  
He may raise what he pleases on that foundation,  
provided he makes it of a piece, and  
according to the rules of probability.  
(Watson, II, 47)

The poet's position, then, lies exactly between that of the historian and the philosopher, and historical events, where the details are doubtful, provide an excellent opportunity for the poet to exercise his imagination.

No imaginative change was required in the movement from heroic verse to odes and panegyrics. The Dedication of Eleonora (1692) shows Dryden still attempting to raise poetry beyond the limits of the prose writer, the philosopher and the historian. He tells the Earl of Abingdon that he writes as a vatic poet in this poem:

We, who are priests of Apollo have not the  
inspiration when we please; but must wait

till the God comes rushing on us, and invades us with a fury, which we are not able to resist: which gives us double strength while the Fit continues, and leaves us languishing and spent, at its departure. (Kinsley, p. 466)

Dryden is obviously indulging in some rhetorical whimsey, but his intention to heighten poetry is consistent with the views expressed in his earlier essays. In this elegy, Dryden has temporarily abandoned his complete judgment, but he will allow his extravagancies to stand uncorrected in his poem:

The Reader will easily observe, that 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 called in my Judgment to my assistance, I had certainly retrench'd many of them. But I defend them not; let them pass for beautiful faults amongst the better sort of Critiques: For the whole Poem, though written in that which they call Heroique Verse, is of the Pindarique nature, as well in the Thought as the Expression; and as such, requires the same grains of allowance for it.

(Kinsley, pp. 466-467)

Finally, in two major critical works written near the end of his life, Dryden again defended the poet's right to exercise his "poetic licence." In A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire (1693), Dryden says that he prefers heroic couplets to Hudibrastic couplets because the former allow greater scope for the poet's imagination:

...I would prefer the verse of ten syllables, which we call the English heroic, to that of eight. This is truly my opinion. For this sort of number is more roomy. The thought can turn itself with greater ease in a larger compass. When the rhyme comes too thick upon us,

it straightens 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. He loses many beauties without gaining one advantage. (Watson, II, 147-148)

In the same essay Dryden asserts again that poetry is animated with a vivacity lacking in prose: "They who will not grant me that pleasure is one of the ends of poetry, but that it is only a means of compassing the only end, which is instruction, must yet allow that, without the means of pleasure, the instruction is but bare and dry philosophy...." (Watson, II, 153) Instruction is the purpose of poetry but without delight there can be little effective instruction. The opening sentences of A Discourse on Epick Poetry (1697) repeat the special claims for the power of poetry found in Dryden's essay on satire:

A Heroick poem, truly such, is undoubtedly the greatest work which the soul of man is capable to perform. The design of it is, to form the mind to heroick virtue by example; it is conveyed in verse, that it may delight while it instructs. The action of it is always one, entire, and great.  
(Kallone, III, 425-426)

It was fitting that a criticism of the epic should have been written near the end of Dryden's career because he had always attempted to ennoble his own poems and plays with the "grave, majestic, and sublime" qualities found in the greatest of the poetic genres. The essay also allowed Dryden to discuss one of his favourite topics--the timidity of the French and the daring of the English:

The French have set up purity for the standard of their language; and a masculine vigour is that of ours. Like their tongue is the genius of their poets, light and trifling in comparison of the English; more proper for sonnets, madrigals, and elegies, than heroick poetry.  
(Malone, III, 523)

Dryden's assessment of the nature of poetry contains three important ideas essential to understanding his work:

1. Poetry is not the same as prose; the poet is given freedom denied to the prose writer. This "poetic licence" has been employed by poets in all ages. The truth that the poet conveys is not opposed to moral or philosophical truth. Instead, poetic statement combines the particularity of history and the generality of philosophy. Delight in imagery gives the poet an advantage over the historian and philosopher. In the light of Dryden's criticism, Kenneth Hamilton's claim that "Poetry to Dryden was 'heightened' prose" cannot be accepted.<sup>3</sup>

2. The greatest poetry is sublime and elevated by all the heightening devices available to the poet. Although we generally think of the concept of the sublime as an eighteenth-century discovery, Longinus's influence pervades much of the critical writing of Dryden. In the Preface to The State of Innocence (1677), Dryden cites this critic to support his own theories about poetry: "...Longinus, who was undoubtedly, after Aristotle, the greatest critick among the Greeks...has judiciously preferred the sublime genius that sometimes errs, to the middling or indifferent one,



which makes few faults, but seldom or never rises to any excellence." (Malone, I, ii, 399)

3. Dryden subscribes to a hierarchical theory of genres: he upholds the idea that all genres are not equal and that the best work can be done only in the best of them. Although he never fulfilled his ambition to write an epic, he makes epic poetry the basis for the heroic drama.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps his most original critical work, his essay on satire, is designed not only to account for the sources and history of the genre but also to encourage a dignified satirical writing above the level of the lampoon.

True enthusiastic or sublime poetry can be written, according to Dryden, only when the fancy and reason co-operate. Neither faculty alone is capable of producing truly great poetry. Dryden admits often to being tempted to write a poetry which depends only on the fancy, as in his Preface to Eleonora, but his often-quoted remarks that fancy must be governed by reason do not mean that poetry must be free of fanciful elements.

The Epistle Dedicatory to The Rival Ladies (1664) reveals that early in his career Dryden was conscious of the necessity of controlling his ungoverned fancy: "imagination in a poet is a faculty so wild and lawless, that, like an high-ranging spaniel it must have clogs tied to it, lest it outrun the judgment." (Watson, I, 8) Dryden believes that the ability of rhyme to control fancy is its greatest

advantage, but he does not say that fancy is to be omitted from poetry. The quoted lines seem to contradict Dryden's celebration of the famous spaniel in the Preface to Annus Mirabilis, but in fact they do not. In this earlier preface Dryden says that the play was conceived wholly in a fanciful mood that had to be trimmed, and in his later essay he says that both judgment and reason are necessary to the writer but that without imagination, there can be no poetry.

Dryden says flatly in A Defense of An Essay on Dramatick Poesy (1668) that fancy and reason are found in the best works and that each has separate functions to perform:

Fancy and reason go hand in hand; the first  
cannot leave the last behind: and though  
fancy, when it sees the wide gulf, would  
venture over, as the nimbler, yet it is  
witheld by reason, which will refuse to take  
the leap when the distance over it appears  
too large. (watson, I, 126)

The poet reiterates the same argument about the symbiotic relationship of reason and fancy in his criticism of those who fail to make allowance for the use of fancy in poetry in the Preface to The Mock Astrologer (1671): "Judgment, indeed, is necessary in him [the poet]; but it is fancy that give the life-touches, and the secret graces to it; especially in serious plays, which depend not much on observation." (Malone, I, ii, 205)

The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy (1679) warns that a poet who would elevate the feelings of his audience

must control the expression of the passions in his works:

"'Tis necessary therefore for a poet who would concern an audience by describing of a passion, first to prepare it, and not to rush upon it all at once." (Watson, I, 255)

Dryden defends his belief that the poet must slowly prepare his audience for passionate scenes by invoking Longinus:

"Longinus whom I have hitherto followed, continues thus:

If the passions be artfully employed, the discourse becomes vehement and lofty; if otherwise, there is nothing more ridiculous than a great passion out of season." (Watson, I,

254) The Dedication of The Spanish Fryar (1681) repeats

Dryden's earlier observation that fury or enthusiasm alone will not produce lasting works of art: "Few good pictures have been finished at one sitting; 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." (Watson, I, 275)

A cursory reading of Dryden's criticism on the relation of reason and fancy might lead to the false conclusion that Dryden was opposed to any poetry which attempted to go beyond the clarity and baldness of prose. But the control of fancy, of his enthusiasm, is not intended to restrict the poet. Dryden advises that the poet use his reason to avoid pure nonsense and travesty. Reason gives a more solid foundation to a poem, and by doing so, actually strengthens its sublimity.

Poetic enthusiasm is a mean between the extremes of dullness and extravagance. The French, and their English followers, are too attentive to the absolute correctness of verse, and some writers wish to abandon common sense totally. One approach is far too pedestrian and the other approaches madness. Dryden's bad-tempered attacks on Settle in his Remarks on the Empress of Morocco (1674) show that he regarded madness in the arts as comparable to the mistaken enthusiasm of the dissenters. Of Settle's defenders, Dryden says:

I am not ignorant that his admirers, who most commonly are women, will resent this very ill; and some little friends of his, who are smatterers in poetry, will be ready for most of his gross errors to use that much mistaken plea of poetica licentia, which words fools are apt to use for the palliating the most absurd nonsense in any poem.

(Malone, II, 285)

There is no contradiction here between Dryden's defence of poetic licence in his Preface to The State of Innocence and the unwarranted defence of Settle on the grounds that he merely exercises the same licence as other poets. Settle and his admirers make mockery of a serious poetic privilege. Later in the essay, Dryden accuses Settle of errant enthusiasm:

Mr. Settle having never studied any sort of learning but poetry, and that but slenderly, as you may find by his writings, and having besides no other advantages, must make very lame work on't; he himself declares he neither reads, nor cares for conversation, so that he would persuade us he is a kind of fanatick in

poetry, and has a light within him, and writes  
by an inspiration.... (Malone, II, 287-288)

Such a poetic Quaker can never understand the true meaning of beneficial enthusiasm which only men who temper their fancy with reason can attain.

The Preface to The State of Innocence defends sublime poetry against Settle's opposites--those who will allow no enthusiasm in verse: "Are all the flights of heroick poetry to be concluded bombast, unnatural, and mere madness, because they are not affected with their excellencies?" (Malone, I, ii, 402-403) In the Dedication to Aurengzebe (1676) Dryden complains about those courtiers, who like the critics, are bent upon the destruction of good verse: "Dulness has brought them to what they are, and malice secures them in their fortunes." (Malone, I, ii, 417-418)

Dryden's attack on Settle is his most heated criticism of extravagant enthusiasm in poetry, but in his other essays, Dryden occasionally discussed the excessive fancy found in other writers. The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy (1679) cites Aeschylus as an example of a poet who refused to control his poetic furor:

...Aeschylus, who writ nothing in cold blood,  
but was always in a rapture, and in fury with  
his audience: the inspiration was still upon  
him, he was ever tearing it upon the tripes;  
or...he was always at high flood of passion,  
even in the dead ebb and lowest water-mark of  
the scene. (Watson, I, 254)

This inability of Aeschylus to modulate the expression of passion weakened the credibility of his plays. Shakespeare, too, often failed to control his enthusiastic rhetoric:

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 of new words and phrases, or racking words which were in use into the violence of a catachresis. 'Tis not that I would explode the use of metaphors from passions, 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.

(Watson, I, 257)

Dryden's Preface to Ovid's Epistles (1680) says that Ovid was a sublime poet, but that he "is frequently witty out of season; leaving the imitation of nature, and the cooler dictates of his judgement, for the false applause of fancy."  
(Watson, I, 265)

Dryden most admired those poets who aimed for the most sublime expression in their verses. He is critical of the French dramatists who jettisoned their poetic licence in favour of a dull correctness, but his adverse criticism of occasional extravagancies in poets like Shakespeare and Ovid should not lead us to the conclusion that Dryden opposed sublime and enthusiastic poetry. On the contrary, he criticizes uncontrolled liberty which approaches poetic anarchy. Dryden's translations and adaptations are not intended to level earlier works to the most pedestrian

demands of "Restoration gentlemen" but to raise them to a true sublimity which men of sense and poetic sensibility could appreciate.

A full evaluation of Dryden's aesthetic theory cannot omit discussion of his ideas on politics and society. As Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal, Dryden was an apologist for Tory politics and for King Charles II, but he was a political artist in a much more comprehensive sense. For Dryden, there was an inexorable connection between a society's standards and the quality of its artistic productions. The poet's critical writing is marked with the conviction that the court is necessary to ensure the production of the best art, because the court fosters the civilized values of stability and liberty. Opposed to the courtly ethic is the ethic of barbarism, favoured by dogmatists, dissenters and Royalist enemies who attack the aristocracy and its freedom and learning. In Dryden's mind, these rebellious adversaries (who manifest a form of enthusiasm) attack the court when they attack art, and art when they attack the court, and their activities parallel those of the enemies of Charles II.

Undoubtedly the greatest spur to Dryden's artistic career was the restoration of the Stuart king. Dryden had written only a few occasional poems and no plays by 1660, but the next twenty-eight years of his life show a voluminous artistic output and Dryden frequently acknowledges

the importance that the court played in his artistic formation. In his critical prefaces Dryden admits to his ignorance of the worldly affairs of courtiers, and offers his poems and plays as apologies for his lack of more critical involvement in state matters. To Roger, Earl of Orrery, he wrote in 1664: "To speak of you as a soldier, or a statesman, were only to betray my own ignorance; and I could hope no better success from it than that miserable rhetorician had, who solemnly declaimed before Hannibal of the conduct of armies and the art of war." (Watson, I, 5) Three years later, in the prefatory matter to Annus Mirabilis, Dryden asks that his poem be accepted as a substitute for his failure to fight in the Dutch Wars: "The former part of this Poem, relating to the War, is but a due expiation for my not serving my King and Country in it." (Kinsley, p. 44) In the Dedication to All for Love (1678) Dryden justifies the position of a non-active poet in a court of active men:

There is somewhat of a tie in nature betwixt those who are born for worthy actions, and those who can transmit them to posterity; and though ours be much the inferior part, it comes at least within the verge of alliance. Nor are we unprofitable members of the commonwealth, when we animate others to those virtues which we copy and describe from you. (Malone, II, 2-3)

The poet is a more contemplative courtier who bases his material on the manners and deeds of the active courtier, and by preserving these feats in verse he gives a kind of immortality to the contemporary court. Dryden believed,



therefore, that the poet had a public role to play, but he did not follow the active pursuits of a soldier or warrior.

Because he was committed to the heroic ideal and because patronage provided Dryden with his livelihood, the poet was grateful to the court. In the Dedication to The Indian Emperor (1667), Dryden says flatly that court favour accounts for the new prestige of heroic drama:

The favour which Heroick Plays have lately found upon our theatres, has been wholly derived to them from the countenance and approbation they have received at court; the most eminent persons for wit and honour in the royal circle having so far owned them, that they have judged no way so fit as verse to entertain a noble audience, or to express a noble passion; and amongst the rest which have been written in this kind, they have been so indulgent to this poem, as to allow it no inconsiderable place.

(Malone, I, ii, 317-318)

A year later, in Epistle Dedicatory to the Essay on Dramatick Poesy, Dryden praises the literary taste of the court which is "the best and surest judge of writing, [which] has generally allowed of verse...." (Watson, I, 14) In his Dedication to the First Part of The Conquest of Granada (1672) Dryden says that "Heroick Poesy has always been sacred to Princes and to Heroes," and he compares his position as a court poet to that of Virgil in the court of Augustus. (Malone, I, ii, 355)

Peter Hughes's contention that "the difference between barbarism and civilization is both originally and continually a difference in language"<sup>5</sup> is substantiated by Dryden's observations on the social importance of the court.

After an earlier period of madness and linguistic anarchy, Charles II brought peace and an invigorated language to England in the later seventeenth century. The Preface to Tyrannic Love (1670) celebrates the ability of the poet to convey moral truth in verse, and scorns the clergy for their linguistic lethargy:

For to leave the employment [moral instruction] altogether to the clergy were to forget that religion was first taught in verse (which the laziness or dulness of succeeding priesthood turned afterwards into prose). And it were also to grant (which I never shall) that representations of this kind [dramas] may not as well be conducing to holiness as to good manners.  
(Watson, I, 138-139)

Once more Dryden defends the use of verse, favoured by the court, and scorns the bald prose employed by uninspiring ministers of the Church. He proceeds to explain that he will not equate poetry with divinity and says that he attacks only those divines who deny the moral efficacy of the stage.

The kind of priest that Dryden chided in the 1670 essay is identified in the Defence of the Epilogue (1672) to The Conquest of Granada. The "Defence" claims that the English language has attained its greatest perfection in the Restoration, and it credits the court with this achievement. Dryden says that the imperfections found in Jonson's language and in Sidney's was caused by the pernicious influence of pulpit rhetoric:

In his [Sidney's] time, I believe, it [word play] ascended first into the pulpit, where...

it yet finds the benefit of its clergy. For they are commonly the first corrupters of eloquence, and the last reformed from vicious oratory; as a famous Italian has observed before me, in his Treatise of the Corruption of the Italian Tongue, which he principally ascribes to priests and preaching friars.

(Watson, I, 179-180)

In an extensive account of the changes after 1660, Dryden congratulates the court for turning England from barbarism to civilization:

Now, if any ask me whence it is that our conversation is so much refined, I must freely, and without flattery, ascribe it to the Court; and, in it, particularly to the King, whose example gives a law to it. His own misfortunes, and the nation's, afforded him an opportunity which is rarely allowed to sovereign princes, I mean of travelling, and being conversant in the most polished courts of Europe ....At his return, he found a nation lost as much in barbarism as in rebellion. And as the excellency of his nature forgave the one, so the excellency of his manners reformed the other. The desire of imitating so great a pattern first awakened the dull and heavy spirits of the English from their natural reservedness, loosened them from their stiff forms of conversation, and made them easy and pliant to each other in discourse. Thus, insensibly, our way of living became more free; and the fire of the English wit, which was before stifled under a constrained, melancholy way of breeding, began first to display its force, by mixing the solidity of our nation with the air and gaiety of our neighbors.

(Watson, I, 181-182)

The above passage makes clear distinction between the court of Charles II and the Interregnum government. The melancholic staidness of the English in the early seventeenth century, one manifestation of their enthusiasm, was noted by other writers who attributed political and spiritual

unrest in the 1640's to a gloomy and introspective religious life, Dryden contrasts the barbarism of the first half of the century with the polish and conversational ease promoted by the court of Charles II. There appears to be justification for Dryden's view because Ruth Nevo has written that "The Court of Charles II was the last court in England which was, or thought itself to be, the cultural center of the nation and the source of all civilized standards."<sup>6</sup>

In at least two other critical essays Dryden asserted his conviction that the court was the greatest defender of civilized standards of language. The Dedication to The Assignation (1673) compares favourably the courts of Caesar Augustus and Charles II:

Certainly the poets of that [Augustan] age enjoyed much happiness in the conversation and friendship of one another. They imitated the best way of living, which was to pursue innocent and inoffensive pleasure; that which one of the ancients called eruditam voluptatem. We have, like them, our genial nights, where our discourse is neither too serious, nor too light, but always pleasant, and for the most part instructive: the raillery neither too sharp upon the present, nor too censorious on the absent; and the cups only such as will raise the conversation of the night, without disturbing the business of the morrow.

(Watson, I, 186)

Geniality and pleasant learning oppose the raillery and earnestness which Dryden identified with the earlier seventeenth century and which he assailed in the 1680's. The political troubles, beginning in the late seventies,

coincided with the poet's intention to establish a more civilized English language under the auspices of the court. To Robert, Earl of Sunderland, he wrote in 1679 in the Dedication to Troilus and Cressida that "the quiet of the nation must be secured, and a mutual trust betwixt prince and people be renewed; and then this great and good man will have leisure for the ornaments of peace, and make our language as much indebted to his care, as the French is to the memory of their famous Richelieu." (Malone, II, 47-48)

Serious study of the arts depends on the political solidarity of a nation: where the nation is weak its language is imperiled. Dryden says that one of the reasons for the present weakness of the English language is the importation of monosyllabic words from the Germans and the Dutch, and he parallels the plethora of current words in English with the abundance of religious sects in Holland: "we have trafficked with our neighbour nations, by which means we abound as much in words, as Amsterdam does in religions...." (Malone, II, 49-50)

The Restoration brought political stability to England and provided a liberal atmosphere for the serious pursuit of artistic and philosophical study. In the 1672 Defence of the Epilogue, Dryden characterized his age by a word that has incited much of the critical discussion of the last thirty-five years. Dryden said in this essay that "we live in an age so sceptical, that as it determines

little, so it takes nothing from antiquity on trust. And I profess to have no other ambition in this essay than that poetry may not go backward, when all other arts and sciences are advancing." (Watson, I, 169) This short quotation indicates that Dryden thought of the Restoration as a period of renewed assessment of traditionally held truths. The authority of the ancients no longer went unchallenged and because advancement was being made in other areas, Dryden expected poetry to keep pace. According to Bredvold, scepticism led Dryden to the Roman Catholic religion, but Phillip Harth has recently challenged Bredvold's claim on the grounds that scepticism in Dryden has nothing to do with Catholic Fideism.<sup>7</sup> Harth says that scepticism means "lack of dogmatism" to Dryden, and this view is supported in the poet's The Life of Lucian (1690) in which he says that "all knowing ages being naturally Skeptick, and not at all bigotted; which, if I am not much deceived, is the proper character of our own." (Malone, III, 371) In an earlier biography, The Life of Plutarch (1683), Dryden called the Pyrrhonians the "grosser sort of Skepticks, who bring all certainty in question, and startle even at the notions of common sense," (Malone, II, 367)--a statement which contradicts Bredvold's thesis that Dryden was an adherent of scepticism.

Harth's contention that Dryden used scepticism as the opposite of dogmatism seems plausible from his other

critical writings. Dryden criticized the conversational inflexibility of the early seventeenth century, and he attacked the opinionated posture of dogmatics who were incapable of self-criticism. The Dedication to Don Sebastian (1690) denounced the stoic claim to personal infallibility:

For stiffness of opinion is the effect of pride, and not of philosophy; it is a miserable presumption of that knowledge which human nature is too narrow to contain; and the ruggedness of a stoick is only a silly affectation of being a god...True philosophy is certainly of a more pliant nature, and more accommodated to human use....

(Malone, II, 277)

Like his beloved Plutarch, Dryden steered a middle course between the extreme scepticism of Pyrrhonians and the absolute certainty of the dogmatists. Liberty was essential for proper philosophical investigation and the Dedication to Plutarch's Lives attacked the dissenters for their narrow approach to philosophical and historical problems:

Of all historians, GOD deliver us from bigots; and of all bigots, from our sectaries! Truth is never to be expected from authors whose understandings are warped with enthusiasm; for they judge all actions, and their causes, by their own perverse principles, and a crooked line can never be the measure of a straight one....They are not historians of an action, but lawyers of a party; they are retained by their principles, and bribed by their interests: their narrations are an opening of their cause; and in the front of their histories there ought to be written the prologue of a pleading--"I am for the plaintiff," or "I am for the defendant."

(Malone, II, 349)

Because they assume the power of gods, stoics and enthusiasts deny the limitations of men and are incapable of

understanding the problems which beset him in a fallen world. Instead of proceeding in the congenial and civilized manner of the Restoration gentlemen in The Essay on Dramatic Poesy, the dissenter tries to make others yield to his will by force.

From the late 1670's through the 1680's, Dryden was constantly on the defensive against a legion of political and artistic enemies. When Dryden called the Whig, Settle, "a fanatic in poetry," he associated religious, political and artistic anarchy with his adversary. The Dedication to All for Love (1678) said that enemies of court poets were also political subversives:

It is indeed their interest, who endeavour the subversion of governments, to discourage poets and historians; for the best which can happen to them is to be forgotten; but such who, under Kings, are the fathers of their country, and by a just and prudent ordering of affairs preserve it, have the same reason to cherish the chroniclers of their actions, as they have to lay up in safety the deeds and evidences of their estates; for such records are their undoubted titles to the love and reverence of afterages. (Malone, II, 3)

Dryden identified himself with the most noble objectives of the court, and he denounced his enemies as traitors to the king. The Dedication to Limberham (1678) connected political agitation with artistic frenzy: "I cannot easily excuse the printing of a play at so unseasonable a time, when the great plot of the nation, like one of Pharaoh's lean kine, has devoured its younger brethren of the stage." (Malone, II, 31) The same essay laments the ignorance of



many noblemen who are bad poets and critics, and who would write against the king if they had not already gained recognition for their writings:

Were it not for two or three instances in Whitehall, and in the town, the poets of this age would find so little encouragement for their labours, and so few understanders, that they might have leisure to turn pamphleteers, and augment the number of those abominable scribblers, who in this time of licence abuse the press almost every day with nonsense and railing against the government.  
(Malone, II, 35)

The Dedication to The Medall (1681) contains one of Dryden's most explicit associations of artistic and social subversion:

A Dissenter in Poetry from Sense and English will make as good a Protestant Rhymer, as a Dissenter from the Church of England a Protestant Parson. Besides, if you encourage a young Beginner, who knows but he may elevate his stile a little, above the vulgar Epithets of prophane and sawcy Jack, and Atheistick Scribler, with which he treats me, when the fit of Enthusiasm is strong upon him: by which well-mannered and charitable Expressions I was certain of his Sect, before I knew his name.  
(Kinsley, p. 226)

Dryden's statement succinctly describes the character of an enthusiast. The dissenter is an upstart who rudely forces his religious beliefs on others. His identity can be ascertained from his writings because his style reveals the pride and extravagance of his character. Whether he is an enemy of the king or a bad poet makes little difference, because both kinds of rebels behave in identical ways.

Dryden's prologues and epilogues are replete with references to an unholy alliance of rebels, religious

maniacs and bad poets. These works inform us about a play's content, allow for timely comment on contemporary political events and provide an opportunity for literary criticism.<sup>8</sup> Although they are public, oral and topical works, Dryden's prologues and epilogues voice serious commentary consistent with his ideas in the prose essays and the poems. His prologues and epilogues, like his panegyrical verse, compliment Charles II for his tasteful patronage of civilized dramatists like himself. Good plays, like good statesmen, ensure national stability which is undermined by the seditious activities of political and artistic scribblers. Dryden's political enemies are transformed into actual traitors sharing the madness of the solitary enthusiast and the barbarism of the Puritan rebel.

An early prologue, "The Prologue to Witt without Money being the first Play acted after the Fire," predicts that the King's Company will arise phoenix-like from the 1672 fire that destroyed Dryden's theatre to enjoy renewed health and vigour. Dryden defends the social and moral importance of the theatre against narrow-minded bigots who consider it a den of vice and iniquity, and he credits the nobility for their firm patronage of true wit on the stage:

You cherish'd it [wit], and now its fall you mourn,  
Which blind urmanner'd Zealots make their scorn,  
Who think that Fire a judgement on the Stage,  
Which spar'd not Temples in its furious rage.  
(11. 16-19)

Dryden clearly identifies enthusiasm as a major enemy of

the court and the drama it patronized, and he rejects the zealot's providential version of the destruction of the theatres. He reminds the enthusiasts that churches as well as theatres have perished in fire and in Annus Mirabilis (1667), Dryden claims that the most famous of the "Temples," St. Paul's, was burned in the 1666 London Fire to purge it of the indignities inflicted on it by Cromwell and his comrades:

The daring flames peep't in and saw from far,  
The awful beauties of the Sacred Quire:  
But since it was prophan'd by Civil War.  
Heav'n thought it fit to have it purg'd by fire.  
(ll. 1101-1104)

Despite the recent fire, English theatrical wit remains strong in the King's Company and Dryden asks the nobility to build a new theatre which will more properly house his plays. The wit of Dryden and that of his fellow playwrights "like a king should in a Pallace dwell" ("The Prologue to Witt without Money being the first Play acted after the Fire," l. 26) because of its inherent nobility and its Royalist sympathies.

The 1679 prologue to Dryden's translation of Oedipus informs the English critics and audiences about the true nature of theatrical criticism. In the Periclean Age, Greece attained the highest perfection of thought because both wit and wisdom infused her philosophy and her literary criticism:

When Athens all the Grecian State did guide,  
 And Greece gave Laws to all the World beside,  
 Then Sophocles with Socrates did sit,  
 Supreme in Wisdom one, and one in Wit:  
 And Wit from Wisdom differ'd not in those,  
 But as 'twas Sung in Verse, or said in Prose. (ll. 1-6)

Dryden says that the learned ages have always regarded  
Oedipus as a touchstone for theatrical improvement, and if  
 foreigners learn that the English scorn this play,

You might set up for perfect Salvages:  
 Your Neighbours would not look on you as men:  
 But think the Nation all turn'd Picts agen.  
 (ll. 16-18)

In his Defence of the Epilogue (1672) to The Conquest of Granada, Dryden attributes the improvement in English thought and manners to the cosmopolitan nature of Charles II and his court, and this later prologue advises the English of the value of continental and classical learning. "True born Britains" are prone to "Damming" good plays because they are poorly acquainted with the best classical criticism. Ignorance of the classical example turns the Englishman to the barbarism of the enthusiast:

With some respect to antient Wit proceed;  
 You take the four first Councils for your Creed.  
 But, when you lay Tradition wholly by,  
 And on the private Spirit alone relye,  
 You turn Fanaticks in your Poetry. (ll. 27-31)

The analogy that Dryden makes between religion and art is clear. The Anglican bases his religion on the Church councils and the good critic will also inform his criticism with the accepted standards of the ages. The Anglican who forsakes his creed becomes an enthusiast, and similarly, the

critic who judges only by his most ephemeral feelings imitates this religious enthusiasm of the dissenter.

Although this prologue is a minor piece in the Dryden canon, it is instructive about Dryden's ambivalence toward the English. Dryden reserves his most exalted praise for English writers and the character and wit of the English, but he is also harshly critical of the native "true born" Englishman. Although graced with a liveliness of mind lacking in the Frenchman, the Englishman is prone to rely wholly on his native gifts to the detriment of his mental improvement. The ignorant English critics depicted in this prologue are like the "Headstrong, Moody, Murmuring race" (l. 45) of Absalom and Achitophel who react to art and religion in a totally instinctual manner.

"The Prologue to The Loyal General" (1680) complains that contemporary audiences do not have the intelligence to understand good plays. As satirist, Dryden dons the traditional mask of the physician to diagnose "the new disease that reigns" in England. The new contagion, "Non-sense," has softened men's brains like ulcerated stomachs: "Weak Stomacks with a long Disease opprest,/ Cannot the Cordials of strong Wit digest." (ll. 22-23) Because this malady infects both politics and the theatre, Dryden parallels the activities on the theatrical and political stages:

The Plays that take on our Corrupted Stage,  
Methinks resemble the distracted Age;

Noise, Madness, all unreasonable Things,  
 That strike at Sense, as Rebels do at Kings!  
 The stile of Forty One our Poets write,  
 And you are grown to judge like Forty Eight.  
 (11. 12-17)

Critics and dramatists, by imitating the frenzy of Puritan confederates, unseat poetry from its princely throne, restating Dryden's claim in the Prologue to Witt without Money that proper wit ought to be protected in courtly surroundings. Kings and poets are the defenders of enlightened societies, and those who attack one of these figures also attacks the other. Hoffman says that "At Oxford wit does not starve and treason does not thrive; here loyalty thrives, and there is forgiveness for the sins of the other place [London]. Here the monarch flourishes and sends abroad poets to cultivate the virtue which he sows."<sup>9</sup> Because art can thrive only in stable monarchies, Dryden associates poetical disorder with political rebellion.<sup>10</sup> This connection was natural for Dryden whose own artistic enemies were often political adversaries, and the critical prefaces of the early 1680's make many complaints against "scribblers" in the arts and pamphleteers against the king.<sup>11</sup>

"The Prologue at Oxford, 1680" censures the treatment of playwrights forced to present their plays in tennis courts. Dryden states that the condition of the stage is a sure index to the health of a society, and he attributes the lowly prestige of the dramatist to the insatiable English desire for reform:

Yet Athens never knew your Learned sport,  
 Of tossing Poets in a Tennis-Court;  
 But 'tis the Talent of our English Nation,  
 Still to be Plotting some New Reformation:  
 And few years hence, if Anarchy goes on,  
Jack Presbyter shall here Erect his Throne.  
 Knock out a Tub with Preaching once a day,  
 And every Prayer be longer than a Play.  
 Then all you Heathen Wits shall go to Pot,  
 For disbelieving of a Popish Plot:  
 Your poets shall be us'd like Infidels....  
 (ll. 7-17)

The preceding lines show clearly that art cannot be divorced from its society. "Reformation" properly refers to religious changes, but Dryden employs the term to describe the insane alterations in England's cultural activity. The stage reenforces the beliefs of the Restoration gentleman because it promotes the artistic wit that scandalized the Puritans and led them to close the theatres during the Interregnum.<sup>12</sup> The tub of the dissenting preacher rivals the stage for attention of an audience, and those who reject the narrow-minded demands of the dissenter face punishment for their ungodly behaviour. The last eight lines of the work predict that destruction of all learning will result from the Saints' opposition to the stage:

Religion, Learning, Wit would be supprest,  
 Rags of the Whore, and Trappings of the Beast:  
Scot, Swarez, Tom of Aquin, must go down,  
 As chief Supporters of the Triple Crown;  
 And Aristotle's for destruction ripe,  
 Some say He call'd the Soul an Organ-Pipe,  
 Which by some little help of Derivation,  
 Shall then be prov'd a Pipe of Inspiration.  
 (ll. 23-30)

The Triple Alliance shattered by Shaftesbury provides an analogy for zealous suppression of religious writings.

Dryden parallels the activity of the Whigs with that of the religious enthusiasts who, in their zeal to purify religion, destroy all that is catholic as well as Roman. The last four lines of the poem pun on the words "Organ-Pipe" and "Pipe." Aristotle will be denounced for his comparison of the soul to an "organ" whose music the Puritans drove from the Church, but the philosopher will be rescued from oblivion because dissenting perversity will insist that Aristotle believed inspiration to be the most valuable function of the soul.

The prologue ends with an account of the enthusiast's skill at intellectual travesty. Although we ordinarily identify Jack Presbyter with repressive and tightly codified beliefs, Dryden emphasizes the enthusiastic penchant of Presbyterianism. The reprehensible treatment of playwrights like Dryden is transformed from a personal protest to an attack on enthusiastic forces that threaten the whole religious, political and artistic fabric of Restoration England. Dryden, by extending his attack beyond the theatre, informs us that enthusiasm is not just a religious mania but a dangerous madness which aims at the complete overthrow of British civilization.

Dryden's prologue and epilogue to The Loyal Brother (1682) contain some of his clearest statements on the opposition of poets and kings to bad critics and anti-monarchists. The prologue begins with a censure of critics and



Whigs who attempt to control the dramatist and the king by keeping them in poverty:

Poets, like Lawfull Monarchs, rul'd the Stage,  
Till Criticks, like Damn'd Whiggs, debauch'd our Age.  
Mark how they jump: Criticks wou'd regulate  
Our Theatres, and Whiggs reform our State:  
Both pretend love, and both (Plague rot 'em) hate.  
The Critick humbly seems Advice to bring,  
The Fawning Whiggs Petitions to the King:  
But ones advice into a Satyr slides;  
T'others Petition a Remonstrance hides.  
These will no Taxes give, and those no Pence:  
Criticks wou'd starve the Poet, Whiggs. the Prince.  
(ll. 1-11)

For Dryden the most damning characteristic of these enemies is their hypocrisy. The prologue ends with the claim that the Whigs share the same political beliefs as the 1640 Presbyterians:

What if some one inspir'd with Zeal, shou'd call,  
Come let's go cry, God save him at White-Hall?  
His best friends wou'd not like this over-care:  
Or think him e're the safer for that pray'r.  
Five Praying Saints are by an Act allow'd:  
But not the whole Church-Militant, in crowd.  
Yet, should heav'n all the true Petitions drain  
Of Presbyterians, who wou'd Kings maintain;  
Of Forty thousand, five would scarce remain.  
(ll. 46-54)

The epilogue attributes the deplorable condition of the good poet and the theatre to the political influence of the Whigs:

Whiggs, at their Poets never take offence;  
They save dull Culpritts who have Murther'd Sense:  
Tho Nonsense is a nauseous heavy Mass,  
The Vehicle call'd Faction makes it pass.  
Faction in Play's the Commonwealths man's bribe:  
The leaden farthing of the Canting Tribe:  
Though void in payment Laws and Statutes make it,  
The Neighbourhood, that knows the Man, will take it.  
(ll. 16-23)

Plays are not assessed on their universal value but by the narrow political bias of the party hostile to true wit and monarchy. The epithet, "Canting Tribe," charges that the Whigs do not only agitate for political change, but that they also abuse learning with the same ardour as the Puritans who use Aristotle to defend their inspired fireworks. Like the "fanatics in poetry" that Dryden denounced in the Prologue to Oedipus, the "canting" Whigs are unruly in thought and behaviour. Language, therefore, is a major clue in detecting the moral, religious and cultural health of society.

Dryden's critical works, including his prologues and epilogues, reveal his consistent attention to the problem of enthusiasm. Although his uncompromising opposition to political and religious dissenters is well known, his favourable assessment of certain kinds of enthusiastic behaviour is not. Dryden constantly endorses the expression of the sublime in poetry, and he attacks English critics for their opposition to poetic licence. Throughout his poetical career Dryden praises those figures whose character and behaviour enable mortal man to catch glimpses of eternal life. His favourite subjects are the poet and the king because they are the most important defenders of civilization. The king upholds political order and the poet defends the kingdom of letters from anarchy. Although usurpers imperil the kingship, monarchs always overcome

their enemies because they derive their power from a supernatural source rather than from the slippery approval of men--order comes from "above," not from "below."

The natural enemies of these sublime figures are the barbarian enthusiasts who crave the power of truly sublime men. Some of the enemies are religious enthusiasts in the strictest sense of the word, because they yearn for a theocracy of the Saints. Poetical enthusiasts like the poet, Settle, want to destroy civilized standards in the theatre and in poetry and the political enthusiasts are bent upon destroying the existing monarchy. Strict classification of enthusiasts is difficult in Dryden's works because the activities of the poet's enemies are rarely confined to just one sphere. Poetical, religious and political enthusiasts support each other, and some of the republican leaders in Absalom and Achitophel have at one time been religious dissenters who now depend on sectarians to realize the goals of their plot. At this point it is best to leave further commentary on this difficult problem of classification until later chapters.

In the first chapter I discussed the causes of religious enthusiasm as understood by classical and Renaissance authorities. I said that in the seventeenth century a more naturalistic medical explanation was replacing the old idea that the malady of enthusiasm was caused by the devil. Dryden uses both of these explanations in his poems, and is,

therefore, a kind of transitional figure between the old and new worlds of medicine. This merger accounts in part for the kind of world depicted in his poetry, a poetry which captures very little of the social flavour of ordinary Restoration life. Battles between warring groups of good and bad enthusiasts are waged in a world half-human and half-divine. Although he is the physical embodiment of rule in the temporal state, King Charles II appears in Astraea Redux, Annus Mirabilis, Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall as a mythical and divine figure. The body politic suffers physical sickness like the poorly nourished, physically deformed and sexually impotent rebels. This phalanx of enemies also lives in spiritual distress caused partially by their dependence on demonic powers. In Absalom and Achitophel sickness alone is incapable of forming a well-wrought plan. Only the devil has the capacity to unite the diseased malcontents in a deliberate, mutually beneficial bond.

Point for point the zealots simulate the activity of Dryden's sublime heroes. The heroes know that all power comes from God, and although they are not equal to God, they are given special gifts that afford them an enlightened vision of the eternal world. The proud barbarians will not submit themselves to truly blessed leaders and so they employ demonic aid to nullify the power of the regal figures. Their curses, quakings, visions and even adventures in

witchcraft are the desperate measures employed by enthusiasts to obtain the supernatural power of a poet or a king. Simple denial of the supernatural claims of a monarch is a second method that enthusiasts use to ruin a king, and this way is often used in combination with the first method. Enthusiasts claim that kings and poets derive their power from popular approval only. This claim is apostasy to Dryden because it denies the special grace bestowed from Heaven. This democratization obliterates all hierarchical distinctions in art, religion and politics and leads to anarchy which precludes the possibility of sensible discrimination in these areas.

Dryden is similar to other Restoration and eighteenth-century critics of enthusiasm in his attack on the demonic and levelling aspects of dissent. One of the most persistent and curious attacks on the enthusiast is that he aspires to become a god and yet behaves like an animal. For example, the most dignified pursuit of Swift's Aeolists is belching. The classical conception of man claims that he is similar to both animal and saint, but that he is grounded in a world between the debased and the divine. The chief failing of the bad enthusiast is that he ignores or denies his human frailty. His overweening pride deludes him into believing that he is a god, but his equally extraordinary behaviour presents him as an animal to his critics. Grovelling and quaking may be signs of divine favour to a

religious dissenter, but they are repulsive exhibitions of animality to his enemy. Dryden's heroic enthusiast aims indirectly at acquaintance with divine power. His methods are indirect because he realizes that he cannot leap immediately from the temporal to the eternal realm. Instead he is poised precariously between this world and the next, and this delicate balance is the origin of his strength, but it is interpreted as weakness by his opponents who demand greater rigidity from men.

The battles between informed and deluded enthusiasts are wars of religion in which language plays a key role. The sublime poet, St. Cecilia, Charles II and Anne Killigrew are masters of rhetoric while the bad enthusiasts are butchers of language. Because the integration of divine and animalistic affinities is absent in the enthusiast, his language is characterized by extremes. On the one hand, he imitates the rhetoric of gods in his ineffable expressions and in his spontaneous speaking in tongues. This eloquence challenges the sublime language spoken by the true prophet, the poet and the king. On the other hand, the enthusiast's language decomposes into monosyllables in which the shouting of slogans is employed to make the sounds of real music inaudible. Both groups treat language as a means of enchantment. The dissenter's unruly imagination bids him to make an unlicensed usage of words, while the man of heightened but controlled imagination imitates properly the language

of the gods. Rhetorical rivalry concerns much more than the denotative meaning of words; the opponents realize fully that word power establishes a kingdom of light or darkness on earth.

Like other commentators, Dryden believes that enthusiasm is a very old problem. His constant attention to the dangers of enthusiasm in his critical works argues convincingly for the view that Dryden believes dissent is a major problem of civilization. Biblical and classical situations and allusions in his poems and plays emphasize the universality of enthusiasm. As a good humanist, Dryden studies the past to inform his assessment of the present, and he shows his cosmopolitanism in his placement of British dissent in a continuum of Western history. Dryden's life-long interest in history is borne out in his many statements on the relationship between a society's conditions and the kind of literature it produces. Especially attentive to modern European history, Dryden's prefaces and works are full of observations on the Reformation impetus to dissent in Europe and in England. The Preface to Religio Laici contains a short history of religious dissent in which Dryden cites a number of historical sources to prove that the "private spirit" of dissenters has been a persistent threat to rightful rulers all over Europe since the Reformation. The 1684 Postscript to the Translation of The History of the League traces the beginnings of English dissent to

Germany and Switzerland. Religio Laici analyzes the similarities between modern enthusiasts and ancient philosophers, and The Hind and the Panther argues that the unstable Anglican Church has been infected by the pernicious "private spirit" of sixteenth and seventeenth-century sects. Although he did not convert to Catholicism until after the death of King Charles II, Dryden's view of Catholics is less virulent than is his assessment of sectarians in the prefaces and poems of the early 1680's. Commonwealth men and their dissenting confederates are the major enemies in Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall and the Preface to Religio Laici denounces only those Roman Catholics (mostly Jesuits) who would unseat a monarch.

Dryden believes that no effective opposition can be mustered against a king until discontented enthusiasts form a league or covenant. These united groups of sectarians, republicans, and poetasters are all inspired by examples from the past. The Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis are used to discredit Charles II's authority as earlier rebels had intimidated his father. In every new movement rebellious leaders endow themselves and their followers with sanctified powers and create a monarchy of republicans. Like the Swiss, the English elect demands absolute political power. The Preface to The Medall charges that the contemporary enemies of the king derive their ideas and activities wholly from former confederacies:



I have perus'd many of your Papers; and to show you that I have, the third part of your No-protestant Plot is much of it stolen, from your dead Author's Pamphlet call'd, the Growth of Popery; as manifestly as Milton's defence of the English People, is from Buchanan, de jure regni apud Scotos: or your first Covenant, and new Association, from the holy League of the French Guisards. (Kinsley, p. 224)

By 1660 dissenters had compiled a large bibliography of seditious works dating back to the 1500's which advised men to "set the People above the Magistrate." (Kinsley, p. 224) Dryden traces the new plot back to the Guisards' rebellion against Henry IV, an observation he repeats in his defence of The Duke of Guise. Dryden (who wrote the play with Nathaniel Lee) says that the authors intended

to make the play a Parallel betwixt the Holy League plotted by the house of Guise and its adherents, with the Covenant plotted by the Rebels in the time of King Charles the First, and those of the new Association, which was the spawn of the Old Covenant. (Malone, II, 81)

Dryden's objection to enthusiasm has a strong political basis. Belief in Catholicism is harmless so long as the Papists do not transform their religious energies into political activism. Sectarianism, however, is always a revolutionary force. Dryden believes that all European areas that have encouraged dissent have also fostered political tyranny and enmity to kings. Ironically, the most vociferous enemies of Catholicism follow religiously the same methods as the Jesuits in their quest for political power.

I have now discussed some of Dryden's major ideas about enthusiasm as they appear in his occasional works. The remaining chapters of this study relate the topic to some of the major poems of John Dryden written between 1678 and 1697. This period includes some of Dryden's best poems (Absalom and Achitophel, The Hind and the Panther, Mac Flecknoe) and covers the years of the most intensive political and social upheaval during Dryden's adult life. Poems written before 1678 can profitably be examined with reference to the topic of enthusiasm, but I have chosen to limit my study to the period of Dryden's best poetical output. Although political, religious and artistic enthusiasm are frequently linked by Dryden, and are, therefore, rather inseparable, for the sake of organization I have divided the following chapters into three distinct groups. The first section includes Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall because both poems respond to the political exigencies created by the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis. The second part deals with Religio Laici and The Hind and the Panther, poems in which Dryden examines the extremism of Reformation Protestantism from Anglican and Roman Catholic viewpoints. My last section concerns Dryden's assessment of sublime and fanatic artistry in Mac Flecknoe, Ode to Anne Killigrew, A Song for St. Cecilia's Day and Alexander's Feast. Taken together, these sections will endeavour to show that Dryden's interest in enthusiasm continued unabated

throughout his poetical career and offered him a pattern in which to describe the problems of his civilization.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Edward Malone, ed., The Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden (London: T. Cade and W. Davies, 1800), II, 287. Malone is hereafter referred to in the text by name, volume number and page number.

<sup>2</sup>John Dryden, Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Essays, ed., George Watson (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1962), I, 114. Because Watson's is the more accessible edition of the essays, I have cited him where possible and hereafter he is referred to in the text by name, volume number and page number. Other citations are from Malone.

<sup>3</sup>Kenneth G. Hamilton, John Dryden and the Poetry of Statement (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1967), p. 49.

<sup>4</sup>Although Dryden never wrote an "original" epic, a case could be made for Dryden as an epic writer on the basis of his translation of Virgil's Aeneid. The same argument applies for Pope's translation of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. In the Restoration and eighteenth century, translation was considered to be an accomplished art. The translator did not merely paraphrase his subject but actually recreated the original poem. For this reason, the translations of Dryden and Pope may be considered "original" epics as the word "original" was understood by the Augustans. The decision of the two major poets of the neo-classical era to undertake translations gives some indication of the importance and status of this art. For Dryden's own thoughts on the difficulties and rewards of translation, see his Preface to the Translation of Ovid's Epistles (1680), Malone, III, 3-24 and his Preface to the Second Part of Poetical Miscellanies (1684), Malone, III, 25-52. For an argument similar to my own see E.M.W. Tillyard, The English Epic and its Background (1954; New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 478-481 and 498-509.

<sup>5</sup>Hughes, "Language, History & Vision: An Approach to 18th-Century Literature," p. 83.

<sup>6</sup>Ruth Nevo, The Dial of Virtue: A Study of Poems on Affairs of State in the Seventeenth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 30.

<sup>7</sup>Phillip Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968). See especially Chapter I "The Sceptical Critic," pp. 1-31.

<sup>8</sup>Arthur W. Hoffman, John Dryden's Imagery (1962; Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1968), p. 22 says:

Dryden's prologues and epilogues comment on a wide variety of matters; they are short, usually not over forty lines in length, and delivered as they were by an actor on the stage, they had to be understood and appreciated by the audience at one hearing. In order to be effective as commentary, poems of this kind need to use sets of strong value and disvalue symbols.

<sup>9</sup>Hoffman, John Dryden's Imagery, p. 51.

<sup>10</sup>Compare to: "Poets, like Disputants when Reasons fail,/ Have one sure Refuge left; and that's to rail." (Epilogue to All for Love, ll. 1-2); "Let them, who the Rebellion first began,/ To wit, restore the Monarch if they can." (Prologue to The Kind Keeper, ll. 11-12)

<sup>11</sup>Mark Van Doren notes the obsessive concern with politics in the prologues and epilogues of the 1680's. See The Poetry of John Dryden (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1920), p. 176.

<sup>12</sup>See Schneider, The Ethos of Restoration Comedy, passim.

### III

#### ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL

Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall deal with the threat to the authority of a lawful monarch made by the supporters of the Popish Plot of 1678 and the Exclusion Bill of 1679. Earl Miner fully recognizes the seriousness of the events which confronted Charles II and his defenders during the late 1670's and the early 1680's: "The crisis over efforts to exclude Charles' brother James from the succession, the Popish Plot and the challenge by Shaftesbury and Monmouth to Charles, to the Stuart line, and to the Clarendon settlement were continuing events, big with civil war."<sup>1</sup> Absalom and Achitophel depicts an archetypal battle fought between conservative and liberal forces for the control of the nation's politics and religion.

Religious and political issues are tightly interwoven in Absalom and Achitophel and in the events upon which the poem is based. The struggle between the king and his detractors began with the Popish Plot when Titus Oates charged that Catholics were soon to assassinate the king and replace him with James Stuart who would be the figurehead for a Jesuit Junta that would persecute English Protestants.<sup>2</sup> Exposed as a hoax after some bloodshed and the execution of innocent men like the Earl of Stafford, the plot's ready reception by many Englishmen shows that the

fear of Catholicism as a political force was strong in Restoration England. Although the plot "fail'd for want of common Sense,/ [It] [h]ad yet a deep and dangerous Consequence." (Absalom and Achitophel, ll. 134-135) Taking advantage of current unrest, Shaftesbury tried to advance his own position in English political life by having other Whigs introduce in May, 1679, the Exclusion Bill, an act designed to prevent the Catholic James from ascending the throne after the death of Charles II and to ensure the passage of the crown to a Protestant heir. The bill passed a second reading in the House of Commons but failed to become law because Charles II refused to sign it.<sup>3</sup>

Although the historical details of the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Bill are not my main concern here, it is important to know that the dissenters and Whigs under Shaftesbury's leadership successfully manipulated the fear of Catholicism to test the Clarendon Code and the authority of Charles II. To many English Protestants, the court was suspiciously Catholic. The queen's own doctor, George Wakeman, was arrested for his Catholic religion during the Popish Plot uproar,<sup>4</sup> the heir to the throne was a Catholic and Charles II, who had married a Catholic, "had developed a feeling of sympathy for the Roman Catholic Church and for French ways during his years of exile."<sup>5</sup> It is interesting that the king had signed a secret treaty with Louis XIV at Dover in 1670, a treaty which provided French

money to Charles II on condition that he would eventually restore Catholicism in England.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the conservative Anglican Church hierarchy with "all of the ecclesiastical, moral, political, and religious pressures that it could command"<sup>7</sup> supported the monarchy in a manner not unlike that of the Laudian Church in the reign of Charles I. Besides being a monarchist "The Cavalier/Tory also identified completely with the Anglican Church in the narrow sense of its establishment in 1661."<sup>8</sup> The hostility of the English conservative to any tampering with the Clarendon Code and the king's authority, even at the risk of assuring a Catholic monarch in England, alarmed the left-wing which suspected the king and his supporters of harbouring an unhealthy sympathy for Roman Catholics.

While the Whigs and their friends attacked the Papism of the court, Dryden and other spokesmen for the "conservative myth" found clear proof in the coalition of Whigs and dissenting factions that enthusiasm was once again on the offensive. The challenge to the succession of James denied the divine and regal power of the king, indeed, it made the monarch a subject of the populace. If the succession were thwarted, parliament (in which dissenters had always placed their hopes) would emerge superior to the king who would then be merely a figurehead chosen by elected officials. Although the Whigs defended the principle of constitutional monarchy, Dryden thought that his enemies

shared the republican ideas of religious enthusiasts who demanded substantial control over the monarch. Because Whig political leaders won the support of many non-conformists, the conservative charge seemed plausible. J.R. Jones's recent work, The First Whigs, identifies five groups that composed the initial Whig party led by Shaftesbury.<sup>9</sup> The "old Presbyterians" included original opponents of the Clarendon Code who "were to be distinguished from the majority of the Whigs by a genuine and positive zeal for religious reform and Protestant unity."<sup>10</sup> The "country Opposition," the largest of the Whig contingents, borrowed its ideas from the opponents of James I and Charles I, and wanted "honest administration and ministerial respect for the law, no favourites, the consultation of Parliament and the prompt redress of grievances, financial retrenchment and the furtherance of trade, insularity, and the defence of the Protestant religion."<sup>11</sup> The adventurers were a small and unimportant group who, as their name suggests, had the sole aim of wresting power away from prominent leaders like Shaftesbury.<sup>12</sup> Monmouth and his circle included supporters for the succession of Charles II's illegitimate son. Although Dryden identifies Monmouth as the Whig candidate for the throne, the Whigs carefully avoided naming any particular favourite during the Exclusion Crisis.<sup>13</sup> The fifth group, the radicals, included true religious enthusiasts and republicans who "were mostly obscure men of comparatively humble



origins, and few gained, or even aspired to, a place in the commons. But as the Exclusion Crisis intensified so their importance steadily increased."<sup>14</sup>

Absalom and Achitophel includes representatives from all five of Jones's groups. Achitophel (Shaftesbury) contrives the plot, and his authority is humorously and unsuccessfully challenged by "the adventurer" Zimri (the Duke of Buckingham). The country party, aided by Issachar (Thomas Thynne) supervises Monmouth's progress to the west. Presbyterians, detectable in Dryden's description of the Jews, share affinities with radicals like Corah (Titus Oates) and Shimei (Slingsby Bethel). Like the conservative apologists, Dryden thinks that no dissenting group is better than any other. Significantly, the poet gives much more attention to the fanatics like Corah and Shimei and the frenzied Jews, than he pays to the rank and file of the Whigs--the country party. Dryden's apparently biased selection may be partly explained by Jones's claim that the radical groups became increasingly important during the months of the crisis, but it seems more likely that Dryden chose to concentrate on the more fanatical members of the plot in order to discredit the whole Whiggish movement. Dryden believed that the Whigs were fanatics, and that men of levelling and republican sympathies dominated their party. As we shall see, Dryden's selection aside, the major figures in the poem, whether Jews,

sheriffs, republicans, informers or courtiers, all are described in the language traditionally reserved for religious enthusiasts.

Writers in 1681 found horrifying and unmistakable similarities between contemporary events and those of the 1640's. The acrimonious battle between king and parliament seemed to recapitulate pre-civil war conditions. A popular volume, One Hundred Eighty Loyal Songs (1680) asks the reader, "'Have you not heard of forty-one, Sir?'" and warns the true Englishman about the dangers of "reformers, Whigs, zealots, rebels, dissenters, and associators."<sup>15</sup> The Earl of Shaftesbury feared that a continuation of present trends would yoke England under Catholicism, and to his friends he "recited over and over again the whole litany of anti-court epithets that had been the stock in trade of the country party since its emergence in the reign of James I in the 1620s."<sup>16</sup>

As in the earlier part of the century, Englishmen again adopted extreme positions. The supporters of the king were Catholics or the dupes of Catholics; the Whigs were enthusiasts or the tools of religious extremists. In the 1630's Puritans were horrified by what they considered to be Popish practices in the Church and Catholic influence in the court. By upholding Arminianism against predestination, Archbishop Laud had strengthened the dissenters' claim that the English were surely being led back to Rome.<sup>17</sup> Malcolm

Ross's brilliant study, Poetry and Dogma, argues that although the Anglican refusal to sanction the doctrine of transubstantiation finally separated the English Church from Rome, nevertheless,

the rhetorical signs and gestures of the ancient symbolism continued to suggest actual dogmatic values to the Puritans long after the Anglicans had put them to merely ornamental or expedient use. The ghosts of sacramentalism continued to haunt the superstitious Puritan mind long after they had been carefully exorcised by Anglican reasonableness. The Puritan, then as now, attributes a far greater degree of sacramental suggestion to the vestigial Catholic rhetoric of Anglicanism than does the Anglican himself.<sup>18</sup>

In other words, appearance and reality were equal. The courtly culture of the Stuart kings was an affront to the early Puritans and to the Restoration Whigs who equated exacting ritual, strict religious observance and strong central authority with the tyranny of Catholicism. Royalists considered reformers on the left, from the early Anabaptists to the current Whigs, to be apostates in religion and traitors in politics.

Each new challenge to the left and right elicited the same stereotyped response. A pamphlet on the dangers of Anabaptism in 1640 could be reprinted almost without alteration to address the Methodist danger in 1745 and the French Revolution in 1795. In our age of historical neglect and sociological preoccupation it is difficult to appreciate the liveliness of previous historical events for

seventeenth and eighteenth-century Englishmen. In 1680 Bishop Hicke published his polemical The Spirit of Enthusiasm Exorcised to castigate Fifth Monarchy Men and Quakers and reissued his pamphlet "as topical stuff in 1709, to confound the French Prophets."<sup>19</sup> Early eighteenth-century poets and divines thought that dissenters and their low-church supporters continued the political perfidy of the seventeenth-century Presbyterians. Ned Ward's Hudibras Redivivus (1705-1707) was written to expose "Fanatics, Dissenters, Moderators, Whigs, Low-Church-men, Saints, Reformers, or whatsoever new Denomination they are pleas'd to rank themselves under, the better to disguise their old base Principles, as well as Practices."<sup>20</sup> After the revolution of 1688, non-conformist zeal had relaxed; the moderate dissenter, like other Englishmen, eagerly desired to keep the peace and to live a comfortable life. For the early eighteenth-century Tory, however, low-churchmen and dissenters were traitors.

In the continuing battle over state and Church hegemony, the stances of liberals and conservatives were rigid. The attempt to give greater personal freedom and political opportunity to non-conformists evoked the same accusation of betrayal to the dissenting cause in 1710 as in 1670. In the long run, the Restoration Settlement proved a failure because it contained within itself the seeds of its destruction. Above all, the Restoration was supposed to guarantee

peace, and this plea proved useful to the low-church clergy and laymen who argued that true peace could arrive only when all English Protestants gained religious liberty. The crisis of the 1670's pitted not only king against parliament, but also clergyman against clergyman. Those who rose to the monarch's defence justified the tenets of a high Anglicanism against the broad interpretation of Church doctrine. The inroads which the Latitudinarians made within the English Church were victories for the "lower" culture. In the Augustan age, Dryden, Pope and Swift, as staunch apologists for the "upper" culture, "emphasized that uniformity of belief, aesthetic standards, and common sense were paradoxically necessary conditions of individual salvation, genius, and judgment. With one or two important exceptions, the major English authors were believing Christians whose faith took a sacramental, hierarchical and mediated form."<sup>21</sup>

Earl Miner says that although Dryden chose Biblical history as his point of reference for the events of the late 1670's and early 1680's in Absalom and Achitophel, other options were available to the poet: "Analogies to earlier English history are not wholly ignored in Absalom and Achitophel" and "It is even possible that the parallels with events in Elizabeth's time and the Ligue's plot against Henri III were in his mind as he wrote the poem."<sup>22</sup> Although Dryden settled on a Biblical source to highlight contemporary English history, by 1684 he had become convinced that

the machinations of Shaftesbury and the Whigs were identical in spirit and method with the schemes of the French Holy League against Henry III and Henry IV: "Our English are not generally commended for invention; but these were merchants of small wares, very pedlars in policy; they must, like our taylors, have all their fashions from the French, and study the French League for every alteration, as our snippers go over once a year into France, to bring back the newest mode, and to learn to cut and shape it." (Postscript to the Translation of The History of the League, Malone, II, 463) Murdered by zealots, as was Henry III, Charles I was succeeded by a son who was hated by fanatic politicians and true believers. French history shows Henry IV "surmounting all these difficulties, and triumphing over all these dangers: GOD Almighty taking care of his own anointed, and the true succession...." (Malone, II, 440) Following the French archetype, Absalom and Achitophel concludes with the divinely-sanctioned victory of Charles II over his enemies. French and English kings had been long besieged by the zealous. The French League could not suffer a Protestant king, and the English rebel would not endure a Catholic monarch: "But some of the French Jesuits are the shame of the Roman church, as the sectaries are of ours. Their tenets in politicks are the same; both of them hate monarchy, and love democracy: both of them are superlatively violent; they are inveterate haters of each other in religion, and yet agree in the

principles of government." (Malone, II, 453) Ironically, then, dissenters borrow their most cherished ideas from their mortal enemies, the Catholics, a criticism which Dryden repeats in Religio Laici.

Other striking similarities between the French and English rebels confirmed Dryden's suspicions that not a haphazard plot but a well-organized conspiracy had arisen in England. The French demanded "that the new provost of merchants, and present sheriffs of the faction, might be confirmed by the King; and for the future, they should not only elect their sheriffs, but the colonels and captains of the several wards." (Malone, II, 464) English Whigs ensured the election of sheriffs like Slingsby Bethel who could circumvent the pursuit of justice by returning verdicts of ignoramus from the courtroom when it was politically expedient to do so.<sup>23</sup> France and England had also been scandalized by perjurious informers: "Bussy le Clerc, it is true, turned out a whole parliament together, and brought them prisoners to the Bastile; and Bussy Oates was for garbling too, when he informed against a worthy and loyal member, whom he caused to be expelled the house, and sent prisoner to the Tower...." (Malone, II, 471)<sup>24</sup> Events culminated, according to Dryden, when leading French and English courtiers took an active part in the rebellion against kings: "Any man who will look into the tenets of the first sectaries, will find these to be more or less

embued with them. Here they were supported underhand by great men for private interests. What trouble they gave that Queen, and how she curbed them, is notoriously known to all who are conversant in the histories of those times." (Malone, II, 447) The English Whigs "had indeed at their head an old conspirator [Shaftesbury], witty and turbulent, like the Cardinal of Lorraine, and for courage in execution much such another...." (Malone, II, 459) Of all the rebellious French nobility, Shaftesbury most "resembled the old decrepid Cardinal of Bourbon, who fed himself with imaginary hopes of power, dreamed of outliving a king and his successor, much more young and vigorous than himself, and of governing the world after their decease." (Malone, II, 459)

Dryden's study of French history gave him an insight into the events that plagued Restoration England. Contemporary politicians had adopted the strategy of the French, and in retrospect, "Our sectaries and long parliament of 1641 had certainly these French precedents in their eyes." (Malone, II, 451-452) Whig political movements imitated the plans of religious fanatics in England and France, and the close study of history revealed structural similarities in the plots against monarchs. Widespread discontent amongst the populace precedes the agitation of intermediate office holders and clergy. Then, demented or unscrupulous courtiers unite all the factions, and a full-scale attack on monarchical rule begins. This is precisely the progress



of the rebellion that occurs in Absalom and Achitophel. The historical instability of the Jews provides an attractive enticement for the provocations of Shimei and Corah. When popular discontent against the king has been inflamed by these middling figures, Achitophel brings the plot to fruition with the blessing of the common people, the city politicians and his fellow courtiers.

The question naturally arises as to why Dryden did not make explicit comparison between France and England in his poem, if he found close historical parallels between the two countries. Miner contends that the choice of Scriptural history "gave his Tory treatment of contemporary events a seemingly divine sanction unavailable to other analogies, and enabled him to suggest an outcome to matters still very much undecided."<sup>25</sup> Biblical events were more authoritative than those of Western European history, and because the poem endeavours to establish the legitimacy of a succession dating back to David and to Adam (as did Filmer's Patriarchia), French history was less suitable for Dryden's purposes. Hobbes had established a Biblical justification for the authority of the sovereign in Leviathan, and the divine-right apologists had invoked Scripture to defend the legitimacy of reigning monarchs. Furthermore, the Absalom and Achitophel story had been frequently used by 1681 to comment on contemporary political events. At least as early as the English civil wars "both Royalist and Puritan utilized

the Bible story, or at least made use of the name of Achitophel to express their political condemnations,"<sup>26</sup> and for many years, "Achitophel served a useful purpose in affording a term of reproach to be levelled at the discomfited Puritans."<sup>27</sup>

French history also proved rather inappropriate for Dryden because it had not been as turbulent as the English. France had enjoyed internal peace since the 1620's, while England in the seventeenth century had been as unruly a society as that of the Old Testament Jews. The equation of Jews and Englishmen also seemed compelling because both awaited a new messiah who would deliver them from the tyranny of their leaders. Lastly, enthusiasts claimed a spiritual affinity with Biblical figures like Moses, Adam and Abraham, claims that Hobbes refuted in Leviathan.

Before beginning an analysis of the poem, I would like to discuss two features of the prefatory material that supports my contention that Dryden had enthusiasm very much on his mind when he wrote this poem. Bernard Schilling makes much of the fact that the title page of the poem reads: "Absalom and Achitophel: A Poem," because he explains that in the seventeenth century a poem "meant a long story in verse, an epic or heroic poem, or a play like an epic" and Schilling goes on to argue that satires and lampoons were thought to be less dignified than a "poem."<sup>28</sup> Ian Jack calls Absalom and Achitophel "a witty heroic poem" and adds

that "Dryden despised mere lampooners and had no intention of allowing a poem on which he would have to bestow a great deal of effort to remain on the same low level as the majority of the productions of the 'violent paper scuffle' to which it was a contribution."<sup>29</sup> I will not attempt to adjudicate between Schilling and Jack now; both critics provide valuable insights into the kind of work Dryden was trying to write. Certainly, he did not want to write a perishable lampoon. But lampoons were not merely ephemeral and vitriolic works. After the Restoration the lampoon "acquires, as it were, an independent life of its own as an effective weapon, for republicans as much as for disillusioned royalists."<sup>30</sup> Dryden, of course, ignored the Royalist association with lampoons and regarded them as the witless weapons of republicans. The Dedication to Limberham (1678) complains of bad poets who might "turn pamphleteers, and augment the number of those abominable scribblers, who in this time of licence abuse the press almost every day with nonsense and railing against the government." (Malone, II, 35) Dryden makes accusations of sedition, malice and nonsense against the dissenting republican in Absalom and Achitophel and so he eschews this low genre partly for political reasons.

Absalom and Achitophel is accurately called a history by Schilling because Dryden refers to himself as "the Historian" and not as the inventor of the poem's action.

(Kinsley, p. 189) Although Miner says the poem is "partisan history,"<sup>31</sup> the poem is partisan in a very special way.

While it would be foolish to argue that the poem is not a Royalist-Tory apology, the poet states baldly "Wit and Fool, are Consequents of Whig and Tory." (Kinsley, p. 188) Dryden says that he wishes to "please the more Moderate sort" to ensure that he is "of an honest Party," (Kinsley, p. 188) indicating that he is not simply a hack writer for a cause. Because he wants to be both a true historian and an honest poet, Dryden risks the rancour of the seditious because "It is indeed their interest, who endeavour the subversion of governments, to discourage poets and historians...." (Dedication to All for Love (1678), Malone, II, 3) The Dedication of Plutarch's Lives (1683) pleads that "Of all historians, GOD deliver us from bigots; and of all bigots, from our sectaries!" because these enthusiasts "judge all actions, and their causes, by their own perverse principles...."

(Malone, II, 349) The Life of Plutarch attacks the Scottish Presbyterian Buchanan, who "for the purity of his Latin, and for his learning, and for all other endowments belonging to an historian, might be placed amongst the greatest, if he had not too much leaned to prejudice, and too manifestly declared himself a party of a cause, rather than an historian of it." (Watson, II, 6-7) Dryden's Preface, then, presents the poet as a man of letters and a civilized student of history for whom the narrow party spirit and the debased

rhetoric of the dissenting Whigs are abhorrent exhibitions of unbridled enthusiasm.

Absalom and Achitophel shows that madness and imagination govern the English people in a political climate which has been poisoned by lies and rumours. Several critics have stated that the poem's subject is the battle between enthusiasm and order. Written in 1943, Ruth Wallerstein's article, "To Madness Near Allied: Shaftesbury and His Place in the Design and Thought of Absalom and Achitophel," is the first piece of criticism to argue that Achitophel suffers from enthusiasm and melancholia, and it concludes that Dryden's poem addresses the dangers of religious and political zealotry.<sup>32</sup> Leon Guilhamet has said that Absalom and Achitophel is "essentially an anti-Puritan and anti-Whig poem,"<sup>33</sup> and Alan Roper thinks that the poem's conflict is based on "a consistent opposition between the zeal and enthusiasm of the crowd and plotters and the sense, reason, and prudence of the king and loyalists."<sup>34</sup> Bruce King considers the poem an anatomy of "the dangers of the imagination" in which "Extravagance, restlessness, ambition, pride, intolerance, and zeal are contrasted with moderation, order, tolerance, patience, humility, and forgiveness."<sup>35</sup> Martin Price's study of Dryden's poem begins with the assumption that all of his poetry concerns the antagonism between the civilized and enthusiastic orders: "In both the political satires and the religious poems the dialectic moves

between the spontaneous generation of order from below that is the rule of the multitude or of the private will and the descent of order from above that is divine right or true religious law."<sup>36</sup> Price's vocabulary echoes Heer's terminology about the battling "upper" and "lower" cultures, and reiterates the accepted claim that Dryden is self-appointed defender of the established culture against a horde of barbarians.

Although Absalom and Achitophel are the chief insurgents in Dryden's poem, their challenge to the king's power depends upon the current unrest of the English people. Twenty years after the English welcomed their king home from Europe, they are impatient for a change of religious and political authority, and it is helpful to begin the analysis of the poem with a consideration of the popular feeling which the courtiers exploit.

Dryden's poem chides the inconstant Jews who are ripe for yet another change in religion and government. The instability of the mob, a common theme in sixteenth-century "mirrors" for princes, continued in the seventeenth century because of civil warfare in England. Lines forty-five to sixty-eight of Dryden's poem recount the English political shifts from the acceptance of Cromwell, to the rejection of his son and to the Restoration of Charles II. Denying the dominion of the king and the authority of the Anglican Church, the English in 1681 are awaiting a new messiah to

direct their religious and political life. Like the contemporary Seekers (who were so-called because they found every religion wanting and were still seeking for an acceptable faith)<sup>37</sup> the English have experimented with religion "of every shape and size" (l. 49) but they are still dissatisfied with their manner of worship. Inconstant, the Jews use their "Humour" (l. 62) and "natural Instinct" (l. 219) to choose their leaders. Initially they look for a legal precedent (l. 53) to justify their concept of liberty, but none can be found in civilized edicts because the unruly demands of the Jews are incompatible with all stable societies. Their desires unsanctioned by legal writ, the Jews withdraw to "Woods and Caves," (l. 55) the most primitive of natural settings where organized society has no dominion. As "Savages" (l. 56) the Jews find a perverse liberty in wild behaviour unsanctioned by the statutes of civilized cultures. Like Swift's Jack, whose demand for absolute simplicity forced him to destroy his coat, the Jews strip themselves of the trappings of civilization in order to enjoy the primitive simplicity of nature and perhaps the original Church as understood by dissenters. As "Adam-wits" (l. 51) they stand naked in the unweeded garden like the sectarian Adamites who refused to wear clothing because it hindered them from reaching the inner paradise known by our first father when he lived gloriously undraped in Eden.<sup>38</sup>

In earlier poems, notably Annus Mirabilis, Dryden

analyzed the temper of a nation at war. Facing a national crisis--a plague, a fire, a Dutch naval invasion--the English selflessly unite to subdue a common enemy. Dryden hoped in 1667 that the recent British triumphs over natural and political crises would guarantee a flourishing trade and an artistic and scientific renaissance. Just fourteen years later, the promise of harmony has soured; peace made the English forgetful of the barbarism of civil wars and the benefits of stability. Like classical and fellow English commentators, Dryden blames luxury for the contemporary social unrest. Great wealth and indulgence makes the nation forget the lessons of the past. The Jews have no capacity for the enjoyment of leisure and the arts of peace, so like Achitophel and Zimri, they continually test the limits of their society. As "God's pamper'd people" (l. 47) the Jews have been treated too generously. They are the chosen people but they abuse this privilege in their search for greater and greater freedoms that neither monarchs nor Providence can satisfy.

The unreasonable behaviour of the Jews can be explained only as madness. Literally, the Jews have lost their minds. "Humour" (l. 62) and "natural Instinct" (l. 219) govern their insane conception of a society. Their activities are sporadic and ominous as "randome bolts" (l. 67) of lightning, and they are directed by the moon (l. 216) which separates men from their wits.



The greatest proof of the Jews' madness is their usurpation of the power of God. Lunar control associates them with the heavens, and the random bolts align them with Jove. Lines forty-nine and fifty inform us that Jewish divines ("God-Smiths" and "Priests") have provided the laity with every imaginable religion, but lines fifty-seven to sixty-six tell us that in the selection of divinely-appointed rulers, the mob forms a discordant priesthood of the laity. As Jews, the English refuse the leadership of the Christian messiah, and they ignore their political redeemer, Charles-David, who is a prototype of Christ. Religious and political beliefs are associated because the Jews behave and worship as pagans, worshippers of idols. Because a "Generall Shout" (l. 60) and not true loyalty (l. 62) has proclaimed David as king, the Jews have been guilty of idolatry since the beginning of their monarch's reign. David is "An Idoll Monarch" (l. 64) created by the Jews to satisfy their own whims. Denying the legitimacy of mouldy writs of succession, the mob wants to replace one idol with another or to convert the present one into a "Golden Calf" (l. 66) worshipped by the apostate Hebrews. Outright replacement of the old kings is, of course, decided when Absalom makes his triumphant march among the people. Because the Jews claim divine power of appointment, they also demand a leader of heavenly power. The new social contract, as perceived by Dryden, is not a secular arrangement. The tempestuous

activity of a mean-spirited people is the only evidence of the mundane in the new social order which replaces true religious faith with idolatry and devil-worship.

Dryden's poem is historically accurate in its description of urban, rural and court opposition to Charles and the Duke of York. By the end of the poem, the king and his faithful little band of followers face the venom of an entire nation ready for revolution. Although all of the figures in Dryden's poem are Jews, there are clear differences in the use of this designation. The king and his supporters are solidly Judeo-Christian, as the frequent comparisons of David to Christ make clear. The Jewish covenant has been maintained since the days of Adam, Noah and Moses, while the Jewish opposition clings to these bonds only when it is opportune to do so. Achitophel advises Absalom that limited kingship conferred by popular appeal is better "Than a Successive Title, Long, and Dark,/ Drawn from the Mouldy Rolls of Noah's Ark." (ll. 301-302) Elsewhere, Achitophel justifies the usurpation of David's throne with the argument that Absalom is the "second Moses" (l. 234) of Israel, and, therefore, has a legitimate claim to rule.

The inconsistency of the Jews manifests itself in all classes of society, but Dryden's treatment of David's enemies varies according to their social position. With the exception of a single reference to Issachar (l. 738) Dryden omits treatment of the gentry. The poet limits himself to

an analysis of the rebellion as it occurred in the places that he knew best--the court and the city. Dryden treats the court figures with the respect due to members of his own class, but he harshly attacks the lower orders. The Jews portrayed in lines forty-five to sixty-eight display all the vulgarity and unruliness of Corah and Shimei. Courtiers may err in their political activity, but pretentious involvement in the political system is sufficient reason to condemn lower-class citizens. Dryden confers a tragic dignity on Absalom, Achitophel and Zimri, but Corah and Shimei have no redeeming qualities. "Headstrong, Moody, Murmuring" (l. 45) courtiers share the worst features of city tradesmen and priests, but wayward gentlemen retain a trace of nobility not found in the middle-class citizen.

Lines 490-542 describe the malcontents that Achitophel uses to advance his plot against David. "No form'd Design,/ Nor Interest made the Factious Croud to joyn" (ll. 67-68) before Achitophel initiated action against the king. Now, groups motivated by many goals "serve the same Design" (l. 494)--to dethrone the monarch. Eight distinct groups appear in these lines, and Dryden begins by very quickly forgiving and dispensing with the aristocrats who are "Mistaken Men, and Patriot's in their Hearts;/ Not Wicked, but Seduc'd by Impious Arts." (ll. 497-498) Like Absalom who is "Not stain'd with Cruelty, nor puft with Pride," (l. 480) the nobility is victimized by the venomous

arts of Achitophel, a poisonous rhetoric which has drawn them from their proper allegiance.

The next seven groups, however, are hardened opponents of David, and like Achitophel, they are eager to reap the personal benefits from the conspiracy. For "Interest" (l. 501) and "good Husbandry" (l. 508) the two trading groups (ll. 501-504; 505-508) want to dismiss the king. The first groups would sell the kingship to the highest bidder (l. 503) and the second would replace David (ll. 507-508) with someone more amenable to trading interests. These merchants (of whom Cromwell would have approved) have betrayed the king and used trade as a means to aggrandize themselves at the expense of the whole nation. The bond between monarchy and city, depicted in Annus Mirabilis, has been severed by the traders who debase themselves like the priests who use their offices to gather the valuable "Fleece" from their flocks. (l. 129) Dryden reiterates this criticism of merchants in his Preface to The Medall. The hypocrisy of "Pretending publick Good" (l. 504) to the king arouses Dryden's anger in his "Epistle to the Whigs" of the later poem: "all this while you pretend not onely zeal for the Publick good; but a due veneration for the person of the King. But all men who can see an inch before them, may easily detect those gross fallacies." (Kinsley, p. 223) Of the plot to cheat Charles II of his legitimate office and to replace him with a more popular leader, Dryden asks, "how

is it constant with your Zeal of the publick Welfare, to promote Sedition? Does your definition of loyal, which is to serve the King according to the Laws, allow you the licence of traducing the Executive Power, with which you own he is invested?" (Kinsley, p. 224) The Preface to The Medall describes the city plot, formed of merchants, politicians and religious zealots, and lines 509-510 of Absalom and Achitophel says "Haranguers of the Throng,/ That thought to get Preferment by the Tongue" join with the expedient tradesmen. These haranguers, composed of politicians, Whiggish merchants and religious enthusiasts shout and rail to silence all opposition.

The next four groups, given over half of the fifty-odd lines of this section, are religious fanatics of various persuasions. Dryden, like many other commentators of his period, does not name these groups specifically (perhaps, "Naming is to praise" (l. 816)) but he does provide us with some clues as to their identity. Lines 511-528 describe a group of sectarians who combine the traits of Quakers and Anabaptists. "Solymæn Rout" (l. 513) identifies this group as urban because Solyma was an old name for the city of Jerusalem. The Biblical reference also suggests that modern enthusiasts have their roots planted deeply in history. This rout, an adamant enemy of kings, hopes to establish a theocracy governed by the blessed. The phrase, "Cowering and Quaking at a Conqueror's Sword," (l. 515) recalls the

Cromwellian persecution of the Quakers whom all seventeenth-century political leaders considered to be seditious. The sectarians' impertinence to the lenient king after his Restoration and following a period of persecution is commented upon in the Preface to Religio Laici in which Dryden says "...If they [dissenters] are under Persecution (as they call it,) then that is a mark of their Election; if they flourish, then God works Miracles for their Deliverance, and the Saints are to possess the Earth." (Kinsley, p. 281) In his poem, Dryden certainly overestimates the political ambitions of the Quakers who annoyed legal authorities but who never launched a full-scale effort to attain political supremacy.

From lines 519-528 the Quakers unite with the Anabaptists who did combine their political aspirations with vigorous dissent. "Hot Levites" (l. 519) are priests (not found among the Quakers) and their most notorious member is Corah the "Levite," (l. 644) a child of Anabaptist parents. Although "Sanhedrin and Priest inslav'd the Nation" (l. 523) can refer to Cromwellian rule, the line also applies to cities like Geneva that were controlled by dissenting clergymen. The claims of this Quaker-Anabaptist group are based entirely upon personal conviction. Like the Jews who abuse the grace of God, (l. 46) this group justifies its actions by its special pretension to "Grace." (l. 526) This absolute conviction blinds the zealot to the rights of other people and he relentlessly forces his beliefs on everyone

else. In Religio Medici Thomas Browne complains of this moral arrogance of the Saints whose certitude about matters of faith causes pitched battles over religion: "particular Churches and Sects usurp the gates of Heaven, and turn the key against each other; and thus we go to Heaven against each other's wills, conceits and opinions, and, with as much uncharity as ignorance, do err, I fear, in points not only of our own, but one another's salvation."<sup>39</sup> Years after Browne's comment, the English had had direct experience with tyranny created by "Insolent zeals, that do decry good Works, and rely onely upon Faith."<sup>40</sup>

As in his Postscript to The History of the League, Dryden comments ironically on the close similarity between the dissenters and their most hated enemies. In their zeal to rid Christianity of its last vestiges of "Popery," Quakers, Anabaptists and Presbyterians become increasingly superstitious and tyrannical. Dryden's poem shows that the most violent opponents of Catholics slavishly imitate their worst actions. "Scorn'd by Jebusites to be Out-done," (l. 518) the sectarians form their own conspiracy. Enraged, not because Catholics threaten to depose the king, but because they have made seditious plans earlier than the dissenters, the sectarian brotherhood eagerly unites to advance the cause of theocracy, in direct imitation of the Catholic initiative. As in the 1640's, English dissenters again pattern their opposition to the king on the French Catholic example.

Dryden emphasizes the philosophical and religious error of his enemies by deprecating their language. Words like "Cant" and "Zealous Cry," (l. 521) and "pul'd" (l. 519) ridicule the pulpit whine of dissenting preachers while "Inspiration" (l. 524) and "deepest mouth'd" (l. 528) satirizes the verbal inflation of the enthusiasts. Man's loss of language robs him of his humanity. "Who pul'd before/  
From th' Ark" (ll. 519-520) suggests that the dissenters express themselves like the Israelites before the Ark. "These led the Pack; tho not of surest scent" (l. 527) stresses the bestiality of these lead-dogs and their inhuman followers and anticipates the comparison of beasts and sectarians in The Hind and the Panther.

The three groups that follow these disorderly leaders exhibit various aspects of religious enthusiasm. The "dreaming Saints" (l. 529) are religious anarchists whose only plan is to destroy all "Form and Order." (l. 531) Unlike the other groups, these "Saints" are apparently incapable of conceiving even a theocracy to rule. Dryden makes no comment on their verbal expression. Apparently they have eschewed all language and communicate, if at all, by some kind of ineffable sign or by telepathy. They are controlled entirely by their own shapeless visions which they somehow hope to realize in the physical world. They share Achitophel's desire to raze the pillars of the state and they have the same unregulated energy as Zimri who in one month "Was



Chymist, Fidler, States-Man, and Buffoon" (l. 550) without accomplishment in any of his endeavours. Of an "old Enthusiastick breed," (l. 530) the Saints are as lawless as the most fanatic followers of Cromwell, and as amorphous as Chaos. "Breed," which suggests a canine connection with the Quaker-Anabaptist lead-dogs, reinforces the picture of savage life in woods and caves (ll. 45-68) and looks ahead to the predatory destructiveness of the beasts in The Hind and the Panther.

The next section (ll. 533-540) describes yet another band of deluded sectarians who assert spurious claims to leadership. "Ador'd their fathers God, and Property" (l. 536) refers to the Restoration admirers of Cromwell who wistfully hope for a return of republican rule. The equation of "God and Property" strengthens the Jewish propensity to idolize the "Golden Calf" (l. 66) and to make a guarantee of prosperous trade the sole factor in the selection of a leader. These people, "Who think too little, and who talk too much," (l. 534) appoint their sovereigns out of "meer instinct" (l. 535); they conform to the general description of the Jews in lines forty-five to sixty-eight and express the sentiments of the worst of the Jewish-English populace. Like the Saints and Quakers, the Presbyterians believe in their infallible right to govern, not because of any special visions or dreams, but because they were "Born to be sav'd." (l. 539) Their claim, based solely on the accident of

birth, is a variation and a travesty on the divine right of kings, who were destined for their office at their conception. Because the elect "could not help believing right," (l. 540) they display the dogmatic and zealous behaviour of the more fiery enthusiasts. Their belief in predestination recalls the battles waged between Presbyterians and Arminians in the 1630's and 1640's that fomented much of the pre-civil war religious rancour. Dryden is anachronistic in his attribution of Calvinistic beliefs to Presbyterians of the 1670's and 1680's. As I pointed out in Chapter I, both Anglicans and Presbyterians accepted the doctrine of predestination before 1640, and both groups had renounced this belief by 1660. The certitude of the Presbyterians makes them rigid and unaware of their own ironic and humorous situation. Fully accepting Titus Oates's claims, the Presbyterians charge forth like the devoted followers of Hudibras to save England from Popery. Although Presbyterians hate "The Devil and the Jebusite," (l. 538) they claim the infallibility of Papists and they surrender to the machinations of the satanic Achitophel who uses them as political pawns.

Lines forty-five to sixty-eight provide an early and generalized picture of the Jews from which Dryden selects particulars that he later applies to the individual opponents of David. Although the courtiers and city men are urban people, they display the barbarism of rustic savages. The old cause revived, all the traditional dissenting factions

regroup into a very new and very old political alliance. Much of the mob's primitive energy derives from the frenzy of enthusiasm. Men of letters like Dryden endeavoured to make Restoration and eighteenth-century culture as urbane and elegant as possible--the antithesis of the enthusiast's culture. Enthusiastic madness provides the impetus for the rebellion against David. Achitophel's plans become feasible only when he can manipulate this emotionalism, the heated feelings that grip even the master-plotter himself and his favourite dupe.

Absalom and Achitophel is one of the first English poems to depict a modern city "mob" in which people from all classes jostle with each other for dominance. The noblemen and parasites of Juvenal's Rome and the aristocrats and butchers of Pope's London are recognizable in Dryden's catalogue of conspirators. The utter depravity of the nobility in Juvenal and Pope, however, is not found in Dryden's poem. Like the dunces, Dryden's enemies are ridiculous and menacing, but the king and the inherently good courtiers give Dryden's London a measure of dignity and these men prevent the apocalyptic destruction that ends The Dunciad. Although it can be destructive, the mob contains the seeds of its own defeat. The union of court Patriots, a Presbyterian elect, tradesmen and zealous Puritans is too unnatural and contrived to endure. Serving "several ends" there is too little common loyalty and too much mutual distrust to keep

the groups together. Part of Dryden's purpose in Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall is to convince present and future rebels that a collusion composed of various discontented groups cannot live in harmony for long. Written at the time of Shaftesbury's trial, (from which Dryden expected the imprisonment of the Earl) the poem confidently proclaims the basic solidarity of the English. Even the Hydra (l. 541) which concludes Dryden's description of the rebels is not a terrifying monster, but an insignificant and fragmented figure of less than human potency.

Although courtiers are the most successful makers of plots, Shimei and Corah perform valuable services for the rebellious cause. The fact that Dryden devotes almost one hundred lines (nearly ten percent of the poem) to the portraits of the two city men in a poem largely about court intrigue, indicates the importance with which the poet regards Shimei and Corah. As middle-class rebels, both figures provide the essential link between the mob and the court. They possess the characteristics of both the Jews and the upper-class nobility, and the Whiggish dependence upon their aid is an embarrassment to the cause. Like Absalom, Achitophel, and the Jews, Shimei and Corah are political overreachers. Each has had much personal experience with religious and political dissent, valuable training for the positions of sheriff and informer. Shimei, the more restrained figure, shares Achitophel's Machiavellian talent

for political manipulation, but his relatively minor public office makes him a rather unsuitable master-plotter. Corah, as unsteady in his religious affiliations as the Jewish mob, bases his seditious accusations upon the evidence of his dreams and visions. His lack of emotional control suggests affinities with both Zimri and Absalom, especially the latter.

As an elected sheriff of London, Slingsby Bethel (Shimei) obtained office solely by the popular appeal which Dryden loathed. Because he was a non-conformist, Bethel could not meet the requirements of The Corporation Act which demanded the reception of the Anglican sacrament, and so his first election to office was declared void.(1. 589) A notorious republican, Bethel was a great favourite among the Whigs who made sure that he would qualify for office when a second shrieval election was held in the summer of 1680. Bethel was an enemy of Charles I (and later of Cromwell) and he opposed monarchical power that was based on divine right. His electoral victory in 1680 is thematically connected to the crowd's adulation of Absalom and to the casting of the Whig medal depicting the popular Shaftesbury as king.

Shimei has many qualities that make him appealing to the Jews. Like the merchants, he believes "That Kings were Useless, and a Clog to Trade," (1. 615) a reference to the anonymously published The Interest of Princes (1680) written by Bethel. Like the other dissenters, Shimei

assumes power over divinely-appointed kings, and he does all in his power to frustrate the rights of David and the court. His cursing of the monarch, mentioned four times in his portrait, (ll. 590, 603, 604 and 605) strengthens the dissenting bond between Shimei and the Jews, and also suggests a connection with the satanic Achitophel who rebukes David with the venom of a fallen Lucifer.

Shimei, faithful to his fellow non-conformists, gives the appearance of personal piety and saintliness. He advances the cause of "the suffering Saint" (l. 609) by appointing "dissenting Jews" (l. 607) to his juries. His concern for the Sabbath (l. 588) recalls the Puritan Sabbatarian movement in the early 1600's which tried to prohibit ungodly sports and pastimes on Sunday.<sup>41</sup> Like the Puritans and the Quakers, Shimei refuses to take oaths because they were thought unnecessary for a godly man.<sup>42</sup> His exhortations to prayer and fasting are public recommendations of religious practices that were strongly associated with dissenters. Shimei's refusal to "misemploy an hour" (l. 613) gives him a solid Puritan attitude toward the hard work that wards off the temptations of the devil.

All of these outward marks of piety, of course, mask the most shameless activities. The search for lewd and immoral behaviour among sectarian groups was a favourite pastime of seventeenth-century popular writers. The orthodox always suspected extraordinary claims to saintliness,

and they delighted in sensational revelations about dissenters' impiety. Dryden employs this persistent theme of dissenting hypocrisy in his unflattering portrait of Corah who, like Flecknoe, is a sectarian priest installed in political office to deceive the gullible.<sup>43</sup>

Although hypocrisy is a serious flaw in the characters of Shimei and the other Whigs, Dryden makes even more damaging accusations of atheism and blasphemy against the London sheriff. Shimei's curses deny the authority of God and the God-like David. Periods of religious extremism were thought to breed atheism in the seventeenth century, and Dryden frequently links enthusiasm and atheism in his poems. Shimei, by inverting the moral values of religion, becomes the opposite of what his appearance suggests. A dissenting, rather than Christian sainthood, makes him an Anti-Christ:

For Shimei, though not prodigal of pelf,  
Yet lov'd his wicked Neighbour as himself:  
When two or three were gather'd to declaim  
Against the Monarch of Jerusalem,  
Shimei was always in the midst of them. (ll. 599-604)

As sheriff, Bethel's duty was to uphold the law of England, but his partiality to republicans and dissenters and his approval of treason (ll. 597-598) make a mockery of justice. As an Old Testament figure, Shimei must preserve the commands of the law-giver, Moses, but he perverts the Mosaic Law just as Bethel misuses English law. Shimei observes the Sabbath only if it is financially prudent to do so, (l. 588) and he will not bear false witness unless it

will aid the Jews at the expense of the king. Lacking the warmth and generosity of David, Shimei recommends a strict temperance (perhaps a reference to Jewish dietetic laws) and he praises Moses not for his ability as a Jewish patriarchal leader or for his power as a law giver, but for his fasting. (l. 629) Dryden draws our attention to yet another discrepancy between the sheriff's external and his actual behaviour. Because of the danger of another fire like the London conflagration of 1666, the Jews have wisely chosen a sheriff who will keep the city safe. (ll. 623-625) Shimei refuses all "the fumes of Wine" (l. 617) and his "Cellars" and "Shrieval Board" (l. 618) are poorly stocked. This apparently prudent figure, however, is cursed with the heat of enthusiasm. Shimei's "Brains were hot" (l. 621) and infected with the same fire that destroyed London and that motivates the other rebels in the poem. "As dare not tempt Gods Providence by fire" (l. 625) is an ironic statement in which Dryden says that Shimei's behaviour arises from the heat and fires of enthusiasm which burnt the city of London fifteen years previously.

Shimei is the conventional "True Blue" English dissenter whose mask of saintliness is intended to hide personal ambitions. On the other hand, Corah (Titus Oates) is an extreme fanatic unable to conceal his madness behind a screen of respectability. His "Prodigious" (l. 638) actions indicate the unnatural, dangerous and celestial character of



his activities. Corah exalts himself beyond his social class and takes on the appearance of a god or an angelic messenger of Providence. He is the son of a "Levite" (l. 644) from a congregation of "Godalmightys Gentlemen" (l. 645) which refers to his father's vocation as an Anabaptist minister after 1649. Although his family has humble social origins, ("Weaver's Issue" (l. 639)) Corah feels no obligation to remain in the class of his birth. His dissenting background and lower-class origins might even spur on his pretentious ambitions, because many leading enthusiasts came from the lower orders. Dryden's remark that Corah's treasonous testimony "Enobles all his Bloud" (l. 641) criticizes this unmannerly and dangerous departure from one's social class.

Dryden compares Corah's social climbing to the formation of a comet: "What tho his birth were base, yet Comets rise/ From Earthly Vapours ere they shine in Skies." (ll. 636-637) The simile strengthens the connection between Corah's religion and his social status. Because he believes that he possesses knowledge inaccessible to other men, he acts like a god, heedless of the ordinary social conventions of mere mortals. He thinks himself a patriarch and a martyr for the true faith, but his behaviour makes him the opposite of a true saint. He resembles the brazen serpent of Moses (l. 634) more than the patriarch, which implies that he is a kind of devil in a poem which draws comparisons

from Paradise Lost. Instead of witnessing the true faith, Corah makes martyrs as did the executioners of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr. (ll. 642-643) Corah's only connection with the patriarchs is his crimson face which shines like Moses' face when he descended from Mount Sinai. (l. 649) "A Church Vermillion, and a Moses's Face" (l. 649) ominously emphasize the redness of fire and blood that refer to the persecution and destruction wrought by enthusiastic religion.

Lines 650-663 analyze Corah's disordered mind to show the cause of the informer's frenzied behaviour. Dryden's anatomy considers Corah's memory, wit, judgment and fancy, the same mental faculties that figure prominently in the works of seventeenth-century philosophers and literary critics. Corah directs his thoughts to the "marvellous" and the otherworldly, an action consistent with his comet-like social ascent. His "miraculously great" memory (l. 650) can recall plots "exceeding mans belief." (l. 651) His wit surpasses ordinary human limits (l. 653) and his judgment works with "wondrous Evidence." (l. 661) Prophecy (l. 655) and vision (l. 656) replace the use of his mundane mental faculties, indicating that he is controlled by fancy like the versifier Settle whom Dryden labelled a "fanatic in poetry." Possessed by the "Spirit," (l. 657) Corah acts in a prodigious and seemingly supernatural manner. Unlike David and the king's followers, Corah will never accept the limitations of his social class and of his humanity; he

strives to surpass his own mediocre station and, in attempting to elevate himself into the celestial world, he denies his human nature. Unable to distinguish between rational and irrational behaviour, Corah behaves like a madman whose "future Truths" (l. 654) are wholly acceptable to an enthusiastic nation driven insane by religious fears. (ll. 662-663)

The last twenty lines (ll. 663-682) of the portrait treat Corah's motivations and the social implications of the Popish Plot. As a new Moses, Corah provides the Jews with a new Pentateuch which they accept as gospel truth. No one dare challenge the validity of Corah's "Writ" (l. 665) without endangering his life. The laws of property (l. 666) ensure that anyone doubting Corah's testimony will be killed because he threatens Corah's livelihood. (l. 667) The enormity of Corah's charges makes him invincible, and it also shows what a profitable business false accusation and murder can be. "The Church Vermillion" regains its ferocity of the 1670's by re-establishing an enthusiasts' Inquisition. Corah's "heav'nly call" (l. 664) and his "Zeal" (ll. 672,674) go unquestioned in the atmosphere of terror which suspends the ordinary laws of justice. The reference to Corah's "dire disgrace" (l. 669) recalls the Catholic rebukes of Titus Oates when he was a seminarian in Spain and England, and it indicates that Oates advanced this plot in order to settle a personal score with the Roman Church. The old injuries "whet" (l. 670) Corah's memory as an executioner whets his

stone with his axe. Attacks on Corah only stimulate the informer's overactive memory which "recalls" that the accuser had once been sympathetic to Popery.

Dryden unites his poem by applying the vocabulary of enthusiasm to all of his characters--including such features as fire, heat, wind, pride, visions and madness. Although the courtiers, Zimri, Achitophel and Absalom, belong to no religious group, the poet describes them in the same way as he depicts the Quakers, Presbyterians and Anabaptists. Like the Jewish "seekers," the court figures are impatient with the ease and peace which David has established, and they too desire a change of political leadership. Zimri, for example, behaves like an enthusiast without a sect. He does not condemn oath-taking, nor does he fast and pray, but he is governed by the moon (l. 549) like the other Jews. His pursuits--"Chymist, Fidler, States-Man, and Buffoon:/ Then all for Women, Painting, Rhiming, Drinking" (ll. 550-551)--are appropriate to Zimri's social class but his volatile temperament makes him as unstable (l. 545) as the common Jewish rabble. His association with lunar madness and the epithet "Blest Madman" (l. 553) imply that Zimri is blinded by the same imaginative excesses as the enthusiasts who thought themselves favoured by God. His judgment that others are either "God or Devil" (l. 558) recalls the tendency of dissenters to divide the world's peoples into saints and sinners.

Before studying the characters of Absalom and Achitophel, I would like to discuss one of the major themes which appears in Dryden's descriptions of the rebels. Perhaps because the enthusiast aspires to live the life of a saint on earth, his detractors have always detected an uneasy relationship between the dissenter and nature. To the Calvinist, of course, corruptible man was not saved by good works but by the arbitrary decision of God. Ronald Knox distinguishes between the Puritan idea about nature and the conventional Christian teaching: "Our traditional doctrine is that grace perfects nature, elevates it to a higher pitch, so that it can bear its part in the music of eternity, but leaves it nature still. The assumption of the enthusiast is bolder and simpler; for him, grace has destroyed nature, and replaced it."<sup>44</sup> Knox adds that above all the enthusiast denounces "the use of human reason as a guide to any sort of religious truth,"<sup>45</sup> which shows that the dissenter rejects what may be called the "human" or "natural" side of man. Because he finds civilization an encumbrance, the enthusiast appeals to primitive nature. Fairchild says of seventeenth-century writers that "loyal to the tradition established by Hudibras, several satirists contemporary with [Bishop Gilbert] Burnet associate enthusiasm with an appeal to a 'nature' which exempts the dissenter from ordinary moral obligations."<sup>46</sup> The Puritan bases his philosophy on laws superseding those of society; on the one side he appeals to

the celestial, and on the other to the barbaric. The conception of man as the central link on the Chain of Being has no importance for the enthusiast who will not be bound like moderate men.

The chief mistake made by every rebel in Dryden's poem is the attempt to construct a society based exclusively on private thought and vision. Rather than being an intellectual or visionary matter, however, society is a thoroughly natural affair. Like other conservatives, Dryden rejects the proposition that societies are the creation of logic and speculation. At the end of the next century, Burke repeated Dryden's sentiments when he wrote that all of the conjectures of the revolutionaries were metaphysical and had "nothing in experience to prove their tendency beneficial."<sup>47</sup> According to Filmer's Patriarchia (published 1680), we are not governed by consensus. A divine monarch bestows on a society the right to maintain parliaments, sheriffs, and other elected officials; "For all those liberties that are claimed in parliaments are the liberties of grace from the King, and not the liberties of nature to the people."<sup>48</sup> The opening sentence of the Postscript to the Translation of The History of the League shows an apparent similarity between the thought of Dryden and Filmer:

That government, generally considered, is of divine authority, will admit of no dispute; for whoever will seriously consider, that no man has naturally a right over his own life, so as to murder himself, will find by consequence,

that he has no right to take away another's life; and that no pact betwixt man and man, or of corporations and individuals, or of sovereigns and subjects, can entitle them to this right; so that no offender can lawfully, and without sin, be punished, unless that power be derived from GOD. It is he who has commissioned magistrates, and authorized them to prevent future crimes by punishing offenders, and to redress the injured by distributive justice. Subjects therefore are accountable to superiours, and the superiour to Him alone; for the sovereign being once invested with lawful authority, the subject has irrevocably given up his power, and the dependence of a monarch is alone on GOD. (Malone, II, 437-438)

As the title of his book implies, Filmer conceives of society as a family, subject to the same laws which govern the familial unit. Like Adam, the monarch performs the roles of ruler and father. Succession dates back to Paradise and power must be transferred onto the eldest member of each European royal family: "For as Adam was lord of his children, so his children under him had a command over their own children, but still with subordination to the first parent, who is lord paramount over his children's children to all generations, as being the grandfather of his people."<sup>49</sup>

Absalom and Achitophel opens in a kind of paradise "In pious times" (l. 1) "When Nature prompted, and no law deny'd," (l. 5) establishing the Adamic identity of the king. Dryden suggests, of course, that Adam's hegemony still obtains in seventeenth-century European society, and the thwarting of this sacred arrangement destroys simultaneously the history, society and nature of man. Because the

battle between York and Monmouth takes place between family members, the conflict of the poem is a kind of cosmic family squabble. Perhaps with Filmer in mind, Dryden asks

If those who gave the Scepter, could not tye  
By their own deed their own Posterity,  
How then could Adam bind his future Race?  
How could his forfeit on mankind take place?  
Or how could heavenly Justice damn us all,  
Who nere consented to our Fathers fall? (ll. 769-774)

The poet's rhetorical questions argue that the principle of succession has been decided for us as descendants of Adam. The social contract antedates our own births, just as original sin stains the soul of every person that enters the world. In the Dedication to All for Love (1678), Dryden confessed to the Earl of Danby that "Both my nature, as I am an Englishman, and my reason, as I am a man, have bred in me a loathing to that specious name of a Republick; that mock-appearance of a liberty, where all who have not part in the government are slaves; and slaves they are of a viler note than such as are subjects to an absolute dominion." (Malone, II, 7) In Absalom and Achitophel he expresses a similar sentiment in his statement that when the mob usurps political power, "Government it self at length must fall/  
To Natures state; where all have Right to all." (ll. 793-794)

Seventeenth-century political ideas must be understood to make sense of Dryden's poem. Bredvold says that the poet "who represents the higher levels of Tory thought, never once leans his case on the Patriarchial theory,"<sup>50</sup>



but the unfortunate consequences of dissent, described in Absalom and Achitophel, arise from the rebels' rejection of the king's patrimony. Albert Ball gives us a valuable insight into the character of David when he says that the king is neither wholly sensual or spiritual, but that he is more than human and less than divine.<sup>51</sup> Perfectly balanced between the natural and celestial worlds, David arouses the hostility of the Jews who require a greater zeal from their leaders. Demanding perfect liberty, the Jews believe that "all but Savages were Slaves," (l. 56) and so they withdraw to "Woods and Caves." (l. 55) The poem is full of exiles to caves, to the country, and to wildernesses in which life is brutish, nasty and short. The plotters spoil the paradisaical splendour with which the poem opens and turn life "to something darker and more cruel."<sup>52</sup> In 1678 Dryden wrote that "Every remonstrance of private men has the seed of treason in it....," (Malone, II, 9) and Absalom and Achitophel dramatically describes the condition of man when self-interest triumphs over communal concern. The "Trade, which like bloud should circularly flow," (Annus Mirabilis, l. 5) becomes only a euphemism for greed in the hands of the Jewish merchants, and the gross sexual appetites and the unnatural asceticism of the Whigs imperil the unity of their society.

Absalom, the instrument of the plot, behaves like an enthusiastic preacher full of the spirit of God. Although

he says that the king "Governs with unquestion'd Right," (l. 317) Absalom nevertheless rejects his subservient role. Like Achitophel and the other Jews, he cannot tolerate the king or the peace that he has made. Early in life "In Peace the thoughts of War he could remove," (l. 25) but influenced by plots he becomes "Warlike Absolon." (l. 221) Because his demands for power vitiate the Eden that "was open'd in his face," (l. 30) he falls from nature and grace. Beautiful in his youth, Absalom seemed to be "Inspir'd by some diviner Lust" (l. 19) at birth, but the law has excused his "warm excesses" (l. 37) that led to the murder of Amnon, and the prince has grown more demanding in peace and luxury. It was believed that Absalom's indiscretions could be "purg'd by boyling o'r," (l. 38) but this leniency only encouraged the madness that fosters sedition:

For, as when raging Fevers boyl the Blood,  
The standing Lake soon floats into a Flood;  
And every hostile Humour, which before  
Slept quiet in its Channels, bubbles o'r:  
So, several Factions from this first Ferment,  
Work up to Foam, and threat the Government.  
(ll. 136-141)

The temptation scenes of Absalom remove any doubts about the young man's "enthusiasm." Fallen from grace and discontented with the conditions, Absalom finds Achitophel's inducement to assume the role of messiah irresistible. Lines 303-315, following Achitophel's first speech, prepare us for Absalom's decision to accept his tempter's proposal. Because he is "Too full of Angells Metal in his Frame," (l. 310)

he aspires to be a god and forsakes his earthly limitations. Created by divine lust, and made too angelic for his position in court, Absalom can no longer endure the authority of the monarch and his fraternal heir. His lament, "Yet oh that Fate Propitiously Enclind,/ Had rais'd my Birth, or had debas'd my Mind," (ll. 363-364) recalls Satan's expression of his dilemma when he first enters Paradise in Milton's poem:

O had his Powerful Destiny ordain'd  
Me some inferior Angel, I had stood  
Then happy; no unbounded hope had rais'd  
Ambition. (Paradise Lost, IV, 58-61)

Satan, Absalom and the religious enthusiasts cannot accept another's dominion. "Flattery Sooths" and "Ambition Blinds" (l. 304) the mind of the young prince who will be satisfied with nothing less than the power of God:

Desire of Power, on Earth a Vitious Weed,  
Yet, sprung from High, is of Cælestial Seed:  
In God 'tis Glory: And when men Aspire,  
'Tis but a Spark too much of Heavenly Fire.  
(ll. 305-308)

Like Prometheus, Satan, and the deluded enthusiast, Absalom demands the power that will turn his interior paradise into a weed garden. In defence of his overpowering desires he pleads,

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 Godlike Sin.  
(ll. 369-372)

Convinced of the wisdom of giving scope to his "large

soul" (l. 365) and to his "mounting Spirits Bold," (l. 367) Absalom denies his mother's role in his creation and rejects his father's natural authority as monarch and parent. "The Charming Annabel," (l. 34) who provided him sexual delight no longer satisfies his urges; Absalom desires celestial power, and in so doing, he becomes a primitive creature.

"Impatient of high hopes, urg'd with renown,/ And Fir'd with near possession of a Crown," (ll. 684-685) the prince leaves the court to become the "young Messiah" (l. 728) for a spiritually starved people. Jewish homes worship him "as a Guardian God" (l. 735) and each family "Consecrates the Place of his aboad." (l. 736) David calls him a "Young Samson" who does "pretend a Call" (l. 955) like a religious zealot whom reason cannot restrain. The prince's march to the west fulfills the pleasing image which Achitophel presents to him in his first speech:

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 shews the promis'd Land:  
 Whose dawning Day, in every distant age,  
 Has exercis'd the Sacred Prophets rage:  
 The Peoples Prayer, the glad Deviners Theam,  
 The Young-mens Vision, and the Old mens Dream  
 Thee, Saviour, Thee, the Nations Vows confess;  
 And, never satisfied with seeing, bless....  
 (ll. 230-241)

The "Pageant Show" (l. 751) in which Absalom travels among the people makes peace a "War in Masquerade" (l. 752) and

the young man emerges as the Prince of War. Achitophel's words promise that the prince is a new Christ or Moses destined to rule the Jews. The prophets, diviners, visionaries and dreamers, young and old, have awaited the coming of this messiah whose birth is associated with the heat and fire of "the southern sky." Absalom claims superiority over the king and affinity with the patriarchs, as seventeenth-century enthusiasts commonly did. Keith Thomas informs us that the claims of healers in the late seventeenth century probably contained a "veiled sectarian protest against the Restoration and the miraculous power claimed by Charles II"<sup>53</sup> and refers to Bishop Jewel who believed it was "common for the most ignorant wizards to boast that their cunning was derived from Adama and Abel, Moses and Athanasius."<sup>54</sup> Certainly Absalom, Achitophel, the Jewish mob and Corah, all base their authority on inherited divinity from Old Testament figures. Corah, with his rod of Moses (also used by seventeenth-century wizards and sectarians<sup>55</sup>), functions as a kind of harbinger for the matured messiah, Absalom, whose march through the west Bruce King compares to the progress of James Nayler to Bristol.<sup>56</sup> In another context, King has written that "'Deluded' Absalom is the perfect example of why the Restoration distrusted 'enthusiasm' and defined it as the mistaken belief that one is divinely inspired."<sup>57</sup>

As the chief architect of the plot, Achitophel is

master and slave of the people's will. In the portrait, Dryden alludes to Shaftesbury's political background, including his destruction of the Triple Alliance (l. 175) and his work as Lord Chancellor (l. 187). Like Shimei, Achitophel "skulk'd behind the Laws" (l. 207) and incited popular unrest "with Jealousies and Fears." (l. 211) An orthodox adherent to left-wing political theory, Achitophel hopes to have the king's power "Drawn to the dregs of a Democracy," (l. 228) but no one "With more discerning Eyes, or Hands more clean" (l. 189) has ever disguised their evil intentions. The discourses and activities of the judges and their lackeys "are couched in ambiguous terms [and they] are therefore the more dangerous, because they do all the mischief of open sedition, yet are safe from the punishment of the laws." (Malone, II, 9) Because he does "the Peoples Will," (l. 183) Achitophel's power rests solely on popular favour. He begs Absalom to seize power because "'tis the general Cry,/ Religion, Common-wealth, and Liberty." (ll. 291-292) By identifying Absalom so closely with the mob and the scheming of Shimei, Dryden discredits the courtier whose behaviour has fallen to the level of the rabble.

Although not associated with any specific religion or sect in the poem, Achitophel shares the enthusiasts' hatred of nature and their desire for divinity. "Turbulent of wit," (l. 153) Achitophel refuses, like Absalom and

Zimri, to be confined by his assigned political office. An old and zealous man, he refuses himself the ease and comfort that he could enjoy and he prepares himself for bold and daring exploits. He possesses "A fiery Soul, which working out its way,/ Fretted the Pigmy Body to decay," (ll. 156-157) a statement which prompts Bernard Schilling to remark that Achitophel acts "as if his body were not the perishable house of the spirit."<sup>58</sup> Perhaps it is more accurate to say that Achitophel is in grief because he cannot destroy his body and become a more powerful spirit in contemporary politics. Having lost healthy contact with nature, Achitophel attempts to live a disembodied existence free from his corporeal trash. His son, inheriting the father's physical and mental condition, was "born a shapeless Lump, like Anarchy" (l. 172) recalling the "freaks" (l. 552) created by the monstrous mind of Zimri. Achitophel's difficulties with sex are shown when he urges Absalom to "Commit a pleasing Rape upon the Crown," (l. 474) which suggests that he regards sex in terms of anomalies. This suggestion is strengthened when Achitophel warns Absalom not to be deceived by his father, David, because "'Tis Natures trick to Propagate her Kind." (l. 424) Achitophel destroyed his body as would his spiritual brothers of the "true old Enthusiastick breed" (l. 530) who "'Gainst Form and Order they their Power employ;/ Nothing to Build and all things to Destroy." (ll. 531-532)

Like other rebels, Achitophel has driven himself to sickness. He must "Punish a Body which he could not please," (l. 167) like the commoners who "In midst of health Imagine a disease." (l. 756) Perhaps Achitophel could be rescued "had the rankness of the Soyl been freed/ From Cockle, that opprest the Noble seed." (ll. 194-195) Unfortunately, the old courtier now appears beyond help.

The humours of Shaftesbury and the other conspirators have bubbled over, (l. 139) transforming the rebels into enthusiasts. The melancholic sickness of the rebels "is the inevitable restlessness which must arise in the human soul when passion has diseased the imagination and when reason is betrayed to the life of the appetites."<sup>59</sup> In Absalom and Achitophel, Dryden shows us the English at their worst. The figures in Absalom and Achitophel are characterized by "dull and heavy spirits," "stiff forms of conversation" and a "melancholy way of breeding." (Watson, I, 181-182) Sir William Temple echoed Dryden's sentiments about Englishmen later in the century when he said in his essay "Of Poetry" that because his countrymen were frequently sullen and embroiled in religious disputes, they had retarded advancement in the arts and sciences.<sup>60</sup>

In his poem Dryden acts as a physician ministering to a people who are individually and collectively sick. "He who writes Honestly," he tells us in his Preface, "is no more an Enemy to the Offendour, than the Physician to



the Patient, when he prescribes harsh Remedies to an inveterate Disease...." (Kinsley, p. 189) The poem is full of references to fevers, humours, diseases and sicknesses, which the poet as court physician must purge. Even the action of Dryden's figures, who begin with explosive activity and end in weariness, imitates the course of melancholic sickness which finally subsides into lassitude after the humours giving rise to its dramatic phase have burned themselves out.<sup>61</sup>

Although courtiers and commoners suffer from the same disease, the cure for the two groups is different. "Such irony as may be found in the hostile 'characters' of the poem is practically always directed at religious non-conformists," Ian Jack says in distinguishing Dryden's attitude to courtiers and the mob.<sup>62</sup> Ironically, the sarcasm which Dryden employs against his enemies was recommended by the Earl of Shaftesbury's son in dealing with enthusiasts.<sup>63</sup> Although almost any crude irony or "sordid jest" will restore the vulgar to their wits, "it must be a finer and truer wit which takes with the men of sense and breeding," according to the third Earl.<sup>64</sup> And Dryden does what Shaftesbury's son later advised. In the Preface Dryden says that he has prevented the satire "from carrying too sharp an Edge." (Kinsley, p. 188) Although he attacks the enemies of the king, "there's a sweetness in good Verse, which Tickles even while it Hurts...." (Kinsley, p. 188) In his

Discourse on the Original and Progress of Satire (1693),

Dryden says that his portrait of Zimri succeeded so well because the poet was not malicious in his attack. Zimri's character is

not bloody, but 'tis 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 blindsides 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 laughed at in his turn who began the frolic."

(Watson, II, 137)

In Absalom and Achitophel Dryden tried to humour men out of their folly and their melancholy. Only the sick man would rail against his enemies, as the dissenters and republicans do, but Dryden thinks of himself as a sanguine and sociable poet. Unlike other writers--Donne, Vaughan, Pope, Thomson--Dryden is not melancholic. He rejects the classical and Renaissance idea that a scholar or poet must be melancholic in order to write well.<sup>65</sup> The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy denies that the poet writes from a disturbed constitution:

They who would justify the madness of poetry from the authority of Aristotle have mistaken the text, and consequently the interpretation: I imagine it to be false read, where he says of poetry, that it is εὐθεὺς ἢ μανικὸν [i.e., either good abilities or genius to madness near allied], that it had always somewhat in it either of a genius, or of

a madman. 'Tis more probable that the original ran thus, that poetry was εὐνοῦς οὐ μανικοῦ, [i.e. good abilities but not mad genius], that it belongs to a witty man, but not to a madman.  
(Watson, I, 255)

Dryden finds a close connection between the temperament of a writer and his works, as when he says in The Life of Plutarch that "Plutarch was sociable and pleasant, Seneca morose and melancholy; Plutarch a lover of conversation and sober feasts; Seneca reserved, uneasy to himself when alone, to others when in company. Compare them in their manners: Plutarch everywhere appears candid, Seneca often is censorious." (Watson, II, 12) Dryden thinks that ease, light spirits and polished conversation characterize the court, while he associates melancholy, dullness and rail-lery with the bad-mannered enthusiast. The Preface to Fables Ancient and Modern compares the humours of Homer and Virgil to show how their work complements their consti-tutions:

Our two Great Poets, being so different in their Tempers, one Cholerick and Sanguin, the other Phlegmatick and Melancholick; that which makes them excel in their several Ways, is, that each of them has follow'd his own natural Inclination, as well in Forming the Design, as in the Execution of it. The very Heroes shew their Authors: Achilles is hot, impatient, re-vengeful, Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer, etc. [Horace, Ars Poetica, l. 121, restless, wrathful, obdurate, fierce] Aeneas patient, con-siderate, careful of his People, and merciful to his Enemies; ever submissive to the Will of Heaven, quo fata trahunt retrahuntque, sequamur. [Virgil, Aeneid V, 709, wherever the fates may bear us let us follow] (Kinsley, p. 525)

Because Homer's actions are "more full of Vigour," (Kinsley, p. 525) they provide greater pleasure for Dryden: "This Vehemence of his, I confess is more suitable to my Temper." (Kinsley, p. 525) The preference for the more active humours may account, at least in part, for the rather objective and public nature of Dryden's poetry and prose. Unlike the more contemplative and melancholy writer who reveals very personal information about himself, Dryden turns his attention to public matters but conceals intimate details about his life.

Before leaving this important topic of melancholy and enthusiasm, something more must be said about the figure of Achitophel. In addition to his physical and mental sickness, Achitophel shows satanic affinities by shedding his "Venome," (l. 229) by shaking the forbidden tree, (l. 203) by tempting Absalom to become a messiah, and by comparing David to Satan. (ll. 273-279) Dryden combines the traditional explanation of satanic possession with the more recent account of natural disorder in his portrait of Achitophel: Achitophel is both sick and demonic. His misery can be explained both by his mistreatment of his own body, and by his affinity with Satan.

Those who thought the enthusiast was melancholic usually explained the sickness in terms of physical problems, but Christianity also regarded the devil as a melancholic figure who sought the damnation of others to relieve

or to forget his own misery. Seventeenth-century writers associated Puritan belief with devil-worship for several reasons. Keith Thomas tells us that converts to more extreme religions often claimed to have adored the devil before their conversion.<sup>66</sup> The melancholic disposition, supposed to characterize the enthusiast, also characterized the devil. Intellectual and spiritual darkness plagued the enthusiast and the devil, and so John Locke could say about the perverted logic of the dissenter that

To talk of any other light in the understanding [beyond what is empirical], is to put ourselves in the dark, or in the power of the Prince of darkness, and by our own consent to give ourselves up to delusion to believe a lie. For if strength of persuasion be the light, which must guide us; I ask how shall anyone distinguish between the delusions of Satan and the inspirations of the Holy Ghost?<sup>67</sup>

Dryden himself likened the melancholic dissenters who attempted to gain converts to their lost cause to Satan after his fall from Heaven:

And yet there are not wanting Malecontents amongst us, who, surfeiting themselves on too much happiness, would persuade the people that they might be happier by a change. It was indeed the policy of their old Forefather, when himself was fallen from the station of glory, to seduce mankind into the same rebellion with him, by telling him he might yet be freer than he was; that is, more free than his nature would allow, or (if I may so say) than GOD could make him.

(Dedication to All for Love, Malone, II, 8)

Dryden's comment implies that there are analogies between God and the king, and the dissenters and the devil.

As in Milton's Paradise Lost, all of the figures in Absalom and Achitophel must choose between obedience or disobedience to divine authority. Those who scorn David's rule also deny the authority of God, and become satanic inhabitants of Milton's Hell. Leonora Leet Brodwin says that the association between Milton and political extremism was frequently made by the seventeenth-century writers who identified Milton's writings with Satan.<sup>68</sup> Dryden cited Milton's "Defence of the English People" as one of the inspirational works for English dissenter in his "Epistle to the Whigs" of The Medall, (Kinsley, p. 224) and in Absalom and Achitophel Dryden turns "Milton's poetry against the party of his political heirs."<sup>69</sup> Allusion to Milton's Hell also proves fruitful in Dryden's poem, because the dissenters rival and imitate the power of the king just as Milton's devils establish a false kingdom which imitates Heaven. Convinced that they have unique spiritual gifts not shared by the king, the rebels create a kingdom of darkness complete with a divine candidate for the crown. Because of their spiritual arrogance, the enthusiasts flout the authority of all kings: "The fanaticks derive their authority from the Bible, and plead religion to be antecedent to any secular obligation; by virtue of which argument, taking it for granted that their own worship is only true, they arrogate to themselves the temporal power according to their pleasure...." (Malone, II, 343)

Although nearly three-fourths of Dryden's poem exposes the fraud and warns of the danger of religious and political enthusiasm, Absalom and Achitophel ends triumphantly with the king's authority reasserted. In November, 1681, Shaftesbury's imprisonment for treason seemed certain, and Dryden's poem celebrates what promised to be a lasting victory for Charles II over his enemies. With Shaftesbury removed from the political scene, Dryden thought that the recent clamour would subside, and so the last two hundred lines of his poem confidently commemorate the restoration of English stability.

David and his allies compose a small and dignified band of Royalists, deserted by the rabble and by nearly all of the courtiers. Their paucity of numbers reflects the decline of courtly patriotism which Dryden was later to lament in the Dedication of Plutarch's Lives (1683): "It is an age, indeed, which is only fit for satire, and the sharpest I have shall never be wanting to lance its villainies, and its ingratitude to the government. There are few men in it, who are capable of supporting the weight of a just and deserved commendation." (Malone, II, 337-338)

Although their numbers are insignificant, the courtiers display a stability and strength lacking in the Whigs and their friends. Governed by the monarch, the faithful part of the court possesses all conceivable civilized virtues. Political order, civil peace and the proper attitude toward

nature can be obtained only by allegiance to the crown, by obedience to a legitimate king..

As king, David provides the means to allow the artist to function, a gift which Dryden gratefully acknowledged to Rochester in the Dedication of Marriage a la Mode (1673): "Wit seems to have lodged itself more nobly in this age, than in any of the former; and people of my mean condition are only writers, because some of the nobility, and your Lordship in the first place, are above the narrow praises which poesy could give you." (Malone, I, ii, 368) Dryden's early panegyric verse made Charles's name synonymous with artistic encouragement and excellence. "To my Honoured Friend, Sr Robert Howard, On his Excellent Poems" (1660) concludes with the observation that art and monarchy prosper together:

"This Work by merit first of Fame secure  
 "Is likewise happy in its Geniture:  
 "For since 'tis born when Charls ascends the Throne,  
 "It shares at once his Fortune and its own."  
 (ll. 103-106)

"To His Sacred Maiesty, a Panegyrick on his Coronation" (1661) depicts Charles as a favourite of heaven (like Saint Cecilia in A Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 1687, ll. 51-54) who attracts the angels to his coronation:

The gratefull quire their harmony employ  
 Not to make greater but more solemn joy.  
 Wrapt soft and warm your Name is sent on high,  
 As flames do on the wings of Incense fly:  
 Musique her self is lost, in vain she brings  
 Her choisest notes to praise the best of Kings:



Her melting strains in you a tombe have found,  
 And lye like Bees in their own sweetness drown'd.  
 He that brought peace and discord could attone,  
 His Name is Musick of it self alone. (ll. 49-58)

The whole cosmos celebrates the king's coronation, and mortal man becomes angelic through the monarch's enchantment: "We add not to your glory, but employ/ Our time like Angels in expressing joy." (ll. 67-68) As a divine ruler, Charles grants a vision of the heavens to his loyal subjects, in contrast to the enthusiasts who present the ugliness of Hell to their followers.

George R. Levine argues that Renaissance and seventeenth-century man made a close connection between politics and music, and that in Absalom and Achitophel Dryden manipulates the "highly allusive figura of David--particularly the Davidic role of psalmist or musician--and his symbolic use of music as an abstract harmonizing principle."<sup>70</sup>

David functions as a musician powerful enough to unite the jarring and discordant sectarians. Harmony characterizes David and his followers, while Achitophel and the rebels form a cacophonous group. Significantly, Achitophel belittles the king's music, speaking pejoratively of David's "old Harp on which he thrums his Laves," (l. 439) which denies David's roles as king and sacred psalmist. Because King David was a shepherd, a musician and a king (as well as an ancestor of Christ), he suits Dryden's purposes admirably. As shepherd, he brings to the court an under-

standing nature which harmonizes beautifully with the arts of music and rhetoric, a connection which Cowley had made in the opening lines of his Davideis:

I sing the Man who Judahs Scepter bore  
In that right hand which held the Crook before;  
Who from best Poet, best of Kings did grow;  
The two chief gifts Heav'n could on Man bestow.<sup>71</sup>

While Achitophel uses fiendish arts to destroy society, David can catch the ear of heaven and charm the bestiality out of man as Orpheus had. Although he composes no music in Absalom and Achitophel, David's speech proves the king's artistry, just as the poet's allegiance to his monarch makes him ruler of the kingdom of letters.

Absalom and Achitophel often refers to events of the Popish Plot, the Exclusion Bill and past English and sacred history, but the poem has no conventional narrative line. The major incidents in the poem are the temptation of Absalom (as Verrall claims<sup>72</sup>), Absalom's march among the people and David's concluding speech. Because speeches comprise nearly 350 of the poem's one thousand-odd lines, Dryden seems to be suggesting that rhetoric, oratory and language are the makers of history, and that language and art are the poem's important subjects. Commenting on the importance of enthusiasm, history and language to the neo-classical artist, Peter Hughes says that "It is crucial to an understanding of the period's literature that we rediscover those other links that join language and vision through history.

Specifically, we must recognize first that fanaticism and enthusiasm were in the eyes of contemporaries, especially of their contemporary opponents, as much matters of stylistic as of spiritual disorder."<sup>73</sup>

Clearly, in Absalom and Achitophel, verbal chaos accompanies the debasement of religion, society and nature. The rabble proclaims David king by a "Generall Shout," (l. 60) Achitophel employs "buzzing Emissaries," (l. 210) and "stammering Babes are taught to lisp" (l. 243) Absalom's name. Achitophel's flattering rhetoric persuades Absalom to challenge his father's authority, while the false prince appeals not to the reason but to the pity (l. 695) of the Jews and "glides unfelt into their secret hearts" (l. 693) just as Milton's Satan and Spenser's Despair (The Faerie Queene, I, ix) charm their prey with smooth language. Achitophel obtains support from "Haranguers of the Throng," (l. 509) those who "get Preferment by the Tongue," (l. 510) those who use "Cant" and a "Zealous Cry," (l. 521) the "deepest mouth'd," (l. 528) and those "Who think too little, and who talk too much." (l. 534) As flatterer and libeller, Zimri's themes are "Rayling and praising." (l. 555) Important support for Achitophel's designs comes from "Canting Nadab," (l. 575) the cursing Shimei and the false witness Corah, the man who first gives the confederacy promise of success.

Seven companions, six of them patrons of Dryden,

accompany the king from whom the poet expected protection of the arts.<sup>74</sup> Earl Miner and Bruce King have both noticed that the king's allies support poetry and poets,<sup>75</sup> which strengthens the claim that language itself is an important theme in the poem. Barzillai (Duke of Ormond) opposed the enemies of Charles-David and suffered with him in exile.

(ll. 819-824) Unlike Achitophel and most of the English nobility, "The court he practis'd, not the Courtier's art." (l. 825) As true courtier, Barzillai befriended "The Fighting Warriour, and Recording Muse," (l. 828) signifying his loyalty to the state and his friendship with heroes and poets. Lines 831-863 lament the death of Barzillai's son who was of "Narrow Circle, but of Pow'r Divine," (l. 838) like the young deceased Hastings in Dryden's 1649 ode. Because he has become a saint, Dryden can commemorate the son of Ormond with the admiration usually reserved for a proper king and with the fervour ordinarily felt for a saint. Unlike Achitophel's deluded followers who believe that they are near-saints, Barzillai's son has been truly canonized:

Now, free from Earth, the disencumbered Soul  
Mounts up, and leaves behind the Clouds and Starry Pole:  
From thence thy kindred legions mayst thou bring  
To aid the guardian Angel of thy King.  
(ll. 850-853)

As at the king's coronation, angelic life comes to the assistance of the monarch, and Dryden, because his subject is sublime, implores his muse to "take thy steepy flight

from heaven, and see/ If thou canst find on earth another  
He." (ll. 860-861)

Although no living person can match Barzillai's son in goodness, the rest of the king's retainers are the most virtuous people alive. After two lines of the description of the priest, Zadock, Dryden returns to his praise of rhetoric in the portrait of the Sagan whose "weighty sense/ Flows in fit words and heavenly eloquence," (ll. 868-869) showing the courtier's profundity of thought, aptness of expression and sublimity of language. His learning and eloquence have led the young schoolboys "To Learning and to Loyalty," (l. 871) and because "never Rebell was to Arts a friend," (l. 873) Dryden considers him a loyal defender of poets.

Four "Pillars of the Laws" complete Dryden's portraits, beginning with "Adriel the Muses friend/ Himself a Muse," (ll. 877-878) followed by "Jotham of piercing wit and and pregnant thought,/Indew'd by nature, and by learning taught" (ll. 882-883) whose oratorical skill in "Assemblies" (l. 884) is unsurpassed. Dryden says little of Hushai's rhetorical abilities, but as leader of the "Sanhedrin" (l. 902) Amiel "Their Reason guided and their Passion could," (l. 903) and he was

So form'd to speak a Loyal Nation's Sense,  
 That as their band was Israel's Tribes in small,  
 So fit was he to represent them all. (ll. 905-907)

Although there are exceptions, Dryden's courtiers are generally skilled in the language and the arts as teachers, orators and poets. Opposed to Achitophel's crafty black arts and the rebels' debasement of language, the Royalists are masters of language and patrons of the poet. Dryden's loyalty to Charles and the court springs from real belief in the rectitude of monarchy, and gets additional support because of the poet's gratefulness to the king and his circle for their aid to his career. Dryden's Dedication of Limberham (1678) says that "as the world goes now, it is very hard to predicate one upon the other [nobleman and scholar]; and it is yet more difficult to prove that a nobleman can be a friend to poetry." (Malone, II, 35) The almost deserted court in Absalom and Achitophel indicates that Dryden thought that poetry had low public esteem in 1681, because of the close connection between Royalist politics and artistic merit. Although poetry ought to be elevated and majestic, only supporters of a truly inspiring political order can write verse which partakes of the majestic and the divine.

The king's speech demands much attention because it ends the threat of civil war which had been mounting throughout the poem. Samuel Johnson objected to Dryden's conclusion because the expected confrontation between David and Absalom does not take place:

We are alarmed by a faction formed out of many sects various in their principles, but agreeing in their purpose of mischief, formidable for their numbers, and strong by their supports, while the king's friends are few and weak. The chiefs on either part are set forth to view; but when expectation is the the height, the king makes a speech, and

Henceforth a Series of new times began.

Who can forbear to think of an enchanted castle, with a wide moat and lofty battlements, walls of marble and gates of brass, which vanishes at once into air, when the destined knight blows his horn before it.<sup>76</sup>

Behind Johnson's criticism is his dislike of non-dramatic poetry, also shown when he writes of Paradise Regained that "a dialogue without action can never please like an union of the narrative and dramattick powers."<sup>77</sup> If I am correct in arguing that rhetoric is a major topic in the poem, then the final speech of David shows that inspired language alone can quell the forces of dissent. Dryden's conclusion could not satisfy Johnson because it is deliberately non-dramatic, or more precisely, the words are the equivalent of dramatic action in Absalom and Achitophel as they are in Dryden's heroic plays. David overcomes his foes with language, and the poet proves himself superior to his enemies through his close identification with his monarch.

Dryden celebrates the king in the conclusion of the poem because David is truly god-like. The picture of Eden, which opens the poem, is soon destroyed because every physical paradise must fall from grace because of Adam's

sin. By line thirty-nine Absalom has already murdered Amnon, but the king does nothing to restrain the zeal of his son or the enthusiasm of the rabble until the end of the poem. The rebels continue to add members to their fiery conspiracy until a conflagration on the order of the London Fire of 1666 appears certain. The king refuses to end the threat to his crown until it is nearly too late. "To My Lord Chancellor, Presented on New-years-day" (1662) speaks of the "fatal goodness" (l. 59) of Charles I whose indulgence of the English people led to regicide. Written three years after Absalom and Achitophel, the Dedication of The History of the League warns Charles that his enemies are "still designing against your sacred life: your principle is mercy, theirs inveterate malice; when one only wards, and the other strikes, the prospect is sad on the defensive side." (Malone, II, 429) Dryden, apparently very concerned about the king's safety at this time, adds in the Postscript to the translation: "And by how much the more a King is subject by his nature to this frailty of too much mildness, which is so near resembling the God-like attribute of mercy, by so much is he the more liable to be taxed with tyranny...."(Malone, II, 457)

The mob seizes power because of the king's inactivity. His "vigorous warmth" (l. 7) becomes as dangerous as the enthusiast's fires, and the king forgives his son's "warm excesses," (l. 37) deciding to let them be "purg'd by



boyling o'r." (l. 38) Dryden does not criticize the king's promiscuity (that is clearly excused in the poem's first two lines), but the refusal to deal justly with his son starts the long chain of problems that threaten the succession of the realm's power. By ignoring his responsibilities, David temporarily surrenders his god-like attributes. In trying to be a loving and forgiving father to his natural son and to his subjects, he forsakes his role as a just and impartial king:

Thus long have I, by native mercy sway'd,  
My wrongs dissembl'd, my revenge delay'd:  
So willing to forgive th' Offending Age,  
So much the Father did the King assuage.  
(ll. 938-941)

Throughout the poem David's enemies censure the king for his great mercy, just as Dryden's essay warns Charles about the danger of excessive clemency. By indulging his subjects, David assumes too much of God's power, as Dryden says in his "Postscript." David reasserts his regal authority in his speech; he is a divinely-appointed king tempering mercy with justice. Because he has not lost his capacity for self-awareness, David realizes his flagrant errors, unlike the Jews who never examine their own assumptions. David changes his priorities because he realizes he is mortal and not a god. Charles Ball has accurately said that David is a Christian hero, an agent of God, whose unnatural mercy explains his weakness.<sup>78</sup> Dryden's king changes from a private and indulgent individual to a public and just

king, whose speech reveals that the monarch has reassumed his true identity.

One of the very difficult problems addressed by seventeenth-century writers was the identification of true and false prophets. How can one be sure that a man's claim to inspiration is true? In a century in which many people said that they had caught the spirit of the angels or the Paraclete, the problem was more than academic. Hobbes tackles this tricky question of true and false enthusiasm in Leviathan:

[The Jews] called mad-men Prophets or...Dæmoniacks; and some of them called both Prophets, and Dæmoniacks, mad-men; and some called the same man both Dæmoniack, and mad-man. But for the Gentiles, 'tis no wonder; because Diseases, and Health; Vices and Vertues; and many naturall accidents, were with them termed, and worshipped as Dæmons. So that a man was to understand by Dæmon, as well (sometimes) an Ague, as a Divell. But for the Jewes to have such opinion, is somewhat strange. For neither Moses, nor Abraham pretended to Prophecy by possession of a Spirit; but from the voyce of God; or by a Vision or Dream: Nor is there any thing in his Law, Morall, or Ceremoniall, by which they were taught, there was any such Enthusiasme; or any Possession.<sup>79</sup>

Writing later in the century, Locke said that we must use our reason to distinguish between the claims of the enthusiast and the truly inspired:

And if reason finds it to be revealed from God, reason then declares for it, as much as for any other truth, and makes it one of her dictates. Every conceit that thoroughly warms our fancies must pass for an inspiration, if there be nothing but the strength of our persuasions whereby to judge of our persuasions:

if reason must not examine their truth by something extrinsical to the persuasions themselves, inspirations and delusions, truth and falsehood, will have the same measure, and will not be possible to be distinguished.<sup>80</sup>

Hobbes and Locke agree that true inspiration exists, and they offer some guidelines to help distinguish between genuine enthusiasm and inauthentic zeal. Real inspiration shows evidence of divine guidance, but sectarian enthusiasm arises from delusion, sickness or demonic possession. Unlike his genuine counterpart, the fake enthusiast behaves like a madman. Absalom and Achitophel shows Dryden's clear awareness of the differences between the two kinds of enthusiasts. The lines preceding David's speech (ll. 933-37) establish the king's divine inspiration: "by Heav'n inspir'd,/ The God-like David spoke." (ll. 936-937) Because he rules by divine right, David's elevated speech (like that of the gifted poet and orator) imitates the language of God. No ill humours account for the king's address; God speaks directly through David as He once spoke through the Old Testament patriarchs, Moses and Abraham.

At the end of the poem, Dryden confers the dignity of age upon the poem's events, which now become part of sacred political lore:

He said. Th' Almighty, nodding gave Consent;  
And Peals of Thunder shook the Firmament.  
Henceforth a Series of new time began,  
The mighty Years in long Procession ran:  
Once more the Godlike David was restored,  
And willing Nations knew their Lawfull Lord.  
(ll. 1026-1031)

As divine monarch David can invoke god-like power and restore his kingdom to peace, apparently at will. The rabble recognizes its mistake because it has been granted a clear sign of God's approval of the king's rule. As in 1660, Charles is restored as monarch in the fullest sense. The term "Restoration" refers to more than the return of Charles in 1660 and his coronation in 1661; indeed, "the Restoration refers both to the events of 1660 and to--at least--the whole reign of Charles II."<sup>81</sup> As in Astraea Redux and Annus Mirabilis, the king asserts his public role by overcoming the discordant forces that threaten his nation. If the "action" in Dryden's poems seems too passive, we may better understand their "plots" as ritual observances as Bernard Schilling advises: "it may not be too fanciful to think of the poetic metaphors that Dryden shares with his generation as having the effect of ritual, a part of the regular ceremony by which a myth is repeated and renewed."<sup>82</sup>

Absalom and Achitophel puts forth Dryden's belief that the major contests of history and politics have a strong religious flavour. Though the antagonism between David and his enemies originates ostensibly from a desire for political power, the king and his rival are patriarchal figures whose influence runs deeply into the religious life of the nation. Commoner, city man and courtier, as we have seen, share the same characterization and they are united by a common desire for religious leadership from

the throne. Victory over the false enthusiasm that dominates Dryden's figures for most of the poem is made possible only when the king gives convincing evidence that he is the truly inspired monarch chosen to rule by Providence. David's display of strength in the poem's conclusion is accompanied by unmistakable proof of divine favour and rests chiefly on the king's rhetorical mastery that charms the bestial desire out of his subjects. Powerful as David's enemies are, we miss the point of this poem if we think of the isolated portraits of Corah, Absalom or Achitophel apart from the poem's action. Though it has no conventional plot, the rhetorical movement and action of Absalom and Achitophel result in the dignified monarchical victory which balances the misguided enthusiasm of the king's enemies and which makes Dryden's work, in the best sense of the term, a civilized poem. The tension between false and true enthusiasm is the heart of the poem's conflict and it accounts for the unity and fine sense of balance that is missing from the poem we shall now examine, The Medall.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Earl Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup>Maurice, Ashley, England in the Seventeenth Century, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup>Ashley, England in the Seventeenth Century, p. 145.

<sup>4</sup>Ashley, England in the Seventeenth Century, p. 143.

<sup>5</sup>Stuart Prall, The Bloodless Revolution, p. 45.  
Also see Christopher Hill, The Century of Revolution, pp. 22 and 60 for an account of the Catholic influence in the court of Charles II.

<sup>6</sup>Ashley, England in the Seventeenth Century, p. 144.

<sup>7</sup>Prall, The Bloodless Revolution, p. 75.

<sup>8</sup>Prall, The Bloodless Revolution, p. 55.

<sup>9</sup>J.R. Jones, The First Whigs: The Politics of the Exclusion Crisis (1961; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970). See especially the introduction, pp. 1-20.

<sup>10</sup>J.R. Jones, The First Whigs, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup>J.R. Jones, The First Whigs, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup>J.R. Jones, The First Whigs, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup>J.R. Jones, The First Whigs, pp. 13-14.

<sup>14</sup>J.R. Jones, The First Whigs, p. 15.

<sup>15</sup>Bernard Schilling, Dryden and the Conservative Myth, p. 68.

<sup>16</sup>Prall, The Bloodless Revolution, p. 44.

<sup>17</sup>G.R. Cragg, From Puritanism to the Age of Reason, p. 16 and Stephen Neill, Anglicanism, pp. 140-141.

<sup>18</sup>Malcolm Ross, Poetry and Dogma, pp. 63-64.

<sup>19</sup>Ronald Knox, Enthusiasm, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup>Hoxie Neale Fairchild, Religious Trends in English Poetry, I, 45.

<sup>21</sup>Peter Hughes, "Language, History and Vision: An Approach to 18th-Century Literature," p. 87.

<sup>22</sup>Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 109.

<sup>23</sup>K.H.D. Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 676-681.

<sup>24</sup>Malone identifies the "worthy and legal member" as Sir Robert Peyton, II, 471n.

<sup>25</sup>Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 109.

<sup>26</sup>R.F. Jones, "The Originality of Absalom and Achitophel" in H.T. Swedenberg, Jr., ed., Essential Articles for the Study of John Dryden (Hampden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1966), p. 203.

<sup>27</sup>R.F. Jones, "The Originality of Absalom and Achitophel", p. 204. Also See Schilling, Dryden and the Conservative Myth, p. 179.

<sup>28</sup>Schilling, Dryden and the Conservative Myth, p. 137.

<sup>29</sup>Ian Jack, Augustan Satire: Intention and Idiom in English Poetry (1952; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 59.

<sup>30</sup>Ruth Nevo, The Dial of Virtue, p. 179.

<sup>31</sup>Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 141.

<sup>32</sup>Ruth Wallerstein, "To Madness Near Allied: Shaftesbury and His Place in the Design and Thought of Absalom and Achitophel," HLQ, VI (1943), 445-471.

<sup>33</sup>Leon Guilhamet, "Dryden's Debasement of Scripture in Absalom and Achitophel," SEL, IX (1969), 405.

<sup>34</sup>Alan Roper, Dryden's Poetic Kingdoms, p. 194.

<sup>35</sup>Bruce King, "Absalom and Achitophel: A Revaluation" in his Dryden's Mind and Art (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970), p. 66.

<sup>36</sup>Martin Price, To the Palace of Wisdom: Studies in Order and Energy from Dryden to Blake (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1965), p. 52.

<sup>37</sup>C.E. Whiting, Studies in English Puritanism, gives a short account of the Seekers, pp. 270-272 who were considered one of the most fanatical of the sectarian groups.

<sup>38</sup>C.E. Whiting, Studies in English Puritanism, p. 284 discusses the Adamites.

<sup>39</sup>Sir Thomas Browne, Religio Medici in Religio Medici and Other Writings, ed., Ernest Rhys (1906; Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1928), p. 62.

<sup>40</sup>Browne, Religio Medici, p. 64.

<sup>41</sup>Hill, The Century of Revolution, p. 81.

<sup>42</sup>William P. Holden, Anti-Puritan Satire, pp. 6 and p. 57 discusses the dissenters' aversion to oaths.

<sup>43</sup>For an account of the biographical particulars of Slingsby Bethel and Titus Oates see The Dictionary of National Biography (London: Oxford University Press, 1953).

<sup>44</sup>Knox, Enthusiasm, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup>Knox, Enthusiasm, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup>Fairchild, Religious Trends in English Poetry, I, 554-555.

<sup>47</sup>Edmund Burke, Reflections, p. 277.

<sup>48</sup>Filmer, Patriarchia, p. 118

<sup>49</sup>Filmer, Patriarchia, p. 57. Although Dryden may not have known Filmer at first hand, the poet was acquainted with the patriarchal theory of kingship at least as early as 1661 as the following passage shows:

When Empire first from families did spring,  
Then every Father govern'd as a King;  
But you that are a Sovereign Prince, allay  
Imperial pow'r with your paternal sway.  
("To His Sacred Maiesty...", ll. 93-96)

<sup>50</sup>Louis I. Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, p. 138.

<sup>51</sup>Albert Ball, "Charles II: Dryden's Christian Hero," Modern Philology, LIX (1961), 25-35.

<sup>52</sup>Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, p. 60.

<sup>53</sup>Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Belief in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p. 204.

<sup>54</sup>Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p. 271.

<sup>55</sup>Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p. 271.

<sup>56</sup>Bruce King, "Absalom and Achitophel: Machiavelli and the False Messiah," Etudes Anglaises, XVI (1963), 250-251.

<sup>57</sup>Bruce King, Dryden's Mind and Art, p. 76.



<sup>58</sup>Schilling, Dryden and the Conservative Myth, p. 194.

<sup>59</sup>Wallerstein, "To Madness Near Allied: Shaftesbury and His Place in the Design and Thought of Absalom and Achitophel," 459.

<sup>60</sup>Temple, "Of Poetry" in Five Miscellaneous Essays by Sir William Temple, pp. 199-200.

<sup>61</sup>Lawrence Babb, The Elizabethan Malady discusses the "hot" and "cold" stages of melancholia, p. 43. It seems to me that Dryden's conclusion to Absalom and Achitophel shows the cooling of the fires of melancholy in Shaftesbury and his companions.

<sup>62</sup>Jack, Augustan Satire, p. 70.

<sup>63</sup>Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, Letter Concerning Enthusiasm in Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, Etc., ed., John M. Robertson (1900; Gloucester, Mass.: P. Smith, 1963), I, 10.

<sup>64</sup>Shaftesbury, Characteristics, I, 10.

<sup>65</sup>See Babb's The Elizabethan Malady, Chapter VIII, "The Dignity of Melancholy," pp. 175-85 and also pp. 73-75.

<sup>66</sup>Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p. 521.

<sup>67</sup>The Works of John Locke, III, 155.

<sup>68</sup>Leonora Leet Brodwin, "Miltonic Allusion in Absalom and Achitophel: Its function in the Political Satire," JEGP, LXVIII (1969), 27.

<sup>69</sup>Brodwin, "Miltonic Allusion in Absalom and Achitophel," 27.

<sup>70</sup>George R. Levine, "Dryden's 'Inarticulate Poesy': Music and the Davidic King in Absalom and Achitophel," Eighteenth-Century Studies, I (1968), 292.

<sup>71</sup>Davidic in The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Alexander Cowley, ed., Alexander Grosart, II, ll. 1-4.

<sup>72</sup>A.W. Verrall, Lectures on Dryden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), p. 63.

<sup>73</sup>Hughes, "Language, History and Vision," p. 80.

<sup>74</sup>Verrall, Lectures on Dryden, p. 89.

<sup>75</sup>See Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 137 and King, Dryden's Mind and Art, p. 78.

<sup>76</sup>Samuel Johnson, "Life of Dryden" in Lives of the English Poets, ed., Arthur Waugh (1912; London: Oxford University Press, 1968), I, 308-309.

<sup>77</sup>Johnson, "Life of Milton," Lives, I, 131.

<sup>78</sup>Ball, "Charles II: Dryden's Christian Hero," 25-28; 30.

<sup>79</sup>Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 143.

<sup>80</sup>The Works of John Locke, III, 156-157.

<sup>81</sup>Roper, Dryden's Poetic Kingdoms, p. 140.

<sup>82</sup>Schilling, Dryden and the Conservative Myth, p. 9.

#### IV

##### THE MEDALL

The Medall, written in March, 1682, four months after a grand jury's acquittal of Shaftesbury, makes the closest of associations between Whiggism and religious enthusiasm. Although the Tories had evidence which seemed to provide overwhelming proof of Shaftesbury's high treason and would have been more than enough to convince an impartial jury of his guilt, the Whig judges packed their jury with persons sympathetic to the first Earl and this group returned a verdict of Ignoramus.<sup>1</sup> Shaftesbury's release excited jubilation among the London citizenry, and a medal struck by George Bower depicting the exonerated courtier as a king appeared the next month.<sup>2</sup> To Dryden, the minting of the medallion officially announced the establishment of a second kingdom in England which rivalled the realm of Charles II, and so his poem, instead of concentrating merely upon the release of Shaftesbury, describes the condition of a republican state governed by an elected monarch.

The purpose of The Medall is to expose the fanaticism of the Whigs and the distinguishing characteristic of Dryden's work is the concentrated and relentless attack on the enemies of the divine monarch who is surprisingly absent from the poem. Though Dryden tried to avoid narrow identification with partisan politics in Absalom and Achitophel,

the "Epistle to the Whigs", prefixed to The Medall signifies the author's intention to enter the arena of party politics. Dryden writes not as a detached observer viewing English history from an elevated perspective, but as a Tory intent on exposing the enthusiasm of the entire Whig party. In the propaganda battle waged between Whigs and Tories after Shaftesbury's release in November, each side branded the other as treasonous in politics and fanatical in religion. Thomas Durfey's song "The Whigs' Exaltation", published early in 1682 depicted the Whig coalition as a murderous and seditious band which wanted to destroy the power of the king and the episcopacy. The last stanza of Durfey's song states the Whig's intention to return English rule to the saints:

We'll break the windows which the whore  
Of Babylon has painted;  
And when their bishops are pull'd down,  
Our elders shall be sainted.  
Thus having quite enslav'd the town,  
Pretending 'tis too free,  
At last the gallows claims its own;  
Then hey boys up go we.<sup>3</sup>

"The Tories' Confession", written about March 28, 1682, just one month after "The Whigs' Exaltation", answers the earlier poem by identifying the Tories with the Papists and charging that enemies of Shaftesbury want to rid England of Protestantism. In the second stanza of the poem, the Tories chant that they will suppress Whig opposition and return the monastery lands seized by Henry VIII to the Catholics:

When once that preaching, whining crew  
Are crush'd and quite undone,

The poor we'll banish by our laws,  
 And all the rest we'll burn.  
 Then abbey-lands shall be possess'd  
 By those whose right they be,  
 We'll cry up laws, but none we'll use,  
 Such Tory rogues are we.<sup>4</sup>

Dryden's introductory Epistle and poem employ the conventional Tory argument that the Whigs are plotting the overthrow of the king, and the installation of a popular leader sympathetic to the interests of religious maniacs. In His Majesties Declaration Defended (1681), Dryden, answering a republican treatise, says that "that reason which is not Law must be either Enthusiasm, or the head-strong will of a whole Nation combin'd: because in despite of any Earthly Power it will have its effect: so that, which way soever our Author takes it, he must mean Fanaticism or Rebellion."<sup>5</sup> Although Whigs accused the Tories of "Popery", Dryden detected a seditious plea for toleration in Whig manifestoes:

His Majesty is well known to be an indulgent Prince, to the Consciences of his dissenting Subjects: But whoever has seen a Paper call'd, I think, An intended Bill for uniting, &c. which lay upon the Table of every Coffee-House, and was modelling to pass the House of Commons, may have found things of such dangerous concernment to the Government, as might seem not so much intended to unite Dissenters in a Protestant Church, as to draw together all the Forces of the several Fanatick Parties, against the Church of England.<sup>6</sup>

The Whig refused to grant toleration to Roman Catholics, and his interest in the welfare of dissenters disguised a deep-seated antipathy to the king and to the Anglican Church.

A month before Shaftesbury's trial and acquittal a pamphlet bearing the following title appeared: No Protestant Plot: or, The Present pretended Conspiracy of Protestants against the King and Government, discovered to be a Conspiracy of the Papists against the King and his Protestant Subjects.<sup>7</sup> As the title indicates, this tract declared the loyalty of the Protestant subjects to the king and blamed the Catholics for the major political troubles in the realm. But that was not all. It attacked many of the leading Tories and demanded exoneration of the much-maligned Shaftesbury claiming that Papists but not Protestants would benefit from his conviction. Originally thought to have been written by John Locke or Shaftesbury himself, the tract was later claimed by a dissenting Scottish minister, Robert Ferguson.<sup>8</sup> This work, published in three parts, the first in October of 1681, the second in January of 1682 and the third in the following month, receives major attention in Dryden's Epistle. Part three, which ran to 151 pages, was a lengthy pamphlet in itself which indicated that major Whig contributors were responsible for its issue.<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, Dryden treats the third part of the tract as a major propaganda instrument of the Whigs, and makes "Plotter Ferguson" one of the major formulators of Whiggish political theory. Speaking directly to his adversaries, Dryden refers to Ferguson's work as "your Papers" and "your No-protestant Plot", (Kinsley, p. 224) which

strengthens the connection between political and religious enthusiasm.

As in his other polemical writings of this period, Dryden emphasizes the dependence of progressive politics on radical religious ideas: "the third part of your No-prot-  
estant Plot is much of it stolen, from your dead Author's Pamphlet call'd the Growth of Popery; as manifestly as Milton's defence of the English People, is from Buchanan, de jure regni apud Scotos: or your first Covenant, and new Association, from the holy League of the French Guisards." (Kinsley, p. 224) Dryden proceeds to trace an unbroken line of seditious commentary between sixteenth-century religious and seventeenth-century political agitators. At the suggestion of Theodore Beza (Calvin's successor in Geneva) the Huguenot, Poltrot, murdered the Duke of Guise, and a "Hugonot Minister otherwise call'd a Presbyterian...first writ a Treatise of the lawfulness of deposing and murthering Kings of a different Perswasion in Religion: But I am able to prove from the Doctrine of Calvin, and the Principles of Buchanan, that they set the People above the Magistrate...." (Kinsley, p. 224) Although the roots of dissent can be found in Protestant writings, the present behaviour of the English dissenters most resembles their Catholic enemies:

But, as the Papists, when they are unoppos'd,  
fly out into all the Pageantry's of Worship;  
but in times of War, when they are hard  
press'd by Arguments, lie close intrench'd  
behind the Council of Trent: So, now, when

your Affairs are in a low condition, you dare  
 not pretend that to be a legal Combination,  
 but whensoever you are afloat, I doubt not but  
 it will be maintain'd and justify'd to purpose.  
 (Kinsley, p. 225)

In His Majesties Declaration Defended, Dryden had attacked Calvinist and Whiggish political theory for its basic republican bias: "Whether Democracy will agree with Jesuitical principles in England I am not certain; but I can easily prove to him, that no Government but a Common-wealth is accommodated to the Systeme of Church-worship invented by John Calvin."<sup>10</sup> Catholics, dangerous as their faction of Jesuit fanatics could be, at least maintained the principles of monarchical rule, unlike the dissenting sects which favoured democratic republics. Lines 201-204 of The Medall make a slight distinction between Catholic and sectarian views of monarchy:

Whether the plotting Jesuite lay'd the plan  
 Of murth'ring Kings, or the French Puritan,  
 Our Sacrilegious Sects their Guides outgo;  
 And Kings and Kingly Pow'r wou'd murther too.

The unfavourable comparison of modern Whigs to their continental forbears is obviously intended to enrage Dryden's opponents, as in line eighty-seven which charges that Shaftesbury "sets the People in the Papal Chair," implying that the populace assumes the infallibility of the Pope and the authority of the king.

Dryden believes that man "naturally" desires the divine leadership which only a king can provide; when the



enthusiastic rabble challenges the king they claim the same powers as the monarch they wish to depose. In our own time Camus makes much the same observation about the trial of Louis XVI as Dryden did about the enthusiast's claim to infallibility. Saint-Just, Louis XVI's accuser, tried to prove that the king lay beyond the pale of the social contract. Camus says that

In order to prove that the people are themselves the embodiment of eternal truth it is necessary to demonstrate that royalty is the embodiment of eternal crime. Saint-Just, therefore, postulates that every king is a rebel or a usurper. He is a rebel against the people whose absolute sovereignty he usurps. Monarchy is not a king, 'it is a crime.' Not a crime, but crime itself says Saint-Just; in other words, absolute profanation....Every king is guilty, because any man who is king is automatically on the side of death. Saint-Just says exactly the same thing when he proceeds to demonstrate that the sovereignty of the people is a 'sacred matter.'<sup>11</sup>

This "profanation" that Saint-Just assesses in the character of Louis XVI in order to justify the king's execution is the same "crime" that the seventeenth-century enthusiast finds in the person of the English king, a discovery which bodes disaster for the institution of monarchy.

In both Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall Dryden plainly considers any infringement on the monarch's authority to be a sin against God. The populace not only denies the sacredness of their king, but by usurping his place, they equate power and popular will with justice and divinity. Might makes right, and God is no longer God as an eternal

spirit, but a creation of the popular mind. Providence's identity may be reshaped as often as the multitude demands, and "This," says Martin Price, "is the clearest inversion of order, the counterpart of the heroic defiance of divinity by the heroes of the plays, but--as in the case of Absalom--a defiance without the authority of greatness of spirit. Instead, it is a tyranny of louts and madmen released by Shaftesbury."<sup>12</sup>

Commenting on Achitophel's importance in Dryden's earlier poem, Ruth Wallerstein says that

The character of Achitophel is at the center both of Dryden's political purpose and of his design in Absalom and Achitophel. To understand Achitophel is to understand the whole spirit of the poem; and on the other hand to see what part his character plays in the design of it is to know in what light to read and interpret his character.<sup>13</sup>

Wallerstein's contention that Achitophel and the London populace are the central characters in Absalom and Achitophel is even truer for The Medall because Shaftesbury and the city men dominate the poem from beginning to end. Dryden's Preface to Absalom and Achitophel speaks of drawing the picture of Absalom as a "Picture to the Wast," (Kinsley, p. 189) like a portrait in verse, but The Medall paints Shaftesbury at full length, a hint of which is contained in the Epistle in which Dryden tells the Whigs that the medalion of their hero is "the Picture drawn at length, which you admire and prize so much in little." (Kinsley, p. 223)

Dryden's depiction of his arch-enemy is close to the method of biography in which everything is "circumscribed and driven to a point, so as to terminate in one," (The Life of Plutarch (1683), Watson, II, 7) because the poem traces the entire insidious career of the first Earl and even predicts his future. Although not lacking in Biblical and classical allusion, the language and setting of The Medall lend a more contemporary aura to this poem than is found in Absalom and Achitophel. By grounding the poem in the rhetoric and environment of seventeenth-century England, Dryden makes a more direct connection between the enthusiastic mob and Shaftesbury in The Medall than he did in Absalom and Achitophel.

Dryden identifies Shaftesbury's career with the chameleon-like political adventures of seventeenth-century England. Because the first Earl's career had been so diverse, he acquires the characteristics of "all Mankinds Epitome", Zimri. Shaftesbury had wavered between support of the Royalist and Roundhead factions during the civil war, before committing himself to the Puritan side. During the Interregnum he worked for Cromwell, but found employment under Charles II after the Restoration. Finally Shaftesbury became the champion of parliamentary power and constitutional monarchy, the political phenomena that Dryden considered dangerous to the authority of Charles II.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps the poet's own life would serve equally well to illustrate the

inconstant nature of seventeenth-century Englishmen, at least until 1688. Like Shaftesbury, Dryden had switched his earlier allegiance from Cromwell to Charles II by 1660, an inconsistency satirized by Shadwell's "The Medall of John Bayes", a poem whose introductory "Epistle to the Tories" and poetic vocabulary imitate The Medall. Shadwell's poem pillories Dryden unmercifully for his immoral conduct, and reminds the poet that his first employment was in the service of Cromwell:

Your loyalty you learn'd in Cromwell's court,  
Where first your Muse did make her great effort.  
On him you first show'd your poetic strain,  
And prais'd his opening the basilic vein.  
And were that possible to come again,  
Thou on that side wouldst draw thy slavish pen.<sup>15</sup>

An era which witnessed many changes in politics and religion provided plenty of examples of opportunistic change (untrue in Dryden's case) in the enemy camp, and Shadwell makes Dryden into the Tory equivalent of the perfidious Shaftesbury.

Dryden considers that Shaftesbury's career was guided entirely by opportunism and malice. Although he was "A Martial Heroe," (l. 26) Shaftesbury used his talents to destroy the leadership of Charles I. "A Rebel, e'r a Man," (l. 28) he behaves rather like the young Absalom whose prowess in military affairs is employed to challenge his father's authority. As in Absalom and Achitophel, Dryden applies satanic imagery to Shaftesbury because of his enthu-

siasm as well as his service to Cromwell:

A Vermin, wriggling in th' Usurpers Ear.  
 Bart'ring his venal wit for sums of gold  
 He cast himself into the Saint-like mould;  
 Groan'd, sigh'd and pray'd, while Godliness was gain;  
 The lowest Bagpipe of the squeaking Train.  
 (ll. 31-35)

Dryden's description of Shaftesbury echoes Milton's depiction of the crest-fallen Satan, who losing even the diminished light that remained with him in Hell, enters the body of a serpent in Book IX of Paradise Lost. Satan's pretence to greatness in Books I and II rapidly deteriorates in later books of Milton's poem, and Achitophel's magnificence in Dryden's earlier poem vanishes in The Medall. The great faculties are reduced to venal wit, and the prodigious intellectual enthusiasm of the arch-plotter degenerates into the conventional fanaticism of the Presbyterian mob. In Absalom and Achitophel, Achitophel had to satisfy the lusts of his brilliant but deranged mind, but in The Medall he prostitutes the little intelligence he possesses for power. He has the soul of a merchant rather than the mind of a genius.

Shaftesbury's conversion to sectarian religion is insincere; he becomes a Presbyterian for opportune reasons and his immorality soon becomes public knowledge:

But, as 'tis hard to cheat a Juggler's Eyes,  
 His open lewdness he cou'd ne'r disguise.  
 There split the Saint: for Hypocritique Zeal  
 Allows no Sins but those it can conceal,  
 Whoring to Scandal gives too large a scope:  
 Saints may not trade; but they may interlope. (ll. 36-41)

Absalom and Achitophel distinguishes between the mundane and fiery enthusiasm of orthodox sectarians and the magnificent and misguided zeal of the courtiers, but no such distinction appears in The Medall. Restoration writers were becoming more sophisticated about enthusiasm, and were less obsessed with the hypocrisy of the zealots than were earlier writers. Dryden was very well acquainted with the intricacies of enthusiasm as Absalom and Achitophel clearly shows. As a political satire, however, The Medall relies heavily upon the conventional and journalistic theme of hypocrisy which may explain why this poem is not so successful as Dryden's earlier and more adventurous poem. Absalom and Achitophel are convinced of the rectitude of their cause, but the second portrait of Shaftesbury shows that the Whig leader and his followers do not believe in the cause that they espouse. Like the sheriff, Shimei, Shaftesbury and his confederates openly express their insincerity. Dryden's assessment of the zealots is like Samuel Butler's cantankerous and single-minded picture of "An Hypocritical Non-conformist" who is

an Ambassador Extraordinary of his own making, not only from God Almighty to his Church, but from his Church to him; and pretending to a plenipotentiary Power from both, treats with himself, and makes what Agreement he pleases; and gives himself such Conditions as are conducive to the Advantage of his own Affairs. The whole Design of his Transaction and Employment is really nothing else, but to procure fresh supplies for the good old Cause and Covenant, while they are under Persecution; to raise

Recruits of new Proselites, and deal with all those, who are, or once were, good Friends to both; to unite and maintain a more close and strict Intelligence among themselves against the common Enemy, and preserve their general Interest alive, until they shall be in a Condition to declare more openly for it; and not out of Weakness to submit perfidiously to the Laws of the Land, and rebelliously endure to live in Peace and Quietness under the present Government....<sup>16</sup>

Dryden and Butler deny the dissenters' religious sincerity and they assert that the enthusiasts' religious collusions are designed to further their political ambitions. Dryden uses the more conventional charge of hypocrisy in The Medall, because the Whiggish pretence of loyalty to the king had incited the poet's anger. Despite coining a medallion which pictures Shaftesbury as a monarch, the No-protestant Plot declared that the Whigs were Charles II's loyal subjects: "Yet all this while you pretend not onely zeal for the Publick good; but a due veneration for the person of the King. But all men who can see an inch before them, may easily detect those gross fallacies." (Kinsley, P. 223) More explicitly, Dryden asks "how is it consistent with your Zeal of the publick Welfare, to promote Sedition? Does your definition of loyal, which is to serve the King according to the Laws, allow you the licence of traducing the Executive Power, with which you own he is invested?" (Kinsley, p. 224) The Whigs devise "pretended Grievances" (l. 224) against the king in order to have a pretext of war against him, at the same time that they protest their

loyalty. Hypocrisy in politics is comparable to religious double-dealing in which the saint may do as he wishes as long as he escapes discovery. Perhaps the most damaging piece of evidence against Shaftesbury was a draft Association found in his living quarters. This document recommended the use of "'force of arms if need so require' to prevent the succession of James."<sup>17</sup> A similar association founded for Queen Elizabeth's defence in the sixteenth century inspired many of the phrases and ideas in this newly discovered tract which, although worthless in proving the charge of treason against Shaftesbury, "played into the hands of the Tory pamphleteers who repeated what the Whigs called 'the cuckow-like tune' of '41 is come again'; the spectre of imminent civil war was raised."<sup>18</sup> Dryden denounced the favourable comparison which the Whigs made between their new association and the Elizabethan one because "the ends of the one are directly opposite to the other: one with the Queen's approbation, and conjunction, as head of it; the other without either the consent, or knowledge of the King, against whose Authority it is manifestly design'd." (Kinsley, p. 225) While the Whigs tried in every way to make their monarchical fealty convincing, Dryden and the Tories read the signs of impending civil war in the bellicose rhetoric of their opponents' public proclamations. The Whigs harboured the same militancy toward the king as the religious enthusiasts who asserted that all



their efforts were carried on in the name of worldly peace and eternal salvation.

Shaftesbury's open debauchery, according to Dryden, exposed him to the scorn of his hypocritical brothers who were more skillful in hiding their sins. Seeing his own chances for advancement thwarted, the Earl decided to return to the Royalist side:

Pow'r was his aym: but, thrown from that pretence,  
The Wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence;  
And Malice reconcil'd him to his Prince.  
(ll. 50-52)

Missing from Dryden's description are all the intimations of greatness found in Absalom and Achitophel: the poet reduces his enemy to a despicable wretch. Cromwellian supporters who emerged from the ruins of the Interregnum government were suspicious of the motives of Shaftesbury who had retained honour, title and an office under Charles II. Tory writers, especially during the Exclusion Crisis (and Dryden is typical here) believed that Shaftesbury had always harboured republican beliefs and that he had always sought the destruction of monarchy and his own appointment as leader of England.<sup>19</sup> Like a white witch, (l. 62) Shaftesbury had been forced to perform worthwhile deeds because of his alleged support for the king. Although his behaviour was impeccable, his motives were not, and soon (1673) Shaftesbury broke the Triple Alliance. (l. 65) This alliance between England, Sweden and the States General had been

formed in 1668 as a defence against France, but was superseded by the secret Treaty of Dover (1670) between Charles II and Louis XIV. Although the king himself had "loos'd our Triple hold," (l. 65) Dryden, probably because of a public speech made by Shaftesbury against the Dutch in 1673, thought that he was to blame for exposing England to the mercy of France.<sup>20</sup>

Although disowned by the Interregnum saints, Shaftesbury shaped his career by "The Frauds he learnt in his Fanatique years." (l. 59) He is a master juggler, (l. 36) a term applied to all dissenting religious hypocrites in the Restoration,<sup>21</sup> and like a popular enthusiastic preacher, Shaftesbury takes to his pulpit and "He preaches to the Crowd, that Pow'r is lent,/ But not convey'd to Kingly Government." (ll. 82-83) The Scott-Saintsbury edition of Dryden says that these lines refer to Shaftesbury's plan to obtain a suspension of penal laws against non-conformists during the 1672 Dutch War, in order to enlist the support of Englishmen in a war against a fellow Protestant nation.<sup>22</sup> Although the recent California edition of Dryden's poems concurs in this interpretation,<sup>23</sup> it seems to me that the lines allude to Shaftesbury's behaviour during the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis, because Dryden's portrait follows the life of Shaftesbury chronologically in the poem and the noble plotter's attempt to receive favour for the dissenters preceded his weakening of the Triple Alliance.

Shaftesbury knows that his deranged ideas will find ready popular approval, and Dryden's judgment on the prostitution of religion for political purposes makes clear that the rabble and Shaftesbury are of one mind:

The common Cry is ev'n Religion's Test;  
 The Turk's is, at Constantinople, best;  
 Idols in India, Popery at Rome;  
 And our own Worship onely true at home.  
 And true but for the time, 'tis hard to know  
 How long we please it shall continue so.  
 This side to day, and that to morrow burns;  
 So all are God-a'mighties in their turns.  
 (ll. 103-110)

Humour and instinct guide the religious preference of the English in The Medall, just as they led the Jews in Absalom and Achitophel, and like any enterprising charlatan, Shaftesbury readily capitalizes on the shifts in popular feeling. "The common cry" suggests the rhetorical degeneration of the enthusiasts, and the entire passage, reflective in its mood, looks ahead to Religio Laici in which the poet castigates the tyrannical religious character of modern Europe.

Because the minting of the medallion declared that Shaftesbury was a popular favourite, Dryden omits all reference to Monmouth in The Medall and concentrates on the new Whig heir-apparent to the throne. The king applies the image of a reckless Samson to Absalom, (l. 955) but Dryden now reserves that appellation for Shaftesbury (l. 73) in The Medall. The "Renegado Priests" (l. 268) "preach up Thee for God," (l. 269) treating Shaftesbury in a similar fashion to the Jews' handling of Absalom in the earlier

poem as the hope of the people. According to its author, His Majesties Declaration Defended tried to show that when the

goodness and equity of the Prince comes to be truly understood by the People, the Authority of the Faction is extinguished; and the well meaning crowd who are misled, will no longer gape after the specious names of Religion and Liberty; much like the folly of the Jews, expecting a Messiah still to come, whose History has been written sixteen hundred years ago.<sup>24</sup>

Dryden found the current politics of messiahship not only personally distasteful but also destructive of true religion and proper governance. The newest political favourite is treated as a popular democratic leader and as a god who replaces the king as an object of reverence.

Because of his opportune religious conversions, Shaftesbury has no religious convictions:

Religion thou has none: thy Mercury  
Has pass'd through every Sect, or theirs through Thee.  
But what thou giv'st, that Venom still remains;  
And the pox'd Nation feels Thee in their Brains.  
(ll. 263-266)

These lines make the strongest connection between the interaction of Shaftesbury and the dissenting groups of London, and in lines 295-296, the bags of venom burst and "The various Venoms on each other prey." (l. 297) Shaftesbury is both the inspiration for and the chief practitioner of religious and political dissent. Single-handedly he creates the restless condition that obtains in all the seventeenth-century enthusiastic groups, and he has himself been a member

of each one. For the dissenter, religious protest is a political activity, and politics itself is a religion. Shaftesbury epitomizes the nature of seventeenth century rebellion: his career in public life, which covers the administrations of Charles I, Cromwell and Charles II, outlines the devious paths of the modern politician.

The exact religious preferences of Shaftesbury are difficult for even the modern historian to determine. Whatever the precise nature of the Earl's beliefs, he allied himself, throughout his life, with ideas and people that the Tories distrusted. J.R. Tanner says that Shaftesbury was a "Presbyterian himself by tradition,"<sup>25</sup> but Haley, contrary to both Dryden and Tanner, says he was never a Presbyterian although he had a Puritan background.<sup>26</sup> Haley adds that Shaftesbury rejected clerical dogmatism, and that he favoured a latitudinarian freedom of thought.<sup>27</sup> He had always championed toleration for dissenters, although he did not favour freedom for extreme enthusiasts.<sup>28</sup> Shaftesbury opposed the Five-Mile Act and in 1672 he worked for the passage of the Toleration Act.<sup>29</sup> Tanner says that after his release from the Tower, Shaftesbury took refuge among the London sects and associated himself with the Dutch Brownists in Holland after he fled to Amsterdam, where he died in 1683.<sup>30</sup> Among his friends in his last years, Shaftesbury could count Colonel John Rumsey, the nephew of a former Cromwellian Major-General, Colonel Thomas Walcot who had

been linked with an infamous republican, Edmund Ludlow, during the civil wars, and Robert Ferguson, the author of the No-Protestant Plot.<sup>31</sup> Ferguson served as a polemical aid to Shaftesbury and the two men became close friends during the Earl's last years.<sup>32</sup> Present when Shaftesbury died, Ferguson later revealed that the Earl confessed on his death-bed to a belief in Arian and Socinian ideas.<sup>33</sup>

Although precise knowledge about Shaftesbury's religious beliefs has yet to be determined, plenty of circumstantial evidence existed to convince the Tories of his apostasy. From the viewpoint of the "upper" culture, Shaftesbury chose his friends unwisely. Closeness to declared enemies of the king discredited his ideas and character. Although he may not have been a Presbyterian, his affiliation with Cromwell and his continued association with Restoration dissenters earned him a reputation for "enthusiasm." Nevertheless, Dryden observes fundamental distinctions between Shaftesbury and the groups that cling to his leadership. Lines 279-287 compare Shaftesbury's God with that of the sectarians. Shaftesbury's creator is

A jolly God, that passes hours too well  
To promise Heav'n. or threaten us with Hell.  
That unconcern'd can at Rebellion sit;  
And Wink at Crimes he did himself commit.  
A Tyrant theirs; the Heav'n their Priesthood paints  
A Conventicle of gloomy sullen Saints;  
A Heav'n, like Bedlam, slovenly and sad;  
Fore-doom'd for Souls, with false Religion, mad.

The first Earl, openly as scandalous in his behaviour now

as during the Commonwealth, retains the adulation of the pious and melancholic zealots. Indifferent to and even amused by public debauchery, Shaftesbury's God abandons the principle of justice and takes a sniggering delight in the profligate crimes of His most devout adherent. Shaftesbury's God has no interest in man's fate, like the Deistic God that Dryden appraises in Religio Laici later in 1682.

Senile and dangerous as the first Earl himself, Shaftesbury's creator clearly conforms to his own mind and character.

Shaftesbury assumes the political ambitions of Absalom in The Medall, and he appropriates the morals of Zimri. Devoted to pleasure and debauchery, the first Earl is presented by Dryden in a conventional manner as a wicked devotee of Epicurus, a judgment which the poet repeats in his assessment of Martin Luther in The Hind and the Panther in which he refers to the Reformation leader as "the Jolly Luther," (I, 380) a follower of "The full fed Musulman." (I, 377) Where The Medall restricts the ascription of opportunistic epicureanism, Dryden's later poem condemns all of European Protestantism for its sensuality.

Dryden attacks Shaftesbury for his enthusiasm and epicureanism in The Medall, and ultimately judges him an atheist. Like their esteemed leader, the enthusiasts create a divinity that conforms to their own fancies. The God depicted in lines 284-287 (cited above) originates in the melancholic disposition of the enthusiastic sectarians.

Shaftesbury's God passes no judgment on man, but the zealot's creator rules like the Old Testament God of vengeance. Only the "saints", chosen by the arbitrary will of God, can be saved while those who foolishly expect rewards for their good works will be damned.

Although the atheistic Shaftesbury and the deranged enthusiasts make an odd combination, seventeenth-century writers, including Dryden, thought this affiliation very common. Francis Bacon believed that religious zealotry could lead a disgusted observer to atheism, "For any one maine Division, addeth Zeale to both Sides; But many Divisions introduce Atheisme,"<sup>34</sup> and Restoration writers were eager to prove that religion ought not to be forsaken simply because of the dogmatism and bitterness of the dissenters. Glanvill observed that many people, depending entirely upon their imaginations to guide them have "run a ground on that more desperate absurdity, Atheism,"<sup>35</sup> as surely as others have joined sectarian groups. Glanvill also speaks of the dissenters themselves as atheists:

The union of a Sect within itself, is a pitiful charity: it's no concord of Christians, but a conspiracy against Christ; and they that love one another for their opinionative concurrences, love for their own sakes, not their Lords: not because they have his image, but because they hear one anothers.<sup>36</sup>

Dryden repeats Glanvill's assertion in The Medall in his description of the dissenting God, created by the deranged imagination. While Glanvill compares a dissenter to an



atheist, Butler likens "A Degenerate Noble" to a religious fanatic

that contents himself with the mere Title of a Saint, and makes that his Privilege to act all manner of Wickedness; or the Ruins of a noble Structure, of which there is nothing left but the Foundation, and that obscured and buried under the Rubbish of the Superstructure.<sup>37</sup>

Determined to topple governments at all costs, atheists and sectarians joined in mutual support of a common goal. Dryden's Prologue to Amboyna (1673) censures English reluctance to fight their Dutch co-religionists, and condemns all commonwealths as atheistic dominions:

Yet still the same Religion answers all:  
Religion wheedled you to Civil War,  
Drew English Blood, and Dutchmens now wou'd spare:  
Be gull'd no longer. for you'll find it true,  
They have no more Religion, faith--then you;  
Interest's the God they Worship in their State,  
And you, I take it, have not much of that.  
Well Monarchys may own Religions name,  
But States are Atheists in their very frame.  
(ll. 14-22)

Dryden ridicules the sectarians' claim that they create a government more righteous and holy than a monarchy--for the poet, democracy and atheism are equivalent. The Medall attacks both Shaftesbury and his sycophantic friends for disbelief, but for different reasons. In denying the supremacy of Charles II, both sincere and hypocritical republicans deny the authority of God's representative on earth. Dryden grants some sincerity to the stauncher dissenters, but dismisses Shaftesbury as an arrant atheist. The Dedication of Plutarch's Lives (1683) says that the commonwealth men

are so wicked, that they conclude there is no sin. Lewdness, rioting, cheating, and debauchery, are their work-a-day practice; their more solemn crimes are unnatural lusts, and horrid murders. Yet these are the patrons of the nonconformists; these are the swords and bucklers of GOD's cause, if his cause be that of separatists and rebels....[T]he republicans are satisfied that the schismatics are hypocrites, and the schismatics are assured that the republicans are atheists: but their common principles of government are the chains that link them.... (Malone, II, 344)

The Postscript to the Translation of The History of the League (1684) again comments on the scandalous lives of the Whig leaders. Dryden does not condemn

their non-conformist preachers, who pretend to enthusiasm, and are as morose in their worship as were those first sectaries; but... their leading men, the heads of their faction, and the principal members of it. What greater looseness of life, more atheistical discourse, more open lewdness, was ever seen, than generally was and is to be observed in those men? (Malone, II, 454)

Although Shaftesbury died a year before this essay was written, the distinction between avowedly debauched leaders and melancholic disciples also appears in The Medall.

Many similarities between atheists and enthusiasts convinced the Restoration writer that the two groups had much in common. Dissenters had agitated for the massive political change that godless republicans countenanced later in the century. Orthodox Anglicans believed that the assassination of Charles I was a sacrilege enacted by atheists, and a comparable attempt to kill or curtail the king characterized the Whiggish rebellion in the Restoration.

Atheists led abhorrent lives, according to the religious, but the pretence of sectarian godliness concealed equally abominable sins. Dryden alleges that the saints may commit any sin they want provided they go undiscovered, an opinion with which Samuel Butler agreed when he said of "A Fanatic" that "His outward Man is a Saint, and his inward Man a Reprobate; for he carries his Vices in his Heart, and his Religion in his Face."<sup>38</sup> Additionally, neither group had any real religious understanding; the atheist denied God's existence, and the enthusiast worshipped the images created by his humours. Medically, the clouded understanding of both groups was attributed to a melancholic dysfunction which suppressed the natural piety owing to God. In the 1670's and 1680's, when the factions united under notoriously impious leaders, the alliance did not generate the great surprise that we might expect.

Dryden's Dedication to Annus Mirabilis opens with the claim that the poet is, perhaps, "the first who ever presented a work of this nature to the Metropolis of any Nation." (Kinsley, p. 42) London justly deserves Dryden's congratulations because it "has set a pattern to all others of true Loyalty, invincible Courage and unshaken Constancy" (Kinsley, p. 42) through its endurance of "an expensive, though necessary, War, a consuming Pestilence, and more consuming Fire." (Kinsley, p. 42) The heroic self-sacrifice of the London citizenry promised an unprecedented future in

1667. The city, under the guidance of a lawful monarch, and especially favoured by a benign providence and a selfless group of businessmen, had been purged within one year by a plague and a fire that cleansed London of its inglorious monuments of the past. Henceforth, London would assume its rightful place as the leading European centre of trade and the arts.

The events of 1665 and 1666 seem to have remained in Dryden's mind for a long time. Absalom and Achitophel contains many references to the 1666 fire, and The Medall reverses the joyous conditions predicted in Annus Mirabilis. The factious and self-centred Interregnum businessmen seemed to have vanished by the mid-1660's when England accosted its common dangers. Dryden trusted that the memory of the terrible months of the plague and the fire would convince Englishmen of the wisdom of obedience to a lawful monarch in the years to come.

Future events, of course, proved Dryden's early hopes overly optimistic. By the late 1670's, English loyalties were divided between the court and the city. Noblemen like Buckingham and Shaftesbury deserted the king, and London became an increasingly greater stronghold of sectarian and republican sentiment.<sup>39</sup> Even the promising expectations stated in the conclusion of Absalom and Achitophel were thwarted within a month of the poem's publication. The coining of the medallion and its public display by the

London citizenry, reasserted the unwillingness of important and influential Englishmen to submit to Charles II. A civil war, akin to that of the 1640's, seemed imminent and the propagandists on either side identified the enemy with religious extremism. November was the chief month for popular political displays: they began on November 5 with a burning of "Jack Presbyter" by boys at Westminster School which publicized the Royalist view that the old sectarians were still the major obstacles to political stability.<sup>40</sup> November 17 featured a

Whig procession which started from Whitechapel, by way of Chancery Lane and Holborn to Smithfield...which included in one pageant three Irishmen in a pillory with the word Suborner inscribed over one and Suborned over the other two, and in another the Pope "with a 'towser' between his legs," Towser being Sir Roger L'Estrange, the author of the Observer.<sup>41</sup>

Dryden's *The Vindication of The Duke of Guise* speaks derisively of the Whig rabble which gathered to dishonour the Tory Papists on November 17,<sup>42</sup> and *The Medall* opens with a description of Whig pageantry. (ll. 1-5) To the November 17 festivities has been added "a new Canting Holiday" (l. 17) which celebrates the release of Shaftesbury and the appearance of the medal in his honour.

In effect, Whigs and Tories were supporting different kings. The Tories remained faithful to Charles II and endorsed the succession of his brother, the Catholic Duke of York, to the throne. The Whigs demanded that a

Protestant ascend the throne after the death of Charles II, and they had declared their allegiance to Shaftesbury even while Charles lived. Although the "upper" culture promulgated the ideas of divine right and non-resistance, Cragg informs us that the theory of divine right "though embellished by churchmen and elaborated with delight by kings, was not widely held among the people."<sup>43</sup> The Restoration establishment failed to revive the theory successfully, because the common people wanted to prevent a Catholic from becoming king. The Whigs placed monarchical theory on a constitutional basis, which the Tories interpreted as kingship by popular acclaim. Among the Tories it was a popular joke that Shaftesbury had contested for the Polish throne in 1674, when Sobieski was elected, and "The Polish Medall" (l. 3) refers to this popular anecdote.<sup>44</sup> Earl Wasserman informs us that the Whigs were frequently referred to as Poles in political pamphlets,<sup>45</sup> and he adds that by 1660 Denmark and Sweden had become "hereditary and absolute monarchies," leaving Poland as the last elective Germanic monarchy.<sup>46</sup> To Dryden and to the Tories, Poland is the equivalent of the Barbadoes in Mac Flecknoe, a barbarian land devoid of art and civilization as the reference to the zealots who "grinn and whet like a Croatian Band" (l. 240) makes clear. Because a popular monarch challenges the authority of a divinely-appointed king, London becomes a little kingdom of dunces, complete with a foolish leader and a proces-

sion as in Pope's Dunciad. Even from the viewpoint of a modern impartial historian, Dryden's depiction of London as an elective monarchy was justified:

This independence of the City embodied principles of government diametrically opposed to those represented by the King, the Court, and ministers with absolutist leanings. With its own trainbands, and treasury, an elective Lord Mayor and sheriffs, and representative institutions with a fairly wide franchise, London was virtually a republic, an Amsterdam on the Thames.<sup>47</sup>

An especially obstinate city, London is oblivious to the purging by plague and fire (l. 188): "Nor sharp Experience can to duty bring,/ Nor angry Heav'n, nor a forgiving King!" (ll. 189-190) These lines recall the events in Annus Mirabilis and Absalom and Achitophel in which England seemed to have been reborn and restored to stability. As instigator of plots against the king, Shaftesbury has satiated the mob's desire for power:

But this new Jehu spurs the hot mouth'd horse;  
Instructs the Beast to know his native force;  
To take the Bit between his teeth and fly  
To the next headlong Steep of Anarchy.  
(ll. 119-122)

As in Absalom and Achitophel and The Hind and the Panther, the law of the jungle governs the relationship between men. Luxury, not only of monetary but of spiritual excess, "makes us poor" (l. 126) because the Whig leader has glutted the populace with visions of glory. (l. 128) Gathered into one unit, the rabble composes a murderous army of madmen: "Almighty Crowd, thou shorten'st all dispute;/ Pow'r is thy

Essence; Wit thy Attribute!" (ll. 91-92) Like their leader who desires power for its own sake, the mob surrenders to its fancy just as Shaftesbury submits to his "venal wit." (l. 32) The rabble, in all ages, is the enemy of freedom because it executes the nation's best men:

Athens, no doubt, did righteously decide,  
 When Phocion and when Socrates were try'd:  
 As righteously they did those dooms repent;  
 Still they were wise, what ever way they went.  
 Crowds err not, though to both extremes they run;  
 To kill the Father, and recall the Son.  
 (ll. 95-100)

Elsewhere, Dryden enumerates the murderous intentions of the mob. Rebels "rack ev'n Scripture to confess their Cause," (l. 156) they "Chop up a Minister at every meal," (l. 227) and they record "their Conquest" (l. 143) on "The Stamp and Coyn of their adopted Lord." (l. 144)

Dryden gives a harsh and ugly account of man's fall from nature in The Medall. His imagery both inflates and contracts Shaftesbury and the enthusiasts. Under Shaftesbury's influence, society becomes monstrous. The mob is a "Beast" (l. 120) and its medal is a "Monster" (l. 4) like its hero:

Never did Art so well with Nature strive;  
 Nor ever Idol seem'd so much alive:  
 So like the Man; so golden to the sight,  
 So base within, so counterfeit and light.  
 (ll. 6-9)

Because discordant elements constitute the rabble, Shaftesbury and the medal, Dryden's conception of the monstrous nature of the rebels is justified. These "Monsters" (l. 173)



issue from the mud of the Thames, and the various Whigs and dissenters form a grand Cyclops. (l. 225) Seventeenth-century journalists sometimes referred to the sectarians as a beast or monster, but they just as frequently described the enthusiasts as worms or vermin. "There is no doubt that the Augustan conservative imagination delights to image the contemptible by recourse to insects," writes Paul Fussell.<sup>48</sup> As in Absalom and Achitophel, Dryden deflates the potency of Shaftesbury by ridiculing his stature. He possesses "an Eunuch face" (l. 23) and he is "a Pigmee" (l. 27) and "A Vermin." (l. 31) His wit is as insubstantial as his weight ("His nimble Wit outran the heavy Pack" l. 45) and the equally light crowd can "leapst o'r all eternal truths, in [its] Pindarique way!" (l. 94) Like their master, the minor sects belong to the lower animal phyla, appearing as "Frogs and Toads, and all the Tadpole Train." (l. 304) The witnesses of the Popish Plot who, "Leech-like, liv'd on bloud,/ Sucking for them were med'cinally good," (ll. 149-150) are both cannibalistic and parasitic. The imagery of amphibians, worms and leeches applied to the rebels suggests the invasion of a garden by a serpent, the image that figures so prominently and insistently in Absalom and Achitophel.

Despite the formidable power of this Whig opposition, their cause is hopeless. Arguing from a geographical account of political arrangements, Dryden contends that by nature,

Our Temp'rate Isle will no extremes sustain,  
 Of pop'lar Sway, or Arbitrary Reign:  
 But slides between them both into the best;  
 Secure in freedom, in a Monarch blest.  
 And though the Clymate, vex't with various Winds,  
 Works through our yielding Bodies, on our Minds,  
 The wholesome Tempest purges what it breeds;  
 To recommend the Calmness that succeeds.  
 (ll. 248-255)

Situated between the torrid south and the frigid north, England is in government, as in climate, naturally temperate. Monarchical and democratic tyrannies will enjoy only a brief success in England. Line 254 echoes the sentiments of lines thirty-seven to thirty-eight in Absalom and Achitophel, in which the court decides to allow Monmouth his freedom so that his adolescent fires will burn themselves out. Although this decision proves nearly fatal in the earlier poem, the frenzy in The Medall takes its own course and finally exhausts itself. Dryden believes that England will be periodically beset by disturbing conditions in its political climate, but that stability will always succeed the storms. At the Restoration, Englishmen welcomed their returning king from the Continent, but within twenty years ("And once in twenty Years, their Scribes Record,/ By natural Instinct they change their Lord," Absalom and Achitophel, ll. 218-219) they demand political change. When they tire of their political experiments, the English will return to "a rightful Monarch's Breast," (l. 322) just as they did in 1660.

English history, according to Dryden, consists of a series of ebbs and flows, of exiles and returns, which gives

the nation's history a circular structure. A king welcomed to power in 1660, is "reinstated" as monarch in early November, 1681, only to be ignored later in the same month. Each crisis recapitulates earlier history; the English accept Charles II in 1660 or they reject his authority as they rejected his father's in the 1640's. Despite the regicide of Charles I, the natural English propensity for monarchs placed the dead king's son on the throne in 1660.

Absalom and Achitophel analyzes the formation of rebellious conspiracies, but The Medall portrays the folly of attempted agitation against a lawful king. The earlier poem ends with a confident picture of the past, but The Medall concludes with a prediction of the future. Because former history reliably shows the course of the future, "Without a Vision Poets can fore-show/ What all but Fools, by Common Sense may know." (ll. 287-288) Because England returned to monarchy after the Interregnum, another disruption of the royal succession will also fail. The last thirty-odd lines of the poem describe the failure of the Commonwealth<sup>49</sup> and warn Shaftesbury of his fate as elected monarch of England. Even though he is an old man now, Shaftesbury in his "decrepit Age" (l. 293) will live to see his kingdom rot from within. For the moment, the Whig opposition presents a united front against Charles, but the factions have entered only a marriage of convenience. A monstrous and unnatural group, the Whig alliance will soon split into

parties that vie for dominance as Dryden forecast in His Majesties Declaration Defended:

At present, 'tis true, their mutual necessities keep them fast together; and all the several Fanatick Books fall in, to enlarge the common stream: But suppose the business compassed, as they design'd it, how many, and how contradicting Interests are there to be satisfied! Every Sect of High Shoes would then be uppermost; and not one of them endure the toleration of another.<sup>50</sup>

In The Medall, sectarian squabbling begins with the establishment of a commonwealth:

The swelling Poyson of the sev'ral Sects,  
Which wanting vent, the Nations Health infects  
Shall burst its Bag; and fighting out their way  
The various Venoms on each other prey.

(ll. 294-297)

The proud Presbyterians, the strongest of the Whig factions, will persecute the nobility (l. 299) and other dissenters. (l. 300) This tyranny will spawn new sectarian groups, (ll. 303-305) just as the Interregnum did.<sup>51</sup> Battles between the clergy and the military (l. 306) and between Royalist and republican noblemen (l. 309) will follow, and when England becomes utterly confused, a king will be recalled to power and the Cromwellian Shaftesbury will be harried from office. The frame of the monarch "shall be cast anew," (l. 316) and a legitimate monarch will reappear on English coinage and medallions.

Throughout The Medall Dryden's attitude points in two directions. Although the Whigs possess undoubted strength in their numbers, their splintered organization

is structurally weak. Because they are both monsters and worms, the Whigs are alternately threatening and impotent. In lines 137-138 the poet implores the aid of God to restore political balance to England: "Help Heaven! or sadly we shall see an hour,/ When neither wrong nor right are in their pow'r!" Desperate as the situation seems, Dryden soon celebrates London for its great Royalist strength:

Sedition has not wholly seiz'd on thee  
Thy nobler Parts are from infection free.  
Of Israel's Tribes thou hast a numerous band;  
But still the Canaanite is in the Land.  
Thy military Chiefs are brave and true;  
Nor are thy disenchanted Burghers few.  
The Head is loyal which thy Heart commands;  
But what's a Head with two such gouty Hands?  
(ll. 175-182)

Although the British malady is confined in the above passage, Dryden returns to his theme of imminent destruction in his observations on an infected country (l. 198) and a "pox'd Nation." (l. 266)

The conclusion of the poem incorporates both of Dryden's attitudes towards the threats of the enthusiasts. The rebels, strong enough to usurp power, retain their leadership only for a short time. The imposing monster splits into factions of warring frogs and toads like Error in The Faerie Queene and like Sin in Paradise Lost, and once it is fragmented, it decomposes. The last lines confidently predict the failure of the "good old cause", but Dryden deliberately avoids direct mention of a regicide which would mar both the assured tone that he wishes to

maintain and the note of Royalist victory on which the poem ends. The poet destroys his contemptible enemies and restores a king, but Charles II, significantly, does nothing in the poem. Fever and madness cure themselves by running their course. Providential aids and warnings--fires, plagues, a speech from the throne, a sign from heaven--do not cure the sick enthusiasts. Only natural events and actual political experience can correct the distempers of the deluded aspirants. Dryden could not merely re-write the conclusion of Absalom and Achitophel without blatantly repeating himself. Nor could he disperse the mob so easily as in Mac Flecknoe in which the playwrights never attain an extensive dominion in England. The Medall resolves itself in compromise. The Whigs, more powerful than King Flecknoe and less politic than King Charles, enjoy a short but abortive reign, which soon ends with the restoration of a monarch.

The Medall embodies both of the attitudes that Dryden expresses towards enthusiasts in his prose. The Dedication to the Translation of The History of the League opens by warning Charles II about the malice and strength of the Whigs. (Malone, II, 427-431) Dryden advises the king to take offensive action against his enemies (Malone, II, 429) as did Henry IV of France (Malone, II, 430) and he congratulates Charles II for publishing his defence for the abolition of parliament. (Malone, II, 433) Because the king took direct action, "it has pleased Almighty God so to

prosper your affairs, that without searching into the secrets of Divine Providence, it is evident your magnanimity and resolution, next under him, have been the immediate cause of your safety and our present happiness." (Malone, II, 433) Although favoured by Providence, God rewards Charles only when he takes immediate action; supernatural aid depends on human will. The rebels have been halted temporarily, but in language recalling The Medall, Dryden warns that "It is still a gusty kind of weather; there is a kind of sickness in the air; it seems indeed to be cleared up for some few hours, but the wind still blowing from the same corner; and when new matter is gathered into a body, it will not fail to bring it round, and pour upon us a second tempest." (Malone, II, 430-431) Although the sectarian threat still looms, Dryden speaks of the certain and easily predictable failure of Shaftesbury and his cohorts, the topic which receives poetic treatment in The Medall:

This was just a Cataline's conspiracy of profligate, debauched, and bankrupt men. The wealthy amongst them were the fools of the party, drawn in by the rest, whose fortunes were desperate; and the wits of the cabal sought only their private advantages: they had either lost their preferments, and consequently were piqued, or were in hope to raise themselves by the general disturbance. Upon which account, they never could be true to one another; there was neither honour nor conscience in the foundation of their League; but every man having an eye to his own particular advancement, was no longer a friend than while his interest was carrying on; so that treachery was at the bottom of their design, first against the monarchy, and if that failed, against each other; in which,

be it spoken to the honour of our nation, the  
English are not behind any other country.  
(Malone, II, 455-456)

Because of the unnatural alliances which compose the conspiracy, and the profane behaviour of its leaders, Dryden can confidently say "For my own part, when I had once observed this fundamental errour in their politicks, I was no longer afraid of their success; no government was ever ruined by the open scandal of its opposers." (Malone, II, 455)

Dryden's admonition and congratulation, fear and confidence, and inflation and belittlement occur in the prose works and in The Medall. Although the poem's conclusion attempts to reconcile Dryden's conflicting feelings, the poem does not conceal the private uncertainties of its author. Dryden's tone shifts between anxiety and outrage. Providence expresses minimal interest in British history; the poet's desperate prayer goes unanswered. The king's presence would prove a redundant embarrassment to the poet who would be forced to reconcile the workings of nature and Providence. The exalted praise of Charles II which Dryden voices in many prologues, epilogues, essays and poems before 1682, never materializes in The Medall. The poem conspicuously omits the "positive enthusiasm" usually found in Dryden's works dealing with state affairs. A routine recounting of Interregnum history replaces the ordinarily jubilant celebration of the monarch. The poet, as a party satirist, dissects his monstrous enemy and destroys him with



the rhetoric of contempt. Dryden does not write a sacred English history perceived through the person of a sacred king. Consequently, Biblical parallels and heavenly invocations are absent or subdued in a composition whose subject is the terrestrial nature of the English people and their peculiar historical and political chronicle.

W.O.S. Sutherland argues that many images and phrases in The Medall occur in contemporary pamphlets dealing with immediate political problems, but Alan Roper contends that the religious analogies that shape Absalom and Achitophel also inform The Medall.<sup>52</sup> To Roper, Shaftesbury functions as "the Satanic snake of an English Paradise...[tempting] the Eve-like subjects of Charles II to commit the political original sin of rebelling against the authority of their Adamic king."<sup>53</sup> Although Shaftesbury does behave like a devil in The Medall, Sutherland's argument is truer to the spirit and tone of the poem. Related to Satan though he be, Shaftesbury is too comical, contemptible and constricted to excite terror or admiration. His power diminished, the arch-English plotter is easily rendered helpless by the poet at the end of the poem. But no St. George conquers this dragon. As Martin Price says of The Medall in comparison to Absalom and Achitophel: "The tone is one of easier contempt, and the logic of the couplet is more consistently exploited to close in upon folly and cant."<sup>54</sup> The poet never allows us to respect his

enemies; from beginning to end, the poem issues a relentless volley of abuse against petty enthusiasts, and the poem lacks the appearance of a David who could lend an inspirational nobility to the action. We have already examined how Dryden demonstrates the folly of sectarian dissent with the aid of history; we must now analyze the cant of the zealots whose holiday provokes the poet's anger.

Although Dryden always displayed an interest in language, he was concerned especially with sectarian rhetoric during the early 1680's. One of the major proofs (at least to himself) that the enthusiasts were mistaken in their cause was their employment of an unrefined literary style that equalled their bad manners, stupidity and immorality. Language informed the Augustan of another man's character and intelligence, and Dryden consistently discovered intemperate and unintelligible expressions in the pamphlets and public spectacles of the enthusiasts. His Majesties Declaration Defended (1681) attacks the style of the author of "A Letter from a Person of Quality to his Friend: Concerning the Kings Late Declaration touching the Reason which Moved him to Dissolve the Two Last Parliaments at Westminster and Oxford." In answer to the proposition that the Duke of York be banished from England, Dryden begins his retort by saying that

I will not be unreasonable with him; I will expect English no where from the barrenness of his Country: but if he can make sense of his

Unnatural War of Expediency, I will forgive him two false Grammars, and three Barbarisms, in every Period of his Pamphlet; and yet leave him enow of each to expose his ignorance, whensoever I design it.<sup>55</sup>

A barbarian does not speak the language of the civilized man and Dryden spurns his adversary for his linguistic ignorance just as he ridicules the use of the word "Laetamur" (l. 15) which adorns the Polish medal. In the same pamphlet Dryden complains: "In justification of the two Votes against lending or advancing Money to the King, he falls to railing, like a Sophister in the Schools, when his Syllogisms are at an end."<sup>56</sup>

In the Dedication of The Duke of Guise (1683), whose subject is the religious wars in France, Dryden also remarks on the dissenters' penchant for raillery:

It is not, my Lord, that any man delights to see himself pasquined and affronted by their inveterate scribblers; but on the other side it ought to be our glory, that themselves believe not of us what they write. Reasonable men are well satisfied for whose sakes the venom of their party is shed on us, because they see that at the same time our adversaries spare not those to whom they own allegiance and veneration. Their despair has pushed them to break those bonds; and it is observable, that the lower they are driven, the more violently they write....Let them rail, since it is the only solace of their miseries, and the only revenge which we hope they now can take. (Malone, II, 67)

Dryden attributes the extravagant outbursts of his enemies to their diseased humours, and his Prologue to the same play makes further comments on the rhetorical excesses of

of enthusiasts and republicans. The poet ironically advises the Whigs to force Charles to "lose England to recover France./ Cry Freedom up with Popular noisy Votes," (ll. 29-30) and he compares the work of London juries and dissenting politicians: "Let Ignoramus Juries find no Traitors:/ And Ignoramus Poets scribble Satyres." (ll. 43-44) The political enemy is not only "illogical" in his thinking, but equally important, he is faulty in his rhetoric. Dryden's censure of lampooners in the Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire (1693) ought to be read within the context of his attacks on his political and religious opponents ten to fifteen years earlier. Lampoons may ruin the reputation of a good man, but thankfully "our common libellers are as free from the imputation of wit as of morality; and therefore whatever mischief they have designed, they have performed but little of it." (Watson, II, 78)

Dryden's "Epistle to the Whigs" assails his adversaries with the accusation of linguistic incompetence. In the conclusion of his epistle, Dryden says

I have one onely favour to desire of you at parting, that when you think of answering this Poem, you wou'd employ the same Pens against it, who have combated with so much success against Absalom and Achitophel: for then you may assure your selves of a clear Victory, without the least reply. Raile at me abundantly; and, not to break a Custome, doe it without wit: By this method you will gain a considerable point, which is wholly to wave the answer of my Arguments. (Kinsley, p. 225)

Dryden wishes to disengage himself from pamphlet wars with the Whigs who are desirous of promoting their own cause at the expense of truth. Addressed to his disdainful enemies, Dryden's preface and poem maintain a haughty and contemptuous style. Embroiled in polemical warfare, Dryden mocks the Whigs rather than leading them slowly and gently to wisdom. Before proceeding to his verses, Dryden makes one last comment on the style of Christopher Ness's A Key (With the Whip), a poem which attacked Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel:<sup>57</sup>

A Dissenter in Poetry from Sense and English,  
will make as good a Protestant Rhymer, as a  
Dissenter from the Church of England a Prot-  
estant Parson. Besides, if you encourage a  
young Beginner, who knows but he may elevate  
his stile a little, above the vulgar Epithets  
of prophane, and sawcy Jack, and Atheistick  
Scribbler, with which he treats me, when the  
fit of Enthusiasm is strong upon him; by  
which well-manner'd and charitable Expres-  
sions, I was certain of his Sect, before I  
knew his name. (Kinsley, p. 226)

Like Absalom and Achitophel, The Medall judges rhetorical enthusiasm as one of the major causes of divisiveness in society. By destroying established religion, enthusiasm undermines moral guidance in political life and Dryden's description of the medal indicates its religious and political significance:

One side is fill'd with Title and with Face;  
And, lest the King shou'd want a regal Place,  
On the reverse, a Tow'r the Town surveys;  
O'er which our mounting Sun his beams displays.  
The Word, pronounc'd aloud by Shrieval voice,  
Laetamur, which, in Polish, is rejoyce.

The Day, Month, Year, to the great Act are join'd:  
And a new Canting Holiday design'd. (ll. 10-17)

The medal's appearance formally announces the foundation of a new demonic religion. Like Lucifer, Shaftesbury spent five days sitting for his portrait.(ll. 18-21) The Earl's followers are devil-worshippers whose adoration of the medallion parallels the Catholic's superstitious reverence for statues. The sectarian "Word" is comparable to the "uncreating word" of Dulness in Pope's Dunciad: it inverts the purpose of language as expressed in the opening of St. John's Gospel. Dryden's dissenters and Pope's dunces employ language in the service of evil. Rhetorical anarchy precludes moral discriminations and intelligent thought. Like his pamphleteering opponents, Dryden's polemicists in The Medall speak "when the fit of Enthusiasm is strong." A preacher himself, Shaftesbury, with his "venom", induces the charlatan priests to mount the pulpit in defence of their leader:

What else inspires the Tongues, and swells the Breasts  
Of all thy bellowing Renegado Priests,  
That preach up Thee for God; dispence thy Laws;  
And with thy Stumm ferment their fainting Cause?  
(ll. 267-270)

Under the sway of Shaftesbury, the preachers spread the good news that the Whig leader is the rightful king of Heaven and earth. "Bellowing" and swelling suggest that fire and wind are the source of enthusiastic zeal, and "Tongues" is a pun on the name of Israel Tonge, a major

witness of the Popish Plot<sup>57</sup> and the spiritual inspiration to Shaftesbury's worshippers.

Perhaps the most regrettable effect of unrestrained zeal is the destruction of the Bible: sectarian priests distort scriptural passages to justify their rebellion:

They rack ev'n Scripture to confess their Cause;  
 And plead a Call to preach, in spite of Laws.  
 But that's no news to the poor injur'd Page;  
 It has been us'd as ill in every Age:  
 And is constrain'd, with patience, all to take;  
 For what defence can Greek and Hebrew make?  
 Happy who can this talking Trumpet seize;  
 They make it speak whatever Sense they please!  
 'Twas fram'd, at first, our Oracle t'enquire;  
 But, since our Sects in prophecy grow higher,  
 The Text inspires not them; but they the Text inspire.  
 (ll. 156-166)

"Our Oracle" ought to serve all men, but the sectarians claim the Bible as their special possession, the private domain of infallible saints. The passage reveals clearly the unlawful and murderous character of the enthusiastic rebels. As a helpless prisoner, Scripture undergoes the torment inflicted by its persecutors. Ignoring the laws banning their conventicles, the zealots "rack" the Bible, the same form of torture to which the Spanish Inquisitors put heretics. Because their "inner light" is their most reliable prophetic guide, the sectarians use Scripture as an adjunct to religion. Dissenting insistence on fidelity to the literal meaning of the Bible is abandoned for a constricted exegesis. The sectarians force a confession from their mute prisoner that sanctifies their cause. As a

"talking Trumpet", holy writ sounds the battle cry for holy warfare.

The oratory of sectarian religious leaders parallels the rhetoric of political opportunists. The Medall interweaves religion and politics so tightly that the two pursuits cannot easily be isolated. Public harangues thrill the unscrupulous and the ignorant who work with messianic zeal for the overthrow of monarchical and episcopal rule. Religious enthusiasm, by hallowing and sanctifying the recititude of a democracy, promotes the cause of the abhorrent enemies of the "conservative myth".

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>H.T. Swedenberg, ed., The Works of John Dryden, Vol. II: Poems, 1681-1684 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 286.

<sup>2</sup>Swedenberg, ed., The Works of John Dryden, II, 286.

<sup>3</sup>Howard H. Schless, ed., Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660-1714 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), III, 13-14.

<sup>4</sup>Schless, ed., Poems on Affairs of State, III, 97.

<sup>5</sup>John Dryden, His Majesties Declaration Defended (London, 1681), p. 16. Facsimile with intro. by Godfrey Davies, Augustan Reprint Society, Publication No. 23 (Series IV, No. 4), (Los Angeles: Williams Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, 1950).

<sup>6</sup>Dryden, His Majesties Declaration Defended, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup>K.H.D. Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, p. 670.

<sup>8</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, p. 670.

<sup>9</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, p. 691.



<sup>10</sup>Dryden, His Majesties Declaration Defended, p. 20.

<sup>11</sup>Albert Camus, The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt, trans. Anthony Bower (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1956), p. 118.

<sup>12</sup>Martin Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, p. 63.

<sup>13</sup>Ruth Wallerstein, "To Madness Near Allied: Shaftesbury and his Place in the Design and Thought of Absalom and Achitophel," 445.

<sup>14</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, see Chapters II through VI.

<sup>15</sup>Schless, ed., Poems on Affairs of State, II, 85.

<sup>16</sup>Samuel Butler, Characters, ed., Charles W. Daves (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1970), pp. 45-46.

<sup>17</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, p. 687.

<sup>18</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, p. 687.

<sup>19</sup>For a discussion and a rebuttal of the Tory accusations, see Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, pp. 137-139.

<sup>20</sup>Swedenberg, ed., The Works of John Dryden, II, 249-250.

<sup>21</sup>See W.O.S. Sutherland, Jr., "Dryden's Use of Popular Imagery in The Medal," University of Texas Studies in English, XXXV (1956), 129, and Keith Thomas's Religion and the Decline of Magic on the word "conjurer" as applied to a recusant Puritan, p. 68.

<sup>22</sup>Sir Walter Scott and George Saintbury, eds., The Works of John Dryden (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1884), IX, 445-446n.

<sup>23</sup>Swedenberg, ed., The Works of John Dryden, II, 294.

<sup>24</sup>Dryden, His Majesties Declaration Defended, p.3.

<sup>25</sup>J.R. Tanner, English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century, 1603-1689, p. 288.

<sup>26</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, pp. 28-29.

<sup>27</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, p. 141.

<sup>28</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, pp. 145, 165, 180, 297, and 324-325.

<sup>29</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, pp. 180, 297.

<sup>30</sup>Tanner, English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century, p. 288.

<sup>31</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, pp. 716-717.

<sup>32</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, p. 654.

<sup>33</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, p. 732.

<sup>34</sup>Francis Bacon, "Of Atheisme" in The Borzoi Anthology of Seventeenth-Century English Literature, David Novarr, ed., Vol. III Seventeenth-Century English Prose (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 51.

<sup>35</sup>Glanvill, The Vanity of Dogmatizing, p. 103.

<sup>36</sup>Glanvill, The Vanity of Dogmatizing, p. 230.

<sup>37</sup>Butler, Characters, pp. 68-69.

<sup>38</sup>Butler, Characters, p. 128.

<sup>39</sup>J.R. Jones, The First Whigs, p. 15.

<sup>40</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, p. 673.

<sup>41</sup>Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, p. 673.

<sup>42</sup>Malone, II, 91-92.

<sup>43</sup>G.R. Cragg, From Puritanism to the Age of Reason, p. 159.

<sup>44</sup>Swedenberg, ed., The Works of Dryden, II, 290.

<sup>45</sup>Earl R. Wasserman, "The Meaning of 'Poland' in The Medal," MLN, LXXIII (1958), 167.

<sup>46</sup>Wasserman, "The Meaning of 'Poland' in The Medal," 166.

<sup>47</sup>J.R. Jones, The First Whigs, p. 198.

<sup>48</sup>Paul Fussell, The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism: Ethics and Imagery from Swift to Burke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 234.

<sup>49</sup>See Scott-Saintsbury, eds., IX, 418 and Swedenberg, ed., The Works of John Dryden, II, 298.

<sup>50</sup>Dryden, His Majesties Declaration Defended, p. 13. Roswell G. Ham notices the similarity between the jostling sects at the conclusion of The Medall. See "Dryden as Historiographer-Royal: The Authorship of His Majesties Declaration Defended, 1681" in Swedenberg, ed., Essential Articles for the Study of John Dryden, p. 149.

<sup>51</sup>For a brief account of the rise of new sects during the Commonwealth, see Christopher Hill, The Century of Revolution, pp. 147-154.

<sup>52</sup>W.O.S. Sutherland, Jr., "Dryden's Use of Popular Imagery in The Medal," 123-134; Alan Roper, "Dryden's Medal and the Divine Analogy," ELH, XXIX (1962), 396-417; and, Alan Roper, Dryden's Poetic Kingdoms, pp. 87-103.

<sup>53</sup>Roper, Dryden's Poetic Kingdoms, p. 87.

<sup>54</sup>Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, p. 62

<sup>55</sup>Dryden, His Majesties Declaration Defended, p. 13.

<sup>56</sup>Dryden, His Majesties Declaration Defended, p. 17.

<sup>57</sup>Swedenberg, ed., The Works of John Dryden, II, 293.

<sup>58</sup>For a synopsis of Tonge's role in the Popish Plot see Maurice Ashley, England in the Seventeenth Century, pp. 142, 144.

RELIGIO LAICI

Religio Laici shares many important features with Dryden's previous works. According to its Preface, the author intends to "Combat Irreligion" (Kinsley, p. 273) and to battle "the Enemies of Piety," (Kinsley, p. 273) who, as we have seen, are associated with enthusiasm and its aberrant activities. For the most part, Dryden combats his adversaries with purely religious arguments: the proper use of reason, the meaning of revelation, the paramount importance of Scripture, the authority of the Church and the salvation of the heathens. Nevertheless, political subjects appear in Religio Laici, just as religious topics mingle with political themes in poems on matters of state. Before 1682, Dryden's writings showed concern with impiety. Loose comedies, which he disdained but frequently wrote, evoked his condemnation on moral and artistic grounds. The Preface to Tyrannic Love (1670) informs us of Dryden's intention to write a play with an instructive moral purpose: "I considered that pleasure was not the only end of poesy; and that even the instruction of morality were not so wholly the business of a poet as that the precepts and examples of piety were to be omitted." (Watson, I, 138) Written to Sir Charles Sedley, the Dedication to The Assignation (1673) bans immorality of all kinds from the stage: "The Wits they

describe are the fops we banish: for blasphemy and atheism, if they were neither sin nor ill manners, are subjects so very common, and worn so threadbare, that people who have sense avoid them, for fear of being suspected to have none." (Watson, I, 187) Three years later in the Dedication of Aurengzebe (1676) Dryden informed the Earl of Mulgrave that he would discontinue the writing of fatuous comedies to devote himself to more serious tasks: "Some little hopes I have yet remaining...that I may make the world some part of amends for many ill plays by an heroick poem." (Malone, I, ii, 425) The word "amends" in Dryden's confession emphasizes the moral, as well as the artistic nature of his literary enterprises.

Examples of pious and irreverent behaviour can be found in poems written before Religio Laici. Annus Mirabilis (1667) shows Charles II praying for divine relief from the fire that ravaged London in 1666:

Mean time he sadly suffers in their grief,  
Out-weeps an Hermite, and out-prays a Saint:  
All the long night he studies their relief,  
How they may be suppli'd, and he may want.  
(ll. 1041-1044)

In contrast to the piety of Charles and the "pious Structures, by our Fathers rear'd." (l. 1090) are the desecrations of religious enthusiasts who emphasized faith to the exclusion of good works. (l. 1092) The same opposition between a pious king and his unholy enemies occurs in Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall. The former poem begins "In pious

times," before natural man was corrupted by religious zeal and superstition, and pictures the king as a devout servant of God, besieged by apostate subjects and led by a wicked political schemer.

Religio Laici pursues some of the same themes that figure prominently in earlier poems. The political poems examine piety in the public figure of Charles II while virtue, as opposed to enthusiastic display, receives a more private and religious consideration in Religio Laici. Whereas the political poems showed how the state and its monarch should cope with enthusiasts, Religio Laici demonstrates how the private Christian may overcome the arguments and enticements of these zealots.

Written in the same year as The Medall, and during a period of continuing political crisis, Religio Laici seems a rather odd work for Dryden to have produced at this time. Edward N. Hooker, unconvinced that the poem was primarily about religion, argued that Religio Laici was a political poem that attacked both Buckingham and Shaftesbury.<sup>1</sup> More conventional students of Dryden's poem see Religio Laici as the first serious attempt by the poet to express his own religious views. In 1682, Verrall reasons, "Dryden was now passing out of middle life; he was fifty years of age, and a deeper consideration of the problems of theology was quite natural, even without external impulse."<sup>2</sup> Robert D. Hume has recently seconded Verrall's opinion that Dryden

became increasingly concerned with religious and moral matters in middle age:

Actually, by the end of the 1670s Dryden had become much more concerned with propriety than he had been at the beginning of the decade. In the troubled period of the 1680s, however, his interest in social and moral matters really deepens. This deepening is not apparent in the few critical essays of the period, but is implicit in the satires and political writings on which he was engaged; during a time when the establishment of which he was a part was being challenged and overthrown his views quite naturally shift and deepen.<sup>3</sup>

This shifting and deepening of Dryden's religious response is important for our study of enthusiasm because the poet now concentrates more directly on the doctrinal shortcomings of the dissenters which had been only parenthetically examined in Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall. By addressing theological questions, Dryden exonerates himself from the charge of crass political opportunism and he also shows his versatility in being able to deal with enthusiasm from a perspective other than the political. As in his other poems, Dryden adopts a conservative stance in Religio Laici, a stance which places him in direct opposition to the forces of anarchy; where he formerly combatted the itch for innovation in politics, he now attacks radical religious thought.

As the title and subtitle of Dryden's poem, Religio Laici or A Laymans Faith, make clear, the poet intends to give an account of his own religious beliefs in his verse.

"I pretend not to make my self a Judge of Faith, in others, but onely to make a Confession of my own," (Kinsley, p. 273) Dryden states in the Preface. Although Dryden's religious opinions are personal, they are not idiosyncratic. The poet stays on the safe side of that narrow line between self-expression and self-indulgence, and although Dryden occasionally raises his voice to exalted heights in Religio Laici, he does so because Scripture makes him experience true Christian joy and not because his soul has been warped by enthusiasm. The poet's thought agrees with that of most divines on major issues. Unwilling to venture unorthodox or heretical ideas in the poem, Dryden says that "I lay no unhallow'd hand upon the Ark; but wait on it, with the Reverence that becomes me at a distance." (Kinsley, p. 273) Because he is a layman, Dryden submitted his work for the approval of

a judicious and learned Friend, a Man indefatigably zealous in the service of the Church and State: and whose Writings, have highly deserv'd of both. He was pleas'd to approve the body of the Discourse, and I hope he is more my Friend, than to do it out of Complaisance.... (Kinsley, p. 274)

Though the poem is the work of a believing Anglican, it is still the work of a layman and it contains statements with which Dryden's clerical mentor disagreed: "'Tis true he had too good a tast to like it all; and amongst some other faults recommended to my second view, what I have written, perhaps too boldly on St. Athanasius: which he



advised me wholly to omit." (Kinsley, p. 274) Although the omission of the attack on Athanasius would have been wise, Dryden says that "I could not have satisfied my self, that I had done honestly not to have written what was my own." (Kinsley, p. 274) Allegiance to the Anglican Church did not require unwavering acceptance of religious tenets on relatively unimportant matters (as the dogmatism of enthusiasm did), and Dryden found this to be a satisfactory arrangement in 1682.

Much confusion about the orthodoxy or heterodoxy of seventeenth-century beliefs has been generated by the mistaken belief that the Anglican Church was as systematic in its theology as the Roman Church. Before proceeding to an analysis of Religio Laici and its relation to enthusiasm, it will be helpful to give a brief account of Anglicanism, especially as it applies to the seventeenth century. This account will show the way in which Dryden conformed to the Anglican thought of his age and it will illustrate clearly why he found rival faiths unacceptable. Because Dryden believed that all religions, except the Anglican, were sectarian and tainted with the stigma of enthusiasm, an explanation of Anglicanism will clarify why Dryden considered the Church of England to be the only true and non-enthusiastic faith available to him in 1682. Also, because Dryden converted from Anglicanism to Catholicism within four years of the writing of Religio Laici, this discussion of Anglicanism

will enable us to see what it was that Dryden objected to in his old faith.

H.R. McAdoo's The Spirit of Anglicanism attempts to show the matters that were particularly Anglican in the theological debates of Dryden's century by emphasizing those features of the Church of England which were neither Roman Catholic nor Protestant. McAdoo's preface begins with the emphatic statement that

Anglicanism is not a theological system and there is no writer whose work is an essential part of it either in respect of content or with regard to the form of its self-expression. Richard Hooker has some claim to be the greatest Anglican writer, but his work was to state a method in theology rather than to outline a system. The concern of the Ecclesiastical Polity was with interpretation and application and not with formulation. The absence of an official theology in Anglicanism is something deliberate which belongs to its essential nature, for it has always regarded the teaching and practice of the undivided Church of the first five centuries as a criterion.<sup>4</sup>

Appeal to the authority of the early Church and a suspension of judgment on secondary matters produces a particular Anglican "method" or "spirit":

Equally consistent in the works of the writer of the period is liberality of outlook on secondary questions. Gore called this a liberal Catholicism but it was in fact simply Anglicanism, and the subject matter of this book is an attempt to show a conscious agreement in this viewpoint, with varying emphases according to circumstance, on the part of seventeenth-century writers.<sup>5</sup>

Stephen Neill, in a more popular work on Anglicanism, makes the same point as McAdoo that the Anglican religion does

not have the rigid doctrines of other faiths:

In the strict sense of the term, there is, therefore, no Anglican faith. But there is an Anglican attitude and an Anglican atmosphere. This defies analysis. It must be felt and experienced in order to be understood. All that can be done is to isolate and comment on certain elements on which Anglicans throughout the world would probably agree as characteristic of their own faith and experience.<sup>6</sup>

Anglicanism, then, according to two authorities on the theology and history of the Church of England, must be discussed in reference to its "spirit" or "method" or "atmosphere." Although these terms are vague, to be sure, there were important doctrinal areas of agreement amongst seventeenth-century as amongst contemporary Anglicans. As we shall see, Dryden incorporates these major assertions of the Anglican religion in his poem, while he also makes the crucial distinction between primary and secondary religious issues. The "spirit" of Anglicanism which Dryden's poem conveys makes the Church of England appear to rest on the same hazy personal foundation as the sectarian faiths. Though Dryden carefully shows that Anglicanism is not synonymous with enthusiasm in 1682, yet his Hind and the Panther charges that his old Church is infected with enthusiastic zeal similar to that of the continental and British sects.

While many features of the poem make Religio Laici an Anglican poem, the congenial and tolerant tone of its speaker make it characteristically Anglo-Catholic. Although

the layman's stance toward rationalistic divines may be essentially the same as the cleric's, the poet's major apologetic tool is his own personality. James W. Corder says that Dryden's poem presents no "systematic theology nor codified philosophy, as the well-known and valuable exegeses of Bredvold and Fujimura suggest."<sup>7</sup> Although Dryden evaluates central features of Anglicanism, his work is neither a catechism nor a handbook explaining the Anglican faith. Such a rigorous approach would be inappropriate in a work in which the layman's own confession is equally as important as his subject matter.

Dryden endeavours to make himself and his faith attractive by emphasizing the charitable nature of each. His unsystematic presentation of Anglican thought stresses the catholicity of the Church of England at the expense of philosophies and religions that have hardened into codes and dogmas. Charity enables the poet to overcome the logic and zeal of his opponents. The reason of the ancients and the Deists, the institutional authority of the Catholics and the fanaticism of Athanasius and the enthusiasts are no match for this one virtue. According to St. Paul, faith and knowledge are hollow without charity: "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." (1 Cor 13: 2) Besides being the paramount Christian virtue, charity in

Dryden's poem is a natural treasure, like Scripture, which confounds the arts of the intellect: "Thus far my Charity this path has try'd;/ (A much unskilfull, but well meaning guide)." (ll. 224-225)

Dryden's advocating charity accomplishes several important purposes. First, this virtue, before all others, establishes Dryden's credentials as a true Christian in contrast to those who invoke the name of Christ, but behave in a despotic manner. Second, Dryden's claim to be a natural and humble man makes him more appealing than his dogmatic enemies, and allows the poet an escape from the difficult questions posed by his more exacting opponents. Confronting an army of dissenting enemies in Religio Laici, Dryden wins our assent to his arguments through the sweetness and light of his personality and language just as David overcame legions of enthusiasts in Absalom and Achitophel by the force of his disposition and his rhetoric. Third, the speaker's defence of charity links him with several important personages. Like St. Paul, Dryden is a tolerant Christian who agrees with the evangelist's statement in Romans 2: 14 that the gentile can be saved: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves." Unlike the enthusiasts who stressed the words of Romans 1: 17 ("The just shall live by faith"), Dryden emphasizes the Pauline command for charity.

Such an emphasis brings the poet into direct conflict with the Papists and the enthusiasts, but still enables him to tolerate the Jesuit Simon with whom he disagrees. The charitable attitude also places Dryden in line with Richard Hooker and other anti-Calvinist divines who avoided both revolutionary and reactionary interpretations of religious doctrine. We shall see later in this chapter how closely Dryden's ideas in Religio Laici conform to Hooker's thought in his Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity.

Although Charles II plays no part in Dryden's poem, there are occasions when the characteristics formerly applied to the monarch are attributed to the speaker and his religion. Dryden retains the crown as an implicit and important symbol in poems written after 1682, even in works in which politics plays little overt part. As in Dryden's other poems, the battle of order and inspiration against anarchy and enthusiasm constitutes the major action of Religio Laici. In this poem, as in Paradise Lost,<sup>8</sup> the private man becomes a kind of monarch responsible for the governance of his own domain, and this image of the individual as king receives even more treatment in The Hind and the Panther. The Preface to Religio Laici hints twice at this extension of the monarchical symbol. Dryden says that because his arguments are borrowed from the works of clergymen, "the Weapons with which I Combat Irreligion, are already Consecrated; though I suppose they may be taken down

as lawfully as the Sword of Goliah was by David, when they are to be employed for the common Cause, against the Enemies of Piety." (Kinsley, p. 273) Although Dryden's statement refers primarily to the Biblical king and not to Charles II, the poet had previously compared King David to the British monarch in Absalom and Achitophel. Indeed, the persistence of the Biblical comparison in earlier works is sufficient to indicate that Dryden's use of the David image in the Preface to Religio Laici initiates a major shift in his poetry. Earlier works stress the charity of Charles, and when speaking of the recalcitrant dissenters in the Preface, Dryden says that "they interpret the mildness of a Writer to them, as they do the mercy of the Government; in the one they think it Fear, and conclude it Weakness in the other." (Kinsley, p. 281) The identification of the king and the poet begins to undergo a slight but important change; whereas the poet has formerly related himself to the king, he now assumes the role and character of a monarch and begins to act more independently of Charles II. Like The Medall, Religio Laici shows the lone Dryden undertaking the battle against enthusiasm that Charles-David had waged in Absalom and Achitophel.

G.R. Cragg writes that "For any thoughtful person in the seventeenth century the problem of authority was urgent. It was involved, directly or indirectly, in every controversy of the age."<sup>9</sup> Because of the revolutionary

character of the century, this problem of authority governed political and religious thought and it is the central issue in Dryden's poem. The Anglican, refusing to submit to simplistic solutions to the vexatious problem of authority, offered several criteria to resolve the predicament. Deistic rationalism, Catholic ecclesiastical dominance or enthusiastic faith in the rectitude of the private spirit were, by themselves, unacceptable bases for a religion that sought a balanced and comprehensive answer to complex problems. H.R. McAdoo explains that

In fact, seventeenth-century Anglicanism taking it by and large, saw no solution to the problem of authority which did not admit of the mutually illuminating relationship of Scripture, antiquity and reason, and refused any solution which insulated authority against the testing of history and the free action of reason. It must be such an authority as can stand investigation and command freely-given adherence. It must evoke rather than repress the response of the individual, and refuse to pronounce on matters that are not essential. In so far as it was consciously formulated, it is not an easy solution, but it was the contention of the seventeenth-century writers that there was no easy solution which was at the same time true.<sup>10</sup>

McAdoo's description of Anglican theological method in the century closely resembles Dryden's treatment of religious problems in Religio Laici. Since Dryden includes historical considerations and the power of free will in his discussion of Scripture, antiquity and reason, we shall begin the analysis of the poem with an examination of the latter three aspects, to which the poet pays key attention.



Nearly half of Religio Laici (ll. 1-223) is concerned with the concept of reason, a concept whose meaning has generated the greatest critical disputes about Dryden's poem. Because of these controversies over reason and its relationship to the meaning of Religio Laici, an investigation of Dryden's understanding of this important faculty is in order. The opening eleven lines of the poem most clearly state Dryden's judgment on reason and faith:

Dim, as the borrow'd beams of Moon and Stars  
To lonely, weary, wandering 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,  
As 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.

Obviously these lines assert the superiority of religion or faith over reason, but they do not claim that reason is without use. Although the exercise of reason does not guarantee religious certitude, the use of the reason which the enthusiasts forsake can be the beginning of religious faith. Like the reflected light of the sun which illuminates the moon and stars, God grants (or lends) reason to man to improve his understanding. "Day's bright Lord" shines on "our Hemisphere," eclipsing our rational efforts to understand Providence, but in other hemispheres that have never heard of Christ, reason allows an understanding of the natural law which leads the heathen to salvation.

Dryden admits in the Preface that reflection upon the cosmos can prove that some superior power guides our destiny: "That there is some thing above us, some Principle of motion, our Reason can apprehend, though it cannot discover what it is, by its own Vertue." (Kinsley, p. 275) Although reason cannot replace faith, faith does not contradict the principles of reason, which is a preamble to faith:

Fideism, a negative and minority view at best, has usually been set off in historical accounts against the majority view which, in the tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas and Richard Hooker, has always prevailed in the Catholic and Anglican churches. This position of what may be called "Christian rationalism" has always accepted a form of natural religion, discoverable by unaided human reason, but has denied its sufficiency, insisting on the necessity of revealed religion as well.<sup>11</sup>

Dryden's position on reason and faith in Religio Laici agrees with Hooker's in The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity:

By reason man attaineth unto the knowledge of things that are, and are not sensible; it resteth therefore, that we search how man attaineth unto the knowledge of such things unsensible, as are to be known that they may be done. Seeing then that nothing can move unless there be some end, the desire whereof provoketh unto motion; how should that Divine power of the soul, "that spirit of our mind," as the Apostle termeth it, ever stir itself unto action, unless it have also the like spur?<sup>12</sup>

Lines twelve to forty-one of Religio Laici demonstrate the folly of divine knowledge attained only through reason. Of the most brilliant of the Greeks, Dryden says;

Some few, whose Lamp shone brighter, have been led  
From Cause to Cause, to Natures secret head;  
And found that one first principle must be:  
But what, or who, that UNIVERSAL HE...(l. 12-15)

Reason led the Greeks to the discovery of a first cause of the universe, but the identity of this prime mover was never settled. Dryden asks the Deist, "Canst Thou, by Reason more of God-head know/ Than Plutarch, Seneca or Cicero?" (ll. 78-79) Dryden's rhetorical question supposes that no living man would claim that he had surpassed the speculative and philosophical genius of the Greeks and Romans. Because the greatest classical philosophers were unable to agree upon ethical and religious matters, Dryden denies that his free-thinking contemporaries will be able to do better. Following his description of the philosophical chaos which characterized Greek thought, Dryden turns his attention to the Deists:

The Deist thinks he stands on firmer ground;  
 Cries Ευρεκα ; the mighty Secret's found:  
God is that Spring of Good; Supreme, and Best;  
We, made to serve, and in that Service blest;  
 If so, some Rules of Worship must be given,  
 Distributed alike to all by Heaven  
 Else God were partial, and to some deny'd  
 The Means his Justice shou'd for all provide.  
 This general Worship is to PRAISE, and PRAY:  
 One part to borrow Blessings, one to pay:  
 And when frail Nature slides into Offence,  
 The Sacrifice for Crimes is Penitence.  
 Yet, since th' Effects of Providence, we find  
 Are variously dispens'd to Humane kind;  
 That Vice Triumphs, and Vertue suffers here,  
 (A Brand that Soverign Justice cannot bear;)  
 Our Reason prompts us to a future State:  
 The last Appeal from Fortune, and from Fate:  
 Where God's all-righteous ways will be declar'd;  
 The Bad meet Punishment, the Good, Reward. (ll. 42-61)

This succinct statement of the Deist's belief is potentially ironic, coming as it does, immediately after the depiction

of classical confusion. In less than twenty lines, the poet outlines what appears to be logically irrefutable and morally irreproachable as a cosmological system. The Deist states many commonplaces about the Christian religion, and the poet himself does not deny the honesty of his opponents' beliefs. What is said is not objectionable, but what is omitted is. In order to create a universal religion, the Deist must dispense with Christianity which is known only to those in "our Hemisphere." Like Swift's Spider, the Deist spins out his system from his darkened mind. Dryden's Preface links the Deist with rationalistic Christians who proudly exalt their intellects:

Deism, or the Principles of Natural Worship,  
are onely the faint remnants of dying flames  
of reveal'd Religion in the Posterity of Noah:  
And that our Modern Philosophers, nay and some of  
our Philosophising Divines have too much ex-  
alted the faculties of our Souls, when they  
have maintain'd that by their force, mankind  
has been able to find out that there is one  
Supream Agent or Intellectual Being which we  
call God: that Praise and Prayer are his due  
Worship; and the rest of those deducements,  
which I am confident are the remote effects  
of Revelation, and unattainable by our Discourse,  
I mean as simply considerd, and without the  
benefit of Divine Illumination. (Kinsley, pp.274-275)

By repeating almost verbatim the language of his Preface, Dryden's verse underlines his strong rejection of the rationalist philosophy. Although Sanford Budick contends that Dryden is only "attacking the abuses of the Restoration deist who rejected available revelation rather than deism itself,"<sup>13</sup> the poet clearly has objections to fundamental

tenets of Deism. Dryden denounces the anthropological solution to religious problems not only as a believing Christian, but also as a student of ancient history who has learned that not even the tiny civilization of Greece shared a common religious outlook. History provides a second strong objection to Deism. Only after the Incarnation did Western society come to see the wisdom of many of the acceptable ideas in Deism:

'Tis Revelation what thou thinkst Discourse.  
Else, how com'st Thou to see these truths so clear,  
Which so obscure to Heathens did appear? (ll. 71-73)

Dryden clearly views history from a Christian perspective, and asserts that the Deistical "enlightenment" has been made possible only through Christianity, the religion which solved the problems which perplexed the heathens.

Although Dryden condemns the unlicensed exercise of reason in Religio Laici, nowhere does he deny man's reasonableness. As Sanford Budick wittily observes, reason is both the subject and the method of the poem: "Ratiocination is used to purify Discourse (l. 71) so that by the end of the poem Discourse (l. 454) can once again be the instrument of divinely endowed reason that it was meant to be--an instrument for finding sacred truth."<sup>14</sup> Dryden does not eschew reason, but he does make us aware of its limitations. He does not advocate enthusiasm or Pyrrhonism. His tone reveals a man of confidence and common sense who does not make us despair of the rational faculties, nor does he lead

us through an inferno of the mind from which we emerge ready to leap into the bosom of an authoritarian church. In fact, he makes us acutely aware of the shortcomings of all systems which proffer simplified solutions to complex problems. This tendency of the Deists to base religion on a few self-evident truths aligns these Augustan rationalists with the sectarians who also believe that religion is an extremely simple matter. In fact, the Deists and the enthusiasts are counterparts because one group makes religion a thoroughly rational pursuit, while the other denies reason any part in religious matters. Dryden's position in Religio Laici is squarely in the mainstream of seventeenth-century Anglican thought because

It is not that Anglican theologians of the period were anti-intellectual or did not like ideas when they met them--they were in fact highly esteemed for their learning--but they had firmly grasped the truth that reason was the human characteristic and that its sphere was not simply speculation but the whole range of human activities.<sup>15</sup>

Dryden's defence of his Anglican faith against the Deists and his other adversaries, rests on an appeal to Scripture. Although he later found the Anglican position untenable, Dryden conforms perfectly with other Church of England members in his attitude toward the Bible in Religio Laici. Stephen Neill tells us that Scripture is the central point of reference in the life of an Anglican, the director and binding force of Anglican thought:

First, we must never forget the biblical quality by which the whole warp and woof of Anglican life is held together. At every point the theological appeal is to Scripture. Even the Creeds are accepted and recited because they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture (Article VIII). The Anglican Churches read more of the Bible to the faithful than any other group of Churches. The Bible is put into the hands of the layman; he is encouraged to read it, to ponder it, to fashion his life according to it, to believe that it can become for him today the living Oracles of God.<sup>16</sup>

Neill's statement on the centrality of the Bible in Anglican religion also applies to Dryden's poem. The poet gives several reasons why the evidence of Scripture is to be preferred to other claims to truth. First, there is a universality in Scripture which surpasses the Deistical assertion of impartiality and cosmopolitanism:

Whence, but from Heav'n, cou'd man 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.

If on the Book it self we cast our view,  
Concurrent Heathens prove the Story True:  
The Doctrine, Miracles; which must convince,  
For Heav'n in Them appeals to humane Sense:  
And though they prove not, they Confirm the Cause,  
When what is Taught agrees with Natures Laws.  
(ll. 140-151)

Because the authors of the books of the Bible lived in different times and different places, Scripture possesses a universality akin to that of nature itself. Although lines 150-151 state that logic cannot prove the truth of the Bible, nothing in Scripture contradicts natural law or reason.

The Deist raises the expected objection to Dryden's claim by reminding him that not all men have heard of Christ:

'Tis said the sound of a Messiah's Birth  
Is gone through all the habitable Earth:  
But still that Text must be confin'd alone  
To what was Then inhabited, and known:  
And what Provision cou'd from thence accrue  
To Indian Souls, and Worlds discover'd New?  
(ll. 174-179)

Donald Greene, commenting on the Western discovery of strange and distant peoples, says that

It is understandable that in the seventeenth century, Europeans, becoming more vividly aware of the existence of millions of human beings in the center of Africa and South America, might well ask whether, unaware of the instruction provided by the Bible and the Church, their souls were therefore doomed to eternal damnation.<sup>17</sup>

Dryden regards this refutation as the strongest challenge to his argument because it can "startle Reason, stagger frail Belief." (l. 185) Yet, only "frail Belief," and not the convictions of a strong Christian would yield to this logic. For Dryden, the essence of Christianity is charity or mercy, and he trusts that his Saviour will rescue those good men who never heard His name:

We grant, 'tis true, that Heav'n from humane Sense  
Has hid the secret paths of Providence:  
But boundless Wisdom, boundless Mercy, may  
Find ev'n for those be-wildred Souls, a way.  
(ll. 186-189)

Paraphrasing St. Paul, Romans 2: 14, Dryden adds that although the Christian claims to have found the true faith, he has never denied that others, who have not known Christ, may also find salvation:



Not onely Charity bids hope the best,  
 But more the great Apostle has exprest:  
That, if the Gentiles, (whom no Law inspir'd,) By Nature did what was by Law requir'd;  
They, who the written Rule had never known,  
Were to themselves both Rule and Law alone:  
To Natures plain indictment they shall plead;  
And, by their Conscience, be condemn'd or freed.  
 Most righteous Doom! because a Rule reveal'd  
 Is none to Those, from whom it was conceal'd.  
 Then those who follow'd Reasons Dictates right;  
 Liv'd up, and lifted high their Natural Light;  
 With Socrates may see their Maker's Face,  
 While Thousand Rubrick-Martyrs want a place.  
 (ll. 198-211)

Lines 208-209 show that Dryden believes that the ancients and the heathens can employ the unaided reason to attain salvation. The non-Christian can discover the natural law but not a natural religion as Phillip Harth explains,

because of an essential difference, not in their origin, which is empirical in every case, but in the manner of reasoning employed in their discovery. Natural religion is, as we have seen, a matter of demonstration available only to those who are capable of such an effort. Natural law, however, consists of maxims which are the effect of common experience shared by all men and which are, in fact, incapable of demonstration.<sup>18</sup>

For this reason it is important that Biblical teaching "agrees with Natures Laws," (l. 151) because although Scripture brings supernatural knowledge to men, it cannot contradict either the universal laws of nature nor man's reasoning.

Lines 198-211 defend the poet against the Deist, but they also contain an implicit attack on fanatical Protestantism. To answer the chief Deistical objection to the Bible's universality, "A solution was sought by recourse

to the Epistle to the Romans, which, having done yeoman service in exposition of Predestination, Justification by Faith and the relations of church and state, was now discovered to have also the key to this enigma."<sup>19</sup> Dryden agrees with the Deist that all men may be saved, and the quoted passage answers his immediate opponent and condemns the doctrines of the true believers. As a follower of St. Paul, Dryden renounces predestination which damned not only all heathens and pagans but the majority of Christians as well:

To Calvin, for whom the atonement was limited to the elect, the fact that the heathen had been denied the light of the Gospel was itself a sign of their reprobation. Throughout the sixteenth century and well into the seventeenth, this continued to be the common doctrine of English Protestants as well, whether Puritans or members of the episcopal party.<sup>20</sup>

Charity and justice demand that those unacquainted with Christ be saved. The "Rubrick-Martyrs" who base salvation exclusively upon their faith and their observances of enthusiastic rules of the sects are condemned by the Pauline message. Zealotry makes the fanatic uncharitable and prevents him from understanding either the natural or the supernatural laws:

Each was ambitious of th' obscurest place,  
No measure ta'n from Knowledge, all from GRACE.  
Study and Pains were now no more their Care;  
Texts were explain'd by Fasting, and by Prayer:  
This was the Fruit the private Spirit brought;  
Occasion'd by great Zeal, and little Thought.  
(ll. 411-416)

Dryden's attack on the enthusiast's ignorance repudiates the view that he believed that reason has no place in religion, and it voices one of the very common criticisms directed against sectarians in the Restoration and eighteenth century.

An extensive knowledge of other cultures and a greater understanding of the laws of the physical universe in the seventeenth century made possible an attack on the wisdom of Scripture. Although Dryden allows that the Bible takes no account of some of the new scientific discoveries, he defends the cornerstone of his faith because it contains truths that are "Sufficient, clear" (l. 167) and essential for salvation. Here, the poet makes an important distinction between certainties and doubts, and between primary and secondary matters. Scripture teaches the Anglican that bliss is possible for all men--all other issues are unimportant compared to this one. In his Preface Dryden says

that the Scripture is a Rule; that in all things needfull to Salvation, it is clear, sufficient, and ordain'd by God Almighty for that purpose, [and so] I have left my self no right to interpret obscure places, such as concern the possibility of eternal happiness to Heathens: because whatsoever is obscure is concluded not necessary to be known.

(Kinsley, p. 276)

Dryden defends Scripture, here, against those enthusiasts who demanded a strictly literal interpretation of the Bible and who also placed equal emphasis on Scriptural matters

of primary and secondary importance. Failure to discriminate between significant and non-essential matters leads the dissenter to a confusion which results in dogmatism and an unhealthy interest in vain speculation.

In his defence of Scripture, Dryden agrees substantially with the position advanced by Richard Hooker in his Preface to The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity:

Some things are so familiar and plain, that truth from falsehood, and good from evil, is most easily discerned in them, even by men of no deep capacity. And of that nature, for the most part, are things absolutely unto all men's salvation necessary, either to be held or denied, either to be done or avoided. For which cause St. Augustine acknowledgeth, that they are not only set down, but also plainly set down in Scripture; so that he which heareth or readeth, may without any great difficulty understand. Other things also there are more obscure, more intricate, and hard to be judged of, therefore God hath appointed some to spend their whole time principally in the study of things Divine, to the end that in these more doubtful cases, their understanding might be a light to direct others.<sup>21</sup>

Like Hooker, Dryden makes a neat distinction between essentials and inessentials, and pleads that the more difficult parts of the Bible be left to the interpretation of an educated priesthood. Later, in Book I, Hooker makes an even more direct statement about the usefulness of Holy Writ:

Although the Scripture of God therefore be stored with infinite variety of matter in all kinds, although it abound with all sorts of laws, yet the principal intent of Scripture is to deliver the laws of duties supernatural. Oftentimes it hath been in very solemn matters disputed, whether all things necessary unto salvation be necessarily set down in the Holy

Scriptures or no. If we define that necessary to salvation, whereby the way to salvation is in any sort made more plain, apparent, and easy to be known; then is there no part of true philosophy, no art of account, no kind of science, rightly so called, but the Scripture must contain it.<sup>22</sup>

The main target of Hooker's Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity were the Puritans who claimed that the Bible was to be followed scrupulously in matters that Anglicans regarded as insignificant, and who denied that the laity had need of an educated and privileged clergy. McAdoo says that in the seventeenth-century Puritan circles, "Instead of the teaching of the Articles concerning the sufficiency of Scripture in fundamentals, there grew up a doctrine which required this authority for non-essentials."<sup>23</sup> In his Preface to Religio Laici, Dryden says that by making Scripture

the Canon of our Faith, I have unavoidably created to my self two sorts of Enemies: The Papists indeed, more indirectly, because they have kept the Scripture from us, what they cou'd; and have reserv'd to themselves a right of Interpreting what they have deliver'd under the pretence of Infalibility: and the Fanaticks more collaterally, because they have assum'd what amounts to an Infalibility, in the private Spirit: and have detorted those Texts of Scripture, which are not necessary to Salvation, to the damnable uses of Sedition, disturbance and destruction of the Civil Government.

(Kinsley, 276-277)

The verse continues the Preface's attack on the enemies of Anglicanism. Because the Roman clergy kept their parishioners in ignorance, Dryden says of the Catholic laity:

"God's Word they had not, but the Priests they had." (l. 383)

Though the Reformation promised to return the Bible to the centre of Christian life, an unhealthy curiosity destroyed this hope:

Plain Truths enough for needfull use they found  
 But men wou'd still be itching to expound:  
 Each was ambitious of th' obscurest place,  
 No measure ta'n from Knowledge, all from GRACE.  
 (ll. 409-412)

Although Catholicism and enthusiasm stand at the opposite poles of Christianity, each faith ignores the central truths of Christianity. Renaissance reformers made it possible for men to know Scripture after it had been rescued from the "Dark Ages", but the enthusiasts neglected the central truths of the Bible and preferred to expound and quibble about religious matters as the schoolmen had done.

Regarding matters of minor importance, Dryden says that he submits his own judgment to the authority of the Church:

Being naturally inclin'd to Scepticism in  
 Philosophy, I have no reason to impose my  
 Opinions, in a Subject which is above it; But  
 whatever they are, I submit them with all reverence to my Mother Church, accounting them no further mine, than as they are Authoriz'd, or at least, uncondemn'd by her.

(Kinsley, p. 273)

Dryden's position here is exactly like Hooker's: "so that unless we will be authors of confusion in the church, our private discretion, which other wise might guide us a contrary way, must here submit itself to be that way guided,

which the public judgment of the church hath thought better."<sup>24</sup> The example of the enthusiasts had shown that there was a need for episcopal authority to prevent anarchy in the Church.

In philosophy as well as religion, Dryden attends to essentials and he admires Plutarch for devoting himself only to useful branches of moral science:

The moral philosophy, therefore, was his chiefest aim, because the principles of it admitted of less doubt; and because they were most conducing to the benefit of human life. For, after the example of Socrates, he had found, that the speculations of natural philosophy were more delightful than solid and profitable; that they were abstruse and thorny, and much of sophism in the solution of appearances.... (Malone, II, 367)

"The Pyrrhonians, or grosser sort of Skepticks, who bring all certainty in question," (Malone, II, 367) are like the Catholics and enthusiasts who concern themselves with unimportant issues, while Plutarch shares the outlook of Dryden and the Anglicans. Seven years later (1690), Dryden attacks dogmatism in the Dedication of Don Sebastian by saying that "True philosophy is certainly of a more pliant nature, and more accommodated to human use," (Malone, II, 177) and states that speculative philosophy "is barren, and produces nothing but vain ideas of things which cannot possibly be known, or if they could, yet would only terminate in the understanding...."(Malone, II, 176)

According to Dryden, religion and philosophy must

centre their attention on man's needs--we need to know what is useful to us. Although he opposes the philosophical dogmatism of Deists, Papists, enthusiasts, Dryden does not believe that the central truths of Christianity are merely relative and open to lengthy debate in which every opinion is equally valid:

Dryden's faith in freedom of inquiry served him well in criticism; he could appreciate the success to which it had led the members of the Royal Society in natural philosophy, and he believed that it could promote the advancement of all the arts and sciences. Beyond these boundaries, however, he never sought to extend it. Had he applied to the political and religious spheres this freedom of inquiry which "takes nothing from antiquity on trust," questioning accepted beliefs and traditions, he would presumably have been a Whig in politics, a freethinker in religion. But neither Dryden nor the other members of the Royal Society who espoused this ideal considered it universally applicable.<sup>25</sup>

This statement by Phillip Harth makes a sharp distinction between those areas where the poet is "A Kind of Law-Giver" and those in which he felt free to explore with philosophical abandon.

Answering Bredvold's argument, Harth shows that Religio Laici is not at all a sceptical poem, but one in which Dryden asserts only ideas that may not be debated. Nevertheless, the Preface to the poem confesses to a "Scepticism in Philosophy" from which we can infer that there is some evidence of sceptical thinking in the poem. "These two characteristics, then, of freedom of inquiry and of



modesty and diffidence were the essential ingredients"<sup>26</sup> of scepticism in the seventeenth century, according to Phillip Harth, and not the Pyrrhonism that Bredvold supposed and that Dryden himself condemned in The Life of Plutarch.

While agreeing with Harth's definition of scepticism and also accepting his premise that religion and politics are not open to the kind of discussion that characterized Royal Society meetings, I believe that some examples of sceptical thinking do occur in the poem. By his own admission (Kinsley, p. 276) the salvation of the heathens cannot be finally determined by the poet. Also, Dryden's attack on St. Athanasius is a personal affair and not a matter of primary importance to the Anglican Church. Although Dryden fully accepts the main tenets of the Anglican faith, he also exercises his option to take an independent stand on issues of secondary importance. This flexibility, in fact, offers additional evidence that Religio Laici is solidly an Anglican poem.

The Bible, inspired directly by God, occupies a unique position in human and divine history. Only God Himself could prompt uneducated men (l. 140) to speak the sentiments contained in Scripture.(l. 148) Any work which has been compiled by men geographically and chronologically separated which yet agrees in "essential" matters, can only be the result of divine inspiration. An important aspect of this inspiration is the Biblical style itself:

Then for the Style; Majestick and Divine,  
 It speaks no less than God in every Line:  
Commanding words; whose Force is still the same  
 As the first Fiat that produc'd our Frame.  
 (ll. 152-155)

Lines 154-155 allude to the first chapter and verse of St. John's Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," and emphasizes that the words of the Bible, as the enemies of chaos, are as fresh as Creation itself. Biblical style, of course, refers not only to the arrangement of words and sentences, but also to the spirit of the work which gives it the mark of authenticity and authority.

Although Scripture informs us about the divine sphere, it never detaches itself from the laws of nature experienced by men, and although its style is elevated and superb, it instructs us only in "Sufficient, clear" (l. 167) matters. Dryden uses the common belief in the inspiration of the Bible as a weapon against his enemies. For example, he attacks St. Athanasius for attempting to usurp the place of a Gospel writer:

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.  
 (ll. 214-217)

When Dryden evaluates Father Simon's Critical History of the Old Testament, he both attacks and praises the French Jesuit's labours. From one aspect the monumental study appears to be both drudgery and an elaborate joke:

Witness this weighty Book, in which appears  
 The crabbed Toil of many thoughtfull years,  
 Spent by thy Authour, in the Sifting Care  
 Of Rabbins old Sophisticated Ware  
 From Gold Divine; which he who well can sort  
 May afterwards make Algebra a sport.  
 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.  
 (ll. 234-243)

Because he professes himself not to be learned in Biblical studies, Dryden cannot really challenge Simon's attacks on literal interpretation of the Bible and so he makes the priest's efforts seem irrelevant to the task of salvation. Unlike the Bible, Simon's treatise is a "weighty Book," possessing none of the linguistic elegance of Scripture, and it concerns itself mostly with matters of subsidiary importance. Nevertheless, Dryden's rather Hudibrastic commentary yields to a more positive assessment in the next four lines of the poem:

A Work so full with various Learning fraught,  
 So nicely pondred, yet so strongly wrought,  
 As Natures height and Arts last hand requir'd:  
 As much as Man cou'd compass, uninspir'd.  
 (ll. 244-247)

Dryden places the word "uninspir'd" last in order to emphasize that whatever gems Simon's book may contain, they can never supplant the Bible as the basis for the poet's faith. Although not personally obnoxious to Dryden as St. Athanasius is, Simon, nevertheless, can claim no more authority than the canonized bishop. Simon is not a zealot like Athanasius but he still lacks the inspiration of Scriptural

writers, that true touch of the divine which makes the Bible the indisputable authority for the Christian just as the positive enthusiasm of the monarch makes the king absolute in political matters.

Dryden asserts that religious problems originate when men meddle with the clear and adequate teachings of Scripture. As an inspired document, the Bible confounds the laborious efforts of all its commentators. The medi-  
eval Catholic Church deified its priests "who cou'd but Reade or Spell" (l. 372) and granted them absolute authority over Scripture. "Private Spirit" (l. 415) and "great Zeal" (l. 416) convinced insane sectarians that they were more inspired than the Biblical authors themselves. Although truth may easily be found in Scripture, not all men are capable of patient and sophisticated interpretation:

The Book thus put in every vulgar hand  
Which each presum'd he best cou'd understand,  
The Common Rule was made the common Prey;  
And at the mercy of the Rabble lay.  
(ll. 400-403)

Dryden's Preface voices a strong protest against the careless translations of the Bible into English:

Since the Bible has been Translated into our Tongue, they [the enthusiasts] have us'd it so, as if their business was not to be sav'd but to be damnd by its Contents. If we consider onely them, better had it been for the English Nation, that it had still remain'd in the original Greek and Hebrew, or at least in the honest Latine of St. Jerome, than that several Texts in it, should have been prevaricated to the destruction of that Government, which put it into so ungrateful hands.

How many Heresies the first Translation of Tyndal produced in few years, let my Lord Herbert's History of Henry the Eighth inform you; Insomuch that for the gross errours in it, and the great mischiefs it occasion'd, a Sentence pass'd on the first Edition of the Bible, too shamefull almost to be repeated.  
(Kinsley, p. 279)

Dryden shows the same concern with language in Religio Laici that he does in Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall. Disregard for the linguistic complexities of Scripture and a democratization of Biblical translations, directly threatens social and religious stability. The enthusiast, in Dryden's view, uses Scripture as a radical social manifesto and mistakes his zealous language and his activities for true inspiration:

for their ignorance all things are Wit which are abusive; but if Church and State were made the Theme, then the Doctoral Degree of Wit was to be taken at Billingsgate: even the most Saint-like of the Party, though they durst not excuse this contempt and villifying of the Government, yet were pleas'd, and grin'd at it with a pious smile; and call'd it a judgment of God against the Hierarchy. Thus Sectaries, we may see, were born with teeth, foul-mouth'd and scurrilous from their Infancy.  
(Kinsley, p. 280)

Dryden's evaluation of the dissenters in this Preface is consistent with his assessment of enthusiasts in Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall. Once again the poet charges the enemies of true inspiration with the rhetorical debasement which precludes order in religion as well as politics.

Another argument that Dryden uses to convince us of the Bible's reliability is its unique position in history:

All Faiths beside, or did by Arms ascend;  
 Or Sense indulg'd has made Mankind their Friend;  
 This onely Doctrine does our Lusts oppose:  
 Unfed by Natures Soil, in which it grows;  
 Cross to our Interests, curbing Sense, and Sin;  
 Oppress'd without, and undermin'd within,  
 It thrives through pain; its own Tormentours tires;  
 And with a stubborn patience still aspires.  
 (ll. 156-163)

Dryden makes a clever connection here between Scripture and the Anglican Church. Only the Anglicans, as we have seen, have been faithful to the precepts of Holy Writ, and while "Faiths" initially seems to refer to non-Christian religions, Dryden tells us elsewhere in his Preface and verse that Catholics and dissenters have used the Bible only to satisfy their own physical desires. Unlike the other religions, Anglicanism is an unpopular faith because it demands a repudiation of personal indulgence while the other faiths glut man's appetites.

The Bible and Anglicanism (with which Scripture is closely identified) occupy the same precarious position in history as the British monarch. Like the king, the Bible has been given to man by a merciful God so that he will not lack divine guidance on earth. The Bible thus gives divine leadership and the king rules by divine right. Scripture and the monarch are civilizing forces which prompt man to renounce fleshly desires for the sake of more noble aspirations. The British king and the Bible refuse to grant the concessions demanded by Catholics and enthusiasts who want to establish tyrannical governance in politics and religion.

Scripture denounces enthusiasm with the same inspired rhetoric that Charles-David employed in Absalom and Achitophel, and Religio Laici shows the superiority of valid enthusiasm or inspiration over frenzied sectarianism. Chaos, being more popular among the mob than stability, will always threaten to drive common sense from religious and political life, but a knowledge that God's truth remains despite its detractors, and that the monarchy survives regicide and enthusiasm, softens this incipiently dark view of history.

The second half of the poem (beginning at line 224), occasioned by Henry Dickinson's translation of Father Simon's study of the Old Testament, deals with the function of tradition in religion. Critical opinion differs on Dryden's knowledge of Simon's work; Charles Ward says that

there is every likelihood that Dryden was well aware of the Critical History before the end of 1681. Since the Religio Laici did not appear for at least a full year, we may conjecture that he spent considerably more time studying Father Simon and the literature of religious thought than we have believed.<sup>27</sup>

Edward N. Hooker, however, claims that Dryden read the Critical History "just before or during the days when he was composing Religio Laici,"<sup>28</sup> and Donald R. Benson asserts that Dryden was not aware of the implications of Simon's book for Protestantism.<sup>29</sup> Phillip Harth has recently written that

Even as a preparation for this latter part of the poem, Dryden's assertion that he has been reading Simon's book need not refer to any pro-

longed activity. He certainly would have read "The Author's Preface," which describes the book's "benefits," and he may have glanced at the "Table of Chapters," which briefly summarizes the contents of each, and the opening chapter, which explains the author's "design." An acquaintance with these, and perhaps a brief look at some of the chapters of Books II and III which deal with the Protestant translators and commentators, would have been enough to furnish Dryden with the two rhetorical interjections he attributes to Simon in the poem, the first to state the Catholic position, the second to raise an objection to Dryden's arguments.<sup>30</sup>

If Dryden knew Simon well, his poem shows little evidence of it. Religio Laici confines itself to the larger areas of disagreement between Anglicans, Catholics, enthusiasts and Deists and does not introduce minor points of dispute. After thirty lines (ll. 224-255), Dryden dispenses altogether with Simon and proceeds to attack the shortcomings of the Catholic position on tradition. Lines 252-255 deal with Simon's reputation and state the accepted Catholic view of authority:

For some, who have his secret meaning ghes'd,  
Have found our Authour not too much a Priest:  
For Fashion-sake he seems to have recourse  
To Pope, and Councils, and Traditions force...

Dryden believes Simon has merely restated the conventional Catholic doctrines in order to further the cause of his church. Later in the poem, an anonymous inquirer asks where authority is to be found if not in tradition: "Oh but says one, Tradition set aside,/ Where can we hope for an unerring Guid?" (ll. 276-277) The pronoun "one," like the "partial Papists," (l. 356) may refer to Simon, but it



is more likely that the impersonal ascription is employed to shift the reader's attention away from a particular author and focus on the position of the ordinary Roman Catholic.

The central weakness in Catholicism, according to Dryden, is that it has replaced Scriptural authority with Church infallibility. If, as Roman Catholics maintain, the Bible is an unreliable basis for faith, how much more undependable is Church tradition:

What Safety from such brushwood-helps as these?  
 If written words from time are not secur'd,  
 How can we think have oral Sounds endur'd?  
 Which thus transmitted, if one Mouth has fail'd  
Immortal Lyes on Ages are intail'd:  
 And that some such have been, is prov'd too plain;  
 If we consider Interest, Church, and Gain.  
 (ll. 269-275)

Because of the corruption of the medieval Catholic Church, the writings of popes and councils since the sixth century are tainted with lies. Recorded words, being less ephemeral than spoken language, win our trust better than an oral tradition that has been conveyed through a dark period of history.

According to Phillip Harth, Dryden completely misunderstood what the Catholic Church means by the oral tradition:

In referring to the famous decree of the Council of Trent which accepted tradition as sharing equal authority with Scripture, both of which comprise the rule of faith, Simon is careful to use the words "not written" (non scripta) by which the council had described

tradition. He consistently employs this expression in alluding to tradition, never Dryden's term "oral," which is not synonymous.<sup>31</sup>

Dryden may be excused his error for no less an authority than Hooker makes the same mistake in Ecclesiastical Polity:

When the question therefore is, whether we be now to seek for any revealed law of God other-where than only in the sacred Scripture; whether we do now stand bound in the sight of God, to yield to traditions urged by the church of Rome the same obedience and reverence we do to his written law, honouring equally and adoring both as Divine? Our answer is, No. They that so earnestly plead for the authority of tradition, as if nothing were more safely conveyed than that which spreadeth itself by report and descendeth by relation of former generations unto the ages that succeed, are not all of them (surely a miracle it were if they should be so) so simple, as thus to persuade themselves; howsoever, if the simple, were so persuaded, they could be content perhaps very well to enjoy the benefit, as they account it, of that common error.<sup>32</sup>

The source of disagreement between Anglicans and Roman Catholics was the relative importance of Scripture and the Church, a controversy introduced in the Reformation. George H. Tavad, a twentieth-century Catholic theologian, says that before the sixteenth century there was no conflict between the institutional Church and the Bible:

Neither the Fathers nor the medieval theologians believed that elements of the Apostles' doctrine had been transmitted orally from generation to generation. To their mind, "tradition" is indeed a handing down of the apostolic teaching considered in its totality: whether it was written in Holy Scripture or was later noted down in the "other scriptures", such a tradition excludes the idea of a purely oral transmission for which there would be no documentary evidence. For the very concept of tradition as being the handing

down of something--a cult, a doctrine, a set of inspired writings--implies that each century "received" it through the common activity of the Body of Christ: worshipping, baptizing, announcing the message, reading the Book in the liturgy. And all these acts have been committed to writing at some time or other. There is nothing essentially "oral" about them: they were acts of fellowship and not esoteric transmissions of an unwritten teaching.<sup>33</sup>

Clearly Dryden in 1681 thinks of the Church as a helpful but not indispensable guide for the Christian, and he rejects the Catholic claim (as he understands it) of church superiority over Scripture. Bredvold argues that the following lines "reveal how strong a hold the notion of authority already had on his [Dryden's] mind, despite his vigorous rejection of the doctrine of infallibility:"<sup>34</sup>

"Such an Omniscient Church we wish indeed,/ 'Twere worth Both Testaments, and cast in the Creed." (ll. 282-283)

These lines, however, are better read as a sarcastic reply to the Papist's assertions, a reading that Thomas H. Fujimura suggests,<sup>35</sup> than as serious evidence that Dryden, in 1681, thought an infallible church was possible. The poet applies the word "Omnipotence" to God alone in line 112, and its repetition in line 282 ironically comments on the Catholic claim to possess infallible truth. Bredvold's reading of the couplet contradicts Dryden's position everywhere else in the poem, and assumes that the poet is a restless Anglican, ripe for conversion to the Roman Catholic Church.

Although Dryden thinks tradition alone provides an insubstantial basis for religion, he does not think it is dispensible. As an Anglican, Dryden believes that his Church conforms to the teaching of the early Christian communities of the first five or six centuries after the death of Christ.<sup>36</sup> Although the Church did not cease to grow after 600 A.D., the guidelines of Christianity were clear by this time and had not yet been obscured by the impure accretions of popes and later councils:

Not that Traditions parts are useless here:  
 When general, old, disinterress'd and clear:  
 That Ancient Fathers thus expound the Page,  
 Give Truth the reverend Majesty of Age:  
Confirms its force, by bidding every Test;  
 For best Authority's next Rules are best.  
 And still the nearer to the Spring we go  
 More limpid, more unsoyl'd the Waters flow.  
 Thus, first Traditions were a proof alone;  
 Cou'd we be certain such they were, so known:  
 But since some Flaws in long descent may be,  
 They make not Truth but Probability.  
 (ll. 334-345)

Acceptance of early patristic writings as a useful adjunct to the understanding of Christianity establishes the Anglican claim to be a Church continuous in history, and prevents it from a commitment to an extreme left-wing or right-wing position. If Dryden or his Church rejected the validity of early Christian writings, they would play into the hands of the enthusiasts who wanted to establish religions based only upon the words of Scripture. Appeals to tradition attempted

in addition to establishing identity of doctrine with the early period, to discover what the Church of the first centuries was like and to show the resemblance between it and the contemporary Church. Inevitably therefore the appeal to antiquity was involved in the controversies of the seventeenth century as to what were the teaching and the ecclesiastical polity of the Primitive Church. Of course, many among the English Puritans disallowed the appeal altogether, and as the Admonitions and the work of Hooker indicate, they sought to erect an ecclesiastical system which they regarded as based on Scripture.<sup>37</sup>

Religio Laici defends tradition on the grounds that its neglect will result in the anarchy displayed by the enthusiasts in Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall:

Must all Tradition then be set aside?  
 This to affirm were Ignorance, or Pride.  
 Are there not many points, some needfull sure  
 To saving Faith, that Scripture leaves obscure?  
 Which every Sect will wrest a several way  
 (For what one Sect Interprets, all Sects may...).  
 (ll. 305-310)

Because he had observed the fragmentation of the sectarians during and after the Commonwealth, Dryden was convinced that popular movements based solely upon private spirit could never establish a permanent Church.

Dryden's Religio Laici attempts to show that Scripture must be the basis for the Christian faith. Unlike enthusiastic religions, Anglicanism is tolerant enough to respect the better traditions of the Catholic Church without becoming enslaved by them. Also, the Anglican Church allows her adherents a judicious and reasonable private interpretation of the Gospel while she discourages enthusiasm. Like Swift, Dryden criticizes systems created ex nihilo,

but the poet's presentation of the Anglican via media is more appealing than the satirist's. Swift's Martin is too passive and colourless to be a positive option to Peter and Jack, and the biting satire of A Tale of a Tub does not spare the allegorical representative of the Anglican Church. As Chiasson and Miner claim, Religio Laici conveys superbly the spirit of English Christian humanism at its best.<sup>38</sup> Against those who base religious faith on unquestioning belief, abstract reason, or personal visions, Dryden argues that man's nature is too richly endowed to be governed by a single part of his psyche.<sup>39</sup>

Although Scripture is inspired, plainly written and designed for man's usage, human beings are forever tampering with it. Not content to reside on his middle rung on the Chain of Being, man aspires to be a god: "How can the less the Greater comprehend?/ Or finite Reason reach Infinity?" (ll. 39-40) Although Dryden directs his rhetorical question to religious rationalists, the gulf between man and God is unappreciated by his other opponents in the poem. As in Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall, Dryden's enemies in Religio Laici live apart from the order of nature--striving to be gods, they become less than beasts.

Religio Laici confirms Hooker's assertion that "The Scripture is fraught even with laws of nature...."<sup>40</sup> Biblical writers are "unskill'd in Arts" (l. 140) and their instruction can save "Th' unletter'd Christian, who believes

in gross." (l. 322) As a simple Christian adherent of the Pauline Gospel, Dryden professes charity, "A much unskillful, but well meaning guide," (l. 225) as a solution to the world's ills. Though the Church does not lack for intellectual commentators on the Bible, she chooses her men of intellect from those who are "by Nature form'd, with Learning fraught." (l. 326) While the gentiles will not be saved because of their acceptance of Scripture, they will be rewarded if they "By Nature did what was by Law requir'd," (l. 201) and raise their "Natural Light" (l. 209) as Socrates had.

Opposed to the natural man is the person who would replace nature with a plea to supernaturalism originating in the reason of the Deist or the imagination of the enthusiast. More pretentious aspirants to knowledge create systems which are unnatural and even monstrous. The Church and the true Christian stand on solid ground, but heathens and heretics have no sure footing. Happiness slipped away from the Greeks "Like Enchanted ground," (l. 28) and the Deist who presumes to surpass the ancients in wisdom only "thinks he stands on firmer ground." (l. 42) The Roman Catholic Church's foundation is constructed by "wondrous Art," (l. 358) and as an enemy of Scriptural truth, her loyal son, Simon, writes a "weighty Book" (l. 234) which is the fruit of "crabbed Toil" (l. 235) and "Sifting Care." (l. 236) The ambitious writers of ingenious tracts and

theories forget that faith, hope and charity grant entrance to the kingdom of heaven: "For the Streight-gate wou'd be made streighter yet,/ Were none admitted there but men of Wit." (ll. 324-325) But man prefers to torment and disfigure (l. 162) his greatest friend, and no one more than the sectarians have carried out this carnage with such eagerness:

The tender Page with horney Fists was gaul'd;  
And he was gifted most that loudest baul'd.  
While Crouds unlearn'd, with rude Devotion warm,  
About the Sacred Viands buz and swarm,  
The Fly-blown Text creates a crawling Brood;  
And turns to Maggots what was meant for Food.  
(ll. 404-405; 417-420)

The enthusiasts spoil the spiritual nourishment offered by the Bible, just as in The Medall they spurned the sustenance tendered by their monarch: "We loath our Manna, and we long for Quails." (The Medall, l. 131)

Religio Laici examines the general philosophical problem of enthusiasm as it occurs in a religious context. Arthur W. Hoffman suitably compares Religio Laici to Pope's Essay on Man, because in each poem man's position in the cosmos and the function of his reason in discovering his proper place in the world constitute the central issues:

The conception of man as occupying a middle position in a heirarchy of being led to a definition of his nature in relation to beings and qualities above and below him in the hierarchy. Such a strategy of definition invites oxymoron; both man and human reason become the focus of antithesis. Perhaps the finest formu-



lation of such a definition of the human condition occurs in Pope's Essay on Man [Epistle II, 1-18].<sup>41</sup>

Man, according to Pope, must accommodate himself to the middle of the cosmic hierarchy, and the poet frequently chides those who think that the universe must conform to their conception:

Let Earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,  
Planets and Suns run lawless thro' the sky,  
Let ruling Angels from the spheres be hurl'd,  
Being on being wreck'd, and world on world,  
Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod,  
And Nature tremble to the throne of God:  
All this dread ORDER break--for whom? for thee?  
Vile worm!--oh Madness, Pride, Impiety!  
(Essay on Man, I, 251-258)

Dryden also scorns man's attempts at self-deification in Religio Laici: "Dar'st thou, poor Worm, offend Infinity?/ And must the Terms of Peace be given by Thee?" (ll. 93-94)

Zealous schemes to reform the world through logic or enthusiasm are doomed to failure because man inhabits a complex and fallen world which defies panaceas. The proud man--whether a dissenting saint, a Papist, or a Deist--assumes that he possesses a special claim to divine knowledge and often goes as far as to deny his inherent imperfections as a human being born into original sin. Donald Greene explains how this urge for perfection runs counter to the Augustinian concept of man as employed by the Restoration and eighteenth-century Anglican Church:

Augustinianism, in the Anglican communion, centers then on the affirmation of Man's inherent moral weakness, which he is unable to

rectify merely through his own unaided efforts--which, indeed, he will never be able to eliminate completely, for he is destined always to be a sinner and to deserve God's just punishment. That punishment cannot be averted by the performance of stipulated good works; indeed, works performed by the unrepentant sinner with a view to assuaging God's wrath have, Article XIII affirms, rather "the nature of sin." It can be averted only by the full emotional acceptance of the fact of one's own imperfection and of God's merciful and forgiving love, freely offered to the sinner. If this change of heart takes place, good works--and moral virtue--will automatically follow. But so long as he remains stubbornly attached to his pride in his own individual superiority as a human being, that change cannot take place; true humility is required.<sup>42</sup>

Although the heresy of Pelagianism challenged the Augustinian claim that man was born into original sin, "the hand of Augustinianism lay heavily on the whole theological scene in the seventeenth century, and neither the Summa Theologica nor the Reformers had done anything to loosen its hold."<sup>43</sup>

Like Sir Thomas Browne who wrote in Religio Medici, "For the World, I count it not an Inn, but an Hospital; and a place not to live, but to dye in,"<sup>44</sup> Dryden believes that man's feeble attempts to scale the heights of the universe by his own efforts only show how much man needs divine succour to cure his illness:

What farther means can Reason now direct,  
Or what Relief from humane Wit expect?  
That shews us sick; and sadly are we sure  
Still to be Sick, till Heav'n reveal the Cure.  
(ll. 117-120)

Although Religio Laici does not dwell on the more sobering features of the universe to the extent that Browne and

other early and mid-century writers do, Dryden does not gloss over the defects that shape man's destiny. Sanford Budick's attempt to link Dryden with the Cambridge Platonists, who softened some of the severer tenets of traditional Christianity, places Religio Laici outside of the mainstream of seventeenth-century Anglicanism. Budick cites among the chief modifications of conventional doctrine made by the Platonists,

Their opposition to absolute reprobation, their decreased emphasis on the fall of man, their lessened concern with grace and God's unicity, their small dependence on scriptural authority, their tolerant attitude towards heresiarchs, their efforts to pacify religious dispute, their emphasis on practical morality and communal tranquility...<sup>45</sup>

Though Dryden denied the complete corruption of man and accepted the last three items which Budick mentions, Religio Laici situates the Bible at the very heart of Christianity and vigorously disagrees with the remaining characteristics ascribed by Budick to the Platonists. Dryden admits that common sense and religion are compatible but he refuses to give reason the high accord granted it by the Platonists,<sup>46</sup> and his poem shows evidence of none of the mysticism of Platonism.<sup>47</sup>

Dryden is not a progressive Christian hoping to make his faith more attractive to fence-sitters. He plainly tells the Deist that his advanced religious views are made apparent only through the Incarnation:

Vain, wretched Creature, how art thou misled  
 To think thy Wit these God-like Notions bred!  
 These Truths are not the product of thy Mind,  
 But dropt from Heaven and of a Nobler kind.  
 (ll. 64-67)

Although he rejects the Calvinist idea that man's salvation depends solely upon the arbitrary granting of grace to an elect, Dryden firmly believes that man needs supernatural grace to be saved: "See God descending in thy Humane Frame;/ Th' offended, suff'ring in th' Offenders Name." (ll. 1-7-108) God, therefore, provides man with the means to salvation, but many human beings usurp God's power, as the enthusiasts and the Deists do, and dictate the terms of salvation to Him. Their unswerving trust in reason landed even the "wiser Madmen" (l. 31) among the classical sages into a Miltonic hell:

Thus, anxious Thoughts in endless Circles roul,  
 Without a Centre where to fix the Soul:  
 In this wilde Maze their vain Endeavours end.  
 How can the less the Greater comprehend?  
 (ll. 36-39)

Following the Greek luminaries, the Deists endeavour to close the gap between man and God: "Thus Man by his own strength to Heaven wou'd soar:/ And wou'd not be Oblig'd to God for more." (ll. 62-63) The Catholic Church, infected by this universal enthusiastic desire to replace the creator, deified its clergy in the middle ages: "And he a God who cou'd but Reade or Spell." (l. 375) The laity never heard the word of God (l. 383) because their Church claimed to have infallible truth. (l. 387) Convinced that

the Holy Spirit (ll. 406;416) directed their activities, the enthusiasts soon granted themselves an absolute control of religious knowledge which they attempted to force upon others.

Undeniable differences separate the Greeks, Papists, dissenters and Deists, but their thought on certain fundamental issues agrees. All of them either ignore or misuse Scripture, and all of them disallow or overemphasize the importance of tradition. Divorced from nature, the Anglican's opponents construct etherial and highly abstract systems; even the Deist's trust in speculative reasoning corresponds to the enthusiast's confidence in his extravagant mental fantasies. Dryden depicts all the corruptors of true religion as lost, blind, wandering exiles, men cut off from the solid land of belief.

Although the poet applies the same critical language to each of his adversaries, the consistent employment of the financial metaphor to characterize the religion of the Deist, Papist and Enthusiast provides the most damaging indictment of all rival faiths. Enthusiastic opponents of the monarch in Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall hope to aggrandize themselves by toppling the king. One of the more influential of Achitophel's followers, Shimei, expressed the prevailing Whig and sectarian philosophy when he explained "That Kings were Useless, and a Clog to Trade," (Absalom and Achitophel, l. 615) and Dryden finds ample

financial motivation in the seditious activities of the other anti-monarchists. Commercial considerations also shape the religion of the heretics in Religio Laici. History shows us that man has almost universally been kept in awe by superstition:

Proof needs not here, for whether we compare  
That Impious, Idle, Superstitious Ware  
Of Rites, Lustrations, Offerings, (which before  
In various Ages, various Countries bore)  
With Christian Faith and Vertues, we shall find  
None answ'ring the great ends of humane kind  
But This one Rule of Life: That shews us best  
How God may be appeas'd and Mortals blest.  
(ll. 126-133)

Although "Impious, Idle Superstitious Ware" immediately calls to mind the liturgical paraphernalia of the Catholic Church, Dryden applies the description to all religions that have kept men in spiritual darkness. These false religions have conducted a thriving trade, offering their "wares" for worship like the unfaithful followers of Moses who adored the Golden Calf.

Although the Deist seems to be an altruistic reformer, interested only in liberating man from a debilitating superstition, he is also infected with the commercial spirit. For him, Heaven is a kind of bank that keeps tabs on man's accounts:

This general Worship is to PRAISE, and PRAY:  
One part to borrow Blessings, one to pay:  
And when frail Nature slides into Offence,  
The Sacrifice for Crimes is Penitence.  
(ll. 50-53)

Dryden chages that the Deist tries to buy his salvation

cheaply. The universal tendency of man to use complicated rituals to appease his gods confirms that penitence is often a selfish ploy to salve a guilty conscience. On the altar of the pagans,

The guiltless Victim groan'd for their Offence;  
 And Cruelty and Blood was Penitence.  
 If Sheep and Oxen cou'd Attone for Men  
 Ah! at how cheap a rate the Rich mught Sin!  
 (ll. 87-90)

Economic factors determined the form of heathen sacrifice and while the modern Deist has no intention of slaying animals on a primitive altar, the rules of practical economy still govern his religion. He does not understand that sin against God cannot be absolved according to the laws of the market place:

Look humbly upward, see his Will disclose:  
 The Forfeit first, and then the Fine impose:  
 A Mulct thy Poverty cou'd never pay  
 Had not Eternal Wisdom found the way:  
 And with Coelestial wealth supply'd thy Store:  
 His Justice makes the Fine, his Mercy quits the Score.  
 . . .  
 For granting we have Sin'd, and that th' Offence  
 Of Man, is made against Omnipotence,  
 Some Price, that bears proportion, must be paid;  
 And Infinite with Infinite be weigh'd.  
 See then the Deist lost: Remorse for Vice,  
Not paid, or paid, inadequate in price.  
 (ll. 101-106; 111-116)

Justice demands that sin can be forgiven only by the offended. Because man sins against God, God must pardon man for his sins in order that man might be forgiven. Only out of mercy, and not by the rules of any contract, did the Son of God take responsibility for man's sins so that he could enter

the kingdom of Heaven. The neat calculations of the Deist, of course, cannot account for God's mercy toward man; the chasm between man and God is too wide to be bridged by the principles of honest business.

More avaricious than the Deists, the Catholic clergy has been motivated by self-interest and profit in the name of religion. (l. 275) In the dark ages, priests kept the laity ignorant so that they could profit at their expense:

In times o'ergrown with Rust and Ignorance,  
A gainfull Trade their Clergy did advance:  
When want of Learning kept the Laymen low,  
And none but Priests were Authoriz'd to know.  
Then Mother Church did mightily prevail: . . .  
She parcel'd out the Bible by retail:  
But still expounded what She sold or gave;  
To keep it in her Power to Damn and Save:  
Scripture was scarce, and as the Market went,  
Poor Laymen took Salvation on Content;  
As needy men take Money, good or bad:  
God's Word they had not, but the Priests they had.  
(ll. 370-373; 376-383)

Dryden reiterates the very common Protestant accusation that a corrupt Catholic Church kept laymen in physical and spiritual poverty during the middle ages. Although the Church gave her people some knowledge of Scripture, she edited the Biblical text so heavily that ordinary men never heard the unadulterated word of holy writ.

When extremists took control of the Reformation, they monopolized Scripture as the Catholics had done and claimed a similar infallibility:

The Spirit gave the Doctoral Degree:  
And every member of a Company  
Was of his Trade, and of the Bible free. (ll. 406-408)



A redoubtable guide, private spirit, displaced reason from religion and gave the enthusiasts full control over Scriptural exegesis.

Against all the financial manipulations of the Deists, Catholics and enthusiasts stands the "Treasure" (l. 429) of Scripture from which man may draw wealth and nutriment. The commercial contracts that give man control over a bookkeeping God are unnatural, blasphemous and enthusiastic examples of man's relentless pride. Like the "partial Papists," (l. 356) the Deists and non-conformists mistake their particular visions for true perceptions of the universe. By obliterating the distinctions between human and divine life, Dryden's three opponents lose their understanding of the natural and supernatural realms. They are zealots blinded by their own particular enthusiasms and deaf to the wisdom of the true faith that reminds man that he is not God. In Religio Laici Dryden accuses all religions not based solidly on Scripture of sectarianism, just as in The Hind and the Panther he asserts that all Christian rivals of Roman Catholicism are unlawful enthusiasts.

Dryden's poem supposes that man desires, above all else, to be happy. The Greeks pursued the search for human happiness assiduously but without success:

But least of all could their Endeavours find  
 What most concern'd the good of Humane kind:  
 For Happiness was never to be found;  
 But vanish'd from 'em, like Enchanted ground.  
 (ll. 25-28)

Although pleasure (l. 29) and virtue (l. 31) seemed to offer a solution to the human dilemma, neither quality proved satisfying. Christian thinkers believed that obedience to the will of God discovered the Summum Bonum that eluded the Greeks. Seventeenth-century Anglicans, like earlier Christian writers, thought happiness an important topic:

With regard to theological perspective, the importance attached to happiness was not an invention of the Latitudinarians, for Aquinas had said exactly the same thing, that "the last end of human life is happiness," and had devoted considerable space to the examination of the subject.<sup>48</sup>

Although Dryden believes that trust in Scripture and not in infallible Churches or the private spirit ensures the greatest happiness, he warns that religious contentment can never be found in a nation involved in civil wars over religion:

Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;  
The things we must believe, are few, and plain:  
But since men will believe more than they need;  
And every man will make himself a Creed:  
In doubtfull questions 'tis the safest way  
To learn what unsuspected Ancients say:  
For 'tis not likely we shou'd higher Soar  
In search of Heav'n, than all the Church before:  
Nor can we be deceiv'd, unless we see  
The Scripture, and the Fathers disagree.

And, after hearing what our Church can say,  
If still our Reason runs another way,  
That private Reason 'tis more Just to curb,  
Than by Disputes the publick Peace disturb.  
(ll. 431-440; 445-448)

Most of Religio Laici demonstrates the errors of false believers on religious bases alone and stresses the superi-

ority of the Anglican faith, but the conclusion of the poem introduces a political plea found only intermittently in the rest of the verse. Man must relax his dangerous will (ll. 433, 434, 442) and establish a necessary and lasting peace. Battles over picayune differences must cease if the will of heaven (l. 423) is to be made known. In his sixteenth-century plea for religious and civil peace, Hooker made the same observation on the Puritans as Dryden does on the enthusiasts of his day: "Thus by following the law of private reason, where the law of public should take place, they breed disturbance."<sup>49</sup> Both men blamed the private desires and self-interest of dissenters for their nation's turmoil, and they urged men to consider the communal repercussions of their intended actions.

Louis I. Bredvold correctly detects a close connection between politics and religion in Dryden's verse:

Assuming the preconceptions of the seventeenth century, the problem of religious knowledge was never far removed from the problem of authority in church and state. Dryden's views on religion are full of political implications, and lose some of their cogency when isolated from those political and ethical questions with which they were, in his own mind, intimately associated.<sup>50</sup>

In this chapter I have attempted to present a balanced discussion of the purely religious issues that form the heart of Religio Laici, but the political ramifications of the poem also need treatment. Edward N. Hooker's exclusively political reading of the poem<sup>51</sup> gives a very

one-sided version of the problems that Dryden addresses in Religio Laici, although there is some internal evidence (unmentioned by Hooker) that the Deistic God is an enlarged portrait of the deity worshipped by Shaftesbury in The Medall. Shaftesbury's God is

A jolly God, that passes hours too well  
To promise Heav'n, or threaten us with Hell.  
That unconcern'd can at Rebellion sit;  
And Wink at Crimes he did himself commit.  
(ll. 279-282)

Though more exacting than this corrupted master, the Deist's God also takes orders from rebellious men, as Dryden tells his rationalistic adversaries: "Then Thou are Justice in the last Appeal;/ Thy easie God instructs Thee to rebell." (ll. 95-96) Though we might suppose them to be far apart, the enthusiast and the Deist share the same instinctive desire for freedom that makes civilized living and instructive religion impossible.

The Restoration Settlement demanded that man curb his radical religious tendencies in order to create a stable society. John, Bishop of Exeter's epistle, attached to an edition of Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity published in 1662, begs the new king to strengthen the English Church against the seditious activities of the reformers:

The still crazy church of England, together  
with this book...do farther need, and humbly  
implore, your Majesty's royal protection under  
God: nor can your Majesty, by any generous  
instance and perseverance...more express  
that pious and grateful sense which God and  
all good men expect from your Majesty, as

some retribution for his many miraculous mercies to yourself, than in a wise, speedy, and happy settling, of our religious peace: with the least grievance, and most satisfaction to all your good subjects; sacred order and uniformity being the centre and circumference of our civil tranquility; sedition naturally rising out of schism, and rebellion out of faction: the only cure and antidote against both, are good laws and canons, first wisely made, with all Christian moderation and seasonable charity; next, duly executed with justice and impartiality....<sup>52</sup>

Although Exon and Dryden desire civil stability, they want the Anglican Church to be the chief religious institution in England. Neither man relishes religious pluralism because diversity threatens the unity of Church and state. When Dryden says that "Reformation of Church and State has always been the ground of our Divisions in England," (Kinsley, p. 281) he informs us that the nation needs uniformity to thrive.

The Preface and verse of Religio Laici have a similar structure. Both begin with an attack on Deism, then proceed to an evaluation of Catholicism and enthusiasm, and conclude with a short commentary on the poet's style. At its inception, the Reformation cleared away some of the major errors of the Catholic Church (ll. 388-392) but soon degenerated into undisciplined frenzy. Dryden believes that the sectarian threat to England is as strong in 1680 as 100 years earlier, and he observes modern England with the eyes of an Elizabethan:

They who will consult the Works of our venerable Hooker, or the account of his Life, or

more particularly the Letter written to him on this Subject, by George Cranmer, may see by what gradations they proceeded; from the dislike of Cap and Surplice, the very next step was Admonitions to the Parliament against the whole Government Ecclesiastical: then came out Volumes in English and Latin in defence of their Tenets: and immediately, practices were set on foot to erect their Discipline without Authority. Those not succeeding, Satyre and Rayling was the next: and Martin Mar-Prelate... was the first Presbyterian Scribler, who sanctify'd Libels and Scurrility to the use of the Good Old Cause. (Kinsley, p. 279)

Dryden follows Cranmer's text closely in his preface,<sup>53</sup> and cites the case of Hacket and Coppinger (mentioned in Hooker's Epistle<sup>54</sup>) who tried to lead a rebellion against Elizabeth I.

Dryden's very conservative (and at times anachronistic) view of the enthusiasts in Religio Laici concurs with his statements on peace and rebellion made elsewhere. As a follower of Hooker, Dryden believes that Scripture is "the greatest security of Governours, as commanding express obedience to them," (Kinsley, p. 281) just as the great Anglican theologian thought that

nature, Scripture, and experience itself, have all taught the world to seek for the ending of contentions, by submitting itself unto some judicial and definitive sentence, whereunto neither part that contendeth may under any pretence or colour refuse to stand.<sup>55</sup>

Religion and politics ought to work together for mutual benefit and, significantly, the mentor who presided over Dryden's writings was "a Man indefatigably zealous in the service of the Church and State: and whose Writings, have

highly deserv'd of both." (Kinsley, p. 274)<sup>56</sup>

Sanford Budick has written that in Religio Laici, "Dryden's hostility to Roman Catholic authoritarianism is overt and unmistakable....In 1682 the Church of Rome was clearly associated in Dryden's mind with the worst 'medievalism' and oppression of the human spirit,"<sup>57</sup> and Phillip Harth claims that "if Dryden had died at the end of 1682, no one, I venture to suggest, would ever have suspected from this poem that he was moving toward the Catholic Church."<sup>58</sup> Although Bredvold's strong assertion that Dryden "was already in 1682 far along on the road to the Roman communion"<sup>59</sup> is not substantiated by Religio Laici, nevertheless, there are indications of Dryden's increasing tolerance of Roman Catholicism in the poem's Preface.

Victor M. Hamm observes that Dryden's main objections are to the Jesuits but not to all Catholics,<sup>60</sup> and Fujimura says that the Catholic claim of authority over heretical monarchs incites Dryden's enmity towards the Roman Church.<sup>61</sup> Both critics overlook Dryden's strong criticism of the Roman clergy in the poem, (ll. 370-387) but their comments are generally true for the Preface. Comparing the civil threat of Catholics and enthusiasts, Dryden says that

To begin with the Papists, and to speak freely,  
I think them the less dangerous (at least in  
appearance) to our present State; for not onely  
the Penal Laws are in Force against them, and  
their number is contemptible; but also their  
Peerage and Commons are excluded from Parliaments,  
and consequently those Laws in no probability of  
being Repeal'd. (Kinsley, p. 277)

Dryden had defended the Duke of York's right to succession to the throne in Absalom and Achitophel and he had attacked the Popish Plot as a scheme led by seditious and fanatical Protestants. On the continent Dryden observed

that those French Kings, though papists, thought the preservation of their subjects, and the publick peace, were to be considered before the gratification of the court of Rome; and though the number of the papists exceeded that of the protestants in the proportion of three to one, though the protestants were always beaten when they fought, and though the pope pressed continually with exhortations and threatenings to extirpate Calvinism, yet Kings thought it enough to continue in their own religion themselves, without forcing it upon their subjects, much less destroying them who professed another.

(Malone, II, 123)

Although the papacy and the Jesuits (Kinsley, p. 277) pose a great challenge to English security, the ordinary layman and priest is harmless. Dissenters, however, to whom many Englishmen would grant toleration, have always behaved rebelliously in England and abroad because even non-conforming laymen claim an infallibility in religious affairs.

Although Dryden expresses fundamental religious disagreement with Roman Catholics, he detects signs of promising enlightenment within the church. He hopes that Catholics will abandon their endeavours to force Catholic kings on Protestant countries and he says that "they might easily be induc'd, if it be true that this present Pope [Innocent XI] has condemn'd the Doctrine of King-killing (a Thesis of the Jesuites) amongst others ex Cathedra



(as they call it) or in open consistory." (Kinsley, p. 278)

None of Dryden's comments on Roman Catholicism in Religio Laici indicate that Dryden would later become a Catholic, but his attitude toward Roman Catholics is far less harsh than that of many of his countrymen. He has many objections to Catholic religious claims, but he does not suspect that the majority of Catholics have grand political designs on the government of England. In Religio Laici, as in Absalom and Achitophel and the The Medall, it is the sectarians who continue to be his bitterest opponents both on religious and on political grounds.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Edward N. Hooker, "Dryden and the Atoms of Epicurus" in H.T. Swedenberg, ed., Essential Articles for the Study of John Dryden, pp. 232-244.

<sup>2</sup>A.W. Verrall, Lectures on Dryden, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup>Robert D. Hume, Dryden's Criticism, pp. 224-225.

<sup>4</sup>H.R. McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism: A Survey of Anglican Theological Method in the Seventeenth Century (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1965), p. v.

<sup>5</sup>McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism, p. v.

<sup>6</sup>Stephen Neill, Anglicanism, p. 418.

<sup>7</sup>James W. Corder, "Rhetoric and Meaning in Religio Laici," PMLA, LXXXII (1967), 248.

<sup>8</sup>See Paradist Lost, XII, 585-587.

<sup>9</sup>G.R. Cragg, The Church and the Age of Reason 1648-1789 (1960; Baltimore: Penguin, 1970), p. 71.

<sup>10</sup>McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism, p. 410.

<sup>11</sup>Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 98.

<sup>12</sup>Richard Hooker, The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity in The Works of Mr. Richard Hooker in Eight Books of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity with Several other Treatises, and a General Index. Also, a Life of the Author by Issac Walton (London: John Bumpus, 1821), I, 88.

<sup>13</sup>Sanford Budick, Dryden and the Abyss of Light: A Study of Religio Laici and The Hind and the Panther (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 34.

<sup>14</sup>Budick, Dryden and the Abyss of Light, p. 159.

<sup>15</sup>McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism, p. 312.

<sup>16</sup>Neill, Anglicanism, p. 418.

<sup>17</sup>Donald Greene, The Age of Exuberance: Backgrounds to Eighteenth-Century English Literature (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 111.

<sup>18</sup>Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 150.

<sup>19</sup>Norman Sykes, From Sheldon to Secker: Aspects of of English Church History, 1660-1768 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), p. 159.

<sup>20</sup>Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 150.

<sup>21</sup>Hooker, Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, I, 88.

<sup>22</sup>Hooker, Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, I, 180.

<sup>23</sup>McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup>Hooker, Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, I, 194.

<sup>25</sup>Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 32.

<sup>26</sup>Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 14.

<sup>27</sup>Charles Ward, "Religio Laici and Father Simon's History" in Swedenberg, ed., Essential Articles for the Study of John Dryden, p. 241.

<sup>28</sup>Edward N. Hooker, "Dryden and the Atoms of Epicurus" in Swedenberg, ed., Essential Articles for the Study of John Dryden, p. 241.

<sup>29</sup>Donald R. Benson, "Who 'Bred' Religio Laici," JEGP, LXV (1966), 248.

<sup>30</sup>Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 197.

<sup>31</sup>Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 203.

<sup>32</sup>Hooker, Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, I, 178-179.

<sup>33</sup>George H. Tavad, Holy Writ or Holy Church: The Crisis of the Protestant Reformation (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 56.

<sup>34</sup>Louis I. Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, p. 126.

<sup>35</sup>Thomas H. Fujimura, "Dryden's Religio Laici: An Anglican Poem," PMLA, LXXVI (1961), 211.

<sup>36</sup>McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism gives the period as five centuries, p. v, while Neill, Anglicanism, p. 120 suggests a period of six centuries.

<sup>37</sup>McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism, pp. 316-317.

<sup>38</sup>Elias J. Chiasson, "Dryden's Apparent Scepticism in Religio Laici" in Swedenberg, ed., Essential Articles for the Study of John Dryden and Earl Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 177.

<sup>39</sup>For a discussion of the philosophical and religious problem of faith and reason before the Reformation, consult Etienne Gilson, Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages (New York: Charles Scribners, 1938). Gilson discusses purely rationalistic thought at the end of the thirteenth century and compares its status with that of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Deism. See pp. 64-65 and passim.

<sup>40</sup>Hooker, Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, I, 175.

<sup>41</sup>Arthur W. Hoffman, John Dryden's Imagery, p. 62.

<sup>42</sup>Greene, The Age of Exuberance, p. 95.

<sup>43</sup>McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism, p. 76.

<sup>44</sup>Sir Thomas Browne, Religio Medici, p. 83.

<sup>45</sup>Budick, Dryden and the Abyss of Light, p. 71.

<sup>46</sup>G.R. Cragg, From Puritanism to the Age of Reason, pp. 42-46.

<sup>47</sup>Basil Willey, The Seventeenth-Century Background: Studies of the Thought of the Age in Relation to Poetry and Religion (1934; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1953), p. 146

<sup>48</sup>McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism, p. 174.

<sup>49</sup>Hooker, Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, I, 193.

<sup>50</sup>Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, pp. 128-129.

<sup>51</sup>Edward N. Hooker, "Dryden and the Atoms of Epicurus," passim.

<sup>52</sup>Hooker, Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, I, 3.

<sup>53</sup>Hooker, Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, I, 65.

<sup>54</sup>Hooker, Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, I, 75.

<sup>55</sup>Hooker, Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, I, 101.

<sup>56</sup>David D. Brown's "Dryden's Religio Laici and the 'Judicious and Learned Friend,'" MLR, LVI (1961), 66-69 says that the cleric is John Tillotson and the author traces the relationship between Tillotson and Dryden.

<sup>57</sup>Budick, Dryden and the Abyss of Light, p. 22.

<sup>58</sup>Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 227.

<sup>59</sup>Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, p. 121.

<sup>60</sup>Victor M. Hamm, "Dryden's Religio Laici and Roman Catholic Apologetics," PMLA, LXXX (1965), 191.

<sup>61</sup>Fujimura, "Dryden's Religio Laici: An Anglican Poem," 214.

## VI

### THE HIND AND THE PANTHER

The Hind and the Panther describes the deplorable condition of religious life that has been produced by enthusiasm. Writing as a Catholic, Dryden mourns the fragmented nature of religion in Western Europe, especially in England, and he blames the current situation on the spirit of zeal that has swept through Christendom since the Renaissance. Enthusiasm has political repercussions, which the poet observes, but Dryden concentrates his attention on the religious issues that have created a myriad of rival sects. Though the mood of much of The Hind and the Panther is sombre, and although the verses end with the prediction of a rather ominous future for Western society, the poem offers a positive solution to a seemingly impossible problem. Dryden argues that the destructive enthusiasm that has splintered European religious life can be halted if men return to the fold of the Catholic Church which has not changed its doctrinal position since the days of the apostles and which still offers the best chance to realize the ideal of a world-wide Christian community. But the poet does more than preach to his separated brethren. He makes his speaker, the Hind, an attractive and personable figure to whom he ascribes those divinely-inspired qualities that he once attributed to his king and which Dryden

associates with master poets. The Hind and the Panther informs us that the Catholic Church will now be Dryden's governor, but once again the action in the poetry involves a non-violent contest between the champions of enthusiasm and the defenders of divine inspiration.

The Hind and the Panther examines "Matters either Religious or Civil" (Kinsley, p. 354) in a broad historical context. Divided into three sections, this work of nearly 2600 lines is by far the longest of Dryden's poems excluding translations. And while history plays a major role in the other poems I have analyzed, it assumes an even greater importance in The Hind and the Panther because Dryden gives it much more extensive treatment. Although the poem is not a linear history of religious and social events, Dryden does adhere to a roughly chronological treatment of the incidents that have shaped Western Christendom. The first section of the poem concentrates on the regrettably divisive nature of religion from the Reformation to the 1680's, and attempts to locate the origin of rampant enthusiasm in Old Testament history. Restricted to a theological debate between the Hind and the Panther, the second part of the poem examines the doctrinal controversies, especially transubstantiation and infallibility, that separate Anglo and Roman Catholics. Almost as long as the first two sections combined, the last part of The Hind and the Panther deals with contemporary civil events including the situation

of English Catholics under a Catholic monarch and the propriety of a Test Act that barred Catholics from holding public office and conducting public religious services.<sup>1</sup> If the Declaration of Indulgence had appeared after the publication of The Hind and the Panther,<sup>2</sup> Dryden says "I might have spar'd my self the labour of writing many things which are contain'd in the third part of it," (Kinsley, p. 353) but we cannot suppose that the poet was totally surprised by James's proclamation because rumours of the declaration's appearance were rife in the winter of 1686 when Dryden was at work on the poem.<sup>3</sup> Although the third section of The Hind and the Panther deals with the recent affairs in the country, the famous and controversial tales told by the main participants predict the future of Anglicanism and Catholicism in England.

Dryden's poem traces the history of dissent from the Old Testament through the 1680's, and moves from an assessment of the general historical situation in Europe to an evaluation of the particular circumstances affecting religious life in England. The poet's method here is rather like that in Absalom and Achitophel in which a general description of history and contemporary affairs precedes the examination of particular figures. Although Dryden's historical method helps to unify the poem by observing a rough chronology throughout his three sections, the poet keeps his historical perspective fluid rather than static.

No historical event stands baldly isolated from other events in The Hind and the Panther, largely because of the use of animal characters. For example, The Hind and the Panther, I, 35-60 describes the character and activities of the Bear, Hare, Ape, Boar and Fox, animals which represent various sectarian branches of post-Reformation Christianity. Although the "Quaking Hare" (I,37) clearly designates the Quakers, the comparison of a sect to an animal adds an important dimension to the description not available in an epithet such as "frightened Quakers."

Dryden's identification of men with beasts implies that there is something universal, immutable and historically unchangeable about the curious band of seventeenth-century English friends, championed by such diverse personalities as James Nayler and William Penn. The Quakers do not pre-date the seventeenth century, but their behaviour incorporates the timorous nature of the hare which has been fearful since the creation, or at least since the fall, when a new pecking order replaced the old natural harmony and determined the relationship between man and man, man and beasts and beasts and beasts. The Quaker displays the fearful behaviour of the hare, and any other sect or heresy, regardless of its historical date, that could be characterized chiefly by its trepid nature would also be like a hare. Earl Miner acutely remarks that "Dryden's Fox and his other animals, however, may be looked upon as types whose attrib-



utes develop in time and history while their essences remain the same."<sup>4</sup> The Fox that "lurk'd in Sects unseen" (I, 52) will always act in accordance with its inherently skulking nature. A wily animal, the Fox's character is fixed like the Hare's and the vicissitudes of history will never alter its behaviour.

The apparently casual introduction of other beasts in the first section of the work, prepares us for the gradual transformation of the Panther into an animal not much different from the lower beasts. As Martin Price says, "Dryden's object is to establish firmly the lowest common denominator of Protestant dissent before he introduces the Anglican Panther, for the instability of her power throws her into the company of the other beasts and allies her with them."<sup>5</sup> Ultimately the Panther becomes a compendium of all the other animals in the poem. Although her nature is more complex than the Fox or the Hare, for example, she has borrowed from each and so the Anglican Church finally becomes an anthology of enthusiastic heresies. Like the Hare, the Panther fears that the removal of the Test Act would rescind her privileges which would then pass to the Hind:

Our Test excludes your Tribe from benefit,  
 These are my banks your ocean to withstand,  
 Which proudly rising overlooks the land:  
 And once let in, with unresisted sway  
 Wou'd sweep the Pastors and their flocks away.  
 (III, 830-834)

The blasphemous Fox and the atheistic Ape, as well as the enthusiastic Boar and Bear, have found a friend in the Panther who allows them to meet the stipulations of the Test Act: "But that unfaithful Test, unfound will pass/ the dross of Atheists, and sectarian brass." (III, 738-739) Although adamantly opposed to the claims of the Roman Church, the increasingly liberal Anglican Panther treats the wildest of the enthusiasts with tolerance and benevolence:

A wondrous charity you have in store  
For all reform'd to pass the narrow door:  
So much, that Mahomet had scarcely more.  
For he, kind Prophet, was for damning none,  
But Christ and Moyses were to save their own.  
(II, 128-132)

The Panther by whittling down the differences between herself and the left-wing sectarians dangerously approaches the religious outlook of Shaftesbury whose God neither punished the bad nor rewarded the good. (The Medall, ll. 279-280) As perceived by Dryden in the mid 1680's, the Anglican Church was deserting its via media position for an alliance with its traditional enemies. Even the Presbyterian Wolf with "his predestinating ears" (I, 165) has busied himself in the Panther's bed (III, 166) suggesting the future birth of a monstrous creature that will guide the destiny of the Anglicans.

The debates and slight action of The Hind and the Panther deepen the connection between the Panther and the

radical beasts. Sexual and social relations with the more extreme predators alter the Panther's identity and genealogy, until her history and beliefs become hopelessly entangled with those of her newly-made friends. "Panther history" merges with Presbyterian, Socinian and Independent chronology, making a clear distinction between the second fairest beast and the lower animals difficult. Anglicanism, Dryden charges, teaches the non-conformist to take great political and religious liberties. If Scripture and the private conscience are to guide man's religious life, then it is unfair of the Anglican Church to demand submission to her social leadership:

How can she censure, or what crime pretend,  
 But Scripture may be constru'd to defend?  
 Ev'n those whom for rebellion she transmits  
 To civil pow'r, her doctrine first acquits;  
 Because no disobedience can ensue,  
 Where no submission to a Judge is due.  
 Each judging for himself, by her consent,  
 Whom thus absolv'd she sends to punishment.  
 (I, 481-488)

The Panther can command no obedience from her enemies because she has abnegated all claims to infallible authority, and her weakened defence encourages the Buzzard in the third part of the poem to usurp her waning power. An airborne predator as malicious as the earth-bound Boar and Bear, the Buzzard's ascendancy betokens the demise of an independent Anglican Church.

As a Roman Catholic in 1687, Dryden considered the establishment of an autonomous Church of England as an act

of rebellion against truth. In his defence of Anne Hyde's (James II's first wife) conversion to Catholicism Dryden at least three times disparaged the English revolt as a "pretended Reformation,"<sup>6</sup> and in The Hind and the Panther he treats all separations from the Church of Rome as manifestations of enthusiastic zeal. Sexual desire and the unwillingness to submit to ascetic control spawned the birth of both Islam and Lutheranism:

Though our lean faith these rigid laws has giv'n,  
The full fed Musulman goes fat to heav'n;  
For his Arabian Prophet with delights  
Of sense, allur'd his eastern Proselytes.  
The jolly Luther, reading him, began  
T' interpret Scriptures by his Alcoran;  
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;)  
And in this masquerade of mirth and love,  
Mistook the bliss of heav'n for Bacchanals above.  
( I, 376-387 )

Henry VIII's English Reformation originated, like Mohammed's and Luther's, in lust:

A Lyon old, obscene, and furious made  
By lust, compress'd her mother [the Panther's] in a shade.  
Then, by a left-hand marr'age weds the Dame,  
Cov'ring adult'ry with a specious name.  
( I, 351-354 )

A "good cause," ( I, 357 ) Anglicanism resembles the "good old cause" of the English sectarians who used religious pretence to usurp civil power, a charge advanced by Dryden in his defence of Anne Hyde and an issue which sets off sharp debate between the Hind and the Panther in the third part of the poem. The connection between Henry VIII

and Mohammed establishes the sectarian nature of the newly created English Church because Hobbes thought the Arabian prophet an enthusiast who "pretended to have conferences with the Holy Ghost, in forme of a Dove."<sup>7</sup> While the connection between sexual excess and enthusiasm may appear obscure, seventeenth-century writers frequently charged that leaders of major and insignificant sects concealed all kinds of sexual irregularities and excesses behind an outward appearance of godliness. "Precisian" described this hypocrisy which was a favourite theme of popular anti-sectarian critics.<sup>8</sup> A whore, the Panther has favoured the Lion in the past but her new lover is the Wolf, (I, 449; III, 166) implying that the Anglican Church has deserted the king for the republican principles of the Presbyterians. As a mother of many sons that she never knew, (III, 144-145) the Panther has gained the promiscuous reputation of a "holy sister," as female members of dissenting sects were called, and her paramour, the Wolf, has earned the status of a sexual libertine which Keith Thomas tells us was a common complaint about Presbyterians in Dryden's century.<sup>9</sup>

Although the seventeenth-century writers commonly attacked the enthusiast for his overactive libido, The Hind and the Panther is the first major composition in which Dryden makes an extensive defence of asceticism. Absalom and Achitophel, we may recall, opens with a celebration of David's sexual energy and proceeds to satirize the impotence

of Achitophel and the inhibited Shimei. In The Hind and the Panther the Anglican Church's wealth and whorish relations with evil kings and conniving enemies elicit Dryden's attack on her worldly power and her love of pleasure in all its varieties. As the "fairest creature of the spotted kind," ( I, 328 ) the Panther has an oddly dual personality unshared by the other beasts in the poem. All of her merits have been borrowed from the Hind, while her defects originate from her intimate contact with the other animals:

Yet, as the mistress of a monarch's bed,  
Her front erect with majesty she bore,  
The Crozier weilded, and the Miter wore.  
Her upper part of decent discipline  
Shew'd affectation of an ancient line:  
And fathers, councils, church and churches head,  
Were on her reverend Phylacteries read.  
But what disgrac'd and disavow'd the rest,  
Was Calvin's brand, that stigmatiz'd the beast.  
( I, 393-401 )

Like Spenser's Duessa ( The Faerie Queene, Book I) who tempts the naive and untested Red Cross Knight, the Panther's regal bearing and ostentatious display shields the ugliness of her lower parts which have been spoiled by her affiliation with the champions of error and heresy. The Panther may also be compared to the Satan of Book Two of Paradise Lost who has retained some light despite his fall from Heaven, while the more extreme animals are like the fallen angels in Book Ten who have lost all of their magnificence and live in total darkness.

Renaissance and Restoration Englishmen, eager to

discredit the claims of a rival church or sect, searched assiduously for evidence of earlier heresies that had been accepted into the contemporary thought and practice of an unorthodox faith or congregation. In his preface to Aërius Redivivus: or the History of the Presbyterians, Peter

Heylyn says that the Presbyterian religion is a conglomeration of heresies existing at the time of the Pharisees:

"The arts and subtilties of the Pharisees were at first suppos'd to be too Heterogeneous to be all found in any one Sect of Hereticks amongst the Christians, till they were all united in the Presbyterians...."<sup>10</sup>

Heylyn goes on to charge Presbyterianism with the incorporation of the errors of the Arians, Novatians, Donatists and Priscillianists. To refute the claims of the Anglican Church, Dryden makes the closest connection between Anglicanism and heretical sectarianism.

A "fair Apostate," (II, 389) the Panther maintains familiar contact with the sects who have learned rebellion from her.

Addressing the Panther, the Hind refers to "your jarring sects" (II, 113) and "your sects." (II, 422; III, 184)

Enthusiasts may defend their beliefs of individual Scriptural interpretation by the Anglican example:

Because some ancient friends of yours declare,  
Your onely rule of faith the Scriptures are,  
Interpreted by men of judgment sound,  
Which every sect will for themselves expound:  
Nor think less rev'rence to their doctours due  
For sound interpretation, than to you. (II, 424-429)

Dissenters agree only on the necessity to suppress

Popery, (II, 462) a strategy with which the Panther also concurs. After she has told her fable of the Swallows, the Hind can barely restrain herself because she recognizes in the Panther's tale the same rancour that Luther and the sects directed against the Catholic Church:

The patience of the Hind did almost fail,  
For well she mark'd the malice of the tale:  
Which Ribbald art their church to Luther owes,  
In malice it began, by malice grows,  
He sow'd the Serpent's teeth, an iron-harvest rose.  
(III, 639-643)

The Panther has joined the ranks of a marauding army that desires to ruin the Catholic Church, just as the early Puritans wished to strip the Anglican Church of the last vestiges of papal taint. By embarking on a course of further accommodation with dissenters, the Panther risks her own destruction. With the revoking of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, many French Huguenots poured into England in search of religious liberty.<sup>11</sup> The Hind warns the Panther that these new immigrants are seeking wealth in England, and that these descendents of Calvin will be satisfied only when they gain enormous power:

Think you your new French Proselytes are come  
To starve abroad, because they starv'd at home?  
Your benefices twinckl'd from afar,  
They found the new Messiah by the star:  
Those Swisses fight on any side for pay,  
And 'tis the living that conforms, not they.  
Mark with what management their tribes divide,  
Some stick to you, and some to t'other side,  
That many churches may for many mouths provide.  
(III, 173-181)

The Huguenot worships money, not Christ, and this sect will



fight as mercenaries for the highest bidder. As non-conformists without principles, the French converts join both the Anglican and the sectarian congregations. Their indiscriminate choice of Churches indicates that there are no substantial differences between Anglicans and sectarians, but this evidence of greater dissent within her own boundaries escapes the Panther's notice.

Not all of the danger to the Panther comes from her traditional enemies. The Anglican Church harbours many leading theologians and clerics who seek lasting agreement with the wildest beasts, either by compromising the Church's principles or by turning Anglicanism into a sectarian religion. The Panther's adherents welcome the guidance of the Buzzard, an enemy of kings and episcopacy, as the Hind's tale in the third part of the poem shows, and the Panther herself has given active encouragement to her old enemy, the Wolf. Although she realizes that her advice will go unheeded the Hind counsels the Panther to cleanse her Church of rebellious ministers:

It now remains for you to school your child,  
 And ask why God's anointed he revil'd;  
 A King and Princes dead! did Shimei worse?  
 The curser's punishment should fright the curse:  
 Your son was warn'd, and wisely gave it o're,  
 But he who councill'd him, has paid the score:  
 The heavy malice cou'd no higher tend,  
 But wo to him on whom the weights descend....  
 (III, 306-313)

This rather obscure passage refers to the activities of Stillingfleet and Bishop Burnet. Edward Stillingfleet had

attacked the honesty of Anne Hyde's conversion to Catholicism after the princess's death, and he had published earlier tracts in which he questioned various aspects of monarchical power.<sup>12</sup> In his defence of the princess, Dryden called Stillingfleet a "foul-mouth'd and shuffling" (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 211) opponent of the "latitudinarian stamp." (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 212) As the counsellor of Stillingfleet, Burnet "has paid the score," either with indictments for high treason issued in Scotland on April 19, 1687 or by Dryden's damaging censure of him in the *Hind's tale*, or both.<sup>13</sup>

Although we have no evidence that Dryden considered Burnet to be a Latitudinarian, The Hind and the Panther shows that the poet thought there was little difference between the Panther's "sons of Latitude" (III, 160) and Presbyterians. In an unflattering comparison Dryden likens the Latitudinarians to the Huguenots:

Your sons of breadth at home, are much like these,  
 Their soft and yielding metals run with ease,  
 They melt, and take the figure of the mould:  
 But harden, and preserve it best in gold.  
(III, 187-190)

Latitudinarians construct golden calves like the French dissenters, and they remain in the Anglican Church only for better pay. Dryden contends that these divines would join the most extreme sects for commercial reward:

Your broad-way sons wou'd never be too nice  
 To close with Calvin, if he paid their price;

But rais'd three steeples high'r, wou'd change their note,  
 And quit the Cassock for the Canting-Coat.  
 (III, 229-232)

Although Latitudinarians were more likely to defend the precision of reason than the sectarian private spirit, Dryden seems to have thought that the reasoners and the supernaturalists created identical problems, just as he made the Deists and the enthusiasts spiritual counterparts in Religio Laici. Though only a minority of Latitudinarians allied themselves with the Socinians,<sup>14</sup> the readiness with which the Latitudinarians would abandon patristic arguments in religion was leading Anglicanism steadily toward the sectarian position.<sup>15</sup> The Hind's commentary on the Socinian heresy establishes a connection between all those who use Scripture as the ultimate religious authority:

For did not Arius first, Socinus now,  
 The Son's eternal god-head disavow,  
 And did not these by Gospel Texts alone  
 Condemn our doctrine, and maintain their own?  
 Have not all hereticks the same pretence  
 To plead the Scriptures in their own defence?  
 (II, 150-155)

Scripture proves everything: the Socinian can demonstrate that Christ was only a man, the Anglican can show that sectarians ought to be submissive to the monarch and the enthusiasts can argue for the abolishment of the English episcopacy. The advocacy of pure reason or pure spirit will lead to the same heretical trials in 1687 that challenged the early Church.

Phillip Harth contends that it is probable that

If Dryden, as an Anglican, experienced growing concern over the ill effects of private conscience, it is unlikely that he expected educated Englishmen to succumb to the private spirit, which he had defined as "the gift of interpreting scriptures by private persons without learning." It is much more probable that his confidence in the Church of England's own alternative of private reason, expressed with such assurance in Religio Laici, began to wane shortly afterwards.<sup>16</sup>

Although the Church of England staunchly defended judicious private interpretation against the extravagancies of the enthusiasts as Harth rightly observes,<sup>17</sup> there is considerable evidence in The Hind and the Panther to support the contention that Dryden did think Anglicanism was veering far to the left. In his altercation with Stillingfleet about the conversion of Anne Hyde, Dryden contrasts the Anglican divines consulted by the Duchess in 1670 with the ministers of the 1680's who have neither civility nor respect for Anglican tradition:

But these are church of England men of the old stamp; betwixt whom, and the faction of this answerer, there is just as much difference as betwixt a true episcopal man and a latitudinarian; and this latter, in plain terms, is no otherwise different from a presbyterian, than by whatsoever titles and dignities he is distinguished.

(Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 227)

Although not all of the Anglican churchmen are as vociferous and disloyal as Stillingfleet, the Latitudinarians eagerly pursue a policy of sedition and dissent:

But God forbid that I should think the whole episcopal clergy of this nation to be of his latitudinarian stamp; many of them, as learned

as himself, are much more moderate; and such, I am confident, will be as far from abetting his irreverence to the royal family, as they are from the juggling designs of his faction to draw in the nonconformists to their party, by assuring them they shall not be prosecuted ...but, in the meantime, this is to wrest the favour out of the king's hands, and take the bestowing it into their own, and to re-assume to themselves that headship of the English church which their ancestors gave away to King Henry VIII. And now let any loyal subject but consider, whether this new way of their proceeding does not rather tend to bring the church of England into the fanatics, than the fanatics into the church of England.

(Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 212)

Unfortunately, the moderate clergy make little appearance in The Hind and the Panther. The Panther's own position seems close to that of Stillingfleet and Burnet for she refuses to censure her own radical sons, and she displays the same venom that Dryden attributed to his prose opponent. Near the end of his attack on Stillingfleet, Dryden compares his Latitudinarian enemy to a sixteenth-century Puritan leader who assembled the rabble in opposition to monarchy and episcopacy: "Our author knows he has all the common people on his side, and they only read the gazettes of their own writers; so that everything which is called an answer, is with them a confutation, and the Turk and Pope are their sworn enemies, ever since Robin Wisdom was inspired to join them together in a godly ballad." (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 252-253) Stillingfleet's position is also analogous to Shaftesbury's in Dryden's political poems, and more importantly for my argument here, it is

very much like the Buzzard's, the bird who unites the Pigeon faction under his frenzied tutelage.

As in Absalom and Achitophel, Dryden traces the origin of religious dissent back into pre-European history in The Hind and the Panther. Enthusiasm pleads a private cause which disrupts the order of nature and the laws of God and "Because it was a rebellion against God's commands, the Fall sets the pattern for all subsequent rebellion"<sup>18</sup> in Dryden's poem. After a splendid description of the creation and majesty of man in Paradise, (I, 247-275) Dryden briefly records the causes and consequences of the fall from grace:

Till knowledge misapply'd, misunderstood,  
And pride of Empire sour'd his balmy bloud.  
Then, first rebelling, his own stamp he coins;  
The murth'rer Cain was latent in his loins,  
And bloud began its first and loudest cry  
For diff'ring worship of the Deity.  
Thus persecution rose, and farther space  
Produc'd the mighty hunter of his race.  
(I, 276-283)

Like seventeenth-century dissenters, the first sectarians, Cain and the "mighty hunter" Nimrod, established new and militant religions that threatened stable government and proper religious worship. Although man caused the fall, animals share the disastrous consequences of warfare and bloodshed and prey upon each other. Man, however, may choose between good and evil but when he surrenders his reason to the passions, he becomes bestial: "If men transact like brutes 'tis equal then/ For brutes to claim

the privilege of men." (III, 14-15) Since the fall, history has been characterized by a series of hunting expeditions against the weak and the righteous. In this fallen world the vicious always tyrannize the virtuous. As the symbol of gentleness and truth in an evil world, the Hind has been the favourite target of all the followers of Nimrod and Cain:

Yet had she oft been chas'd with horns and hounds,  
And Scythian shafts; and many winged wounds  
Aim'd at Her heart; was often forc'd to fly,  
And doom'd to death, though fated not to dy.  
(I, 5-8)

The Scythian hunt implies pagan persecution of the Hind during an early but unspecified era, and it establishes the great antiquity of the true Church. Protected by Providence, the Hind will outlast all worldly civilizations and she will survive the royal hunt of emperors and kings who pursue her with bows and arrows and hounds. As a spiritual descendent of Nimrod, Henry VIII plundered the Hind's English kingdom. (I, 26) Although she escaped Henry's rapine unharmed, the Hind's children were martyred in "The Caledonian wood" (I, 14) by predatory monarchs and "The common Hunt" (I, 27) of English Anglicans and sectarians who were determined to end her life.

Jealous of her recent protection by a Catholic king, the Panther reminds the Hind of how recently British huntsmen stalked her during the Popish Plot:

Dame, said the Panther, times are mended well  
 Since late among the Philistines you fell,  
 The toils were pitch'd, a spacious tract of ground  
 With expert hunts-men was encompass'd round;  
 Th' Enclosure narrow'd; the sagacious pow'r  
 Of hounds, and death drew nearer ev'ry hour.  
 'Tis true, the younger Lyon scap'd the snare,  
 But all your priestly calves lay struggling there.  
 (II, 1-8)

The Hind's precarious situation throughout history reappears in contemporary Britain. Philistines, Scythians and Nimrods appear in every historical period to slaughter the elusive beast and her children. As usual, the Hind has escaped the latest danger but her priests and laity have sacrificed themselves on the altars of the British Cains. Unwilling to identify herself with the Hind, the Panther refuses to see that the Popish Plot conspired to destroy the Anglican as well as the Catholic Church:

As I remember, said the sober Hind,  
 Those toils were for your own dear self design'd,  
 As well as me; and, with the self same throw,  
 To catch the quarry, and the vermin too,  
 (Forgive the sland'rous tongues that call'd you so.)  
 How e'er you take it now, the common cry  
 Then ran you down for your rank loyalty;  
 Besides, in Popery they thought you nurst,  
 (As evil tongues will ever speak the worst,)  
 Because some forms, and ceremonies some  
 You kept, and stood in the main question dumb.  
 (II, 18-28)

The Hind's retort to the Panther's ill-natured attack reiterates Dryden's own position in Absalom and Achitophel and The Medall that the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis were cleverly disguised ploys by sectarian politicians and clergymen to build a dissenting religious and social



establishment in England, free from the constraints of monarchy and the vestigial Catholic practices and ceremonies that remained in the Anglican Church. Because of her reticence on the significance of the eucharist ("the main question") and her superficial resemblance to the Catholic Church, the seventeenth-century Puritans treated the Church of England with the same suspicion and hostility as their forbears had done a century earlier. The Panther, eager to retain amiable relations with her sons of latitude and other traitors within her midst, does not respond to the Hind's allegations and she maintains a revealing silence (III, 1290) about the fable of the Pigeons in which the Buzzard unites "the feather'd Nimrods of his Race" (III, 1274) to plan future attacks on the Anglican Church.

Although the theological issues and the poetic rendering of The Hind and the Panther are complex, the poem has a simple moral to teach. Man must obey the commands of the true Church in this world and rebuke the teachings of false prophets and mentors. Historical analogies and references enable us to discover which church truly conveys the word of God to man. As in Absalom and Achitophel and Religio Laici, authentically inspired figures and misguided enthusiasts put forth their claims to truth. All of the animals in the poem have an ancient history, but only the Hind's story is unsullied. Although she exists in the natural world, the Hind has never shared in the general

fall. Perfect like Christ, the Hind knows neither sin nor imperfection and she dwells in an unfallen Paradise protected by an Abel-Pan-Christ figure:

Not so the blessed Pan his flock encreas'd,  
Content to fold 'em from the famish'd beast:  
Mild were his laws; the Sheep and harmless Hind  
Were never of the persecuting kind. (I, 284-287)

The modern Catholic Church experiences the same trials as the ancient Israelites whose numbers were diminished by the hostile Egyptians and other enemies of true religion:

So Captive Israel multiply'd in chains  
A numerous Exile, and enjoy'd her pains.  
With grief and gladness mixt, their mother view'd  
Her martyr'd offspring, and their race renew'd;  
Their corps to perish, but their kind to last,  
So much the deathless plant the dying fruit surpass'd.  
(I, 19-24)

Despite the cruel vicissitudes of history, the true Church has an eternal mission to fulfill from Old Testament times until the end of the world and no earthly power can impede that duty. Martyrdom and the guarantee of heavenly life overcome the savagery of the infidel and the Church persists on earth while her children thrive in the hereafter. The pope and cardinals guide the Catholic Church like Moses (II, 209) protecting the embattled Israelites, and the apostolic tradition of the Church extending back to St. Peter forms a kind of "Jacob's ladder" (II, 220) that connects past and present history and earth and Heaven. Although persecuted by her sectarian enemies, the Church stands ready to welcome her separated brethren back into

the fold like a father would greet the return of his prodigal son, and as Joseph offered forgiveness to his brothers who sold him into Egypt:

See how his church adorn'd with ev'ry grace  
 With open arms, a kind forgiving face,  
 Stands ready to prevent her long lost sons embrace.  
 Nor more did Joseph o'er his brethren weep,  
 Nor less himself cou'd from discovery keep,  
 When in the croud of suppliants they were seen,  
 And in their crew his best beloved Benjamin.  
 That pious Joseph in the church behold,  
 To feed your famine, and refuse your gold;  
 The Joseph you exil'd, the Joseph whom you sold.  
 (II, 639-648)

By comparing his church to Joseph and the prodigal son's father, Dryden imparts an attractive personality to the Hind and de-emphasizes the impersonal aspects that one associates with an institutional church. As a spiritual descendant of figures like Moses and Joseph and the faithful Israelites, the Catholic Church continues an unbroken heritage of truth that originates with the holiest and most noble figures found in Scripture.

By implication the enemies of the true Church must be the spiritual offspring of the wicked. Nimrods abound in the modern Protestant sects, and the Hind compares the Anglican Church to an Egyptian wizard, powerless to rid his lands of the plagues:

But like Egyptian Sorcerers you stand,  
 And vainly lift aloft your magick wand,  
 To sweep away the swarms of vermin from the land:  
 You cou'd like them, with like infernal force  
 Produce the plague, but not arrest the course.  
 (II, 538-542)

Lacking internal strength and conviction, the Anglican Church cannot check the growth of enthusiasm or defend itself against multiplying attacks. A captive in the Anglican's Egypt, the Catholic Church is the only power that could end the religious pluralism that imperils religious and social peace. Protestantism displays the same confusion as beset the builders of the tower of Babel, (II, 470) whose proud efforts to construct a physical passageway to Heaven ended with the loss of language and communication. Reforms breed more reforms, and congregations that have abandoned the authority of the true Church are powerless to enforce their rule on the other rebellious sects. Those who champion Scripture as the only basis for religious faith are destined to endless dispute like "the jarring Jews" (II, 317) who have wrangled over the meaning of the commandments since the time of Moses. As in Absalom and Achitophel, Dryden draws a distinction between Israelites who are staunch defenders of order and truth, and the Jews who in both poems are moody, murmuring and headstrong.

Heylyn's Preface to Aërius Redivivus comments on the great antiquity of the Presbyterians: "Intending a compleat History of the Presbyterians, in all the Principles, Practices, and most remarkable Proceedings of that dangerous Sect; I am to take higher aim then the time of Calvin... and fetch their Pedigree from those whose steps they follow."<sup>19</sup> The historian adds that "I shall not grutch them

an Antiquity as great as that which they desire, as great as that of Moses or the Jewish Sanhedrin, from which they would so willingly derive themselves."<sup>20</sup> Because Christianity is firmly based on Scripture, the comparison of modern and ancient belief, ceremonies and persons should not seem strange. Like Heylyn, Dryden finds uncomplimentary figures from the Old Testament to compare with modern enthusiasts. Stillingfleet, for example, is a modern Shimei, (III, 308) who shouted curses at the king like the Biblical personage and like Slingsby Bethel in Absalom and Achitophel. Heylyn claims that the spiritual origins of the Presbyterians are undeniably Biblical:

For if we look upon them in their professed opposition, as well to all Monarchical as Episcopal Government, we cannot but give them an Extraction from that famous Triumverate, Korah, Dathan and Abiram, combined in a Design against Moses and Aaron, against the Chief Priest and the Supreme Prince....<sup>21</sup>

Dryden incorporates Heylyn's observations in The Hind and the Panther; dissent began when

That fi'ry Zuynghius first th' affection bred,  
And meagre Calvin blest the nuptial bed.  
In Israel some believe him whelp'd long since.  
When the proud Sanhedrin oppress'd the Prince.  
Or, since he will be Jew, derive him high'r  
When Corah with his brethren did conspire,  
From Moyses hand the Sov'reign sway to wrest,  
And Aaron of his Ephod to divest....

(I, 180-187)

Dryden works the supposed affiliation between modern sectarians and Biblical persons to the disadvantage of the dissenters. European reformers continue the shameful

activity of the most disloyal and faithless Old Testament rebels, and because the Anglican Church countenances the behaviour of the zealots within and without her own jurisdiction, she shares in this general condemnation.

All rebellions, as mentioned before, are patterned after the fall, but not just the fall of man as Alan Roper supposes. Dissenters imitate the behaviour of Satan and the fallen angels who would not submit to God's authority. Only the Catholic Church resolutely battles against the satanic giants that threaten her sovereignty: "Still when the Gyant-brood invades her throne/ She stoops from heav'n, and meets 'em half way down." (II, 535-536) Martin Luther, dissatisfied with God's universe, decided to "make the paths of Paradise more sweet," (I, 383) like Adam who tried to improve Eden and like Satan who found Heaven insufferable under God's command. The enthusiast's plea of Scriptural guidance makes the dissenters followers of Satan who tempted Christ with an illegitimate reading of the Bible. (II, 163) Dryden compares the Buzzard to Satan and Moloch, (III, 1181-1182) and the Panther enters the Hind's cottage like Satan coming into the Garden of Eden in Paradise Lost.<sup>22</sup>

The silent stranger stood amaz'd to see  
Contempt of wealth, and wilfull poverty:  
And, though ill habits are not soon controll'd,  
A while suspended her desire for gold.  
(II, 714-717)

The Panther presents a pleasing exterior like Milton's Satan,

and her superior breeding and less destructive behaviour when compared to the other beasts reminds us of the sophisticated Belial who "seemed/ For dignity compos'd and high exploit." (Paradise Lost, II, 110-111)

Typological argument determines the true nature of the beasts and men in The Hind and the Panther. An unfallen Adam, the Hind merits the protection of Pan and will one day become the Bride of Christ:

Behold what heav'nly rays adorn her brows,  
What from his Wardrobe her belov'd allows  
To deck the wedding-day of his unspotted spouse.  
(II, 517-519)

"Immortal and unchang'd," (I, 1) the Hind has "glorious Visions of her future state" (III, 1298) which make her earthly sojourn bearable until she can be eternally united with Christ.

Both the Hind and the Panther possess very old traditions which extend as far back as the creation of the universe, but only the Hind bears the marks of the true church. According to the Lateran Council of 649, the Church is "holy, Catholic, and apostolic,"<sup>23</sup> and the creed of the Council of Trent affirmed "that there is one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church."<sup>24</sup> Because the Anglican Church agreed with the Catholic Church on the signs of the true religion, Dryden and the Hind attempt to show how their faith fulfills the requirements that both faiths demanded. Anglicans based their faith firmly on Scripture, as we have seen in

the discussion of Religio Laici, but they also claimed to be the true heirs of the apostolic succession. This dichotomy makes the Panther a "mute" and a "chameleon" in the eyes of the Hind. Dependence on Scripture allies the Anglican Church with the enthusiasts, while apostolic tradition draws her towards the Catholics. The retention of an episcopacy angered the other Protestant groups in England, which claimed that bishops had no precedent in Scripture. Perhaps the most damaging attack that the Hind makes on the Panther is her denial of the Anglican Church's claim to true apostolic authority, because Anglicans justified their civil and religious ascendancy on this basis. To the Anglican Church, other Protestants were unlicensed pretenders to authority, while the Catholic Church regarded the Anglicans as just another branch of the divisive Protestant tree.

Throughout history the Catholic Church "and none but she, th' insulting rage/ Of Hereticks oppos'd from age to age." (II, 533-534) The Church's wisdom has been tested in every historical period when new heresies have arisen, but the Anglicans lack this long experience. Heresies and heretics creep into the Panther's fold because she cannot recognize her enemies when she meets them. When the Hind charges that the Panther uses Scripture as her only authority, the spotted lady asks when

Were those first Councils disallow'd by me?



Or where did I at sure tradition strike,  
 Provided still it were Apostolick?

(II, 169-171)

Because the Panther accepts the early decrees of the  
 Catholic Church, the Hind accuses her of inconsistency:

Friend, said the Hind, you quit your former ground,  
 Where all your Faith you did on Scripture found;  
 Now 'tis tradition join'd with holy writ,  
 But thus your memory betrays your wit.

(II, 172-175)

The Hind raises the same objection to Anglican theology as  
 did the dissenters who believed that tradition was a super-  
 fluous addition to a religion that proclaimed full depen-  
 dence on Scripture. The Panther reserves to herself the  
 decision about when the tradition of the Hind is "forg'd,  
 and when 'tis true." (II, 177) Anglican usage of Catholic  
 tradition is arbitrary because it accepts only the decrees  
 of the early church. Glaring at her opponent, the Panther  
 firmly refuses to recognize medieval Roman tradition which  
 the Hind describes as part of the Church's "Jacob's ladder":

And said but this, since lucre was your trade,  
 Succeeding times such dreadful gaps have made  
 'Tis dangerous climbing: to your sons and you  
 I leave the ladder, and its omen too.

(II, 224-227)

The Catholic Church avoids fruitless arguments  
 about Scripture because it depends on accumulated knowledge  
 to solve difficulties as they arise, as the Hind reminds  
 her adversary:

The Council steer'd it seems a diff'rent course,  
 They try'd the Scripture by tradition's force;  
 But you tradition by the Scripture try;

Pursu'd, by Sects, from this to that you fly,  
Nor dare on one foundation to rely.

(II, 181-185)

The Panther's pretension to be a qualified interpreter of the Bible is as arrogant as the dissenter's pride in individual exegesis. Only the Hind can instruct man truthfully because she has preserved an unbroken connection with the primitive Church. Ignorance of the past causes the same pandemonium in religious life as innovation produces in the political arena:

The church alone can certainly explain,  
That following ages, leaning on the past,  
May rest upon the Primitive at last.

(II, 354-356)

No truncated employment of tradition can replace an unbroken link with Christian origins. As the Hind advises her opponent,

Despair at our foundations then to strike  
Till you can prove your faith Apostolick;  
A limpid stream drawn from the native source;  
Succession lawfull in a lineal course.

(II, 612-615)

Although the Panther's claim that Scripture ought to be the ultimate authority for religious belief seems irrefutable, the Hind reminds her that practice was antecedent to the text:<sup>25</sup>

Before the Word was written, said the Hind:  
Our Saviour preach'd his Faith to humane kind;  
From his Apostles the first age receiv'd  
Eternal truth, and what they taught, believ'd.  
Thus by tradition faith was planted first,  
Succeeding flocks succeeding Pastours nursed.

. . . . .

Thus faith was e'er the written word appear'd,  
 And men believ'd, not what they read, but heard.  
 (II, 305-310; 322-323)

Dryden, then, rests his Catholic belief on the "oral" tradition of the Church declared by the Council of Trent:

The council is aware that this truth and teaching [of Christ] are contained in written books and in the unwritten traditions that the apostles received from Christ himself or that was handed on, as it were from hand to hand, from the apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and so have come down to us. The council follows the example of the orthodox Fathers and with the same sense of loyalty and reverence with which it accepts and venerates all the books both of the Old and the New Testament, since one God is the author of both, it also accepts and venerates traditions concerned with faith and morals as having been received orally from Christ or inspired by the Holy Spirit and continuously preserved in the Catholic Church.<sup>26</sup>

Whereas Dryden formerly parodied the Catholic teaching on oral tradition in his attack on Simon and other Roman apologists, he now defends the orthodox position of his new Church in The Hind and the Panther. His enlightened understanding of the doctrine accords perfectly with Earl Miner's explanation of Catholic pronouncement on the matter:

that Christ and the Apostles taught before writing; that much that was divinely inspired came not through writing to separate churches in apostolic times, but through teaching within the early church; that the teaching was handed down in purity from age to age; and that, in any case, without the Church to interpret, the Bible was just so many written characters on the page or the prey of every unlettered zealot.<sup>27</sup>

The early Christian Church had not been troubled by the severance of practice from theory that led to schisms in

the Renaissance. Dryden accepts the authority of the Catholic Church on religious matters because this institution alone has preserved an unbroken heritage of teaching since the time of the apostles. Reformed religions, on the other hand, have constructed a new body of tenets solely from conjectural interpretation of Scripture, uninformed by historical knowledge of the Christian faith. Guided only by the innovative itch, each of the new sects has granted itself the right to interpret the Bible, and this private spirit has led to the establishment of a mosaic of religions divided from each other by disagreement concerning obscure points of Scripture.

The Panther, of course, dismisses "This Oral fiction" (II, 180) as a superstitious accretion to the purity of the early Church. As Dryden employs the word, "oral" defines not only his church's thought but also the Church and the Hind themselves. Although animals have no language, Dryden's figures are "dumb beasts" in a special sense. Of the fallen animals, only the Panther has the gift of speech but she forsakes her power and remains silent. Scripture itself is a "mute" guide (II, 359) and does not proclaim itself clearly as the dissenters and the Anglicans claim:

And what one Saint has said of holy Paul,  
 He darkly writ, is true apply'd to all.  
 For this obscurity could heav'n provide  
 More prudently than by a living guide,  
 As doubts arose, the difference to decide?  
 (II, 344-348)

The followers of the dumb must themselves be only dumb. The Panther adheres to a "dumb rule" (II, 203) and she scorns "Oral fiction" and "The word." (II, 186) Anglicanism is "The Passive Church" (III, 1261) with a mute conscience (III, 1215) that equivocates like a Jesuit (II, 45) and refuses to acknowledge Catholic warnings (III, 1290) or answer sectarian questions about the significance of holy communion. (II, 28) Phillip Harth has noticed that the debate between the Hind and the Panther is grossly uneven, with the Hind speaking 575 lines of the 648-line conversation in Part Two.<sup>28</sup> After line 305, the Panther has nothing more to say in the second part of the poem and the Hind proceeds to lecture her opponent on the strength of the Catholic Church and the weakness of Protestantism. The Panther's reticence illustrates her "dumbness" and reinforces the Panther's claim to superiority.

As the Panther slips slowly down the Chain of Being, the Hind rises as a truly inspired speaker. Control of language indicates the spiritual quality of the speaker and the Hind shares the rhetorical powers of the greatest human orators. We have seen this clash between inspiration and enthusiasm earlier in this study: like David in Absalom and Achitophel and Scripture itself in Religio Laici, the Hind asserts her superiority over the Panther by a superb use of language which shows her eminence. The Hind's enemies issue the same inarticulate utterances as Absalom,

Shaftesbury and their many followers among the enthusiasts.  
At creation, man emerged as a kind of Orpheus-David figure  
empowered to tame the beasts with his intellectual gifts  
alone,

And like his mind his outward form appear'd;  
When issuing naked, to the wondering herd,  
He charm'd their eyes, and for they lov'd, they fear'd.  
Not arm'd with horns of arbitrary might,  
Or claws to seize their furry spoils in fight,  
Or with increase of feet t' o'ertake 'em in their flight.  
(I, 263-268)

By neglecting her powers of speech, the Panther must rely  
on physical power to subdue others, and men who are silent  
or awkward in language become bestial in behaviour. On the  
other hand, the Hind by perfecting her oratory, attains the  
eminence of the finest poets. The herd of animals that pur-  
sue the Hind resembles the mob of enthusiasts that besiege  
David in Absalom and Achitophel and whereas Dryden had for-  
merly celebrated the poetic power of the king, he now hails  
the artistic power of the Hind with whom he closely iden-  
tifies. Man tamed the animals in Paradise and the Hind  
attempts to cure the inner pain and rage of the uncouth  
Panther with words:

Yet durst she not too deeply probe the wound,  
As hoping still the nobler parts were sound;  
But strove with Anodynes t' assuage the smart,  
And mildly thus her med'cine did impart.  
(III, 80-83)

The Panther's failure to respond to the Hind's treatment  
testifies more to her own wickedness than to the Hind's  
lack of fluency, because both of them are allowed a super-

natural vision in which God declares that the Hind represents the true Church:

The Dame, who saw her fainting foe retir'd,  
 With force renew'd, to victory aspir'd;  
 (And looking upward to her kindred sky,  
 As once our Saviour own'd his Deity,  
 Pronounc'd his words--she whom ye seek am I.)  
 Nor less amaz'd this voice the Panther heard,  
 Than were those Jews to hear a god declar'd.  
 (II, 394-400)

The direct declaration of God for his Church is similar to the conclusion of Absalom and Achitophel in which Providence supports the long speech of David with visible signs of approval. Unfortunately, the Panther's obstinacy exceeds that of the Jews under the aegis of the monarch, and she remains deaf to the Hind's exhortations and the unmistakable favour shown by her God.

At the end of the first section of the poem the Hind and Panther agree to share "an hour of talk" (I, 558) which becomes progressively more acerbic. All verbal exchange ends four hundred lines before the end of the poem, shortly after the Panther concludes her malicious tale of the Swallows. Despite unfailing efforts of the Hind to win the Panther's confidence, their meeting ends in a stalemate. The Panther's "hour of Grace was past," (III, 893) and the Hind relates her fable of the Pigeons and the Buzzard to deaf ears. When her period of grace passes, the Panther becomes a "graceless beast" (I, 54) like Reynard the Fox and the other lower animals. Although she begins the poem

like one of Milton's more attractive fallen angels, by the debate's end the Panther has degenerated into an ugly and satanic beast. As we have seen before, the enthusiast is distinguished by his inarticulate speech, and in this poem the Panther and the other beasts share the linguistic confusion of Babel's labourers. When she surrenders her powers of language the Panther becomes a dumb animal no different than her sectarian enemies. That eloquence which characterized the cultured and civilized writings and sermons of Renaissance Anglican divines expired because of the new influence of enthusiastic ministers over the English Church. Her fluency gone, the Panther will express herself inarticulately like the groaning Bear, (I, 36) the quivering Hare (I, 37) and the insanely destructive Boar. (I, 43-51) Commenting on the radical groups in The Hind and the Panther, Martin Price says that "Like Swift's Yahoos they are degenerate creatures, once domestic and now savage; like the multitude in Absalom they are natural energy perverted and debased...."<sup>29</sup> Refusing to observe the minimum requirements for admittance to civilized society, the Panther, indulgent of men like Stillingfleet and Burnet, will soon behave no differently than the poorly endowed beasts that vex and despise her.

Sanford Budick informs us that Restoration England witnessed the publication of a large number of pamphlets and books intended to identify the Anti-Christ based on



the description provided in the Book of Daniel, Chapter 7.<sup>30</sup> One of the beasts in Daniel's vision looks like a leopard (Daniel 7: 6) which is close to a panther, and the horrible beast in in Revelations 13: 2 also resembles a leopard. Budick asserts that Dryden's purpose in The Hind and the Panther is to identify the Anti-Christ which is to be found in the Protestant sects and the Anglican Church.<sup>31</sup> When the beasts first observed the Hind at rest they

Survey'd her part by part, and sought to find  
The ten-horn'd monster in the harmless Hind,  
Such as the Wolfe and Panther had design'd.  
(I, 535-537)

The ten horns, considered as an unmistakable mark of the Anti-Christ in Daniel 7: 7 cannot, of course, be located on the Hind's body. Instead Dryden's Hind is "the Tsebi or Hind of Daniel, chapters 8 and 11 persecuted by Anti-Christ,"<sup>32</sup> and not the Anti-Christ itself.

Dryden's poem emphasizes the control of Satan over the enthusiasts (obvious to his Anglican audience) and over the Anglican Church itself. Anglican rebels share the malice begun by Martin Luther's planting of "the Serpent's teeth," (III, 643) and the Hind accuses the Panther of learning her language "from the blatant beast," (II, 230) a monster both hellish and slanderous as Calidore tells Sir Artegall in Spenser's Faerie Queene, VI, i, 8:

"Of Cerberus whilome he was begot,  
And fell Chimæra in her darkesome den,

Through fowle commixture of his filthy blot;  
 Where he was fostred long in Stygian fen,  
 Till he to perfect ripeness grew, and then  
 Into this wicked world he forth was sent,  
 To be the plague and scourge of wretched men:  
 Whom with vile tongue and venomous intent  
 He sore doth wound, and bite, and cruelly torment."33

Dissenting enemies of the true Church speak the language of the devil and bear the stigma of Anti-Christ. Dryden charges that the Anglican Church, too, indulges in the Seven Deadly Sins. Henry VIII's reformation is motivated by lust for the Panther and avarice for and envy of papal possessions. Finding Catholicism too demanding a religion, the Panther has allowed further dilutions of the original faith for the sake of sloth or ease, and the power of the Catholic Church and the opposition of the enthusiasts rankle her pride and arouse her wrath. The proud Pigeons in the Hind's fable also commit the Seven Deadly Sins. Envious of the modest Fowl, the disruptions of the Pigeons force the Master of the yard to learn the source of their "Rancour." (III, 1059) The Pigeons are "Voracious Birds" (III, 950) and "jolly Birds" (III, 991) like the sensuous reformers, Mohammed, Luther and Henry VIII, and their religious life is dictated by their sloth: "But sure the common Cry was all for these/ Whose Life, and Precept both encourag'd Ease." (III, 1036-1037)

Dryden contends that Anglicanism is quickly following the lead of the sectarians that she views as anathema. By allowing popular acclaim rather than principle

to steer her fortunes, the Church of England will soon be as rudderless as the mad zealots that plagued the nation since the sixteenth century. Under the grip of Satan and other diabolical leaders, the Anglicans join the other representatives of Anti-Christ. Dryden condemns the fanatic reformers from Genesis to Revelations and from the creation to modern England in a cosmological history that chronicles the activities of falsely enthusiastic and genuinely inspired figures on a scale unequalled in his other poems.

At the beginning of his confessio Dryden asks, "What weight of antient witness can prevail/ If private reason hold the publick scale?" (I, 62-63) Dryden's question confirms Bredvold's observation that recognizing the inherent weakness of the individual temper that he had championed in Religio Laici, the poet "abandoned it for what he considered the stronger position of the Catholic Church. Authority he was looking for; and in The Hind and the Panther he speaks with scorn of a state church without any inner principle of authority on the basis of which it can demand obedience."<sup>34</sup> Individuals and civilizations need "an unerring Guide" (I, 65) in religion as well as in politics or else civil wars are inevitable. When the early Church faced the challenge of the Arians, a group of men relying on traditional knowledge clarified the Christian position on the divinity of Christ:

How did the Nicene council then decide

That strong debate was it by Scripture try'd?  
 No, sure to those the Rebel would not yield,  
 Squadrons of Texts he marshal'd in the field;  
 That was but civil war, an equal set,  
 Where Piles with piles, and eagles Eagles met.  
 (II, 156-161)

The Catholic Church operates like a monarchy, defending itself from the seditious activities of religious and political enthusiasts and the passage reverses Dryden's claim in the Preface to Religio Laici "that the Scriptures... are in themselves the greatest security of Governours, as commanding express obedience to them." (Kinsley, p. 281) Only the creeds and councils of the Church guarantee a continual defence against heresy and rebellion:

Those Canons all the needfull points contain;  
 Their sense so obvious, and their words so plain,  
 That no disputes about the doubtfull Text  
 Have, hitherto, the lab'ring world perplex'd:  
 If any shou'd in after times appear,  
 New Councils must be call'd, to make the meaning clear.  
 (II, 96-101)

Just as Dryden once believed that Scripture contained everything one needed to know in order to be saved, he now argues that the Roman Church's canons teach all that is necessary for salvation.

Private spirit and Scripture generate confusion and unorthodox thought, as the Hind reminds her guest:

And yet your Clerks wou'd sit in Moyse's chair:  
 At least 'tis prov'd against your argument,  
 The rule is far from plain, where all dissent.  
 (II, 209-211)

Although the Anglican Church has the best qualifications of any of the sectarian congregations to govern, she displays

the same fragmented character as the other Protestants,  
according to the Hind:

I pass the rest, because your church alone  
Of all usurpers best cou'd fill the throne.  
But neither you, nor any sect beside  
For this high office can be qualify'd,  
With necessary gifts requir'd in such a guide.  
For that which must direct the whole, must be  
Bound in one bond of faith and unity:  
But all your sev'ral churches disagree.  
(II, 446-453)

Better endowed than her rivals, the Panther, nevertheless,  
is a "usurper" who has provided her enemies with justification for religious enthusiasm:

Because some ancient friends of yours declare,  
Your onely rule of faith the Scriptures are,  
Interpreted by men of judgment sound,  
Which ev'ry sect will for themselves expound:  
Nor think less rev'rence to their doctours due  
For sound interpretation, than to you.  
(II, 424-429)

The false queen will never bring peace to her kingdom, because her unwilling subjects know that she has no more right to rule than they:

So hardly can Usurpers manage well  
Those, whom they first instructed to rebell:  
More liberty begets desire of more,  
The hunger still encreases with the store.  
(I, 517-520)

Though Dryden's comments apply specifically to the position of the sects under the aegis of the Panther, they also contain an important lesson for the Anglicans. Once rebellion begins, it cannot be stopped. The supposedly conservative reformation of the Anglican Church cannot remain unaltered. In order to obtain greater control over her

subjects, the Anglicans have had to grant them more liberty which has made them even more obstreperous, and they have also had to shift their own position on faith and morals in order to satisfy the requests of the more radical theologians within the fold. The proud Dove in the Hind's tale loses its imperial power and must be contented with "a private Rod" (III, 1260) that we would expect a pretentious and enthusiastic imitator of Moses to carry.

Ultimately pleas for the private spirit must end in chaos because "each wou'd be the guide" (II, 466) of other enthusiasts. Not content with religious freedom, rebels soon demand political supremacy. The Wolf, like Dryden's Anglican enemy, Stillingfleet, bears "innate antipathy to kings," (I, 177) and Dryden describes the seditious activities of the Fox and Wolf in England:

O happy pair, how well have you increas'd,  
 What ill's in Church and State have you redress'd!  
 With teeth untry'd, and rudiments of claws  
 Your first essay was on your native laws:  
 Those having torn with ease, and traml'd down  
 Your Fangs you fastn'd on the miter'd crown,  
 And freed from God and monarchy your town.  
 (I, 197-203)

Although the Anglican Church opposed the collusion between the Wolf and the Fox during the Interregnum, the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis, the Panther is suspicious of the current monarch and she has recently allowed the Wolf too much scope in her own domain. Anglicanism's weakness will be responsible if England is "Drawn to the dreggs of

a Democracy," (I, 211) for usurpers offer subjects little protection. The Anglican Church stamps her own coins like the first rebels (I, 278) and the Whig followers of Shaftesbury in The Medall, and although she has not fully committed herself to republican principles yet, the traitors in her midst threaten to wrest her monarchical allegiance from her.

Dryden's fear of the private spirit conforms to the thought of his contemporaries. According to Hobbes, one of the most dangerous ideas fostered in commonwealths is "That every private man is Judge of Good and Evill actions,"<sup>35</sup> and what Hobbes feared in the state, Dryden dreaded in the Church. When men defend the inalienable right of the private spirit to make law and religion, there will follow the endless dissent and confusion found in The Medall, Absalom and Achitophel, Religio Laici and The Hind and the Panther. In his Exomologesis, published in Paris in 1647 and 1653, Hugh-Paulin de Cressy, an Anglican convert to Catholicism, anticipated Dryden's complaint that his former Church lacked convincing authority and that although the Anglican Church was preferable to the sects, it was still a divided institution that could not guarantee religious certainty or tranquillity.<sup>36</sup>

The consequences of indulging the private spirit are extensive and devastating. Dryden's beasts inhabit a world that they are powerless to control. As rebels

against the order of nature, they become the targets of its ferocity. We have mentioned earlier in this study that seventeenth-century commentators considered the enthusiast to be inspired or "puffed up" by wind, and Dryden applies this observation to the defenders of individual interpretation:

As long as words a diff'rent sense will bear,  
 And each may be his own Interpreter,  
 Our ai'ry faith will no foundation find:  
 The word's a weathercock for ev'ry wind:  
 The Bear, the Fox, the Wolfe, by turns prevail  
 The most in pow'r supplies the present gale.  
 (I, 462-467)

The Bear, Fox and Wolf are windy beasts whose lungs determine which faith is in vogue, just as the Jews in Absalom and Achitophel choose their kings according to the common cry.

Zealots were also thought to be fiery or heated beings and Dryden laments the destruction of nature wrought by their enthusiasm:

As where the lightning runs along the ground,  
 No husbandry can heal the blasting wound,  
 Nor bladed grass, nor bearded corn succeeds,  
 But scales of scurf, and putrefaction breeds:  
 Such warrs, such waste, such fiery tracks of death  
 Their zeal has left, and such a teemless earth.  
 (I, 223-228)

The zealots, here, are like the Jews in Absalom and Achitophel who "led their wild desires to Woods and Caves" (l. 55) because they could not tolerate civilized life. When men surrender their reason and unleash their fury, they produce wastelands because they behave like wild animals that



were created by a divine blacksmith:

One portion of informing fire was giv'n  
To Brutes, th' inferiour family of heav'n:  
The Smith divine, as with a careless heat,  
Struck out the mute creation at a heat....  
(I, 251-254)

The passionate nature of beasts makes them natural enthusiasts because they have no rational powers to check their destructive behaviour. Reformed religions are created by fire and the Panther reveals her own incandescent nature in "Her glowing eye-balls glitt'ring in the dark." (II, 223)

Although water and land are not ordinarily associated with enthusiasm, Dryden shows the helplessness of the lower beasts to control these elements. The Panther and the other animals are literally adrift at sea since they departed from the true Church. Dryden says of his old Church that "Her wild belief on ev'ry wave is tost," (I, 430) and the Hind chides the Panther for her liberal treatment of the uncouth beasts: "The way to please 'em was to make 'em proud./ Thus, with full sails, they ran upon the shelf." (II, 256-257) Dryden's description of the sectarians recalls his portrait of Achitophel who was

A daring Pilot in extremity;  
Pleas'd with the Danger, when the Waves went high  
He sought the Storms; but for the Calm unfit  
Would Steer too nigh the Sands, to boast his Wit.  
(Absalom and Achitophel, ll. 159-162)

Unlike her shipwrecked enemies the Hind and the Church enjoy clear sailing. Under the protection of Christ, the Catholic Church safely conducts man's pilgrimage through

this world:

Why chuse we then like Bilanders to creep  
 Along the coast, and land in view to keep,  
 When safely we may launch into the deep?  
 In the same vessel which our Saviour bore  
 Himself the Pilot, let us leave the shoar,  
 And with a better guide a better world explore.  
 (I, 128-133)

Christ and the sea-venturing Church are the anti-types of Noah who preserved his family from the universal destruction of the flood. The bold sailing contrasts with the reckless adventures of Shaftesbury, the Panther and the other beasts who court disaster. Because she touches "A limpid stream drawn from the native source," (II, 614) we need not fear drowning or shipwreck when we sail in the Church's vessel.

Religio Laici outlines man's search for solid foundations and escape from the false, enchanted lands that trap the unwary and this struggle figures prominently in The Hind and the Panther. The wildest animals in Dryden's poem have an insane but singular desire to ravage the landscape. The "Baptist Boar" (I, 43) levelled mountains (I, 46) and

In German Forests, had his guilt betrayd,  
 With broken tusks, and with a borrow'd name  
 He shun'd the vengeance, and conceal'd the shame.  
 (I, 49-51)

Other wild beasts, who found the sight of ordered nature too painful, fled to desolate hiding places:

And some wild currs, who from their masters ran  
 Abhorring the supremacy of man,  
 In woods and caves the rebel-race began.  
 (I, 194-196)

Although she disdains the behaviour of the more extreme beasts, the Panther also lives uneasily in the natural world. Spiritually, she inhabits a kind of limbo or purgatory because she cannot be either absolved or condemned:

If, as our dreaming Platonists report,  
 There could be spirits of a middle sort,  
 Too black for heav'n, and yet too white for hell,  
 Who just dropt half way down, nor lower fell;  
 So pois'd, so gently she descends from high,  
 It seems a soft dismissal from the sky.  
 (I, 341-346)

In Part II of the poem, the Hind informs the Panther about her unsure footing in this world:

But mark how sandy is your own pretence,  
 Who setting Councils, Pope and Church aside,  
 Are ev'ry man his own presuming guide.  
 (II, 105-107)

The Hind proceeds to tell her adversary that she abandons her "former ground" (II, 172) on the sufficiency of Scripture, then adds that she will not "dare on one foundation to rely" (II, 185) and finally concludes that she treads upon "unfaithfull ground." (I, 192) In contrast to the feeble foundations of the Anglican and other Protestant Churches, the Catholic Church has erected its superstructure upon a tenacious base:

O solid rock, on which secure she stands!  
 Eternal house, not built with mortal hands!  
 Oh sure defence against th' infernal gate,  
 A patent during pleasure of the state!  
 (I, 493-496)

The difference between the Anglican and Catholic edifices echoes two important passages in the Gospel of St. Matthew,

the parable of the two men who built their houses on rock and on sand (Matt. 7:24-27) and the text in which Christ says to Simon "thou are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18) These words of Christ to Peter are the key to the Catholic Church's assertion that she is the one and true institution because they declare that Christ, in effect, made Peter the first pontiff from whom all other popes descended. Protestantism, of course, denied this special status for Peter and gave more prominence to the other apostles, especially the evangelist St. Paul. In 1520, Pope Leo X condemned Luther for this heresy, and as recently as 1647, Pope Innocent X had "condemned as heretical the propositions of Martin de Barcos, an abbot of St. Cyran. De Barcos, who had studied under Jansen, maintained that the Apostles Peter and Paul were two heads of the Church, thus implying an equality of the two apostles."<sup>37</sup> As a staunch convert to Catholicism, Dryden abandons his former enthusiasm for the Pauline gospel that is one of the major influences on his thought and style in Religio Laici.

Dryden places all the animals, save the Hind, in a completely chaotic world. Lacking any solidity they pass through life as fortune's slaves, completely at the mercy of the four elements. The Bear "Unlick'd to form" (I, 36) suggests some incomplete piece of matter that has come into the world without proper gestation. The broken tusks of

of the Boar reveal a primeval desire for destruction and disorder as does the savage rape of the "blissfull bow'r." (I, 158) The Panther is also a rather shapeless beast who behaves like a mule and a chameleon and who conducts illicit affairs with obscene lions and voracious wolves. The Hind, on the other hand, is a paragon of stability in a slippery world. Having faced all the harshest elements unflinchingly and without having shifted her position, the Hind reminds the Panther that

'Tis said with ease, but never can be prov'd,  
The church her old foundations has remov'd,  
And built new doctrines on unstable sands:  
Judge that ye winds and rains; you prov'd her,  
yet she stands.  
(II, 587-590)

Because she has not shared the consequences of the fall, the Hind can control the forces of nature like Christ who was able to walk upon the water. Such power demonstrates that the true Church can command the shifting fortunes of nature that thrust other institutions into chaos, and it also suggests that the natural world that seems so potent and decisive will be ultimately surpassed by a transcendental force. As in his other poems, Dryden's concern with the order of nature is great in The Hind and the Panther. His Hind emanates the freshness of creation and the permanence of the eternal, while the other beasts possess the uncurbed temper of the barbarian enemies of Charles II.

The imagery of light and darkness, introduced in

the first eleven lines of Religio Laici, continues to dominate the poetic landscape of The Hind and the Panther. Because their view of the natural world is distorted, Dryden's graceless beasts inhabit a kingdom of darkness. The Hind, possessing perfect natural sight, and promised heavenly bliss (associated with light in Paradise Lost, Book III, and a legion of other seventeenth-century poems) enjoys pure physical and intellectual illumination. Dryden associates the Panther and the other enthusiasts with the mistiness of Hell and Satan and he allies the Hind with the light of Heaven and God. Introduced as "A MILK white Hind," (I,1) she is adorned with a "heav'nly hiew," (I, 543) and she represents a Church which gleams like a diamond:

One in herself not rent by schism, but sound,  
Entire, one solid shining Diamond,  
Not sparkles shatter'd into sects like you,  
One is the church, and must be to be true:  
One central principle of unity.

(II, 526-530)

The image of the diamond symbolizes the first mark of the true Church, oneness, and the comparison of the Church to the sun proves her catholicity: "From East to West triumphantly she rides." (II, 550) The progress of the Church contrasts with and echoes the illicit march of Absalom: "From East to West his Glories he displaies." (Absalom and Achitophel, l. 731) The Hind's children share their mother's brightness: man at his inception is "kneaded up with milk," (I, 274) and Dryden as a convert to Catholicism has forsaken the

broken and misleading lights of his youth and his Anglicanism:

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.  
(I, 72-75)

Anglicans, like the reasoners in Religio Laici, prefer "the borrow'd beams of Moon and Stars" (l. 1) to true illumination:

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 borrow'd from a better star:  
Big with the beams which from her mother flow  
And reigning o'er the rising tides below:  
Now, mixing with a salvage croud, she goes  
And meanly flatters her invet'rate foes.  
(I, 501-508)

The brightness possessed by the Anglican Church comes from her conformity with Catholic principles which give her some control over the darker beasts but does not guarantee her perpetual rule. "The rising tides" are poorly managed because she is a fallen beast subject to the fortunes of nature.

More extreme dissenters are totally blind creatures who cannot see the light that adorns the Hind and the Panther nor the differences between the superior beasts:

Such souls as Shards produce, such beetle things  
As onely buz to heav'n with ev'ning wings;  
Strike in the dark, offending but by chance,  
Such are the blind-fold blows of ignorance.  
They know not beings, and but hate a name,  
To them the Hind and Panther are the same.  
(I, 321-326)

Later the Hind tells the Panther that all churches which defend the rights of the private spirit lead their members into spiritual darkness:

Where ev'ry private man may save a stake,  
Rul'd by the Scripture and his own advice  
Each has a blind by-path to Paradise....  
(II, 123-125)

Perhaps the worst example of blindness in the poem is the Socinian application of science to religion:

False Reynard fed on consecrated spoil:  
The graceless beast by Athanasius first  
Was chas'd from Nice; then by Socinus nurs'd  
His impious race their blasphemy renew'd,  
And natures King through natures opticks view'd.  
Revers'd they view'd him lessen'd to their eye,  
Nor in an Infant could a God descry.  
(I, 53-59)

The microscopic examination of Christ strips Him of divinity and makes religion a purely natural and scientific pursuit. Although Dryden limits his criticism to the Socinians in these lines, he expands his censure to include the Anglicans also. In his Rational Account of Protestant Religion (1664) Stillingfleet argued that miracles had established the supremacy of Christ and that the modern church must also give physical manifestation of her superiority. Dryden incorporated his adversary's (Stillingfleet) observations into The Hind and the Panther:

'Tis urg'd again that faith did first commence  
By miracles, which are appeals to sense,  
And thence concluded that our sense must be  
The motive still of credibility.  
(I, 106-109)

According to H.R. McAdoo the fundamental weakness in the



Latitudinarians, including Stillingfleet, was their tendency "to whittle down the distinction between natural religion and Christianity."<sup>39</sup> Those who make physical apprehension the acid test of religion are like Doubting Thomas, who after the resurrection of Christ said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." (John 20:25) The dominance of the senses over faith overthrows the order of nature in man:

Can I my reason to my faith compell,  
And shall my sight, and touch, and taste rebell?  
Superiour faculties are set aside,  
Shall their subservient organs be my guide?  
Then let the moon usurp the rule of day,  
And winking tapers shew the sun his way;  
For what my senses can themselves perceive  
I need no revelation to believe. (I, 85-92)

Dryden's belief in the superiority of faith to reason is consistent with his position in Religio Laici, and his depiction of the body's rebellion recalls the seditious activity of the organs of Lord Hastings "Who, Rebel-like, with their Lord at strife,/ Thus made an Insurrection 'gainst his Life." ("Upon the Death of the Lord Hastings, 1649" ll. 61-62)

Sensory enslavement is the fundamental difference between Catholics and Anglicans in The Hind and the Panther. Far from being a mere philosophical dispute, the importance attached to sensory apprehension determines each Church's position on the eucharist. The Council of Trent had

reaffirmed in the sixteenth century that the priest had the power to transform bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ:

Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread...it has always been the conviction of the Church, and this holy council now again declares that, by the consecration of the bread and wine a change takes place in which the whole substance of bread is changed into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church fittingly and properly names transubstantiation.<sup>40</sup>

According to Article XXVIII of the Anglican Church, however, "Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions."<sup>41</sup> This difference between the two Churches was becoming one of the most important distinctions between them in the seventeenth century,<sup>42</sup> and was used by the Test Act of 1678 as a device to bar Catholics from public office.<sup>43</sup> According to Bredvold, "The doctrine of transubstantiation became, indeed, one of the centers of the controversy over reason in religion."<sup>44</sup> Dryden sports with the uncertain Anglican position about the eucharist and implies in his criticism that Anglicans have the same defective sight as the Socinians and the other heretics in the poem:

In doubtfull points betwixt her diff'ring friends,  
 Where one for substance, one for sign contends,  
 Their contradicting terms she strives to join,  
 Sign shall be substance, substance shall be sign.  
 A real presence all her sons allow,  
 And yet 'tis flat Idolatry to bow,  
 Because the god-head's there they know not how.  
 (I, 410-416)

Relying entirely upon physical evidence, the Anglican and other Protestant churches can come to no agreement on the significance of communion. The Catholics, by accepting the doctrine of Transubstantiation, are like those blessed ones "that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20:29) Faith and trust in the decrees of the popes and councils illuminate the Hind and her followers, while the Protestant reliance on enthusiasm and zealotry for rationalism casts the reformers into intellectual and spiritual darkness. Once more, Dryden supports the moderate interdependence of faith and reason in religious matters, and rebukes those who employ their endowments irrationally.

The debates between the Hind and the Panther are designed to show which beast is the genuine monarch of religion. Although the British Lion rules the political affairs of their domain, the animals struggle to assert their sovereignty in religious life. The identification of the true Church exposes the Anti-Christ and recapitulates the situation in Absalom and Achitophel in which Monmouth and the Duke of York vie for the right of succession to the British throne. The Reformation produced a number

of challengers to the spiritual crown of Christendom because "More liberty begets desire of more." (I, 519) The Panther currently reigns over a hierarchical kingdom of more tainted beasts that crave her power. The Bear, Boar, Wolf and Fox threaten her position and the "New swarming Sects," (I, 60) "half-animated lumps," (I, 314) shards and beetles (I, 321) and "A slimy-born and sun-begotten Tribe" (I, 311) contest the hegemony of the Panther. Only geographical distance (II, 468) prevents a world-wide religious war. Dryden's observations in the conclusion of The Medall that the sects will never allow power to their rivals is repeated in The Hind and the Panther. Religious peace will be restored to England when the true monarch dethrones the "mere mock Queen of a divided Herd" (I, 498) and puts an end to the proliferation of religious dissenters.

Like Shaftesbury in The Medall, the Panther is a false monarch of a paper realm. She fights for "petty royalties" (II, 490) and presides over a "Polish Diet" (II, 407) while her enemies battle for a "Hungary." (II, 382) The struggle for these insignificant and barbarian nations recalls the Whig coronation of Shaftesbury effected by the "Polish Medall." (The Medall, l. 3) Because each sect demands control of the others, their avarice reduces the geographical and spiritual size of the universal kingdom. Although frightening and dangerous, their power succeeds only in creating grotesque and comic nations. Like Shadwell

who rules the ocean from Ireland "To farr Barbadoes on the Western main," (Mac Flecknoe, l. 140) the Wolf commands a small kennel "Bounded betwixt a puddle and a wall." (I, 205) Equally powerless, the Panther has never been able to extend her influence beyond England:

Thus, like a creature of a double kind,  
In her own labyrinth she lives confin'd.  
To foreign lands no sound of Her is come,  
Humbly content to be despis'd at home.  
(I, 402-405)

The political terrain of the beasts displays the same confusion and disorder that obtains in their natural world. Because the private spirit is private, none of the sectarian animals can hope to maintain a stable realm because they themselves have violated the universal laws of nature and good government.

In contrast to the other beasts', the Hind's church is undivided and universal:

Prove any church oppos'd to this our head,  
So one, so pure, so unconfin'dly spread,  
Under one chief of the spiritual state,  
The members all combin'd, and all subordinate.  
Shew such a seamless coat, from schism so free,  
In no communion join'd with heresie:  
If such a one you find, let truth prevail:  
Till when your weights will in the balance fail:  
A church unprincip'l'd kicks up the scale.  
(II, 616-624)

Geographical expansion proves that the Roman, and not the Anglican Church may be called "Catholic." The Hind defends an "unfailing universal state" (II, 491) and not the small principality of the Panther and the true Church successfully

defends her throne against the giants that attempt to usurp her power. (II, 535-536) "All shoars are water'd" (II, 551) by the profuse tides of the Catholic Church while the Anglicans export their vices to new colonies:

Here let my sorrow give my satyr place,  
To raise new blushes on my British race;  
Our sayling ships like common shoars we use,  
And through our distant colonies diffuse  
The draughts of Dungeons, and the stench of stews.  
Whom, when their home-bred honesty is lost,  
We disemogue on some far Indian coast:  
Thieves, Pandars, Palliards, sins of ev'ry sort,  
Those are the manufactures we export;  
And these the Missionaires our zeal has made:  
For, with my countrey's pardon be it said,  
Religion is the least of all our trade.  
(II, 556-567)

According to Dryden, religious fervour determines the social condition of a nation. Zealots who spur on the progress of Absalom create political havoc. When a national church becomes more concerned with worldly power than spiritual goodness, it arouses the enmity of the subjects that it attempts to control. Naturally, the Anglican nation will export self-seekers and panderers because the desire for power and ease created its church. As in Absalom and Achitophel, excessive wealth and flourishing trade corrupt the spiritual values of the nation. Bound by the desire for riches, the Panther and the other beasts wage war for a sensuous and physical kingdom, a kingdom to which the Hind is indifferent: "The Hind (the Roman Catholic Church in England) triumphs by the very freedom of her position; she has been dispossessed of her regal power, to become strong

in the only power that she now aspires to wield--the power of spirit."<sup>45</sup> Although the Hind advocates the holiness of a universal Church, she alternately performs international and English roles. Although hounded by European and middle-Eastern pagans, the Hind is given a strong English identity by Dryden who stresses her impoverished condition in Britain and avoids any mention of her continental wealth.

The Hind claims that the Catholic Church bears the signs of a monarchy established by Christ directly so that men would be able to identify the true Church:

Behold what marks of majesty she brings;  
 Richer than ancient heirs of Eastern kings:  
 Her right hand holds the sceptre and the keys,  
 To shew whom she commands, and who obeys:  
 With these to bind, or set the sinner free,  
 With that t' assert spiritual Royalty.  
 (II, 520-525)

Granted royal authority by Christ, the pontiff and the councils function like a cooperating king and parliament:

I then affirm that this unfailing guide  
 In Pope and gen'ral councils must reside;  
 Both lawfull, both combin'd, what one decrees  
 By numerous votes, the other ratifies:  
 On this undoubted sense the church relies.  
 (II, 80-84)

Although powerful, the Church will not use her weaponry indiscriminately; when attacked by her enemies, she brandishes her armaments like King David: "Those monumental arms are never stirr'd/ Till Schism or Heresie call down Goliah's sword." (II, 599-600) Significantly, the Church now wields the sword of Goliath, the weapon that Dryden

himself used against the enemies of piety in Religio Laici, (Kinsley, p. 273) and the supernatural signs that accompanied David's speech at the end of Absalom and Achitophel are now reserved for the Church (II, 394-400)

The Hind argues for the Catholic Church's authenticity on legal grounds. The line of popes descending from Peter displays "Succession lawfull in a lineal course," (II, 615) but the Anglicans have attempted to frustrate this orderly apostolic succession by supposing that God abandoned the world from the end of the sixth century to the time of Wycliffe:<sup>46</sup>

But if you cannot think, (nor sure you can  
Suppose in God what were unjust in man,)   
That he, the fountain of eternal grace,  
Should suffer falshood for so long a space  
To banish truth, and to usurp her place:  
That seav'n successive ages should be lost  
And preach damnation at the proper cost;  
That all your erring ancestours should dye,  
Drown'd in th'Abyss of deep Idolatry:  
If piety forbid such thoughts to rise,  
Awake and open your unwilling eyes:  
God has left nothing for each age undone  
From this to that wherein he sent his Son:  
Then think but well of him, and half your work is done.  
(II, 625-638)

Because God loves man, He would not abandon him for seven hundred years after having re-opened the gates of Heaven. The Anglican rejection of medieval Catholicism as superstitious implies a belief in a capricious God and proves that the Panther usurps a throne that the Hind has defended for nearly seventeen hundred years. By placing its trust in tradition rather than in Scripture, the Catholic Church



escaped the internal squabbling that characterizes Protestantism:

The good old Bishops took a simpler way,  
Each ask'd but what he heard his Father say,  
Or how he was instructed in his youth,  
And by traditions force upheld the truth.  
(II, 164-167)

The Catholic Church maintains in its succession of power from father to son the kind of institution that Sir Robert Filmer would have approved. In his Patriarchia, Filmer writes, "I see not then how the children of Adam, or of any man else, can be free from the subjection to their parents. And by the subordination of children is the fountain of all regal authority, by the ordination of God himself."<sup>47</sup> Cardinals elect popes in closed councils and do not seek the approval of laymen. Just such a procedure, Filmer argues, is the best way to choose a king: "And he that is so elected claims not his power as a donative from the people, but as being substituted properly by God, from whom he receives his royal charter of an universal Father, though testified by the ministry of the heads of the people."<sup>48</sup> We have already seen that the true Church's roots extend far back into Old Testament history and include such early progenitors as Noah and Adam. Filmer submits that the authority of a modern king is derived "from the original dominion of Adam,"<sup>49</sup> thus pleading for the kind of antiquity in the political sphere that the Hind advocates in the religious establishment.

Because of its great age and its uninterrupted succession, the Catholic Church fulfills the patriarchal requirements of Filmer as well as any European monarch does. Dryden's use of Filmer's theories in The Hind and the Panther transfers real power from the political to the religious world, and indicates the poet's increasing desire for spiritual rather than worldly grace. But this is not all. Dryden also applies the monarchical symbol to the common man: "...Conscience is the Royalty and Prerogative of every Private man. He is absolute in his own Breast, and accountable to no Earthly Power, for that which passes only betwixt God and Him." (Kinsley, p. 353) Although he does not accept the enthusiast's claim that every man has an equal right to rule the nation, Dryden does defend the religious liberty of the private citizen and he expresses some wariness about the practices of the monarch. At creation, God endowed Adam with the traits of the best kings:

But, when arriv'd at last to humane race,  
 The god-head took a deep consid'ring space:  
 And, to distinguish man from all the rest,  
 Unlock'd the sacred treasures of his breast:  
 And mercy mix'd with reason did impart;  
 One to his head, the other to his heart:  
 Reason to rule, but mercy to forgive:  
 The first is law, the last prerogative.  
 (I, 255-262)

Good men aspire to imitate the unfallen Adam, while evil men emulate the fallen Adam and the beasts that God created "at a heat." (I, 254) Alan Roper comments: "Hunting and the preying of one beast on another provides the pattern of

tyranny, while man's benevolent dominion over nature before the Fall provides the pattern of just monarchy, of kings on coronation day."<sup>50</sup> Dryden's Adam is like a British king because he is neither the absolute monarch of the French, nor a popular republican ruler.

Since man inhabits a fallen world, he cannot hope to obtain the perfection of Adam. Nevertheless, faithful sons of the Catholic Church can become heroes in this world and saints in the next. The Hind persistently eludes her enemies but

Not so her young, for their unequal line  
Was Heroe's make, half humane, half divine.  
Their earthly mold obnoxious was to fate,  
Th' immortal part assum'd immortal state.  
(I, 9-12)

Faithful service to the sovereign Church guarantees greater rewards than assistance to the nation's monarch. Passive suffering can be more valuable than active warfare and by becoming "half humane, half divine," the martyr shares the attributes of a king who rules by divine right. Although Dryden tends to deemphasize physical battles in his poetry, he often gives credit for spiritual victories to a king. Thus, Charles II ends the fire of London with prayer in Annus Mirabilis and David stops the plans of the zealots with inspired speech in Absalom and Achitophel. In The Hind and the Panther, however, nameless persons of exceptional fervour surpass the valour of national heroes and equal the virtues of the best kings.

Although James II appears in The Hind and the Panther, Dryden lavishes on him none of the praise that he once bestowed on Charles II. Dryden restricts his encomium of James II to fourteen lines (II, 629-662) that describe the king's victory over the Duke of Monmouth at the Battle of Sedgemoor. "A streaming blaze" (II, 650) in the sky announces the king's success which fulfills the will of God:

Such were the pleasing triumphs of the sky  
For James his late nocturnal victory;  
The pledge of his Almighty patron's love,  
The fire-works which his angel made above.  
(II, 654-657)

Elsewhere in the poem, Dryden stresses the human qualities of the king. To the dissenters, James has shown kindness and restraint:

So JAMES, if great with less we may compare,  
Arrests his rowling thunder-bolts in air;  
And grants ungratefull friends a lengthn'd space,  
T'implore the remnants of long suff'ring grace.  
(III, 273-276)

His "thunder-bolts" proclaim James's majesty and power, but the king plays a minor role compared to that of the Hind. In her fable of the Pigeons, the Hind allots control of the farm (England) to James, but since he is "A Plain good Man," (III, 906) he receives none of the martyr-king treatment that Dryden gave to Charles. The good man's kindness and sense of justice recalls Dryden's depiction of Adam in Part I, but we must remember that every man can attain the perfection pictured in the ideal of Adam if he governs his own private kingdom well.

The old worship of kings, encouraged by the Stuarts and supported in Dryden's earlier poems, disappears in The Hind and the Panther. The poet seems more independent of the monarch than previously, and his religious faith is much more private and intense than in Religio Laici. For reasons that I shall enumerate in the conclusion of this chapter, Dryden distrusted James's indulgent policy toward Catholics, and as the Hind reminds the Panther, new converts will not prosper after the present monarch's death. (III, 228) Dryden could not depend on James forever, and although he undertook many works at the request of Charles II, Dryden makes a special point of telling us in his Preface that The Hind and the Panther received no impetus from anyone but himself: "As for the Poem in general, I will only thus far satisfie the Reader: That it was neither impos'd on me, nor so much as the Subject given me by any man." (Kinsley, p. 353) As he became more uneasy and less enthusiastic about reigning monarchs, Dryden extended the monarchical analogy to new figures more deserving of inspired praise and better able to halt the growth of unrestrained enthusiasm.

Separated by choice from the most durable of all monarchies and inhabiting an inconsequential kingdom of darkness, the Panther and the other fallen beasts exhibit the classical symptom of religious enthusiasm--melancholy. Upon seeing the Hind, the common animals "Gave gloomy

signs of secret enmity." (I, 30) The Wolf's "belly Gaunt, and famish'd face" (I, 161) give him a haggard appearance and Dryden says that the Wolf and the Fox "shuffl'd in the dark," (I, 190) avoiding bright and pleasant locations like the more desperate animals--"Who, far from steeples and their sacred sound,/ In fields their sullen conventicles found." (I, 312-313) The Wolf takes advantage of the "wandring heart" (I, 338) of the disturbed Panther whose thought is "melancholy" (I, 512) and who is "full of inward discontent." (I, 524) Upon meeting the Panther the Hind wants to discuss their past experiences in the Popish Plot, and also to learn why she appears so forlorn:

Yet wondring how of late she grew estrang'd,  
Her forehead cloudy, and her count'nance chang'd,  
She thought this hour th' occasion would present  
To learn her secret cause of discontent.

(I, 564-567)

The Panther has changed for the worse since the Hind last saw her, and, in chronological terms, Dryden suggests that the Anglican Church has declined rapidly within the last ten years. Part III makes clear that recent liberalizing tendencies in the Church of England account for the Panther's sickness:

This heard, the Matron was not slow to find  
What sort of malady had seiz'd her mind;  
Disdain, with gnawing envy, fell despight,  
And canker'd malice stood in open sight.  
Ambition, int'rest, pride without controul,  
And jealousy, the jaundice of the soul;  
Revenge, the bloody minister of ill,  
'Twas easie now to guess from whence arose  
Her new made union with her ancient foes,

Her forc'd civilities, her faint embrace,  
 Affected kindness with an alter'd face:  
 Yet durst she not too deeply probe the wound,  
 As hoping still the nobler parts were sound;  
 But strove with Anodynes t'assuage the smart,  
 And mildly thus her med'cine did impart.  
 (III, 68-83)

The Hind will try to root out the Panther's sickness with eloquent and soothing language. Although part of her soul is still strong, some of the Seven Deadly Sins--envy, anger, avarice--have deeply disturbed the Panther's spiritual health.

Warfare and acrimonious argument are the inevitable consequences of melancholy and Dryden fears that the splenetic temperament will even condemn his poem: "Much malice mingl'd with a little wit/ Perhaps may censure this mysterious writ...." (III, 1-2) The poet also laments the frenetic attempts of Protestants to understand Scripture. The doctrine of Transubstantiation, Dryden, reasons, presents no problems if we can believe that Christ was God incarnate:

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 biggottry.  
 (I, 134-142)

As in Religio Laici, Dryden argues that the religious knowledge we need to have is plain and easily obtainable. The Catholic Church teaches clear truths that will lead man to

salvation. Problems arise when man forsakes faith for argument, and in Dryden's view, the Anglican Church has become a particularly quarrelsome institution. In his defence of Anne Hyde Dryden assails Stillingfleet's penchant for disputation in religious matters: "The answerer is of opinion, there is nothing to be done, no satisfaction to be had in matters of religion, without dispute; that is his only recipe, his nostrum for attaining true belief." (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 218) Dryden goes on to say that if wit grants man the keys to heaven then ordinary people have no hope of salvation:

Now, if the learned avail themselves so little of dispute, that is as rare as a prodigy for one of them to convince another, what shall become of the ignorant, when they are to deal with those fencers of divinity, who can hit them in tierce and quart at pleasure, while they are ignorant how to stand upon their guard? And yet such poor people have souls to save, as precious in the sight of God as the grim Logician's." (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 218)

The Panther dismisses Dryden as a "grim Logician," (III, 201) and the Hind blames "teachers obstinate and proud" (III, 405) for the failure of laymen to discover the true faith.

The Anglican Church, depicted as a haven of tranquillity in Religio Laici, becomes an institution of disputation and ill-feeling in The Hind and the Panther. Battered from without and corrupted from within, the Church of England embraces the enthusiast's love of zealotry, private spirit and contention. Like her old enemies, the



Anglican Church has become a danger to civil peace, or at least a willing collaborator with the seditious and the ungovernable forces that writers since the time of Hooker had struggled to control.

Melancholy instigates the tragic activities described in the Panther's fable of the Swallows and the Hind's tale of the Pigeons. Each speaker warns the other of the disastrous consequences that await their Church if they do not control their zealous sons. The Martyn represents "Superstition silly to excess," (III, 471) the worst feature of Catholicism according to Protestant critics, while the Buzzard who runs amok (III, 1188) displays the wildest of enthusiastic behaviour. Both narrators select well-known and fanatic public figures from the other's religion: the Martyn's character is based on Edward Petre, a Jesuit, "clerk of the closet to the king"<sup>51</sup> who held a notorious reputation among both Catholics and Protestants; the Buzzard is a composite portrait of Bishop Burnet, who opposed the removal of the Test Act, and William of Orange, who fought against England in the Third Dutch War, and who poses future danger to the nation and the national church.<sup>52</sup>

Although the Buzzard and the Martyn represent opposite kinds of religious extremism, characters and actions are very similar. The Buzzard is "A Portly Prince, and goodly to the sight" (III, 1141) while the Martyn is "Of little body, but of lofty mind,/ Round belly'd, for a

dignity design'd." (III, 463-464) A diminutive figure, Martyn recalls the enthusiastic Shaftesbury who possessed "A fiery Soul, which working out its way,/ Fretted the Pigmy Body to Decay." (Absalom and Achitophel, ll. 156-157)

Martyn's superstition manifests itself in his attachment to astrology ("casting Schemes, by planetary guess," III, 472) and in his belief in the prophetic truth of dreams:

To strengthen this, he told a boding dream  
Of rising waters, and a troubl'd stream,  
Some signs of anguish, dangers and distress,  
With something more not lawfull to express:  
By which he slyly seem'd to intimate  
Some secret revelation of their fate.  
(III, 480-485)

Dependence on dreams, a raven's croak (III, 475-476) and some obscure prophetic rhyme (III, 486-494) make the Martyn a modern follower of "Merlin's art." (III, 546) The Panther suggests that the Martyn's attachment to medieval superstition can be explained only by the "melancholy fumes" (III, 512) that distort the stupid bird's thinking. Superficially, the Buzzard appears to be a saner animal than the Martyn because his devilish arts are more sophisticated. He possesses "A fair Behaviour, and a fluent Tongue," (III, 1154) but the Hind quickly adds that the Buzzard considers himself to be the messiah: "Loud Praises to prepare his Paths he sent,/ And then himself pursu'd his Compliment." (III, 1157-1158) Unable to wait for some John the Baptist to announce his arrival, the Buzzard performs the duties of both Absalom and Achitophel and Flecknoe and Shadwell.

Craving political power, both birds ingratiate themselves at court. True to his Jesuit order, Martyn soon usurps the power of the monarch: "His point thus gain'd, Sir Martyn dated thence/ His pow'r, and from a Priest became a Prince." (III, 527-528) The Buzzard, as a fictional representation of a bishop and a prince, enters the barnyard as a ready-formed priest and king like Flecknoe and Shadwell in Mac Flecknoe. "King Buzzard" (III, 1140) receives his crown by the popular acclamation of the crowd that Absalom received, and he quickly destroys the liturgical character of the Anglican Church: "Sev'n Sacraments he wisely do's disown." (III, 1175) As an illegitimate king, the Buzzard despises all monarchs that proceed lawfully to the throne, "For in his Rage, he spares no Sov'rains name." (III, 1164) After the "good man" restores peace to his barnyard, the Buzzard decides to leave for he cannot bear subservience to another king. But this grudging departure may only be temporary because the Buzzard has grown fond of Pigeon flesh and may well return when the owner of the farm dies:

The Buzzard not content with equal place,  
 Invites the feather'd Nimrods of his Race,  
 To hide the thinness of their Flock from Sight,  
 And all together make a seeming, goodly Flight:  
 But each have sep'rate Int'rests of their own,  
 Two Czars, are one too many for a Throne.  
 Nor can th' Usurper long abstain from Food,  
 Already he has tasted Pigeons Blood:  
 And may be tempted to his former fare,  
 When this Indulgent Lord shall late to Heav'n repair.  
 (III, 1273-1282)

A major difference between the two tales is the

response of the Swallows and Pigeons to their immoderate rulers. Although the Swallow bestows leadership on the Martyn, (III, 469) some other birds think his advice to delay their flight is fatuous:

'Tis true, some stagers of the wiser sort  
 Made all these idle wonderments their sport:  
 They said, their onely danger was delay,  
 And he who heard what ev'ry fool cou'd say,  
 Wou'd never fix his thoughts, but trim his time away.  
 (III, 497-501)

Not only do some of the Swallows express token opposition to the Martyn's crazed schemes, but many of the birds under Martyn's dominion are too young and inexperienced to propose alternative action:

And now 'twas time (so fast their numbers rise)  
 To plant abroad, and people colonies;  
 The youth drawn forth, as Martyn had desir'd,  
 (For so their cruel destiny requir'd)  
 Were sent far off on an ill fated day....  
 (III, 588-594)

When the destined time arrives, many of the young fledglings are mercilessly butchered by the elements:

What shou'd they doe, beset with dangers round,  
 No neighb'ring Dorp, no lodging to be found,  
 But bleaky plains, and bare unhospitable ground.  
 The latter brood, who just began to fly  
 Sick-feather'd and unpractis'd in the sky,  
 For succour to their helpless mother call,  
 She spread her wings; some few beneath 'em craul,  
 She spread 'em wider yet, but cou'd not cover all.  
 T' augment their woes, the winds began to move  
 Debate in air, for empty fields above,  
 Till Boreas got the skyes, and powr'd amain  
 His ratling hail-stones mix'd with snow and rain.  
 (III, 610-621)

This slaughter of the innocents recalls the martyrdom of the Hind's offspring in the first eighteen lines of the poem,

and celebrates the Catholic capacity for suffering. The grotesque caricature of Catholics by the Pigeons in the Hind's tale bears no resemblance to their real condition as presented by the Panther:

An hideous Figure of their Foes they drew,  
Nor Lines, nor Looks, nor Shades, nor Colours true;  
And this Grotesque design, expos'd to Publick view.  
One would have thought it some Aegyptian Piece,  
With Garden-Gods, and barking Deities,  
More thick than Ptolemy has stuck the Skies.  
(III, 1042-1047)

Although the Pigeons' cartoons fairly depict the superstition of Martyn, most of the Swallows are unfairly represented by their adversaries' crude drawings.

The reader feels pity for the cruel fate of the Swallow and her young children, but the Pigeons elicit contempt. Theirs is a masculine and aggresssive culture without eternal love. The Pigeons are uniformly "Voracious," (III, 950) "Melancholy" (III, 977) and "spleenful." (III, 1195) At their consult the most popular speaker urges the other Pigeons to invite the Buzzard into their midst:

I know he haunts the Pigeon-House and Farm,  
And more, in time of War, has done us harm;  
But all his hate on trivial Points depends,  
Give up our Forms, and we shall soon be friends.  
(III, 1124-1127)

So deep is their hatred of the humbler fowl that the Pigeons welcome their old enemy to guide their fortunes. These Latitudinarian pleas for understanding soon make enthusiasts of all the Pigeons:

False Fears their Leaders fail'd not to suggest,  
 As if the Doves were to be dispossess't;  
 Nor Sighs, nor Groans, nor gogling Eyes did want;  
 For now the Pigeons too had learn'd to Cant.  
 (III, 1205-1208)

Even after the Buzzard departs and civil tranquillity returns, it is unclear whether the Pigeons have returned to their former liturgical practice. While the Swallows have been innocent victims of a harsh destiny, the Pigeons have knowingly welcomed the agents of their own destruction.

Melancholic disorders can make the sufferer either superstitious or enthusiastic, but as the fables of the Swallows and the Pigeons show, the social effects of both maladies are about the same. Raymond A. Anselment argues convincingly that Martyn's character is based on the Puritan figure, Martin Marprelate, which implies that the dividing line between zealots on the right and the left was thin indeed.<sup>53</sup> Dryden and the Hind repudiate the extremism of the Martyn and the Buzzard, but the Panther's response is ambiguous. Though she denounces Martyn, her refusal to comment on the Hind's tale implies tacit approval of the Buzzard or, at least, an unwillingness to examine the internal threats to her own domain. Ironically, the Catholic Church seizes the via media position that Anglicans prided themselves on. By taking a firm stand against superstition and enthusiasm, the Catholic Church advocates the moderation that Dryden once found so admirable in the Church of England. The Buzzard's progress recapitulates the advances of

Absalom and Achitophel, with the Anglicans as non-resisting and consenting victims, and the events in the Hind's tale constitutes a miniature dunciad which Pope fully exploited in his satire on Dulness's tools, George I and Colley Cibber.<sup>54</sup>

Dryden's conversion to Roman Catholicism which "must have required protracted consideration and religious instruction, took place probably in 1685, possibly early in 1686."<sup>55</sup> The conversion was well known and Dryden's poem evoked thirteen replies by 1691, beginning with Montagu's and Prior's satire in the summer of 1687.<sup>56</sup> Although Montagu and Prior concentrated on the literary defects of The Hind and the Panther, most critics assailed the mercenary motives behind the author's conversion. In fact, the assaults on Dryden's probity make a rather dreary chorus proclaiming that the poet was a time-server. Published sometime between January and April of 1686, "To Mr. Dryden Upon his Declaring himself a Roman Catholic," begins "Great truckling soul, whose stubborn honesty/ Does with all revolutions still comply!"<sup>57</sup> "To Mr. Bays," published about the same time as "To Mr. Dryden," commences with the address:

Thou mercenary renegade, thou slave,  
Thou ever changeling, still to be a knave:  
What sect, what error wilt thou next disgrace?  
Thou art so lewd, so scandalously base,  
That anti-Christian Popery may be  
Asham'd of such a proselyte as thee.<sup>58</sup>

"On the Author of The Hind and the Panther" (1687) ignores Dryden's recent poem, but not its writer:

His praise of Nol [Cromwell] obtain'd no lasting boon,  
Because his hated mem'ry stank so soon.  
Now sure he cannot fail of a supply  
From a rich mother "fated ne'er to die"?<sup>59</sup>

In "Dryden's Ghost" (1687) the poet declares from the other world that considerations of personal safety and profit determined his loyalty to religious congregations and political leaders:

When martial Caesar came to th' crown,  
The northern heresy tumbling down,  
Prerogative sitting aloft,  
And charters in subjection brought,  
Then I, the mighty King of Me,  
Became the friend of liberty:  
Not liberty of subject, no!  
There is no need of that, we know,  
When law's well kept, and armies stout  
Fence the three nations round about;  
But Liberty of Conscience dear--  
That's the beloved character,  
When th'Inquisition shall come here.  
And now w'are sure we can't but please you:  
Mahomet, Nol, Maria, Jesu,  
Nayler, or Muggleton to ease you.<sup>60</sup>

Of Dryden's embracing the Catholic faith shortly after the succession of James II, Samuel Johnson wrote, "That conversion will always be suspected that apparently concurs with interest."<sup>61</sup>

Admittedly, Dryden's conversion occurred at a seemingly opportune moment, but Johnson excused Dryden's change on the grounds that the poet was poorly prepared to defend his Protestantism against the arguments of the Catholic apologists:



I am willing to believe that Dryden, having employed his mind, active as it was, upon different studies, and filled it, capacious as it was, with other materials, came unprovided to the controversy, and wanted rather skill to discover the right than the virtue to maintain it. But enquiries into the heart are not for man; we must now leave him to his Judge.<sup>62</sup>

Modern critics have, like Johnson, defended Dryden against the charge of rank opportunism. Although Verrall believed that "there was probably an immediate advantage to his conversion,"<sup>63</sup> Louis I. Bredvold's close examination of financial grants to Dryden by Charles II and James II reveals that the poet fared no better under a Catholic than a Protestant monarch.<sup>64</sup> Bredvold, of course, attributed Dryden's conversion to a desire for more rigid religious and political authority: "His shifts of allegiance were all changes in the same direction, toward greater conservatism. He feared the crowd, the 'dregs of democracy,' and believed that the weaknesses of human nature must be offset by some compelling and supreme authority in church and state."<sup>65</sup> Miner concurs with Bredvold's opinion when he observes that "The desire for as assured an authority in religious as in civic matters led him to conversion."<sup>66</sup>

Contrary to Bredvold and Miner, Phillip Harth tells us that in all the works published about the time of The Hind and the Panther, the critic "will find no hint of the change of faith that was taking place in the poet's mind and heart. On that matter of crucial importance he remained

deliberately silent."<sup>67</sup> It is characteristic of Dryden to tell us little about his personal feelings. Ordinarily, he maintains a detached viewpoint in his prose and poetry, but he does not reveal his very private sentiments. Nevertheless, there are times when he does allow us a more intimate glimpse into his personal life. Immoderately angry assaults on his enemies, as in the "Epistle to the Whigs" that prefaces The Medall, reveal an intensity not often expressed in his works. In the Preface to The Hind and the Panther, Dryden indicates that we may discover some of the reasons for his conversion in his poem: "What I desire the Reader should know concerning me, he will find in the Body of the Poem; if he have but the patience to peruse it." (Kinsley, p. 352) Perhaps this promise raises more problems than it solves for with the exception of a short confessio (I, 62-92) and a brief defence of his verse, (III, 1-15) the poet is a narrator describing the activities and recording the speeches of his beasts. Nevertheless, The Hind and the Panther gives some clear indications of the reasons for Dryden's conversion.

The Hind and the Panther includes many key statements first found in Dryden's prose battle with Stillingfleet. As a "new convert," (a term Stillingfleet applies scornfully to Dryden, Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 256, 260) the poet, "In the eyes of Anglicans...was a renegade and apostate who had even less right to expect a fair hearing than

most members of his newly adopted church."<sup>68</sup> Like Anne Hyde, another apostate, Dryden had to convince Anglicans not only of the theological superiority of the Catholic Church but also of the purity of his motives in leaving his old Church. Although the Duke of York's first wife might appear as an unscrupulous turncoat who changed her religion to conform with the future king's, Dryden's conversion shortly after that prince's succession to the throne seemed even more unprincipled. Anne Hyde's paper begins with the confession that she was "one of the greatest enemies" (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 191) that the Catholic Church ever had. Although he disliked the Jesuits most of all, his Religio Laici also shows Dryden's strong disapproval of the Catholic subjection of laymen by the clergy. Anne Hyde also claims that "no person, man or woman, directly or indirectly, ever said anything to me since I came into England, nor used the least endeavour to make me change my religion." (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 192) Near the end of her pamphlet Anne says, "I think I need not say, it is not any interest in this world leads me to it. It will be plain enough to everybody, that I must lose all the friends and credit I have here by it." (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 195) Dryden's answer to Stillingfleet repeats Anne Hyde's plea that she suffered much for her conversion: "The loss of friends, of worldly honours and esteem, the defamation of ill tongues, and the reproach of the cross--all these, though

not without the strugglings of flesh and blood, were surmounted by her." (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 211) The Test Act forces the Hind's converts to endure humiliating hardships for their religion:

If joyes hereafter must be purchas'd here  
 With loss of all that mortals hold so dear,  
 Then welcome infamy and publick shame,  
 And, last, a long farwell to worldly fame.  
 'Tis said with ease, but oh, how hardly try'd  
 By haughty souls to humane honour ty'd!  
 O sharp convulsive pangs of agonizing pride!  
 (III, 281-287)

In his confessio, the poet admits to being a proud man who sought "wandring fires" (I, 73) and "false lights" (I, 74) before his conversion:

Such was I, such by nature still I am,  
 Be thine the glory, and be mine the shame.  
 Good life be now my task: my doubts are done,  
 (What more could fright my faith, than Three in One?)  
 (I, 76-79)

Dryden has ended his pursuit of fame and fortune for he realizes that his Catholicism will bring him the same enmity as Anne Hyde faced. The Hind's acceptance of poverty in exchange for everlasting life echoes the poet's own sentiments in his personal confession and in his battle with Stillingfleet.

Stillingfleet charges that Anne Hyde prepared herself insufficiently for conversion to Rome:

For may things must fall in her way, which she  
 could neither have the leisure to examine, nor  
 the capacity to judge of, without the assistance  
 of such who have made it their business  
 to search into them. Had she no divines of the  
 church of England about her, to have proposed

her scruples to? None able and willing to give her their utmost assistance in a matter of such importance, before she took up a resolution of forsaking our church?

(Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 198)

Enthusiasm, rather than considered reason, accounts for Anne Hyde's conversion because "she thought herself converted by immediate divine illumination." (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 203) Finally, Stillingfleet concludes that

many things are allowed to bring persons to the church of Rome, which they will not permit in those who go from it; as the use of reason in the choice of a church; the judgment of sense; and here, that which they would severely condemn in others as a private spirit, or enthusiasm, will pass well enough if it doth but lead one to their communion.

(Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 203)

To Stillingfleet, Dryden answered that Peter Heylyn's History of the Reformation first raised Anne Hyde's doubts about Anglicanism, and that she afterwards considered the differences between Catholicism and Protestantism and consulted two Church of England divines before changing her religion: "All these ordinary ways she took, before she could persuade herself to send for a priest, whose endeavours it pleased the Almighty so to bless, that she was reconciled to his church, and her troubled conscience was immediately at rest." (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 224)

Although we do not know what circumstances led Dryden to the Catholic Church, The Hind and the Panther displays a vast range of knowledge about the poet's new religion. Dryden's clear understanding of the meaning of

the "oral tradition" contrasts sharply with his abuse of the term in Religio Laici and the doctrine receives a much livelier and more extensive treatment than in his earlier poem. One of the things that he wants Anglicanism to learn from The Hind and the Panther is that the "new convert" has not taken a sudden, enthusiastic leap into the Roman Church. Phillip Harth has demonstrated that Dryden's poem shows a vast knowledge of Jesuit apologetics, a view also shared by Victor Hamm,<sup>69</sup> and Earl Miner has shown that Dryden was aware of the conflicting theories in the Catholic Church as to where infallibility rested. Mocking the Catholic claim to infallibility, the Panther asks,

But, shunning long disputes, I fain wou'd see  
That wond'rous wight infallibility.  
Is he from heav'n this mighty champion come,  
Or lodg'd below in subterranean Rome?  
(II, 64-67)

The Hind answers,

I then affirm that this unfailing guide  
In Pope and gen'ral councils must reside;  
But lawfull, both combin'd, what one decrees  
By numerous votes, the other ratifies:  
On this undoubted sense the church relies.  
(II, 80-84)

But not all Catholic theologians would agree with the Hind:

'Tis true, some Doctours in a scantier space,  
I mean in each apart, contract the place.  
Some, who to greater length extend the line,  
The churches after acceptation join.  
(II, 85-88)

Earl Miner says of these important passages on the doctrine of infallibility that

The Hind is forced to hem and haw, for the good reason that there was at the time no authoritative Roman decision whether infallibility resided: (1) in the Pope; (2) in General Councils; (3) in the Pope and General Councils; or (4) in the Pope, General Councils, and "diffusive" Church. Dryden had the choice in writing his poem of avoiding the issue, which in conscience he could not, or of slurring it, which he rejected, or choosing from one of the four theories. He presents them all and characteristically chooses the most moderate. He rejects the first two for being too narrow, and the fourth as being too broad to mean anything.<sup>70</sup>

Because Stillingfleet and the Panther are more concerned with the motives rather than the reasons for conversion to Catholicism, the onus is upon Dryden and the Hind to prove that not just enthusiasts and fools enter the Church of Rome. The Hind's willingness to entertain all sides of a debate before choosing an answer proves that she and the poet are deeply schooled in the vagaries of Catholic knowledge. Stillingfleet's attack on Anne Hyde contains few theological arguments and the fact that the Panther must be instructed in Catholic teachings at every step of her debate, reveals that Dryden believed Anglicans to be ignorant about the Church that they had despised for so long.

Although selfless motives and extensive knowledge of the Catholic faith may justify Dryden's conversion, they do not by themselves explain the reasons for entering the Church of Rome. Anne Hyde says that Heylyn's The History of the Reformation describes

the horridest sacrileges in the world; and could find no reason why we left the church,

but for three, the most abominable ones that were ever heard of amongst Christians. First, Henry VIII. renounces the Pope's authority because he would not give him leave to part with his wife, and marry another in her lifetime; secondly, Edward VI. was a child, and governed by his uncle, who made his estate out of churchlands; and then Queen Elizabeth, who, being no lawful heiress to the crown, could have no way to keep it but by renouncing a church that could never suffer so unlawful a thing to be done by one of her children. I confess I cannot think the Holy Ghost could ever be in such councils; and it is very strange, that if the bishops had no design but (as they say) the restoring us to the doctrine of the primitive church, they should never think upon it, till Henry VIII. made the breach upon so unlawful a pretence. (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 192-193)

Stillingfleet replied that

there are two distinct parts in the history of our Reformation; the one ecclesiastical, the other political: the former was built on Scripture and antiquity, and the rights of particular churches; the other on such maxims which are common to statesmen at all times, and in all churches, who labour to turn all revolutions and changes to their own advantage.  
(Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 204-205)

Like Anne Hyde, Dryden rejected Stillingfleet's distinction between the ecclesiastical and political reform, and answered that Henry VIII's changes in the Church proceeded directly from lust:

Neither the answerer, nor I, nor any man, can carry it so high as the original cause with any certainty; for the king only knew whether it was conscience and love, or love alone, which moved him to sue for a divorce. But this we may say, that if conscience had any part in it, she had taken a long nap of almost twenty years together before she awakened, and perhaps had slept on till doomsday, if Anne Bolleyn, or some other fair lady, had not given her a jog. (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 244)



Stillingfleet spent over half of his reply (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 267-280) to Dryden defending the propriety of the English Reformation and the integrity of Henry VIII. In The Hind and the Panther, the Panther pleads that she cannot remove the Test Act for reasons of conscience:

I spake against the Test, but was not heard;  
 These to rescind, and Peerage to restore,  
 My gracious Sov'reign wou'd my vote implore:  
 I owe him much, but owe my conscience more.  
 (III, 782-785)

The Hind responds that the Panther has always been a bawd willing to bargain her conscience for gain:

Conscience is then your Plea, reply'd the Dame,  
 Which well-inform'd will ever be the same.  
 But yours is much of the Camelion hew  
 To change the dye with ev'ry diff'rent view.  
 When first the Lyon sat with awfull sway  
 Your conscience taught you duty to obey:  
 He might have had your Statutes and your Test,  
 No conscience but of subjects was profess'd.  
 (III, 786-793)

In this passage the Hind imputes the same unprincipled behaviour to the Anglican Church that Dryden ascribes to Henry VIII in his prose work. To Anne Hyde's horror at the reports of the wickedness of Henry VIII, Stillingfleet had asked, "Were not the vices of Alexander the Sixth, and many other heads of the church of Rome, for a whole age together, by the confession of their own greatest writers, as great at least as those of Henry the Eighth?" (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 205) Dryden admits that the Church has had evil popes, but like the Hind, he maintains that the Church of Rome

has never changed her teachings on matters of faith in the cavalier fashion of the Panther:

on the other side, here is a total subversion of the old church in England, and the setting up of a new; a changing of received doctrines and the direction of God's holy spirit pretended for the change; so that she might reasonably judge that the Holy Ghost had little to do with the practices of ill popes, without thinking the worse of the established faith: but she could never see a new one erected on the foundations of lust, sacrilege, and usurpation, without great scruples whether the spirit of God were assisting in those counsels. (Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 249)

Like Anne Hyde, Dryden came to believe that only the Catholic Church had preserved doctrinal consistency and the teachings of the primitive church. To Dryden, the Protestant Reformation was an illegitimate rebellion led by proud, zealous unscrupulous men. The merits of the Anglican Church were remnants of the Catholicism from which she had severed herself, while her defects were the innovations adopted from English and continental sectarians. Perhaps, increasing Latitudinarianism in the Anglican Church in the 1680's led Dryden to re-examine the bases of the Churches of England and of Rome. Religio Laici displays the superficial knowledge about Catholicism that the Panther possesses, while the poet's knowledge of his new faith was comprehensive only five years later. In the earlier poem, he had defended faith against reasoners in his Church. By 1687, he attacked that same Church for encouraging its proud and disputatious leaders, but we cannot suppose that

Dryden defended a faith untested by reason. The Hind argues effectively with the Panther as Dryden did with Stillingfleet, and the last impression that the poet wanted to convey was that he was an enthusiast. Instead, he shows that the man of faith is reasonable and knowledgeable and that his detractors are possessed with the kind of enthusiasm that had plunged Europe into religious civil wars for over a century.

Though the Test Act that the Hind denounces so thoroughly in Part III was removed before the poem was published, it was unlikely that Catholics would prosper. As Phillip Harth says, "the fable of the martin and the swallows in Part III of The Hind and the Panther, as well as Dryden's letter to Etherege, make perfectly clear that he expected the English Catholics to remain a small and precarious minority."<sup>71</sup> Chronic unemployment oppressed Catholics throughout the Restoration, and almost none of them had any influence either in London or at court.<sup>72</sup> Although they may have numbered ten percent of the population in 1680, their membership did not proliferate under James II, and after 1688, continual defections reduced their tally to about one percent of the English citizenry by 1780.<sup>73</sup> About the best that Dryden could hope for as a Roman Catholic was to stay alive and continue to receive his pension from the court, but the prospect of death seems to weigh heavily on his mind in The Hind and the Panther. All

of the young Swallows (that is, the new or "young" converts) perish in the storm that Martyn sends them into, and the Pigeon's hatred of the innocent fowl is intense even before the Buzzard arrives. Because the Buzzard can so easily arouse the passions of the Pigeons, the Hind's fable predicts a bad future not only for the Catholic Church in England but for Christianity itself.

A major danger to the safety of Catholics was James II. His policy of favouring Catholics for high public office, even before the removal of the Test Act, exacerbated the precariousness of most of his co-religionists, and the appointments of Jesuits like Father Petre at court "was a shocking thing indeed--shocking not only to English Protestant, but even to English Catholic, laymen and the Pope himself."<sup>74</sup> Besides alienating very loyal Anglicans, the king was also antagonizing moderate Catholics like Dryden who believed his policies were too forward. The Preface to The Hind and the Panther speaks of the great kindness of James in removing the Test Act, (Kinsley, p. 353) and the poem contains a few complimentary verses on the king but the years 1685-1688 witnessed no flourishing of encomiums from Dryden's pen. Britannia Rediviva: A Poem on the Birth of the Prince (1688) advises the king that "Resistless Force and Immortality/ Make but a Lane, Imperfect Deity," (ll. 349-350) and begs that moderation be practiced in order to guarantee the prince's successful

future:

By living well, let us secure his days,  
 Mod'rate in hopes, and humble in our ways.  
 No force the Free-Born Spirit can constrain,  
 But Charity, and great Examples gain.  
 Forgiveness is our thanks, for such a day;  
 'Tis Godlike, God in his own Coyn to pay.  
 (ll. 298-303)

Clearly Dryden thought that James's policies would prove disastrous. Even the removal of the Test Act in 1687 did little to ease the friction between Catholics and Protestants. Although the Baptists and Quakers accepted the Declaration of Indulgence gratefully, "The larger and more powerful Presbyterians and Congregationalists...were inclined to oppose any step that might 'tend to bring in popery.'" <sup>75</sup> Even though the *Hind* expresses Dryden's approval for the removal of the Test Act in the fable of the Pigeons, yet there are other indications that Dryden thought a general freedom for Catholics and all dissenters would be unwise. The Declaration of Indulgence would liberate the Wolf, Fox, Boar and Bear to roam as they please, while the first part of the poem and much of the discussion between the *Hind* and the Panther demands their banishment. A celebration of the freedom for these animals in Part III disrupts the unity of the poem, and if the declaration had been proclaimed after Dryden's work was published, one cannot but wonder if The Hind and the Panther would have had the same conclusion.

The Hind and the Panther is Dryden's most ambitious

poem in terms of its length and its scope. It traces the entire history of true inspiration that resides in the Catholic Church, and false enthusiasm that inheres in Protestantism. In 1687 Dryden had reached a position similar to that of Milton when he published Paradise Lost. Milton denounced the superstitious spirit that marred Catholicism and much orthodox Protestantism, while Dryden condemned the sectarian zeal that had swept Protestant Churches and threatened to engulf Anglicanism as well. Each poet had become disillusioned by the political world (for different reasons) and so they placed their future hopes in the promise of salvation rather than in the pledges of governors. Dryden and Milton were also men of peace, wearied by the religious bickering that characterized their century. The Hind and the Panther shares Milton's distaste for warfare and the major part of the poem records a debate. Although Book VI of Paradise Lost narrates the war in heaven between God and Satan, Milton renounces the idea that only physical battles are appropriate subject matter for an epic:

Wars, hitherto the only Argument  
 Heroic deem'd, chief maistry to dissect  
 With long and tedious havoc fabl'd knights  
 In Battles feign'd; the better fortitude  
 Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom  
 Unsung.... (Paradise Lost, VII, 28-33)

The topic of Dryden's poem is also "Heroic Martyrdom," suffered by the Hind and her sons who struggle against enthusiasts to capture the purity and goodness of the unfallen Adam.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the Test Act and the Declaration of Indulgence, see Stuart Prall, The Bloodless Revolution, especially Chapter IV, and Richard E. Boyer, English Declarations of Indulgence, 1687 and 1688 (Paris and The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1968), passim.

<sup>2</sup>The Hind and the Panther was entered into The Stationers' Register on May 27, 1687 nearly two months after the Declaration of Indulgence according to Earl Miner, ed., The Works of John Dryden (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), III, 326.

<sup>3</sup>Miner, ed., The Works of John Dryden, III, 350.

<sup>4</sup>Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 163.

<sup>5</sup>Martin Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, p. 74.

<sup>6</sup>Sir Walter Scott and George Saintsbury, eds., The Works of John Dryden (London: William Paterson and Co., 1892) XVII, 244, 245, 248. Because the Scott-Saintsbury edition, volume XVII contains the whole of the correspondence between Stillingfleet and Dryden concerning Anne Hyde's conversion to Catholicism, I have made use of this edition throughout the chapter when I refer to documents relating to the controversy.

<sup>7</sup>Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 177.

<sup>8</sup>For a discussion of the term "precisian," with reference to Measure for Measure see William P. Holden, Anti-Puritan Satire, 1572-1642, pp. 127-129.

<sup>9</sup>Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p. 156.

<sup>10</sup>Peter Heylyn, Aërius Redivivus: or The History of the Presbyterians, A5<sup>r</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Prall, The Bloodless Revolution, p. 113.

<sup>12</sup>For a discussion about the battle between Stillingfleet and Dryden concerning the papers of Anne Hyde, see the annotations in Scott-Saintsbury, XVII, 189-280 and passim.

<sup>13</sup>Miner, ed., The Works of John Dryden, III, 416.

<sup>14</sup>Norman Sykes, From Sheldon to Secker, p. 146.

- <sup>15</sup>Sykes, From Sheldon to Secker, p. 169. See also G.R. Cragg, From Puritanism to the Age of Reason for a brief discussion of Stillingfleet's attack on appeals to apostolic authority in his Irenicum (1660), p. 74.
- <sup>16</sup>Phillip Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 235.
- <sup>17</sup>Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 234.
- <sup>18</sup>Alan Roper, Dryden's Poetic Kingdoms, p. 113.
- <sup>19</sup>Heylyn, Aërius Redivivus, A3<sup>r</sup>.
- <sup>20</sup>Heylyn, Aërius Redivivus, A3<sup>r</sup>.
- <sup>21</sup>Heylyn, Aërius Redivivus, A3<sup>v</sup>.
- <sup>22</sup>Also compare to Paradise Lost, IV, 114-357, especially 183-193, as suggested by Miner, The Works of John Dryden, III, 407.
- <sup>23</sup>John F. Clarkson and others, trans., The Church Teaches: Documents of the Church in English Translation (1955; London and St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1957), p. 43.
- <sup>24</sup>Clarkson, and others, trans., The Church Teaches, p. 7.
- <sup>25</sup>For a discussion of the meaning of the oral tradition in Dryden's poem, see Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, pp. 279-284.
- <sup>26</sup>Clarkson and others, trans., The Church Teaches, p. 45.
- <sup>27</sup>Miner, Dryden's Poetry, pp. 188-189.
- <sup>28</sup>Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 36.
- <sup>29</sup>Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, p. 73.
- <sup>30</sup>Sanford Budick, Dryden and the Abyss of Light, pp. 203-207.
- <sup>31</sup>Budick, Dryden and the Abyss of Light, pp. 216-217.
- <sup>32</sup>Budick, Dryden and the Abyss of Light, p. 214.
- <sup>33</sup>The slanderous beast threatens Spenser's Faerie Queene VI, xii just as malice threatens a fair hearing for Dryden's verses, The Hind and the Panther, III, 1-2.



<sup>34</sup>Louis I Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, p. 126.

<sup>35</sup>Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 365.

<sup>36</sup>For a discussion of this topic see Victor M. Hamm, "Dryden's The Hind and the Panther and Roman Catholic Apologetics," PMLA, LXXXIII (1968), 402.

<sup>37</sup>Clarkson and others, trans., The Church Teaches, p. 79.

<sup>38</sup>For a discussion of this point see Hamm, "Dryden's The Hind and the Panther and Roman Catholic Apologetics," 407.

<sup>39</sup>H.R. McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism, p. 175.

<sup>40</sup>Clarkson and others, trans., The Church Teaches, p. 283.

<sup>41</sup>E.J. Bicknell, A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919), p. 479.

<sup>42</sup>Hamm, "Dryden's The Hind and the Panther and Roman Catholic Apologetics," 402.

<sup>43</sup>The Test Act stipulated that "every holder of any civil or military office was to take the sacrament of the Lords Supper according to the Church of England." An oath against Transubstantiation was also required. See Boyer, English Declarations of Indulgence, 1687 and 1688, p. 24.

<sup>44</sup>Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, p. 124.

<sup>45</sup>Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, p. 71.

<sup>46</sup>Miner, ed., The Works of John Dryden, III, 404. The Anglican Church, of course, accepted only the Church traditions and decrees of the first five or six centuries.

<sup>47</sup>Robert Filmer, Patriarchia, p. 57.

<sup>48</sup>Filmer, Patriarchia, p. 62.

<sup>49</sup>Filmer, Patriarchia, p. 71.

<sup>50</sup>Roper, Dryden's Poetic Kingdoms, p. 112.

<sup>51</sup>Prall, The Bloodless Revolution, p. 114.

<sup>52</sup>Miner, ed., The Works of John Dryden, III, 449-450 discusses the Buzzard's identity.

<sup>53</sup>Raymond A. Anselment, "Martin Marprelate: A New Source for Dryden's Fable of the Martin and the Swallows," RES (new series), XVII (1966), 256-267.

<sup>54</sup>Pope's Dunces echo the Pigeons' response to their new monarch, "God save King Buzzard was the gen'rall cry," (The Hind and the Panther, II, 1140) when he writes in The Dunciad (1742):

She ceas'd, Then swells the Chapel-royal throat:  
'God save King Cibber!' mounts in ev'ry note.  
Familiar White's, 'God save King Colley!' cries;  
'God save King Colley!' Drury-lane replies....  
(I, 319-322)

It might also be noted that Cibber champions the "good old cause" of Dulness. (Dunciad, I, 165)

<sup>55</sup>Miner, ed., The Works of John Dryden, III, 333.

<sup>56</sup>Helene Maxwell Hooker, "Charles Montagu's Reply to The Hind and the Panther," ELH, VIII (1941), 52.

<sup>57</sup>"To Mr. Dryden Upon his Declaring himself a Roman Catholic," ll. 1-2 in Galbraith M. Crump, ed., Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660-1714 (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), IV, 75.

<sup>58</sup>"To Mr. Bays," ll. 1-6 in Crump, ed., Poems on Affairs of State, IV, 79.

<sup>59</sup>"On the Author of The Hind and The Panther," ll. 10-13 in Crump, ed., Poems on Affairs of State, IV, 145.

<sup>60</sup>"Dryden's Ghost," ll. 1-16 in Crump, ed., Poems on Affairs of State, IV, 146-147.

<sup>61</sup>Samuel Johnson, "Life of Dryden" in Lives of the Poets, I, 266.

<sup>62</sup>Johnson, "Life of Dryden" in Lives of the Poets, I, 266.

<sup>63</sup>A.W. Verrall, Lectures on Dryden, p. 157.

<sup>64</sup>Louis I. Bredvold, "Notes on John Dryden's Pension," MP, XXX (1933), 267-274.

<sup>65</sup>Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, p. 128.

<sup>66</sup>Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 177.

<sup>67</sup>Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 230.

<sup>68</sup>Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 50.

<sup>69</sup>See Hamm, "The Hind and the Panther and Roman Catholic Apologetics" and Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, Chapters VII and VIII for a discussion of Dryden's knowledge of Catholic polemical works. In his Puritanism to the Age of Reason, G.R. Cragg writes that "The Jesuits were dreaded for more on political than on religious grounds. It was not their dogma nor even the moral basis of their methods which alarmed the English mind." pp. 166-167.

<sup>70</sup>Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 188.

<sup>71</sup>Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought, p. 228.

<sup>72</sup>David Mathew, Catholicism in England. The Portrait of a Minority: Its Culture and Tradition (1936; London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1948), pp. 94-95.

<sup>73</sup>E.I. Watkin, Roman Catholicism in England from the Reformation to 1950 (London and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 101; 111-112; 120.

<sup>74</sup>Prall, The Bloodless Revolution, p. 115. Prall's fourth chapter, "James II and the Descent into Tyranny" discusses the imprudent policies of James with precise details. William J. Cameron's "John Dryden's Jacobitism" in Harold Love, ed., Restoration Literature: Critical Approaches (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd, 1972), p. 292 and passim denies that Dryden, as a Catholic, was an admirer of King James II merely because they shared the same religion.

<sup>75</sup>Prall, The Bloodless Revolution, p. 141. In Lord Halifax's "A Letter to a Dissenter," published just after the Declaration of Indulgence, the minister who had been dismissed by James II for his disapproval of the king's policies advised the emancipated non-conformists to maintain the peace and warned them that they had been used by the Papists to get freedom for themselves: "You are therefore to be hugged now, only that you may be the better squeezed at another time." Halifax: Complete Works, ed., J.P. Kenyon, (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), p. 106.

## VII

### ARTISTIC ENTHUSIASM

The discussion of art and the role of the artist, the third major area of enthusiasm which I will consider in this study, reaches at least as far back as Plato. Although this is the oldest of the three kinds, I have reserved the examination of artistic enthusiasm until last in this thesis for three reasons. First, I have discussed Dryden's poems in chronological order, and most of his major works on artistic enthusiasm were written in the latter part of his career. Furthermore, we commonly associate enthusiasm with politics and religion in the Restoration and eighteenth century, and it is perhaps easier to understand enthusiasm by examining the topic as it appears in Dryden's political and religious verse. Thirdly, we generally think only of Dryden's opposition to enthusiasm, an antipathy which can be easily grasped in poems like Absalom and Achitophel and The Hind and the Panther. Though he vigorously opposed religious and political figures who claimed a right to dominion because of the infallibility of their inner light, Dryden also believed that some individuals were especially gifted with transcendental grace and true inspiration, and this somewhat neglected side of Dryden's attitude toward enthusiasm cannot be so quickly grasped in his political and religious poems.

Artistic enthusiasm is inseparable from political and religious inspiration. We have already seen, for example, that the Hind is a superior rhetorician to the Panther, and that David's musical and oratorical powers surpass the artistic abilities of all his foes. Eloquence, in fact, is a pliable term embracing art, politics and religion simultaneously. The comprehensive nature of the topic can be clearly seen in Mac Flecknoe, a poem which ridicules improper enthusiasm in the arts. This poem serves as a good contrast and a useful introduction to the Anne Killigrew and St. Cecilia odes which celebrate legitimate artistic inspiration and which will be examined later in this chapter.

Mac Flecknoe incorporates all three areas of enthusiasm discussed in this study. Flecknoe and Shadwell are kings, priests and artists<sup>1</sup> like the Buzzard and the Martyn in The Hind and the Panther who are influential clergymen in a court and whose prophecies and orations control the fortunes of their subordinates. Dryden fuses the roles of these false kings making it difficult to isolate one function to the exclusion of the others. As Earl Miner has written about Mac Flecknoe:

The allusions to Virgil and to Milton fuse into a whole. The three controlling metaphors--art (or literature), monarchy, and religion--similarly exchange their roles throughout the poem as subjects, figures, and values. This is not to say that we are unable to make distinctions between the dominant functions of the controlling

metaphors. The metaphor of art is particularly important as a subject, because the satire focuses chiefly upon literature. The metaphor of monarchy is particularly important for structure, since it governs the situation and the plot. The metaphor of religion is particularly important for evaluation, because it controls our response to the elements introduced into the poem. All the same, Dryden obviously feels monarchy and art to be important values. By the same token, each crucial point in the action of the poem is governed by literary suggestions or allusions, so that literature in addition to monarchy is crucial to the structure. Used as they are for equivalents of each other as well as for such other functions as subject, structure, and evaluation, the metaphors play a role so central to the poem that one can scarcely imagine a poet who conceives of poetry in more figurative terms. It would be difficult to decide whether, in the end, MacFlecknoe is finally simple or finally complex. The whole is so entire, so integrated, that one's mind can embrace it at once. Yet the articulation of that whole is minutely and ceaselessly significant.<sup>2</sup>

Written apparently in 1678, Mac Flecknoe circulated privately in manuscript until 1682 when it was published without Dryden's consent. Not until 1684 did the author's approved version appear,<sup>3</sup> but the poem must have been fresh in his thoughts when he came to write Absalom and Achitophel in 1681. Mac Flecknoe's slight action depicts the selection and coronation of a false king, and though only a few passing references are made to Shadwell's politics, the poem has a strong political undercurrent. Shadwell had dedicated his opera Psyche (1675) to the Duke of Monmouth,<sup>4</sup> and the playwright dedicated his adaptation of Timon of Athens (1678) to the Duke of Buckingham whom he

praised for his attack on Dryden in The Rehearsal.<sup>5</sup>

Dryden's Flecknoe and Shadwell are complementary figures; the loquacious old man delivers one long speech which ends with his undignified unseating by his passive son who takes his father's throne: "Flecknoe has been a meaningless writer. His son--also a writer--goes a step further and becomes wordless. He thinks no thoughts. He is stirred by no feelings. His only actions are to sit (108) and swear (114)."<sup>6</sup> In contrast to his favourite son, Shadwell's father is an exuberant enthusiast. As "the good old Syre," (l. 60) he defends the cause of the dissenters in art as the non-conformists do in religion. The opening of the poem, which unfolds with majesty, concludes with the father's quick decision about the future king. Although Flecknoe "did at length debate" (l. 9) and ponder the matter, (l. 11) he utters his decision about the succession in a sudden cry (l. 13) that begins his fulsome speech. As a visionary, Flecknoe foresees his accomplished son proceeding along the Thames to his coronation:

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.  
(ll. 38-42)

The corpulent poet excels all his rivals in physical size and in spiritual proportions. Dryden equates obesity and depravity in his pictures of Mohammed, Luther, Martyn and

the Buzzard as he does in his portrait of Shadwell whose preposterous hymns parody the inspired songs of the Psalmist, David. Overcome with paternal joy, Flecknoe relishes his son's achievements "In silent raptures" (l. 61) and at the coronation he cannot contain a fit of enthusiasm:

...long he stood,  
Repelling from his Breast the raging God;  
At length burst out in this prophetick mood....  
(ll. 136-138)

During his long harangue, Flecknoe begs his son to borrow the fire of his father (l. 173) in order to perform even greater feats of dullness. A.L. Korn glosses "the raging God" as a reference to "the furor poeticus, of Platonic-Renaissance convention,"<sup>7</sup> and he reads the whole poem as an onslaught against false enthusiasm in the arts:

When Dryden wrote Mac Flecknoe the traditional Renaissance conception of the poet as vates, an inspired prophet and seer, had lost much of its former prestige. If it suited the purpose of the satirist, the notion served as a general target of ridicule along with "enthusiasm," whether religious or poetic.... [I]n the literary polemics of the period and by a natural transference of terms of abuse, the victim of "enthusiasm" might be identified with a pretentious rival author, a Settle or a Shadwell.<sup>8</sup>

But Shadwell is not only enthusiastic; his passivity, allied with sleep and dullness, represents the final surrender of all thought in religion, politics and art. Like the enthusiast who collapses from his frenzied activities, Shadwell and his father weary themselves into a perpetual torpor.



Korn has also discussed "the Hero as Prophet" theme in Mac Flecknoe,<sup>9</sup> and, indeed, false prophets and prophecies abound in Dryden's poem. Designated as a young prophet, (l. 216) Shadwell will assume a kingship that has been predicted almost mythically. The "last great Prophet of Tautology" (l. 30) fulfills Dekker's prediction that a great king would reign in the heart of the London theatrical district:

For ancient Decker prophesi'd long since,  
That in this Pile shoud Reign a mighty Prince,  
Born for a scourge of Wit, and flayle of Sense....  
(ll. 87-89)

By transforming the Renaissance playwright Thomas Dekker into an ancient prophet, Dryden intensifies the pretentiousness of the mock king and provides him with a lineage that makes Shadwell a false messiah:

Heywood and Shirley were but Types of thee,  
Thou last great Prophet of Tautology:  
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,  
Was sent before but to prepare thy way;  
And coursly clad in Norwich Drugget came  
To teach the Nations in thy greater name.  
(ll. 29-34)

Shadwell culminates the increasingly stupid line of Heywood and Shirley, while his father, Flecknoe, performs the double function of apostle and John the Baptist. Like Flecknoe, Shadwell is full of the God-head, and accordingly, he must be worshipped. Like Absalom and Achitophel, Mac Flecknoe depicts the preparation of a mortal for kingship and for a messianic role. Flecknoe performs the function of Achitophel who prepares the youthful Absalom to wrest power from

his own father. The "Nations" (ll. 34, 96) gather to witness the coronation of a new king by Flecknoe who is a "Priest by Trade," (l. 119) a phrase echoed in the opening lines of both the first and second parts of Absalom and Achitophel:

In pious times, e'er Priest-craft did begin...  
(Absalom and Achitophel, l. 1)

Since Men like Beasts, each others Prey were made,  
Since Trade began, and Priesthood grew a Trade....  
(Absalom and Achitophel II, ll. 1-2)

As in Absalom and Achitophel, religious and political enthusiasm unite when a fool becomes the champion of the people-- "and all the people cry'd Amen." (l. 144) The word "Amen" reminds us of the religious significance of a coronation, and also implies that the popular monarch will be received as a god like Absalom who became a "Guardian God" (Absalom and Achitophel, l. 735) in the homes of the populace.

The throng that attends Shadwell's coronation behaves like the London mob depicted in The Medall and described by implication in the picture of the Jewish populace in Absalom and Achitophel. Mac Flecknoe harbours a strong class bias manifested in Dryden's scorn of middle-class theatrical figures like Heywood, Shirley, Ogilby (l. 102) and Shadwell whose plays Dryden considered to be low, farcical and decidedly non-courtly. Shadwell's worshippers come "From near Bun-Hill," (l. 97) a major burial ground for dissenters and from "distant Watling-street," (l. 97) an avenue which extended into the heart of the city.

According to H.T. Swedenberg Jr., "The line [97] may suggest that Shadwell drew his admirers from the quick and the dead, from the dissenting City merchants and from the ill-favored characters of an ill-favored suburb...."<sup>10</sup> Championed only by the true-blue London citizenry, Shadwell's cause acquires none of the dignified associations that accrue to the dissenting mission in Absalom and Achitophel from the patronage of the courtly figures, Absalom, Achitophel and Zimri. At the coronation, "Th' admiring throng loud acclamations make" (l. 132) like the noisy rabble attending an enthusiastic conventicle.

The seat of the new king is situated in the heart of the London theatrical district, a location associated with filth and sedition. Shadwell's theatre, built on the ruins of a "watch Tower," (l. 68) stands near an acting school:

From its old Ruins Brothel-houses rise,  
 Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys.  
 Where their vast Courts the Mother-Strumpets keep,  
 And, undisturb'd by Watch, in silence sleep.  
 Near these a Nursery erects its head,  
 Where Queens are form'd, and future Hero's bred;  
 Where unfledg'd Actors learn to laugh and cry,  
 Where infant Punks their tender Voices try,  
 And little Maximins the Gods defy.  
 (ll. 70-78)

Dryden imitates Cowley's Davideis I, 661-664 in his reference to a Nursery that Solomon founded as a meeting place for true prophets in Cowley's poem,<sup>11</sup> and he later employed the figure of the nursery to describe the work of "Plotter

Ferguson<sup>12</sup> in Absalom and Achitophel II:

Shall that false Hebronite escape our Curse,  
Judas that keeps the Rebels Pension-Purse;  
Judas that pays the Treason-writers Fee,  
Judas that well deserves his Namesake's Tree;  
 Who at Jerusalem's own Gates Erects  
 His College for a Nursery of Sects.  
 (ll. 320-325)

Dryden condemns the theatrics of Shadwell and his followers by an implied contrast with the true prophets in Cowley's poem, and his use of the same material a second time shows how easily a metaphor applied to artistic satire could be employed to denounce enthusiasm in politics and religion. Like loyal dissenters, the playwrights construct false kings in art as in life. The nursery is a training school for the education of those who will portray kings and queens on stage in dramas written by playwrights like Shadwell that aspire to have dominion over the artistic, religious and political kingdoms of London. In the true spirit of dissent, Shadwell's theatre rests on the ruins of a watch tower that once served as a fortification for the defence of a legitimate king, an edifice which now lies in ruins. The erection of a theatre of dullness over a formerly august structure is one more instance of the desecration of the monarchical symbol by the champions of sedition and enthusiasm.

The squalid setting of Shadwell's triumphant progress undercuts the pretensions of the new king and his father. As we have seen before, enthusiasts are simultaneously

bestial and godlike, a discrepancy that Korn finds instructive in Mac Flecknoe:

Not a little of the irony and paradoxical force of Dryden's comic characterization in Mac Flecknoe consists, in short, in the way Flecknoe and Shadwell embody at one and the same time a sub-human stupidity and supernatural powers of "inspiration."<sup>13</sup>

Blinded by pride and ignorance, the figures in Mac Flecknoe have no awareness of their barbarism. Prostitutes govern courts of "lewd loves" and "polluted joys" while names like "Pissing-Ally," (l. 47) "Bun-Hill," and "Barbican" (l. 67) suggest the depraved, barbarian nature of the poem's participants. The many kingdoms and realms mentioned in the poem are all extensions of the corrupt London setting.

Dryden associates Flecknoe and Shadwell with places far removed from enlightened civilization. Born in Norfolk,<sup>14</sup> Shadwell has, according to Flecknoe, written "Northern Dedications," (l. 170) and the retiring king mentions his own "Norwich Drugget." (l. 33) Referring to Shadwell's play Epsom-Wells (1672), Flecknoe speaks of Shadwell's "hungry Epsom prose" (l. 164) and says that the younger playwright's progress on the Thames surpasses a tossing in Epsom bankets, (l. 42) a rude country custom. Flecknoe speaks proudly about winning the favour of the Portuguese king (l. 36) and predicts that his son's dominion will exceed his own. Shadwell has an "Irish pen," (l. 202) and Flecknoe anticipates a gigantic new realm for his son at the coronation:

Heavens bless my Son, from Ireland let him reign  
 To farr Barbadoes on the Western main;  
 Of his Dominion may no end be known,  
 And greater than his Father's be his Throne.  
 (ll. 139-142)

The poet will govern a vast expanse of an uninhabitable world, fitting for an artist of nothingness and dullness.

Physical settings in the poem suggest mental landscapes, and some of the sites mentioned in Mac Flecknoe are wholly figurative. Thus, Flecknoe commands "all the Realms of Non-sense" (l. 6) which will pass to his son. At the coronation Flecknoe places "Love's Kingdom" (l. 122) (a title of one of his own plays) in Shadwell's right hand and says "Beyond loves Kingdom let him stretch his Pen," (l. 143) expressing the hope that his son's intellectual realm will equal his palpable kingdoms and surpass his own. Near the poem's conclusion, Flecknoe advises Shadwell to abandon playwriting in order to enhance his dominion over dullness: "Leave writing Plays, and chuse for thy command/ Some peacefull Province in Acrostick Land." (ll. 205-206) Grandeur and squalor co-exist in Mac Flecknoe. Greater kingdoms paradoxically grow from decreasing efforts and true splendour in the arts can ultimately be attained by abandoning linguistic competence in favour of puns, anagrams (l. 204) and acrostics.

Like the followers of Absalom, Shadwell's admirers wage war against artistic competence. Ben Jonson, says Flecknoe, did never "rail at Arts he did not understand,"

(l. 178) a statement which begs comparison with Dryden's observation in Absalom and Achitophel that "never Rebell was to Arts a friend." (l. 873) Earl Miner has isolated several arts that are debased in Mac Flecknoe:

Singing (209-10) is but one of the arts assimilated into the larger subject. We encounter as well lute-playing (43-48), dancing (53-54), architecture (64-82), rhetoric (165) word-games (203-08), and several skilled trades. Each of these is debased by Shadwell's art--his fumbling pretense to the reality and his degrading expression of his motives in his attempts.<sup>15</sup>

Together Flecknoe and Shadwell are consummate practitioners of the art of noise. Flecknoe used to play a "warbling Lute" (l. 35) that he bestows on Shadwell for his Thames' progress:

Methinks I see the new Arion Sail,  
The Lute still trembling underneath thy nail.  
At thy well sharpned thumb from Shore to Shore  
The Treble squeaks for fear, the Bases roar:  
Echoes from Pissing-Ally, Sh---call,  
And Sh---they resound from A---Hall.  
About thy boat the little Fishes throng,  
As at the Morning Toast, that Floats along.  
(ll. 43-50)

Squeaks, roars and echoes of the poet's own name create a cacophonous chorus initiated by the lute which "began in England and Italy during the rise of Baroque music to suffer a decline at the expense of keyboards."<sup>16</sup> Shadwell presents a comical and perverted version of the Greek musician and poet, Arion, saved from drowning by the dolphins that he charmed with his art.<sup>17</sup> Just before his departure, Flecknoe reminds Shadwell that his unfashionable instrument

can be profitably used to attain dullness in music as well as in poetry: "Or if thou would'st thy diff'rent talents suit,/ Set thy own Songs, and sing them to thy lute."

(ll. 209-210) Such endeavours will make Shadwell the artistic opponent of figures like Arion and David, who excelled in both music and poetry.

Shadwell gathers "false flowers of Rhetorick," (l. 165) specifically the puns and anagrams that characterize his Epsom prose style. Flecknoe's rant begins with a cry, (l. 13) the theatrical students "laugh and cry" (l. 76) in "tender Voices" (l. 77) and defy the gods (l. 78) while the mob greets their new king with "loud acclamations." (l. 132) Shouting and haranguing form one part of the rhetoric of the dunces, while wordlessness comprises the other half.

As in other poems examined in this study, Dryden's enemies in Mac Flecknoe live beyond the pale of nature. A long battle between Dryden and Shadwell about the importance of wit and the humours in comedy had raged on for almost ten years by the time that Dryden wrote Mac Flecknoe. Shadwell won the favour of William Cavendish, the Duke of Newcastle, Ben Jonson's patron, before the production of his first play, The Sullen Lovers (1668), and throughout his career he claimed to be a follower of the theory of humours as expounded by Jonson.<sup>18</sup> According to one of Shadwell's recent critics, a humour is the dominating force which



control a man's will.<sup>19</sup> Although there were many humours in man, Shadwell

distinguished between false and true ones by describing two kinds of human imperfection, the natural and the acquired. Natural imperfection --such as lunacy, blindness, or the physical deformities of "men born monstrous"--he disqualified as a proper source of comedy. It was rather acquired folly which was freighted with dramatic potential--all those imperfections which men ironically and unwittingly cultivate with painstaking assiduity.<sup>20</sup>

A lover of Shakespeare, Dryden considered Jonson to be a much more cautious and methodical playwright than Shakespeare and he thought him too old-fashioned for an age in which wit and courtly manners should prevail on the stage:

That the wit of this age is much more courtly may easily be proved by viewing the characters of gentlemen which were written in the last. First, for Jonson, Truewit in The Silent Woman was his master-piece, and Truewit was a scholar-like kind of man, a gentleman with an allay of pendants, a man who seems mortified to the world by much reading. The best of his discourse is drawn not from the knowledge of the town, but books. And, in short, he would be a fine gentleman in an University."

("Defence of the Epilogue," Watson, I, 180)

In his Preface to The Mock Astrologer (1671), a play dedicated to Shadwell's patron, William Cavendish, Dryden complained that farce which "consists of forced humours, and unnatural events" (Malone, I, ii, 191) dominated the age, and he recommended that playwrights abandon their taste for humour comedy which he likened to the antics of madmen: "And to entertain an audience perpetually with humour, is

to carry them from the conversation of gentlemen, and treat them with the follies and extravagancies of Bedlam."

(Malone, I, ii, 197)

Despite the enmity of the two writers, the disputes between Dryden and Shadwell seem to have subsided for a time in 1674 when they collaborated with John Crowne to write a denunciation of Elkanah Settle's Empress of Morocco.<sup>21</sup> The Preface and Postscript to Notes and Observations on The Empress of Morocco are important critical documents for the study of Mac Flecknoe because many of the comments on bad poets and inferior poetry which were voiced in the prose writings were later repeated in the poem. According to its detractors, Settle's play was "a rhapsody of nonsense" (Malone, II, 271) in which every character "rants, and swaggers, and talks nonsense abundantly." (Malone, II, 276) The author loves "the rumbling of robustious nonsense" and makes a false plea of "poetica licentia" (Malone, II, 285) in defence of his execrable work. Because Settle's best thoughts come from his dreams, (Malone, II, 286) his imagination is full of "licentious wildness and extravagance." (Malone, II, 286) Possessing a heated fancy, (Malone, II, 287) Settle "would persuade us he is a kind of fanatick in poetry, and has a light within him, and writes by inspiration...." (Malone, II, 288) In his poem Dryden applies the prose comments that he had made about Settle to Flecknoe whose utterances come wholly from an enthusiastic "inner

light," and he also transfers some of the observations in the critical work to the character of Shadwell as we shall see.

During his oration Flecknoe asks "What share have we in Nature or in Art?" (l. 176) and reminds Shadwell of his greatest dramaturgical strength:

This is thy Province, this thy wondrous way,  
New Humours to invent for each new Play:  
This is that boasted Byas of thy mind,  
By which one way, to dullness, 'tis inclin'd.  
(ll. 187-190)

Shadwell had boasted about his ability to create new humours for his plays in his Preface to The Sullen Lovers (1668) in which he claimed to be a follower of Ben Jonson whose comedies consistently contained seven or eight humours.<sup>22</sup> In his Preface to The Humorists (1671), Shadwell defended Jonson as a poet of wit against Dryden's arguments and he stated that he had found more new humours for his latest drama.<sup>23</sup> Ironically, Dryden makes Shadwell a humours character in Mac Flecknoe, a figure who has no grounding in nature and no ability in the arts. As an unnatural compendium of all humours, Shadwell passes out of human and natural life and becomes a monster. To emphasize this conception of the unnatural, Dryden even changes the sexual identity of the corpulent poet who experiences labour pains, "Pangs without birth, and fruitless Industry," (l. 148) like Elkanah Settle who "sometimes labours with a thought, but with the pudder he makes to bring it into the world, it is commonly still-

born; so that, for want of learning and elocution, he will never be able to express any thing either naturally or justly." (Malone, II, 277)

Because Flecknoe and Shadwell inhabit an unnatural and monstrous world, they are closely identified with the satanic. At the coronation, Flecknoe sits "High on a Throne of his own Labours rear'd" (l. 107) which resembles the seat of Satan in the opening two lines of Paradise Lost II: "High on a Throne of Royal State, which far/ Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind...."<sup>25</sup> Like the devils in Milton's epic, Shadwell lives in spiritual and mental darkness. He emits "rising Fogs" (l. 24) which obscure the day and he escapes the "Beams of Wit" (l. 21) that occasionally brighten the works of other dull poets. The great corpulence of Shadwell reminds his father of an oak tree that obscures light from smaller plants:

Besides his goodly Fabrick fills the eye,  
And seems design'd for thoughtless Majesty:  
Thoughtless as Monarch Oakes, that shade the plain,  
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.  
(ll. 25-28)

The emphasis on darkness coupled with the supine position of Shadwell faintly recall the serpentine Satan in Paradise Lost. At the coronation, objects of darkness and density surround the new king: "His Brows thick fogs, instead of glories, grace,/ And lambent dullness plaid arround his face." (ll. 110-111) As the priest of the ceremony, Flecknoe adorns his son with the most renowned symbols of dullness:

His Temples last with Poppies were o'erspread,  
 That nodding seem'd to consecrate his head:  
 Just at that point of time, if Fame not lye,  
 On his left hand twelve reverend Owls did fly.  
 (ll. 126-129)

Darkness is as sacred to Flecknoe and Shadwell as light to the Christian, and Shadwell finally becomes as dense as Settle whom Dryden had attacked four years earlier: "In short, he is an animal of a most deplored understanding, without reading and conversation: his being is in a twilight of sense, and some glimmering of thought, which he can never fashion either into wit or English." (Malone, II, 277)

The poem concludes with the indecorous departure of Flecknoe, whom Dryden identifies with satanic figures. The father's last words are barely audible

For Bruce and Longvil had a Trap prepar'd,  
 And down they sent the yet declaiming Bard.  
 Sinking he left his Drugget robe behind,  
 Born upwards by a subterranean wind.  
 The Mantle fell to the young Prophet's part,  
 With double portion of his Father's Art.  
 (ll. 212-217)

Dryden's conclusion imitates the situation in Kings II: 2, 9-14, in which Elijah climbs to heaven in a fiery chariot and leaves a double portion of his spirit to his son, Elisha.<sup>26</sup> As in the Scriptural account, the son receives his father's spirit and mantle in Mac Flecknoe, but the robe rises upward on "a subterranean wind" which presumably ascends from Hell. Flecknoe's demonic kingdom on earth will be preserved by his favourite son after his departure. The

conclusion also recalls the action in Absalom and Achitophel in which a son seeks to replace his father on the throne. Shadwell's own characters, Bruce and Longvil from The Virtuoso (1676) act as agents of their author and send Flecknoe off the stage through a trap door. A cheap theatrical trick, characteristic of Shadwell according to Dryden, brings the satire to an end in which art and life become inseparable. Although Shadwell is the legitimate successor to his father's throne, he takes possession before Flecknoe leaves, an action which recalls the ending of The Medall and of the Hind's tale in which false pretenders to the throne will not tolerate the presence of other illegal monarchs.

The larcenous action of Shadwell recalls the murderous intentions of Settle who is an "upstart illiterate scribbler, who lies more open to censure than any writer of the age, comes amongst the poets, like one of the earth-born brethren; and his first business in the world is to attack and murder all his fellows." (Malone, II, 275) Shadwell's silence and inactivity conceal a potentially vicious nature which becomes manifest in the conclusion. He commands an army of fools that "stand in [his] defence" (l. 155) to fight a perpetual battle against wit and sense. (l. 117) Flecknoe says that his son wields papers "in [his] threshing hand" (l. 52) and adds that Shadwell was "Born for a scourge of Wit, and flayle of Sense." (l. 89) Samuel Holt Monk identifies Shadwell's flail as the "Protestant flail,"

a weapon like a blackjack invented by Stephen College (to whom Dryden alludes in Absalom and Achitophel, l. 643) and used in the dissenting cause from 1678-1681.<sup>27</sup> By employing this weapon in the defence of dulness, Shadwell becomes the chief warrior of the non-conformists against the art and civilization upheld by the court.

Commenting on the object of attack in mock-heroics like Hudibras, Mac Flecknoe and The Dunciad, Martin Price says:

Concerned as these works are with wit in its largest sense--including imagination, maturity, and critical discrimination--they are first of all works of verbal criticism. The mock form begins by attacking a false language. We can see this tendency in all satire; Juvenal's first satire, for example, opposes the language of the heart to the fustian of unthinking epic imitation.<sup>28</sup>

Although Dryden does not appear as a "character" in Mac Flecknoe, we are always aware of the ingenuity of the poet. The ceaseless ironic praise of Shadwell enhances the reputation of the poet at the expense of his satirical target. The poem's concealed purpose is to discredit forever a writer of humours comedy and to win a lasting fame for the poet of wit and grace. Through oratory Dryden dismisses his artistic enemies in Mac Flecknoe as Charles-David does at the end of Absalom and Achitophel. In Absalom and Achitophel II, Dryden speaks of immortalizing Doeg (Settle) and Og (Shadwell):

To make quick way I'll Leap o'er heavy blocks,  
Shun rotten Uzza as I wou'd the Pox;

And hasten Og and Doeg to rehearse,  
 Two Fools that Crutch their Feeble sense on Verse;  
 Who by my Muse, to all succeeding times,  
 Shall live in spight of their own Dogrell Rhimes.  
 (ll. 406-411)

The poet makes the reputation of certain fools imperishable. Corah in Absalom and Achitophel "shalt from Oblivion pass," (l. 632) and Shadwell's character will be remembered in future ages. Shadwell epitomizes not only the dullness of the Restoration stage, but the denseness of writers in every historical era. He is the "last great Prophet" (l.30) who will "wage immortal War with Wit" (l. 12) and whose dominion will have no end. (l. 141) By implication, the writer of the poem will be immortally remembered for his artistry so long as Shadwell lives as a symbol of stupidity.

The year 1685 marked a crisis in Dryden's life: Charles II died on February 6 and James II ascended the British throne. With Charles's death and the final defeat of Monmouth in the summer of the same year, Dryden's connection with the past was ending:

Absalom, David, Achitophel--the main figures in his great poem were now dead. Threads with the past were being broken rapidly; and at fifty-four Dryden faced a period of change and uncertainties far deeper and more subtle than he could at this time hope to foresee.<sup>29</sup>

Dryden's attempts at satire ended and in 1697 he wrote in his Postscript to A Discourse on Epick Poetry that, "since the Revolution, I have wholly renounced that talent. For who would give physick to the great, when he is uncalled?



To do his patient no good, and endanger himself for his prescription?" (Watson, II, 259) Even the Battle of Sedgemoor, which conceivably could have rekindled Dryden's satiric and panegyric bent three years before the Revolution, received only a dozen lines of treatment in The Hind and the Panther. (II, 654-666) Evidence of greater concern with religious than with political matters can be found in Religio Laici (1682) and in 1685 Dryden was preparing himself for conversion to the Catholic Church. His changing interests demanded new topics for poetry and new verse forms in which to express them.

Beginning in 1685, major political figures start to play a diminishing role in Dryden's poems. An elegy on the relatively well-known, but politically insignificant, Anne Killigrew followed the Pindaric ode, Threnodia Augustalis, on the death of Charles II in 1685. Though Dryden writes about public persons like Purcell after 1685, he incorporates only passing or oblique references to powerful heads of state in his major poems. In March of 1689 Shadwell replaced Dryden as Poet laureate,<sup>30</sup> and Dryden was forced to earn his living without government patronage. His essays and letters both before and after the Bloodless Revolution are linked by a concern with retirement from public life. Dryden complains in the Dedication of Aureng-Zebe (1676) that he is weary of disingenuous courtiers and facetious dramas and tells the Earl of Mulgrave "Neither am

I formed to praise a court, who admire and covet nothing but the easiness and quiet of retirement." (Malone, I, ii, 423) "True greatness," he continues, "if it be any where on earth, is in a private virtue, removed from the notion of pomp and vanity, confined to a contemplation of itself, and centering on itself...." (Malone, I, ii, 424) A letter to Etherege, February 16, 1686/87, confesses the poet's reluctance to go to court and indicates some hostility between Dryden and the government:

I am almost lazy enough to get a Stamp for my name like the King of France wch indeed wou'd be to be great in idleness--I have made my Court to the King once in seaven moneths, have seen my Lord Chamberlain full as often....I might probably get something at Court, but my Lord Sunderland I imagine thinks me dead while I am silently wishing him all prosperity for wishes cost me no more than thinking.<sup>31</sup>

Replying to Dryden's letter about a month later, Etherege refuted the poet's self-incriminations of laziness, but he added that "nature no more intended me for a Politician than she did you for a Courtier."<sup>32</sup>

After the Revolution the theme of retirement persists in the essays. Twice in 1690 Dryden extolled the example of the laughing philosopher, Democritus. In language recalling his remarks on private virtue to the Earl of Mulgrave in 1676, Dryden congratulated the Earl of Leicester for his detachment from the insanity of the world:

How much happier is he, (and who he is I need not say, for there is but one phoenix in an age,) who centering on himself, remains immoveable, and smiles at the madness of the dance about him. He possesses the midst, which is the portion of safety and content; he will not be higher, because he needs it not; but by the prudence of that choice, he puts it out of fortune's power to throw him down.

(Malone II, 174-175)

Dryden's comments to Leicester also refer to the poet himself for in the Dedication of Amphitryon he says that the Revolution has not broken his spirits: "The merry philosopher is more to my humour than the melancholick; and I find no disposition in myself to cry, while the mad world is daily supplying me with such occasions of laughter." (Malone, II, 200) Counting his blessings during the ten remaining years of his life, Dryden constantly stressed the value of retirement from public life. In 1691 he approved of Halifax's departure from the government of James II and asked:

What prudent man would not rather follow the example of his retreat, than stay like Cato, with a stubborn unseasonable virtue, to oppose the torrent of the people, and at last be driven from the market-place by a riot of a multitude, incapable of counsel, and deaf to eloquence? There is likewise a portion of our lives, which every wise man may justly reserve to his own peculiar use, and that without defrauding his native country.

(Malone, II, 212)

The Dedication of Virgil's Georgics in 1697 reminds the Earl of Chesterfield of the double nature of courts:

It is necessary for the polishing of manners, to have breathed that air; but it is infectious even to the best morals to live always in it. It is a dangerous commerce, where an

honest man is sure at the first of being cheated; and he recovers not his losses but by learning to cheat others.

(Malone, III, 417)

To Lord Clifford Dryden wrote in 1697 that his translation of Virgil's Pastorals was the "wretched remainder of a sickly age, worn out with study and oppressed by fortune: without other support than the constancy and patience of a Christian." (Watson, II, 217)

Dryden relied on Christian virtue and piety and the aid of private friends to sustain him after the Revolution. The detached and heavily masculine perspective in poems like Absalom and Achitophel, The Medall and Mac Flecknoe yields to a more personal and feminine character in the poetry written after 1684. In the Preface to Walsh's Dialogue Concerning Women (1691), Dryden said

For my own part, who have always been their servant, and have never drawn my pen against them, I had rather see some of them praised extraordinarily, than any of them suffer by detraction: and that in this age, and at this time particularly, wherein I find more heroines than heroes. (Malone, III, 56)

A Discourse on the Original and Progress of Satire (1693)

castigates contemporary lampoonists who celebrate vicious men and attack virtuous women:

When they come in my way, 'tis impossible sometimes to avoid reading them. But, good God, how remote they are, in common justice, from the choice of such persons as are the proper subject of satire! And how little wit they bring, for the support of their injustice! The weaker sex is their most ordinary theme; and the best and fairest are sure to be the most

severely handled. Amongst men, those who are prosperously unjust are entitled to a panegyrick. But afflicted virtue is insolently stabbed with all manner of reproaches."

(Watson, II, 127)

Though Dryden's comments on Walsh's Dialogues may seem like perfunctory remarks written simply for the purpose of introducing a book in which women are praised, they cannot be casually dismissed for no such intention can explain the heated outburst in his essay on satire. Beginning in 1685 women figure as prominent symbols in Dryden's poems. Anne Killigrew and St. Cecilia provided useful vehicles for the discussion of art and the artist's role. Female figures also embody a kind of private and pristine virtue unavailable to men holding prominent political offices. The Hind lives in near seclusion far removed from the centres of power, but she governs the true Church of the faithful. The Sparrow and her children are youthful martyrs killed by a corrupt world that also persecuted St. Cecilia who refused to be an idolator.<sup>33</sup> Anne Killigrew, also a young martyr, must atone for the Fall of poetry, and she governs painting and poetry as Cecilia rules the world of music. Eleonora begins by comparing the Countess of Abingdon's to a monarch's death, and proceeds to show how the lady ruled a private kingdom with her mercy, charity and humility. Dying at the age of thirty-three, Eleonora is yet another youthful martyr who imitates the example of Christ who also died at her age:

But more will wonder at so short an Age;  
 To find a Blank beyond the thirt'th Page;  
 And with a pious fear begin to doubt  
 The Piece imperfect, and the rest torn out.  
 But 'twas her Saviour's time; and, cou'd there be  
 A Copy near th'Original, 'twas she. (ll. 295-300)

These feminine personages in Dryden's poems equal or (usually) surpass the dominion of the world's monarchs. The governments of James, William and even Alexander the Great are feeble compared to the kingdoms established by these frail women, and by implication, Dryden asserts that the artist labouring in private can create a world of dignity independent of the political realm.

Before turning to an examination of the Anne Killigrew and St. Cecilia poems, it is necessary first to give some attention to Dryden's experimentation with the Pindaric verse form. According to G.N. Shuster, Pindar is the "distant begetter of the principal English ode forms."<sup>34</sup> Crashaw seems to have been the first poet to use the Pindaric ode in a significant way, and his friend Cowley first introduced the form into England,<sup>35</sup> but Dryden brought the genre to perfection:

We may conclude, therefore, that Dryden profoundly modified the Pindarick ode. He substituted for the intellectualistic brilliance and the imagistic grotesqueness of Cowley a smooth, serene, but still lively and virile poetic form which was at once closer to nature (in the Anne Killigrew poem) and closer to music (in "Alexander's Feast"). He wrote the first significant ode in the cantata form. And he established a rule based not on slavish imitations of the classical models but upon good taste and sound judgment. It was impossible that an

achievement so notable could be forgotten by practitioners of English verse. In a word, Dryden established the irregular ode as a valuable and interesting genre, not less important than the quatrain or the sonnet.<sup>36</sup>

Before Dryden's achievement, the word "Pindaric" appears to have had a pejorative meaning. In his attack on Shadwell's Psyche, Elkanah Settle says "there's no Man that sees that pretty Pindarick piece call'd Psyche, but would swear Mr. Ninny was Sire to an Author, and Grandfather to an Opera,"<sup>37</sup> and Dryden himself attacked Shaftesbury in The Medall (1682) by telling him that "Thou leapst o'r all eternal truths, in thy Pindarique way!" (l. 94)

The later part of his career witnessed Dryden's intense interest in the Pindaric form and in the metaphysical and baroque ideas and expression of Donne and Cowley. Although Dryden thought that Cowley was a skillful writer of Pindarics, (Preface to the Sylvae, 1685, Watson, II, 32) he also believed that the versification of Donne and Cowley was uncontrolled. Donne, according to Dryden,

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 softness of love. In this...Mr. Cowley has copied him to a fault; so great a one, in my opinion, that it throws his Mistress infinitely below his Pindarics and his latter compositions; which are undoubtedly the best of his poems, and the most correct. (Watson, II, 76)

Though Cowley was the best of the Pindaric poets, "On the other side, without being injurious to the memory of our

English Pindar, I will presume to say, that his metaphors are sometimes too violent, and his language is not always pure." (Malone, III, 538) In 1685 Dryden returned to the metaphysical themes of the Hastings elegy (1649) but he abandoned the cloying images that marred his first published poem.<sup>38</sup> Between 1685 and 1697, Dryden wrote Threnodia Augustalis (1685), To the Pious Memory of...Anne Killigrew (1686), A Song for St. Cecilia's Day (1687), Britannia Rediviva (1688), Eleonora (1692), An Ode, on the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell (1696) and Alexander's Feast (1697), all Pindarics of which three have earned high critical acclaim. There is frequently a reflective theme reminiscent of the metaphysicals in these works. In the Preface to Eleonora, for example, Dryden acknowledges himself as a follower of Donne in writing a poem about a woman he has never seen, (Kinsley, p. 467) and Threnodia Augustalis opens with imagery that recalls Donne and Crashaw:

Thus long my Grief has kept me dumb:  
 Sure there's a Lethargy in mighty Woe,  
 Tears stand congeal'd, and cannot flow;  
 And the sad Soul retires into her inmost Room:  
 Tears, for a Stroke foreseen, afford Relief;  
 But, unprovided for a sudden Blow,  
 Like Niobe we Marble grow;  
 And Petrified with Grief. (ll. 1-8)

Many of these odes express a reflective or meditative mood (four are written on the occasion of a death) and fit the poet's new and growing concern with religious matters.

The Pindaric is almost a poet's poem, calling as it



does for a superb combination of poetic fire and artistic control as Dryden himself told John Dennis:

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 Pinder 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. I remember Poor Nat. Lee, who was then upon the Verge of Madness, yet made a Sober, and a Witty Answer to a Bad Poet, who told him, It was an easie thing to write like a Madman: No, said he, 'tis very difficult to write like a Madman, but 'tis a very easie matter to write like a fool.<sup>39</sup>

Dryden sees the Pindaric as a form to be cultivated, but one which has need of poetic control. The distinction between madness and foolishness which Dryden makes here in his comment from Nathaniel Lee shows that the Restoration poet recognized the close alliance between madness, inspiration and poetry--an alliance which ultimately links the Pindaric ode with enthusiasm.

One of the great difficulties for both writers and critics of odes is that they are closely related to music.<sup>40</sup> Dryden's St. Cecilia Day odes were written for musical performance and his Preface to the Sylvae acknowledges the musical quality of Pindaric verse:

But the ear must preside, and direct the judgment to the choice of numbers: without the nicety of this, the harmony of Pindaric verse can never be complete; the cadency of one line must be a rule to that of the next; and the

sound of the former must slide gently into that which follows, without leaping from one extreme into another. (Watson, II, 32-33)

Although Dryden thought few decent Pindarics were being written, he added that "A musical ear, and a great genius, if another Mr. Cowley could arise, in another age may bring it to perfection," (Malone, II, 33) a task which Dryden himself accomplished.

To the Renaissance and Restoration, music was almost synonymous with artistic enthusiasm. Musical commentators were more impressed by the power of music upon the passions than by abstract treatises on the "mechanics of instruments." The affect of music on the passions was considered especially potent when combined with poetry. Renaissance thinkers were convinced

that neither poetry nor music alone could accomplish the effects achieved by the two in proper combination. In this respect, they took their lead from the Neoplatonism of Ficino, where the combination of poetry and music is identified with the furor poëticus, the first of those intuitive or "enthusiastic" stages in which the human soul, after its thorough discipline in all the separate arts, begins its ascent back to the original One.<sup>41</sup>

According to Thomas Ravenscroft's A Briefe Discourse (1614), "Enthusiasme or ravishing of the Spirit"<sup>42</sup> is one of the major causes of music, and Thomas Mace's Musick's Monument (1676) waxes ecstatic about the affective powers of music, which attained even greater force when given verbal accompaniment.<sup>43</sup>

Jean H. Hagstrum emphasizes the connection between Pindarics and enthusiasm in Dryden's era:

The great ode was, during the Restoration and the entire course of English neoclassicism, always considered the vehicle for freedoms not encouraged in other genres, where the rule of decorum was more austere and regulative. Usually the noble rage of this poetic form has been thought to reside principally in its irregular numbers, its declamatory fervor, its exalted religiosity.<sup>44</sup>

Dryden, like other critics of his century, concurs that the Pindaric allows the artist to voice a positive artistic enthusiasm. At the opening of his Preface to his translations of Pindar, Cowley explains that he had to take great liberties with the Greek Poet because

If a Man should undertake to translate Pindar Word for Word, it would be thought that one Mad-man had translated another; as may appear, when he that understands not the Original, reads the verbal Traduction of him into Latin Prose, than which nothing seems more Raving.<sup>45</sup>

One of Cowley's recent critics has written that Pindar

offered Cowley significant opportunities to formulate and comment upon his poetics. Cowley's audience was undoubtedly excited by the wit and ingenuity of a poet who could sustain such productions and constantly convey that "furor poeticus," soaring on the wings of inspiration oblivious of traditional patterns and depending only upon his individual talent. Cowley and his concept of creation in a frenzy endeared him to his own time; ironically, one thinks of him as a poet whose enduring temper was that of the Horatian Bee rather than the Theban Swan.<sup>46</sup>

So Cowley, too, like Dryden, linked Pindar and his seemingly mad ravings with enthusiasm and poetic inspiration. John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave and one of Dryden's patrons,

said of odes in An Essay Upon Poetry (1682):

A higher flight, and of a happier force,  
Are Odes, the Muses most unruly Horse,  
That bounds so fierce the Rider has no rest,  
But foams at mouth, and speaks like one possest  
The Poet here must be indeed Inspired,  
And not with fancy, but with fury fired.<sup>47</sup>

In the Preface to Dryden's own Eleonora the poet says "I think I need not mention the inimitable Pindar, who stretches on these Pinnions out of sight, and is carried upward, as it were, into another World." (Kinsley, p. 467) In the Preface to Ovid's Epistles, Dryden justifies Cowley's method of translating Pindar:

Pindar is generally known to be a dark writer, to want connection (I mean as to our understanding), to soar out of sight, and leave his reader at a gaze. So wild and ungovernable a poet cannot be translated literally, his genius is too strong to bear a chain, and Sampson-like he shakes it off. (Watson, I, 271)

John Dennis's The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry (1704) reiterates the Restoration demand for enthusiastic expression in the ode when the author says

the excellence of the Greater Ode must consist in extraordinary Passion, which can be nothing but strong Enthusiasm; but Religion is the greatest, noblest, strongest source of Enthusiasm as we very clearly shew; so that the Modern Ode, by forsaking Religion, and becoming for the most part prophane, has parted with that from which it deriv'd its greatest excellence.<sup>48</sup>

Degeneration of the ode followed from attempts to use the Pindaric for satiric and eulogistic purposes, but Dryden maintained in his Pindarics the religious impulse of

the Greek lyricist who intended his odes for the expression of spiritual sentiments.<sup>49</sup>

The Anne Killigrew poem was Dryden's second effort at a Pindaric elegy and Ruth Wallerstein claims that Dryden sought to perfect the Pindaric genre in this poem by giving his verse a structure that Cowley had been unable to impose upon his material. Furthermore, Dryden skillfully combined the conventions of the Greek and Latin elegies with the reflective tone of Donne's "Anniversaries" and the theological elegies<sup>50</sup> to create a work in which Arthur W. Hoffman finds the consummate fusion of Classical and Christian themes: "In Dryden's ode...there is no suggestion of the displacement of the classical informing spirit by the Christian spirit, but rather a suggestion that the two are supplementary or in fact the same, cherishing the same ideals, seeking the same ends."<sup>51</sup>

Critics of Dryden's poem have been sensitive to the exalted spirit of the ode's speaker. Samuel Johnson, while opposing the unevenness of the poem, speaks admiringly of the artistic energy that infuses the verse:

On the death of Mrs. Killigrew, is undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language has ever produced. The first part flows with a torrent of enthusiasm. Fervet immensusque ruit. All the stanzas indeed are not equal. An imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond; the gems must be held together by some less valuable matter.<sup>52</sup>

E.M.W. Tillyard regarded the Anne Killigrew ode as a major

challenge to Arnold's contention that Augustan poets were merely prose writers in disguise: "Here, if anywhere, Arnold's attribution of the prosaic to Augustan verse is refuted, while the raptures into which his contemporaries fell over one kind of musical verse are perfectly appropriate to the excellence if not to the kind of Dryden's,"<sup>53</sup> Elsewhere, Tillyard speaks of the sustained "tone of solemn rapture," "the controlled yet enthusiastic movement" of the piece and of the heroic inflation of Anne which reminds Tillyard of the exaggerated character of the almost supernatural figures in Dryden's other poems and plays.<sup>54</sup>

Anne Killigrew is nearly a perfect subject for an ode. Dead at a young age, she inevitably initiates a consideration of the purpose of a Christian's life on earth. A rather obscure figure in seventeenth-century England, her death brings the thought of mortality close to ordinary men for whom Charles II's departure raises speculations about the future of the national state and not about one's own personal destiny. Because she was both a poet and painter, Dryden can unobtrusively evaluate the purpose of art and the poet's own mission in his elegy. Furthermore, Anne Killigrew's characteristic impatience makes her a rather enthusiastic figure who tests the limits that most persons leave untried.

At the beginning of the poem, the speaker must rather comically restrain Anne Killigrew so that she will

listen to the verse the poet has written for her:

Cease thy Celestial Song a little space;  
 (Thou wilt have Time enough for Hymns Divine,  
 Since Heav'ns Eternal Year is thine.)  
 (ll. 13-15)

Not contented to master only the art of poetry, Anne also tried her hand at painting like all "young ambitious Souls" (l. 91) eagerly testing their own mettle. As a young artist who attempted to surpass the merely prosaic and dull, Anne fulfills Dryden's conception that a poet ought never to be satisfied with the mechanical production of correct but wholly uninspiring works and he establishes a sympathetic artistic bond between himself and his young subject. At a turning point in his own artistic career, Dryden will now strike out in a fresh direction like the young Anne who endeavoured to be an accomplished artist in two fields. Although Dryden will contain himself within the bounds of poetry, his Pindaric ode will capture some of the fire associated with the young poetess:

Hear then a Mortal Muse thy Praise rehearse,  
 In no ignoble Verse;  
 But such as thy own Voice did practise here,  
 When thy first Fruits of Poesie were giv'n.  
 (ll. 16-19)

Anne Killigrew's youthful spirit and poetical attempts inspire the middle-aged artist:

Dryden's piece is not a generalised encomium; obviously he had read her verses; and his analysis of her art is firmly based. Our understanding of this famous poem, then, depends to some degree on our knowledge of Anne Killigrew's output. Her verses deserve attention on their

merits--Dryden may well be thought more gallant than scrupulous, but undeniably the poems have an appealing wit, a picturesque imagination and a touching personal candour.<sup>55</sup>

A.D. Hope has pointed out that Dryden occasionally interrupts the Pindaric versification with octosyllabic couplets in imitation of Anne's own poems,<sup>56</sup> and Dryden's statement that he will write "In no ignoble Verse" compliments Anne Killigrew on her own work and announces the poet's intention to write a poem that will gain lasting praise. Dryden can make a saint and poet attend to the efforts of a mere mortal who will create a song that displays the inspiration of heaven.

Initial problems arise with the poem's central figure because we know that she was not a great poet. David M. Vieth writes that

the picture of Anne is lightly etched with an irony which implicitly concedes that she may not have been an apotheosized being, after all, but only an ordinary, though attractive, girl. This irony is almost automatically latent in the mode of hyperbole which pervades the poem, but it is also reinforced at crucial points by ambiguities in phrasing, imagery, and tone which must have been deliberate on Dryden's part.<sup>57</sup>

Vieth allows that the irony "remains always secondary to the ritual celebration of Anne's personal and artistic merits"<sup>58</sup> which are highly praised. Richard Morton's introduction to a volume of her poems contains a balanced account of Anne Killigrew's artistry which was neither exceptional nor totally without merit: "Anne Killigrew lacked the artistry



which comes from discipline and practice...but she felt that the prompting of passion outweighed the niceties of form."<sup>59</sup>

We must remember, of course, that Anne Killigrew was a young poet whose twenty-five years of life were too short to allow her poetic abilities to come to fruition, and that her very obscurity makes her a suitable subject for a poem in which the purpose of poetry itself receives serious treatment:

It seems to me psychologically understandable and just that the death of even so very minor a poet as Anne Killigrew should have urged upon Dryden questions such as these. It is easier to come to terms with them at the death of such a person than at the death of a Milton. His death is both too much of a loss and, because of the achievements of a lifetime, too great in implication to allow us free speculation into such matters. The death of any artist of such greatness does not lead us to concern ourselves with the nature of his genius. Anne Killigrew was more useful in being not only the daughter of a friend but also a suitable vehicle for larger subjects.<sup>60</sup>

The spirit of poetry, as A.D. Hope observes, is the same for great and minor poets and so an unaccomplished artist serves Dryden's purpose as well or better than an artistic genius,<sup>61</sup> and, to some extent, Anne Killigrew and Dryden are complementary figures in this ode which combines the enthusiasm of the young poet with the discipline and experience of the older artist.

Dryden's poem tells us that without a true and supernatural inspiration, no person can create works of

enduring worth. As the "Youngest Virgin-Daughter of the Skies," (l. 1) Anne Killigrew is a type of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Dryden constantly associates her with youth, innocence and purity. "Thou has no Dross to purge from thy Rich Ore," (l. 35) the speaker tells his subject whose "Aretusian Stream remains unsoil'd,/ Unmixt with Forreign Filth, and undefil'd." (ll. 68-69) As Arthur Hoffman suggests, Anne is also a type of Christ atoning for man's profanation of the heavenly gift of poetry.<sup>62</sup> Because Heaven does inspire poems, poets ought to utter some recognition of the sources of their gifts in their verses:

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?  
 O 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?  
 What can we say t'excuse our Second Fall.  
 Let this they Vestal, Heav'n, attone for all.  
 (ll. 56-67)

A young virgin-martyr, Anne Killigrew dies in the cause of poetry to restore true artistry to the world. She is the antithesis of London Saints like Settle and Shadwell who justify their works by a plea to a false inspiration. As Mother Mary Eleanor argues, Anne cleanses the world of "fat Pollutions" and "steaming Ordures" that Shadwell has made.<sup>63</sup> Dryden, nevertheless, includes himself in the general condemnation of bad poets for in the lines above he employs the

pronoun "we" four times and the possessive adjective "our", twice. Although he singles out the theatre for special consideration, the passage suggests that all verse, including the dramatic, has fallen into decay. Anne Killigrew expiates John Dryden's sins as well as Thomas Shadwell's and the passage announces Dryden's intention to abandon the writing of frivolous productions and to devote himself to serious works. His ode celebrates the virtues of the young poet-martyr, and begs forgiveness for his own dissolute wasting of his gifts, and according to Earl Miner, Dryden's ode must be seriously considered as a prelude to his later verse that is concerned with religious matters:

this is the last poem he wrote before his other great statement of faith, The Hind and the Panther. It is worth reading the Ode as a preparatory affirmation for the religious poem, since in both he moves from the natural, the worldly, the imperfect in which art is perforce involved and in which it must even rejoice, to the transcendent supernatural realm into which (ordered) imagination in the Ode and (rational) faith can take us.<sup>64</sup>

Arthur W. Hoffman argues that there is a tight connection between heaven and earth in the poem, and that Dryden never allows one locale to completely obliterate the other. The circular progression of the poem tightens this relationship between heaven and earth:

There is a cycle in the positions of the imagery, from a postmortal heavenly existence to a pre-mortal heavenly existence, to incarnation in a succession of earthly poets down the ages of history, to incarnation in Anne, the life of Anne, the death of Anne, and then finally, come full

circle, back to the post mortal heavenly state; the cycle involves the progress of a soul, not an individual soul but a great and continuing soul.<sup>65</sup>

The cyclical movement suggests that all men must obey a fate which prevents any radical progress. Anne's circular journey typifies the pilgrimage of all mortals; in this poets are unexceptional. But Anne seems unaware of the conventional nature of her progress. Because of her eagerness and impatience, she has never discovered the orderliness that guides her own life as a mortal and a poet, and Dryden educates her in these matters. Poets obey the same heavenly harmony as other beings in the universe, and, indeed, their progress may be more rigidly guided because so few of them are born.

In the first stanza, the speaker implores the attention of the new saint and speculates on her location in the supernatural world:

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 Superiour Bliss,  
Thou tread'st, with Seraphims, the vast Abyss:  
What ever happy Region is thy place,  
Cease thy Celestial Song a little space.

(11. 6-13)

The poet allows Anne's soul only three possibilities in the  
etherial world: she may be attached to a star rolling  
around the universe; she may be moving with a fixed star;  
or, she may have joined the Seraphims and be very close

to the Almighty. Whichever position Anne has assumed, her role in the afterlife is stable--she cannot arbitrarily abandon one site for another. Even wandering stars observe a constant if erratic movement, and the other two situations regulate her activities. The procession is "fixt and Regular" and the Seraphs attend forever in the service of God, closest to His throne. The passage itself observes the kind of regularity that Dryden continues in his ode and that he believes necessary for great poetry. Each of the latter two stations in the afterlife are superior to the first, and the frequent employment of commas creates caesuras which slow down the pace of the verse to a solemn and majestic tempo which fits the orderliness of the heavenly bliss.

Although Anne Killigrew's gifts may seem inexplicable, Dryden suggests a determinism in her decision to become a poet. Her father conveyed his talents into her blood at birth:

If by Traduction came thy Mind,  
 Our Wonder is the less to find  
 A Soul so charming from a Stock so good;  
 Thy Father was transfus'd into thy Blood:  
 So wert thou born into the tuneful strain,  
 (An early, rich, and inexhausted Vain.)  
(ll. 23-28)

Inheritance accounts for the poetic gift, which one acquires at birth or not at all, and the meeting of the soul with other great poets before birth strengthens the likelihood that an artist will be born:

But if thy Præexisting Soul

Was form'd, at first, with Myriads more,  
 It did through all the Mighty Poets roul,  
 Who Greek or Latine Laurels wore,  
 And was that Sappho last, which once it was before.  
 (ll. 29-33)

Even before birth, then, Anne's soul had had converse with the spirit of artists from the beginning of Western tradition, and only this rich acquaintance explains why she became a poet. In both accounts of her privileged inheritance, human and divine powers are essential to produce an artist. The pre-existing soul must be born in a human and imperfect world to exhibit its artistic gifts, and spirit and body are corollaries for the spirit and form that an artist must join in his poems. Perhaps Anne's greatest fault is an exaggerated sense of the spiritual. The heavenly saint's attention must be sought by the earth-bound artist who teaches her that even on earth man can mould something approaching the divine and who reminds her that there is an orderly movement encompassing both the etherial and the mundane in her own fortunes. Inspiration and artistic enthusiasm must be given shape, presumably the tightness of composition that Anne's poems lacked and that Dryden's observes.

The third stanza of the poem joins the immortal and the mundane. As the science of the heavens, astrology, shows man, there is a divine guidance and destiny that awaits a newly born child:

For sure the Milder Planets did combine  
 On thy Auspicious Horoscope to shine,  
 And ev'n the most Malicious were in Trine.  
 (ll. 41-43)

At Anne Killigrew's birth the whole cosmos joined in a celebration of the conception of a poet. Fate destined her for poetry and "New Joy was sprung in Heav'n, as well as here on Earth." (l. 40) Angels announced the birth of Anne in Heaven, and man could hear the music of the spheres because of their joyful singing:

Thy Brother-Angels at thy Birth  
 Strung each his Lyre, and tun'd it high,  
 That all the People of the Skie  
 Might know a Poetess was born on Earth.  
 And then if ever, Mortal Ears  
 Had heard the Musick of the Spheres!  
 (ll. 44-49)

The proper task of all poets is to unite the universe as the angels do who play upon their heavenly lyres. The mortal poet, Dryden says, can share the divine joy of heaven's beings if his gifts are not abused. Like Anne Killigrew whose "Wit was more than Man," (l. 70) Dryden and other poets have inspirational powers that enable them and their audiences to transcend earthly limitations.

Anne's entire destiny is governed by inevitable fate and duty: even on earth she was "a young Probationer,/ And Candidate of Heav'n" (ll. 21-22) whose early death was ordered by "Fate." (l. 148) Regardless of her place in the heavens now, at the end of time she will lead the poets from their graves:

The Sacred Poets first shall hear the Sound,  
 And formost from the Tomb shall bound:  
 For they are cover'd with the lightest Ground  
 And streight, with in-born Vigour, on the wing,  
 Like mounting Larkes to the New Morning sing.

There Thou, Sweet Saint, before the Quire shalt go,  
 As Harbinger of Heav'n, the Way to show,  
 The Way which thou so well has learn'd below.  
 (ll. 188-195)

Poets who inspired Anne's soul before her birth shall be led to heaven by their young student when the world ends. "Sacred Poets" refers to both the Christian writer, Anne Killigrew, and to the Latin and Greek artists who instructed her before birth. The conclusion unifies the poem by continuing the thematic tension between earthly and heavenly existence, by referring back to the opening speculation about Anne's current position and to the influence of the Greek and Latin poets, and also by joining the long line of Classical and Christian poets into a harmonious identity.

Earl Miner contends that Dryden's Anne Killigrew Ode affirms his own faith in his role as an artist,<sup>66</sup> and as we can see in the conclusion of the poem, Dryden thought that poets could attain a separate and dignified independence from current monarchs. Dryden portrays four, and perhaps five, kings in his poem: Anne governs the empires of poetry and painting (Stanza VI) just as James and Queen Mary rule the British realm. (Stanza VII) Contained within the description of Anne's rule in Stanza VI are allusions to the French monarch, Louis XIV,<sup>67</sup> and the "last Assizes" (l. 182) "which yokes together the last judgment and the sitting of a British court,"<sup>68</sup> making God Himself into a universal monarch. Tillyard says of the monarchical imagery



that "It is hard to feel warmly about the political metaphor in stanza six: the idea that through the descriptive passages in her poetry she had staked out claims in the adjacent province of painting, as an ambitious ruler forms seditious groups in the country he means to invade."<sup>69</sup> Although the imagery seems forced and rather unnatural to Professor Tillyard, I believe that it performs the important function of declaring Dryden's own liberty from the whims of contemporary monarchs.

Dryden applies some rather harsh criticisms to Anne Killigrew in stanza VI. As a marauding monarch of the arts, she shares the insatiable desire of Louis XIV. Both are conquerors who "will never want Pretence,/ When arm'd to justify the Offence," (ll. 96-97) and Dryden supposes that this untempered and bellicose behaviour caused her early death: "To such Immod'rate Growth her Conquest rose,/ That Fate alone its Progress could oppose." (ll. 147-148) Anne's inordinate ambition leads to her untimely fall:

Born to the Spacious Empire of the Nine,  
One would have thought, she should have been content  
To manage well that Mighty Government.  
(ll. 88-90)

By attempting an art not protected by the muses, Anne rashly deserted the security of her defenders. The easy conquest of painting, prepared for by the invasion of other poets, (ll. 98-105) ends in tragedy. Nevertheless, Anne's youth excuses most of her indiscretion and relieves her of most

responsibility.

The seventh stanza describes Anne's portraiture of James and Mary, and more importantly, it establishes a strong relationship between the painter and her regal subjects:

The Scene then chang'd, with bold Erected Look  
Our Martial King the sight with Reverence strook:  
For not content t'express his Outward Part,  
Her hand call'd out the Image of his Heart,  
His Warlike Mind, his Soul devoid of Fear,  
His High-designing Thoughts, were figur'd there,  
As when, by Magick, Ghosts are made appear.

Our Phenix Queen was portrai'd too so bright,  
Beauty alone could Beauty take so right:  
Her Dress, her Shape, her matchless Grace,  
Were all observ'd, as well as heav'nly Face.  
With such a Peerless Majesty she stands,  
As in that Day she took the Crown from Sacred hands:  
Before a Train of Heroins was seen,  
In Beauty foremost, as in Rank, the Queen!

(ll. 127-141)

Arthur W. Hoffman says that "The fact that her portraits represent monarchs not merely in their outward appearance but in their inward essence as well suggests a bond of sympathy between herself and them, a bond which the imagery has already asserted by making Anne herself a monarch."<sup>70</sup> The Queen's character is simpler but more attractive than her husband's and it shares the heavenly qualities of Anne Killigrew. Queen Mary is a phoenix and in the same stanza, Dryden speaks of the blazing heat of Anne's soul and talents:

Thus nothing to her Genius was deny'd,  
But like a Ball of Fire the further thrown,  
Still with a greater Blaze she shone,  
And her bright Soul broke out on ev'ry side.

(ll. 142-145)

Like the Queen herself, for whom Anne Killigrew was a maid of honour, the young poetess is a phoenix who arises above her earthly form to become immortal.

Dryden associates James II with the pejorative qualities that he holds in common with Louis XIV and with Anne Killigrew--unfavourable attributes that are found in Dryden's other poems. He is "Warlike" and has "High-designing Thoughts" stamped on his heart. Because these desires must be wrested from the king's interior being, Dryden suggests that James II is a rather suspicious and secretive monarch, that only a fellow-conqueror can really understand. Threnodia Augustalis, published in the same year, calls James "Hercules," (l. 35) and "A Warlike Prince," (l. 429) and Britannia Rediviva explicitly condemns those characteristics of James II ascribed to him in the Killigrew Ode:

Some Kings the name of Conq'rours have assum'd,  
Some to be Great, some to be Gods presum'd;  
But boundless pow'r, and arbitrary Lust  
Made Tyrants still abhor the Name of Just;  
They shun'd the praise this Godlike Virtue gives,  
And fear'd a Title, that reproach'd their Lives.  
(ll. 339-344)

Anne Killigrew and her canvasses mirror the characters of James and Mary. Outwardly she is as beautiful as Mary, but in her soul she harbours the ambition of the king. In fact, the paintings concentrate upon James's interior ("the Image of his Heart," l. 130) and the Queen's exterior ("Her Dress, her Shape, her matchless Grace," l. 136).

A young girl may be forgiven a youthful enthusiasm, but the same cannot be said for the adult king whose ambitions may soon be contracted by "Fate". (l. 148) Furthermore, however questionable Anne's enthusiastic pursuits may be, she attains a noble dignity unshared by the furtive monarch. In Dryden's vision of the Last Judgment, the modest and great poets will be the first to leave their graves but nothing is said about the current British king whose present dominion seems evanescent and demeaning.

We should look briefly at the background of the St. Cecilia festival before discussing Dryden's Cecilia day odes. Celebrations of St. Cecilia's Day (November 22) occurred in Louvain in 1502 when the city's musical society made Cecilia patron of its festival. A later celebration started in Normandy in 1570, and in England "The Musical Society" began to observe the saint's feast day in 1683.<sup>71</sup> In England one ode was commissioned for each festival, a custom which continued almost yearly from 1683 to about 1736.<sup>72</sup> Many of these poems were of execrable quality and the festival in 1685 was so bad that no celebrations were held in the following year. Probably because of the Revolution, festivities were suspended in 1688 and 1689 and no odes survive from 1694, 1695 and 1696, and except for Philip Hart's composition in 1703, only Handel's rendition of Alexander's Feast in 1736 remains extant.<sup>73</sup> Only Dryden's two odes, especially his later one, are distinguished works,

and the festival appears to have died for lack of good material.

A.W. Verrall says that "in the case of an ode a performance is conceivable:"<sup>74</sup> because odes are concerned with matters of public importance and because they are closely related to music, public presentation is to be expected. On November 22, a congregation gathered at St. Bride's Church where an anthem and a sermon defending church music were heard.<sup>75</sup> We must remember that the performance of the music accompanying the poem is an integral part of the Cecilia day Odes.<sup>76</sup> Though given public performance, these poems, nevertheless, are not public in the way that Absalom and Achitophel is. General political comment does find its way into Dryden's odes, but neither of his St. Cecilia Day poems deals with radically contemporary political events. They are not panegyrics on kings nor satires but encomiums on art and affirmations of the poet's own value.

Odd as it may seem, Dryden's Song for St. Cecilia's Day (1687) is the first festival poem to deal with the titular saint and with Christian themes. In the three previous poems written by Christopher Fishburn, John Oldham and Nahum Tate, pastoral and pagan themes dominated.<sup>77</sup> Dryden's poem, then, wrought a small revolution in technical and thematic matters. Although Johnson thought Alexander's Feast superior, he allowed that in this first ode

"there are passages which would have dignified any other poet."<sup>78</sup> Perhaps the most distinguished feature of the poem is the simultaneous emphasis on order and inspiration.

Dryden's ode opens with the assertion that the universe began with inspired musical harmony: "From Harmony, from heav'nly Harmony/ This universal Frame began." (ll. 1-2) Music (and by implication, poetry) is analogous to the Word in St. John's Gospel that brought the world into being. Although enthusiastic, this primary musical expression breathed order and form into its creation: the "Frame" gives shape to formless matter as pillars support a building. The "jarring Atoms" (l. 4) that lay in chaos "In order to their stations leap," (l. 9) emphasizing the creative and methodical power of music. In assuming their shapes, the "cold, and hot, and moist, and dry" (l. 8) elements form increasingly more complicated arrangements as they ascend the Chain of Being: "Through all the compass of the Notes it ran,/ The Diapason closing full in Man." (ll. 14-15) The "Diapason" is the basic unit of harmony<sup>79</sup> which implies that man is the epitome of musical creation.

Because music orders the four elements of the universe, it also controls the sentiments of its greatest creation, man. "What Passion cannot MUSICK raise and quell!" (l. 24) the speaker exclaims, and stanzas three to five describe music's dominion over man's feelings. Trumpets and drums evoke martial sentiments (stanza III) while the

flute and the lute intensify the sorrow of despondent lovers. (stanza IV) Violins (stanza V) echo the frustration and anger of a spurned lover rejected by "the fair, disdainful Dame" (l. 41) whose brief designation recalls the haughty ladies of Elizabethan sonnets. Stanzas three to five deal with the themes of love and war found in the heroic drama: as presented by Dryden in the Ode, warfare and profane love are unattractive and destructive. A "loud Clangor" (l. 25) and a "double double double beat" (l. 29) awaken the primitive and discordant passions in their listeners while the flute nearly forces the "hopeless lovers" to suicide. (l. 35) The "warbling LUTE" (l. 36) commemorates the death of the lovers and, ironically, Flecknoe also played a "warbling Lute." (l. 35) The violins that delineate "Depth of Pains, and height of Passion" (l. 40) fail to inspire man to anything else but a frantic and vain display of fury. These three stanzas describe an illegitimate usage of musical arts that appeal only to the baser instincts of man, and since they form the centre of the poem, they accentuate the spiritual power of music described in the first twenty-four and the last twenty-two lines of the poem.<sup>80</sup>

Dryden's short poem observes an historical chronology which begins with the creation of the world (stanza I) and continues with an evaluation of the first musician. (stanza II) Genesis 4: 21 says that Jubal "was the father

of all such as handle the harp and organ," but Dryden gives the patriarch of musicians a "corded Shell" (l. 17) which emphasizes the "primitive crudeness" of his art.<sup>81</sup> The response of his Hebrew listeners is almost mystical and pagan: although the music awakens spiritual feeling in Jubal's audience, they worship not the Deity but "that Celestial Sound" (l. 20) supposing that a god must live within Jubal's shell. Because of the Fall, man can no longer hear the "music of the spheres," the "heav'nly Harmony" that first ordered the universe. Dryden's account of Jubal's accomplishments contradicts Jeremy Collier's assessment of antediluvian art:

The Antiquity of Musick reaches beyond the Flood: Jubal, Noah's brother, is said to be the Father, or the first Teacher, of those who handled the Harp, and the Organ. And how far a Genius which lay that way might improve his Invention, in Seven or Eight hundred years of Life and Vigour, is not easy to imagine.<sup>82</sup>

Dryden reverses Collier's conservative evaluation of the arts, and makes Jubal little more than an inspired but unaccomplished musician who attained roughly the same stature as Anne Killigrew who failed to give form to her enthusiasm.

The Thracian musician, Orpheus, fares little better in Dryden's poem than Jubal. Thomas Fletcher's Ode on the Feast of St. Cecilia, 1686 contains sixteen lines of celebration of Orpheus, but Dryden reduces his role to just three lines. (ll. 48-50)<sup>83</sup> In slighting Orpheus, Dryden refuses to indulge in the adulation of the poet that had



persisted from the Classical period through the seventeenth century:

The art of Orpheus and his instrument, that object of the hatred of his frenzied destroyers, were always taken, in an unbroken tradition from Classic times on, as representations of eloquence. This figurative notion of eloquence, effective utterance in the abstract, always clung to allusions to and moralizations about the Thracian hero. Through him something approaching the intermediate sense...of the Greek mousike was retained long after the cultural practices supporting such a sense had so changed as to limit its meaning.<sup>84</sup>

George Sandys's commentary on Ovid's Metamorphoses says that "Orpheus begins his song...with the praises and omnipotency of Jupiter: it being the true and originall use of Poetry, to sing the praises of the Highest, and to inflame the mind with zeale and devotion."<sup>85</sup> Dryden's Song includes the legend that Orpheus tamed his primitive countrymen and that his music uprooted trees from the ground, but nothing is said about his ability to make men worship the gods. Allotted only one-third as many lines as Jubal, and placed within a section describing the achievements of St. Cecilia, Orpheus's role in this history of music is minuscule indeed.<sup>86</sup>

Dryden's history of musical accomplishment slights the efforts of all musicians before St. Cecilia. The Classical and Hebraic achievements must yield to the consummate ability of the Christian artist. Because of technical advancement, modern artists surpass the powers of the ancients. The organ, a "sacred" (l. 44) instrument,

inspires "holy Love" (l. 45) and not the primitive idolatry of Jubal's shell, nor the futile outbursts inflamed by trumpets and lutes. As an inspired musician playing an inspired instrument, Cecilia lends her "vocal Breath" (l. 52) to the organ. The "vocal Breath," according to James E. Phillips,

may refer, as some commentators on the ode point out, to the wind pumped into the organ's pipes. But Dryden's reference to the elevating power of this "vocal breath" rather suggests to me the "effect" of the union of poetry and music which seventeenth-century theorists regularly referred to in their praise of vocal music.<sup>87</sup>

Dryden, as the writer of the Cecilian Ode shares the inspiration of the patroness of music and renounces the profane themes of other writers and composers for the expression of sacred feelings.

One of the definitions of the verb "spire" is "To breathe forth or out, to create or produce by the agency of the breath." (OED) Cecilia's breath is inspired because it creates sacred music that stirs the soul to worship and it contrasts with the windy outbursts of London enthusiasts who bring men close to Satan. A seventeenth-century controversy between Puritans and Anglicans surrounded the use of the organ. Elizabethan Calvinists opposed all forms of church music except for psalms,<sup>88</sup> and during the Commonwealth period organ playing and choir singing ended in British churches.<sup>89</sup> When the Solemn League and Covenant of the Scots was signed in 1644, an act of Parliament

"declared that church organs were amongst the 'superstitious monuments' that should be removed."<sup>90</sup> Hollander says that "By far the most vigorous attack on music in church was devoted to instrumental performance, the organ bearing the brunt of the attack,"<sup>91</sup> but Percy A. Scholes claims that after some zealous destruction of organs early in the Commonwealth, the instrument was more neglected in churches than vandalized.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, the old hatred of church organs seems to have persisted for the chapter book describing the behaviour of Monmouth's soldiers on July 1, 1685 says that

The civil war still grows. This cathedral church has suffered grievously from the rebel fanatics, who have this very morning laid hands upon the furniture thereof, have almost utterly destroyed the organ, and turned the sacred building into a stable for horses.<sup>93</sup>

The St. Cecilia's Day festival, complete with a chorus, orchestra and sermons defending inspirational music in churches, rebuked the Puritan stance that contemporary church music continued the superstitious legacy of Popery.

Dryden incorporates the legend that St. Cecilia's organ playing drew an angel to earth into his ode: "An Angel heard, and straight appear'd/ Mistaking Earth for Heaven." (ll. 53-54) As in the Killigrew Ode, the artist who applies his gifts to proper themes can connect the temporal and eternal realms. Cecilia governs the world of art, as did Anne Killigrew, and in Threnodia Augustalis

King Charles II achieves near sainthood for his patronage  
of the arts:

Live then thou great Encourager of Arts,  
Live ever in our Thankful Hearts;  
Live blest Above, almost invok'd Below;  
Live and receive this Pious Vow,  
Our Patron once, our Guardian Angel now.  
(ll. 383-387)

With the death of the last great patron of art, Dryden turns to more private personages for examples of true monarchy. Cecilia, Charles and Anne Killigrew are innately inspired individuals who bring man close to eternal life on earth through their positive enthusiasm. No art (stanza VI) can teach organ playing because one must be directly inspired in order to bring angels from the heavens. On the other hand, a frenzied Flecknoe and a dull Shadwell can keep man emotionally shackled with their warbling lutes, and a king like James II can arouse the bestial instincts of his subjects with his trumpets and drums.

The concluding five lines of the Song strike a pensive note, reminding man of his mortality. The poem, which begins with the creation and sketches the history of man in the Hebrew, Classical and Christian eras, terminates with an apocalyptic vision. Paradoxically, music which set the world in motion now "untunes" the very world it created. Ceaseless progress, as Earl Miner observes, cannot obtain in the fallen world: the trumpet of doom renders useless all of the human instruments that man has created.<sup>95</sup> Cecilia and Christian art represent the ultimate achievements of man

on earth. "This crumbling pageant," (l. 60) as Mark Van Doren shrewdly notes, refers not only to the world itself but to the "painted scenery crashing down on a darkened stage"<sup>96</sup> at the festival itself. Dryden voices the "divinely ordained limitation of that very event which he was supposed to celebrate."<sup>97</sup> "This crumbling Pageant," like "This universal Frame," (l. 2) displays the order of its creators but it also approaches its destruction with each passing hour. Human limitations prevent us from discovering anything more than intimations of immortality--intimations made possible by an enthusiastically inspired artist. A fallen world precludes perfection and Dryden's introduction of a somber note in this poem of celebration is typical of his poetry after 1684. Threnodia Augustalis, the Anne Killigrew Ode and Eleonora are all Pindarics written to commemorate a death. The Killigrew Ode, like A Song for St. Cecilia's Day, ends with a version of the Last Judgment just as The Hind and the Panther concludes with threatening omens for the Hind's children and their mother's "glorious Visions of her future state." (III, 1298)

Alexander's Feast (1697) surpasses Dryden's 1687 Cecilia Song in both poetical and musical qualities. Ernest Brennecke, Jr. considers Alexander's Feast to be the "climax of Cecilian poetry," a work which demonstrates Dryden's profound understanding of the musical demands of the genre. The 1687 Ode posed problems of choral arrangement for the

composer, but the 1697 poem clearly defined the passages for recitative, aria and chorus within each strophe.<sup>98</sup>

Robert M. Myers, who has enumerated the ten requirements for a successful ode, according to neo-classical standards, argues that Dryden's poem fulfills the critical demands of the Restoration and eighteenth century form in every particular. According to Augustan writers, an ode "must follow the historical or narrative form rather than the mythological,"<sup>99</sup> and unlike his first St. Cecilia Day poem, Dryden's Alexander's Feast does tell an imaginative and concrete story: "The pictorialism of this poem appears with great obviousness if we compare it to the first St. Cecilia's Day ode, which is to a very large extent intellectually abstract and musical."<sup>100</sup>

The action depicted in Alexander's Feast has no historical authenticity. Plutarch records the story that after Alexander's victory over Darius and the Persians, the Greek conqueror attended a celebration at which there was much drinking and revelry among the soldiers and their mistresses. Thais, an Athenian mistress of Ptolemy, made a speech declaring that the Greeks ought to burn the palace of Xerxes in revenge for Persian atrocities committed against the Athenians. Her suggestion received enthusiastic support and the king's attendants convinced Alexander to set fire to the palace to prove his resolute opposition to barbarians.<sup>101</sup>

Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's Lives contains

an account of the feast, but John Case's The Praise of Musicke (1586) differs from this rendition: it attributes the frenzied behaviour of Alexander to the hypnotic playing of the musician, Timotheus, and not to the combined powers of wine and love.<sup>102</sup> Just three months before Dryden wrote Alexander's Feast, Jeremy Collier's Essays Upon Several Moral Subjects appeared and the collection contained an essay "Of Musick" which repeated Case's version of the story,<sup>103</sup> an occurrence which leads John Robert Moore to argue that Collier's story of Timotheus provided Dryden with the narrative for the poem that he was having difficulty writing.<sup>104</sup>

As presented by Dryden, the anecdote about Alexander's feast can be interpreted as a moral admonishment on the excesses of paganism and the futility of conquest. At a royal celebration of the world's greatest monarch, one expects to find formality and order and dignity; instead, the festivities present a drunken festival which culminates in the burning of a city. Martin Price says that "the emotions of Alexander and his court are seen from the outside, grotesque in their rapid alterations, tremendous in their compelling force, but all at the expense of the mind and dignity of those aroused."<sup>105</sup> Alexander, described like the most despicable of figures in Dryden's other poems, displays the worst kind of enthusiasm. A "Warlike Son," (l. 2) like "Warlike Absolon," (Absalom and Achitophel, l.221)

Alexander joins a gallery of Dryden's belligerent rogues which includes Louis XIV, James II, the London dissenters, the Panther and Flecknoe's warfaring boy. Under the overpowering influence of Timotheus' music, Alexander assumes the frenzied exterior of a Fifth Monarchist: "The Master saw the Madness rise;/ His glowing Cheeks, his ardent Eyes." (ll. 69-70) After he forces Alexander to re-enact his battles with the Persians, he moves the conqueror to pity for the tragic death of Darius:

He chose a Mournful Muse  
Soft Pity to infuse:  
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:  
Deserted at his utmost Need,  
By those his former Bounty fed:  
On the bare Earth expos'd He lyes,  
With not a Friend to close his Eyes.  
(ll. 73-83)

Abandoned by his allies and denied a proper burial, Darius' condition demands pity and condemns the aggressive behaviour of Alexander and his men. Although he regrets his bellicose actions, the king soon surrenders to Timotheus' music and the encouragement of his men, and decides to burn the civilization of the Persians:

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 seyz'd a Flambeau, with Zeal to destroy;  
                    Thais led the Way,  
                    To light him to his Prey,  
And, like another Hellen, fir'd another Troy.  
(ll. 143-150)



The Greek aggression against the Persians is partially a religious battle to suppress the gods of a competing religion. The fire, zeal and fury with which the Athenians act resemble the emotional state of enthusiasts in Dryden's other poems. Inflamed priests in Absalom and Achitophel carried out similar plans against the Jebusites whose gods were disgraced "and burnt like common wood," (l. 97) and though Dryden compares the destruction of Persia to Troy, it also recalls his description of the Fire of London in Annus Mirabilis in which sectarian zeal had been held responsible for the conflagration.

Plutarch employs the tale about the feast in order to show Alexander's great restraint. Though he accepted his company's determination to burn Xerxes' palace, "it is agreed that Alexander speedily repented and gave orders to put out the fire."<sup>106</sup> Significantly, Dryden omits any mention of Alexander's reversed decision, and abandons him and his party as they are about to sack a city. Collier discusses only Timotheus' ability to inflame and deflate the passions of the Greek emperor, but Dryden ends his account with a vision of insane and meaningless vandalism.

Alexander possesses both a human and an immortal inheritance like Anne Killigrew who is both the daughter of her father and the offspring of an eternal line of poets. Plutarch writes, "As for the lineage of Alexander, on his father's side he was a descendant of Heracles through

Caranus, and on his mother's side a descendant of Aeacus through Neoptolemus; this is accepted without any question."<sup>107</sup> Although Olympias was the mother of Alexander, some confusion about his male parentage existed among the Greeks. One of several miraculous stories recounted that "a serpent was once lying stretched out by the side of Olympias as she slept,"<sup>108</sup> and this serpent becomes the dragon concealing Jove in Dryden's poem. (ll. 25-28) Eager to discredit these tales of the supernatural, Plutarch relates that Olympias,

who affected these divine possessions more zealously than other women, and carried out these divine inspirations in wilder fashion, used to provide the revelling companies with great tame serpents, which would often lift their heads from out the ivy and the mystic winnowing-baskets, or coil themselves about the garlands of the women, thus terrifying the men.<sup>109</sup>

At one time Alexander journeyed to the temple of Ammon, who told him that he would have dominion over the world, "and a story became current that the god had addressed him with 'o pai Dios,' or O son of Zeus."<sup>110</sup> To remove the stigma of superstition from his subject, Plutarch says that Alexander "In general...bore himself haughtily towards the Barbarians, and like one fully persuaded of his divine birth and parentage, but with the Greeks it was within limits and somewhat rarely that he assumed his own divinity."<sup>111</sup>

Alexander's Feast notes only once that Philip of Macedon fathered the Greek conqueror. (l. 2) Plutarch's biography endeavours to suppress vain tales about Alexander's

heritage, but Dryden's Alexander and his subjects fabricate a false deity from the hero. After only a brief reference to Alexander's human heritage, Dryden describes the proud bearing of the seated god:

Aloft in awful State  
The God-like Heroe sate  
On his Imperial Throne  
(ll. 3-5)

These lines faintly recall Milton's description of Satan, who at the beginning of Paradise Lost II sits "on a throne of royal state" (l. 1) and elevates himself to godhead:

Satan exalted sat, by merit raised  
To that bad eminence; and from despair  
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires  
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue  
Vain war with Heaven. (ll. 5-9)

Alexander, like Flecknoe who also occupies a demonic throne, (Mac Flecknoe, l. 107) aspires to create a satanic kingdom of temporal and eternal scope, and Dryden strengthens the demonic associations of Alexander in the account of his birth. Jove descends to earth assuming the form of a dragon, a kind of serpent, and a serpent only in Plutarch's brief anecdote. The dragon's "fiery Form" (l. 28) anticipates and explains the inflamed countenance of Alexander in his reenactment of his battles. (ll. 69-70) Although Jove appears "Sublime on Radiant Spires," (l. 29) we must remember that Milton's Satan fatally attracts Adam and Eve. According to the OED, the word "spire" refers to "One of the sinuous folds or winding of a serpent, etc; a coil," and the verb "spire"

means "To breathe forth or out, to create or produce by the agency of the breath." Dryden's usage of the word "spire" appears to contain both meanings suggesting that Jove creates Alexander with the inflated winds of enthusiasm. Finally, just as Flecknoe's son bears the "perfect image" (Mac Flecknoe, l. 15) of his father, Alexander contains "an Image" (l. 33) of Jove who rules the skies as his son governs the land.

Timotheus' account of Alexander's divine origins prompts the revellers to proclaim their king a god: "A Present Deity, they shout around:/ A present Deity the vaulted Roofs rebound." (ll. 35-36) By proclamation, Alexander becomes a god just as Absalom becomes a messiah, but the Greek deity is no more inspiring than Shadwell:

With ravish'd Ears  
The Monarch hears,  
Assumes the God,  
Affects to nod,  
And seems to shake the Spheres. (ll. 37-41)

Alexander's nodding is similar to Shadwell's sleep and dullness; only the lunacy that drunkenness and lust produces can make the Greek monarch bring the music of the Spheres to earth, and the short lines with the comical rhyme, "God" and "nod", emphasize the ridiculous appearance of Alexander. Under the power of Timotheus he becomes a "joyless Victor" (l. 84) and a "vanquish'd Victor" (l. 115) whose final action is the destruction of a city. At last Dryden reduces him to a "Mortal" (l. 169) stripping Alexander of all

appearances of divinity.

Plutarch portrays Alexander as a temperate and cultured man who loathed the barbarism of his enemies but who also dealt justly with friend and foe. He attributes his heavy drinking to "moist humours,"<sup>112</sup> but elsewhere depicts Alexander as a civilized participant at a symposium:

To the use of wine also he was less addicted than was generally believed. The belief arose from the time which he would spend over each cup, more in talking than in drinking, always holding some long discourse, and this too when he had abundant leisure.<sup>113</sup>

Dryden transforms this paragon of ancient culture into a frenzied murderer whose heroic code justifies the most heinous conduct. Revenge motivates the culminating event described in the poem, and the love that might ennoble the court is also debased. Jove's lust (with the suggestion of rape) gives birth to Alexander, and Thais, who "Sate like a blooming Eastern bride," (l. 10) is a whore who disgraces her lovers like Helen of Troy did. (l. 150) Because "Drinking is the Soldiers Pleasure," (l. 57) Alexander and his men worship Bacchus, the "jolly God," (l. 49) the deity adored by Luther, Henry VIII and Shaftesbury in Dryden's earlier poems.

As an accomplished musician, Timotheus has total control over Alexander and the Greek soldiery. Alexander exerts physical mastery over all other men, but he fails the crucial test of attaining dominion over his own passions. In Timotheus' hands he exhibits "the somewhat comic aspects

of a puppet"<sup>114</sup> whose responses are determined by the musician's song. To the Phrygian note that causes wars and produces fury,<sup>115</sup> Alexander is especially helpless because he displays his strongest outburst when he fights his battles a second time. (stanza IV) Timotheus quickly transforms Alexander's response to grief for Darius when the conqueror is in his most furious fit: "And while He Heav'n and Earth defy'd,/ Chang'd his hand, and check'd his Pride." (ll. 71-72) The mere change of a note reduces the earth's monarch to dependency, and even when Alexander accepts the love of Thais, it is music that has been responsible: "The Many rend the Skies, with loud Applause;/ So Love was Crown'd, but Musique won the Cause." (ll. 107-108) Although Timotheus is a "sweet Musician," (l. 47) he is the agent of the concluding conflagration:

Revenge, Revenge, Timotheus cries  
     See the Furies arise!  
     See the Snakes that they rear,  
     How they hiss in their Hair,  
     And the Sparkles that flash from their Eyes!  
     Behold a ghastly Band,  
     Each a Torch in his Hand!  
 Those are Grecian Ghosts, that in Battail were slayn,  
                                     And unbury'd remain  
                                     Inglorious on the Plain.  
     Give the Vengeance due  
     To the Valiant Crew.      (ll. 131-142)

Timotheus and his music conjure strong pictorial representations of Greek ghosts crying for revenge, of Jove descending to earth as a dragon and of the young Bacchus arriving in triumph. Although he can conquer the greatest king in history and expose him as a pretender to divinity,

Timotheus also causes the destruction of Persian civilization, just as the trumpets, drums, violins and lutes in Dryden's Song arouse the most destructive passions. Jeremy Collier believed that music possesses an almost hypnotic control against which the rational powers are defenceless:

It infuses an unexpected Vigour, makes the Impression agreeable and sprightly, and seems to furnish a new Capacity, as well as a new Opportunity of Satisfaction. It Raises, and Falls, and Counterchanges the Passions at an unaccountable Rate. It Charms and Transports, Ruffles and Becalms, and Governs with an almost arbitrary Authority. There is scarcely any Constitution so heavy, or any Reason so well fortified, as to be absolutely proof against it.<sup>116</sup>

Collier adds that "The Antients were much our Superiours in this Mystery. They knew how to Arm a Sound better, and to put more Force and Conquest in it than we understand,"<sup>117</sup> and he cites Timotheus' action at the feast as an example of the ancients' mastery over the affections. Although modern musicians are unable to use man as an instrument to be played upon, Collier says that

possibly we are no great Losers by it: For the Heathens often made an ill Use of this Advantage. The Fathers declaim against their Theatre Musick, as Lewd and Licentious. No doubt 'twas capable of being reformed to Manly and Religious Purposes. And, on the other hand, 'tis no less probable we might have misemploy'd it as much as they did.<sup>118</sup>

Music's power is completely demonstrated in Alexander's Feast, but Collier's observation on the improper use of music by the ancients is also incorporated into Dryden's poem. Timotheus' art has no moral foundation

except, perhaps, an allegiance to the barbaric code of heroism. Dryden's poem "consign[s] Alexander and Timotheus to history. It is past, the heroic action of the race, and so too those artistic ideals which had inspired it."<sup>119</sup> The last strophe of the poem opens with a demarcation of ancient and modern history:

Thus, long ago  
'Ere heaving Bellows learn'd to blow,  
While Organs yet were mute;  
Timotheus, to his breathing Flute,  
And sounding Lyre,  
Cou'd swell the Soul to rage, or kindle soft Desire.  
(ll. 155-160)

It is possible that within the narrow vision of the ancient world Timotheus' behaviour can be justified by an appeal to some set of culturally relative standards, but Dryden exalts the achievement and cultural milieu of Cecilia over that of the pagan musician.

In Dryden's 1687 Song technical improvements explained the superiority of Christian to Hebraic and Classical music, but technology receives slight treatment in the 1697 Ode. In both poems Dryden introduces the organ before the saint, but in the earlier poem the organ itself creates "Notes inspiring holy Love," (l. 45) while in Alexander's Feast Cecilia appears as an innovator in her own right and as a Christ figure enlightening man's mind about the nature of the cosmos:

At last Divine Cecilia came,  
Inventress of the Vocal Frame;  
The sweet Enthusiast from her Sacred Store,



Enlarg'd the former narrow Bounds,  
 And added Length to solemn Sounds,  
 With Nature's Mother-Wit, and Arts unknown before.  
 (ll. 161-166)

The "sweet Enthusiast" surpasses the "sweet Musician" (l. 47) in the Dorian and Lydian modes and triumphs over the destructive enthusiasts at the feast celebrating Alexander's victory. Although technical expertise partially accounts for the superiority of Cecilia, her inspiration and intuitive grasp of nature primarily explain her genius.

As a Christian artist, Dryden shares Cecilia's triumph over the pagans. James E. Phillips interprets the poem's last strophe as a celebration of the combined arts found in the best poets and musicians:

Here the echo of Neoplatonic "enthusiasm" in conjunction with references to the "divine" source of the vocal frame, and to enlarging the powers of purely instrumental music in an art unknown before seems to suggest very strongly that Cecilia's "vocal frame" is the union of poetry and music idealized by Dryden's English contemporaries.<sup>120</sup>

Jean Hagstrum detects a similar unification of the arts in Alexander's Feast, a poem which elevates poets above kings:

The subject, ostensibly the power of music, is extended to all art. The artist, whatever his medium, is the real hero. That extension of meaning is partly accomplished by the very form of the poem. Music, the most abstract of all the arts, produces scenes that are as vividly visual as words can make them. This is an art poem, an iconic poem--or more accurately, a subtle modification of the iconic genre (in which the subject is usually a work of plastic art). Here the subject is music, but music celebrated in plastic scenes verbally described. Dryden in a single poem has dissolved the boundaries between all the arts.<sup>121</sup>

In Alexander's Feast, according to Earl Miner, Dryden made an "assertion of his own values, of the dignity of his art, and of his personal integrity during the years after the Revolution which had brought William and Mary (unlawfully in his view) to the throne."<sup>122</sup> Harsh experience convinced Dryden that peace and stability were essential for a great society, but monarchs were not invariably the protectors of these values. Alexander debases the claim of divine right of kings as James II had also done, and William's seizure of the British throne merely replaced one tyrant with another.

Opposed to the chaotic events depicted in Alexander's Feast is the sure control of the consummate artist over his material. The artist prevails over the man of action without surrendering his dignity or his own enthusiasm; if kings were no longer inspired, then the Christian poet could entice angels to earth and connect the mundane and eternal parts of the cosmos. John Dennis thought Dryden's 1697 Ode a superb expression of sublime enthusiasm beyond the reach of Pope's Cecilia Day Ode:

In the Ode which the same Pantomimical Creature wrote upon St. Cæcilia's Day, an Ode which was vainly and foolishly writ in Emulation of Mr. Dryden's Feast of Alexander, he has not the least Shadow of any of Mr. Dryden's great Qualities, neither of his Art, his Variety, his Passion, his Enthusiasm, or his Harmony. The very Numbers in Mr. Dryden's incomparable Ode, are themselves incomparable, and are always adapted and adjusted by that great Poet to his Passion and his Enthusiasm.<sup>123</sup>

Writing some fifty years after Dennis, Samuel Johnson wrote with highest approval of the fusion of decorum and enthusiasm in Alexander's Feast:

The ode for St. Cecilia's Day, perhaps the last effort of his poetry, has been always considered as exhibiting the highest flight of fancy, and the exactest nicety of art. This is allowed to stand without a rival. If indeed there is any excellence beyond it, in some other of Dryden's works that excellence must be found.<sup>124</sup>

Dryden's odes won the poet an indelible reputation among Augustan critics. Dennis, Johnson, Gray and Collins all acknowledge Dryden's supremacy in the Pindaric. Gray's "The Progress of Poesy. A Pindaric Ode" rated Dryden as the third best English poet after Shakespeare and Milton, and bemoaned the passing of great poetry after his death:<sup>125</sup>

Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car,  
Wide o'er the fields of glory, bear  
Two coursers of ethereal race,  
With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!  
Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er  
Scatters from her pictured urn  
Thoughts that breathe and words that burn.  
But ah! 'tis heard no more---

(ll. 103-111)

William Collins hinted that Dryden was a "loved Enthusiast" (l. 29) in the "Ode on the Poetical Character" and his poem, "The Passions. An Ode for Music" opens with an imitation of Dryden's St. Cecilia's Day Song:

When Music, heavenly maid, was young,  
While yet in early Greece she sung,  
The Passions oft to hear her shell  
Thronged around her magic cell,

Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,  
 Possessed beyond the muse's painting;  
 By turns they felt the glowing mind,  
 Disturbed, delighted, raised, refined.  
 (ll. 1-8)

"In lyrical poetry," Scott observed, "Dryden must be allowed to have no equal. 'Alexander's Feast' is sufficient to show his supremacy in that brilliant department."<sup>126</sup> Although Dryden's Pindarics have not the structural regularity of Collins and Gray, he was, with Milton, the most influential writer of odes in his own period and in the next century. During his own lifetime the odes allowed Dryden to assert his belief in the powerful inspiration of the Christian muse against the pagans, dull poets and crazed monarchs and gained for the former attendant of monarchs, a dignity within the kingdom of letters.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Flecknoe was thought to be a Roman Catholic priest according to Earl Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup>Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup>Percy L. Babington's "Dryden Not the Author of 'Mac Flecknoe'," MLR, XIII (1918), 25-34 initiated a dispute about the authorship of Dryden's poem. H.M. Belden, "The Authorship of Mac Flecknoe," MLN, XXXIII (1918), 449-456 cast grave doubts on Babington's contention that John Oldham wrote Mac Flecknoe. G. Thorn-Drury, "Dryden's Mac Flecknoe: A Vindication," MLR, XIII (1918), 276-281 asserted Dryden's authorship and argued that the poet corrected the errors in the text in 1682 in his own approved version of 1684.

<sup>4</sup>Michael W. Alssid, "Shadwell's Mac Flecknoe," SEL, VII (1967), 399.

<sup>5</sup>Daniel Morley McKeithan, "The Occasion of Mac Flecknoe," PMLA, XLVII (1932), 770.

<sup>6</sup>Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 88.

<sup>7</sup>A.L. Korn, "Mac Flecknoe and Cowley's Davideis" in H.T. Swedenberg, Jr., Essential Articles for the Study of John Dryden, p. 178.

<sup>8</sup>Korn, "Mac Flecknoe and Cowley's Davideis," p. 180.

<sup>9</sup>Korn, "Mac Flecknoe and Cowley's Davideis," p. 178 and passim.

<sup>10</sup>H.T. Swedenberg, ed., The Works of John Dryden (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), II, 320-321.

<sup>11</sup>Swedenberg, ed., The Works of John Dryden, II, 319 and Alexander B. Grosart, ed., The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Abraham Cowley, II, 51

<sup>12</sup>Dryden attacked Robert "Plotter" Ferguson, author of The No-Protestant Plot, in his Epistle to The Medall. See Kinsley, pp. 223-226 and Chapter IV of this study.

<sup>13</sup>Korn, "Mac Flecknoe and Cowley's Davideis," p. 181.

<sup>14</sup>Michael W. Alssid, Thomas Shadwell (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1967), p. 17.

<sup>15</sup>Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 84.

<sup>16</sup>John Hollander, The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500-1700 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 217.

<sup>17</sup>Sir William Smith, Smaller Classical Dictionary (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1958), p. 39.

<sup>18</sup>Alssid, Thomas Shadwell, p. 17.

<sup>19</sup>Alssid, Thomas Shadwell, p. 25.

<sup>20</sup>Alssid, Thomas Shadwell, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup>See George McFadden, "Elkanah Settle and the Genesis of Mac Flecknoe," PQ, XLIII (1964), 55-72 for a discussion of the importance of the Empress notes in relation to Dryden's poem, and also Anne Doyle, "Dryden's Authorship of Notes and Observations on the Empress of Morocco (1674)," SEL, VI (1966),

421-445 argues for Dryden's authorship of the critical piece and notes similarities between the prose work and the poem itself.

<sup>22</sup>Thomas Shadwell, Preface to The Sullen Lovers in The Complete Works of Thomas Shadwell, ed., Montague Summers (London: The Fortune Press, 1927), I, 10-11.

<sup>23</sup>Shadwell, Preface to The Humorists, Works, I, 189.

<sup>24</sup>See Michael Wilding, "Allusion and Innuendo in Mac Flecknoe," Essays in Criticism, XIX (1969), 362-367 for a full discussion of sexual depravity in Dryden's poem.

<sup>25</sup>For an account of satanic imitation in Mac Flecknoe see Wilding, "Allusion and Innuendo in Mac Flecknoe," passim.

<sup>26</sup>Baird Whitlock, "Elijah and Elisha in Dryden's Mac Flecknoe," MLN, LXX (1955), 599-600 identifies the source of Dryden's allusion.

<sup>27</sup>Samuel Holt Monk, "Shadwell, 'Flail of Sense': 'Mac Flecknoe' Line 89," N & Q, 205 new series, VII (1960), 67-68.

<sup>28</sup>Martin Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, p. 251.

<sup>29</sup>Charles E. Ward, The Life of John Dryden, p. 212.

<sup>30</sup>Ward, The Life of John Dryden, p. 240.

<sup>31</sup>Charles E. Ward, ed., The Letters of John Dryden with Letters Addressed to Him (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1942), pp. 26-27.

<sup>32</sup>Ward, ed., The Letters of John Dryden, p. 29.

<sup>33</sup>Donald Attwater, The Penguin Dictionary of Saints (Baltimore: Penguin, 1965), pp. 81-82.

<sup>34</sup>G.N. Shuster, The English Ode from Milton to Keats (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), p. 10.

<sup>35</sup>Shuster, The English Ode, pp. 99-100.

<sup>36</sup>Shuster, The English Ode, p. 143.

<sup>37</sup>Elkanah Settle, The Preface to Ibrahim, ed., Hugh MacDonald (Oxford: Blackwell's, 1947), p. 2.

<sup>38</sup>See Ruth Wallerstein, "On the Death of Mrs. Killigrew: The Perfecting of a Genre," SP, XLIV (1947), 519-528

for a discussion of the persistence of early seventeenth-century themes in Dryden's ode which Miss Wallerstein compares with the Hastings' ode.

<sup>39</sup>Ward, ed., The Letters of John Dryden, p. 72.

<sup>40</sup>Shuster, The English Ode, p. 5 records an instructive and amusing incident about the intricate critical problems that arise from the strong connection between music and poetry in the English ode: "Herbert Franklin Hamilton nonplussed by the fact that Addison's 'Spacious Firmament on High' was dubbed both 'hymn' and 'ode,' was inwardly ready to abandon a task which for academic reasons he nevertheless had somehow to complete."

<sup>41</sup>James E. Phillips, "Poetry and Music in the Seventeenth Century" in Music and Literature in England in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1953), p. 3

<sup>42</sup>Quoted in Morrison Comegys Boyd, Elizabethan Music and Musical Criticism (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), p. 35.

<sup>43</sup>Phillips, "Poetry and Music in the Seventeenth Century," p. 9

<sup>44</sup>Jean H. Hagstrum, The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism in English Poetry from Dryden to Gray (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 197.

<sup>45</sup>Grosart, ed., The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Abraham Cowley, II, 4.

<sup>46</sup>James G. Taaffe, Abraham Cowley (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1972), p. 74.

<sup>47</sup>John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, An Essay Upon Poetry in J.E. Spingarn, ed., Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), II, 289.

<sup>48</sup>John Dennis, The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry in Edward Niles Hooker, ed., The Critical Works of John Dennis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1939), I, 332.

<sup>49</sup>Shuster, The English Ode, p. 126.

<sup>50</sup>Wallerstein, "On the Death of Mrs. Killigrew: The Perfecting of a Genre," especially 522-524 and 526.

<sup>51</sup>Arthur W. Hoffman, John Dryden's Imagery, pp. 122-123.

<sup>52</sup>Samuel Johnson, "Life of Dryden," Lives of the Poets, I, 310-311.

<sup>53</sup>E.M.W. Tillyard, Five Poems, 1470-1870: An Elementary Essay on the Background of English Literature (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), p. 49.

<sup>54</sup>Tillyard, Five Poems, 1470-1870, pp. 50, 53 and 63.

<sup>55</sup>Richard Morton, ed., Poems (1686) by Mrs. Anne Killigrew (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1967), p. v.

<sup>56</sup>A.D. Hope, "Anne Killigrew or the Art of Modulating," The Southern Review, I (1963), 11-12.

<sup>57</sup>David M. Vieth, "Irony in Dryden's Ode to Anne Killigrew," SP, LXII (1965), 92.

<sup>58</sup>Vieth, "Irony in Dryden's Ode to Anne Killigrew," 92.

<sup>59</sup>Morton, ed., Poems (1686) by Mrs. Anne Killigrew, pp. vi-vii.

<sup>60</sup>Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 259.

<sup>61</sup>Hope, "Anne Killigrew or the Art of Modulating," 9.

<sup>62</sup>Hoffman, John Dryden's Imagery, p. 102.

<sup>63</sup>Mother Mary Eleanor, S.H.C.J., "Anne Killigrew and Mac Flecknoe," PQ, XLIII (1964), 47-54.

<sup>64</sup>Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 265.

<sup>65</sup>Hoffman, John Dryden's Imagery, p. 116.

<sup>66</sup>Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 265.

<sup>67</sup>See Vieth, "Irony in Dryden's Ode to Anne Killigrew," 95-96 for a discussion of the ironical connections between the poet's titular subject and Louis XIV.

<sup>68</sup>Hoffman, John Dryden's Imagery, p. 118.

<sup>69</sup>Tillyard, Five Poems, 1470-1870, p. 50.

<sup>70</sup>Hoffman, John Dryden's Imagery, pp. 113-114.

<sup>71</sup>H.C. Colles, ed., Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Third edition (London: MacMillan and Co., 1929), I, 590.



<sup>72</sup>Ernest Brennecke, Jr., "Dryden's Odes and Draghi's Music," PMLA, XLIX (1934), 36.

<sup>73</sup>Brennecke, "Dryden's Odes and Draghi's Music," 6-7; 30, 33 and 35.

<sup>74</sup>A.W. Verrall, Lectures on Dryden, p. 176.

<sup>75</sup>Robert M. Myers, "Neo-Classical Criticism of the Ode for Music," PMLA, LXII (1947), 404-405.

<sup>76</sup>See Brennecke, "Dryden's Odes and Draghi's Music," especially 1-2 and passim.

<sup>77</sup>See Myers, "Neo-Classical Criticism of the Ode for Music," 405 and Jay Arnold Levine, "Dryden's Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 1687," PQ, XLIV (1965), 48.

<sup>78</sup>Johnson, "Life of Dryden," Lives of the Poets, I, 311.

<sup>79</sup>Levine, "Dryden's Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 1687," 42.

<sup>80</sup>See Alastair Fowler and Douglas Brooks, "The Structure of Dryden's 'Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 1687'," Essays in Criticism, XVII (1967), 434-447. The authors suggest that stanzas three to six describe the choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic temperaments successively because drums and trumpets awaken the heated passions of soldiers and because the lute is associated with melancholy and the violin with phlegm. Fowler and Brooks go on to say that the organ appeals to the best temperament, the sanguine, which is superior to the other three. Although an intriguing hypothesis, the argument is rather arbitrary because the lute in stanza four more accurately echoes the woes of the phlegmatic while the violin (stanza V) voices the "Pangs", "Desperation", "Fury", "Indignation", "Pains" and "Passions" of very emotional lovers. Earl Miner, "Dryden and the Issue of Human Progress," PQ, XL (1961), 126 argues for a psychological evolution that accompanies historical progress from war to love to worship.

<sup>81</sup>Levine, "Dryden's Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 1687," 46 discusses the unsophisticated figure of Jubal and argues that a simple rhyme in stanza two (seven of the nine rhymes are the same) emphasizes the primitive and uncomplicated quality of Jubal's music.

<sup>82</sup>Jeremy Collier, Essays Upon Several Moral Subjects (1698; facsimile rpt., Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1969), Part II, p. 17.

<sup>83</sup>See Brennecke, "Dryden's Odes and Draghi's Music," 7-8 for a brief discussion of Dryden's use of Fletcher's ode.

<sup>84</sup>Hollander, The Untuning of the Sky, p. 163.

<sup>85</sup>George Sandys, Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, Mythologized and Represented in Figures[1632] eds., Karl K. Hulley and Stanley T. Vandersall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), p. 479.

<sup>86</sup>Purcell in Dryden's 1696 ode also triumphs over Orpheus to whom Dryden allots seven lines in a thirty-one line poem. See "An Ode, on the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell," Kinsley, pp. 500-501.

<sup>87</sup>Phillips, "Poetry and Music in the Seventeenth Century," p. 20.

<sup>88</sup>Boyd, Elizabethan Music and Musical Criticism, p. 13.

<sup>89</sup>Percy A. Scholes, The Puritans and Music in England and New England: A Contribution to the Cultural History of Two Nations (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 214, Chapters XIV, XV and passim.

<sup>90</sup>Scholes, The Puritans and Music, p. 221.

<sup>91</sup>Hollander, The Untuning of the Sky, p. 251.

<sup>92</sup>Scholes, The Puritans and Music, pp. 234-238.

<sup>93</sup>Stuart E. Prall, The Bloodless Revolution, p. 106.

<sup>94</sup>Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, I, 590 says that a tradition of unknown origin that Cecilia drew an angel to earth by her singing was current in the sixteenth century. Earlier writers mention neither the legend nor St. Cecilia's music. Hagstrum, The Sister Arts, p. 204 says that "St. Cecilia was one of the most popular subjects of baroque religious art, chiefly because the life and death of so attractive a martyr served the whole purpose, religious and aesthetic, of Counter-Reformation culture." Raphael, for one, portrayed Cecilia with angels suspended from the sky attending to her music, Plate XII.

<sup>95</sup>Miner, "Dryden and the Issue of Human Progress," 126.

<sup>96</sup>Mark Van Doren, The Poetry of John Dryden, p. 255.

<sup>97</sup>Levine, "Dryden's Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 1687," 49.

<sup>98</sup>Brennecke, "Dryden's Odes and Draghi's Music," 30, 34.

<sup>99</sup>Myers, "Neo-Classical Criticism of the Ode for Music," 413. See Myers' list of critical demands for an Augustan ode, pp. 411-419.

<sup>100</sup>Hagstrum, The Sister Arts, p. 206.

<sup>101</sup>Plutarch, Plutarch's Lives, eds. E. Capps, T.E. Page and W.H.D. Rouse, trans., Bernadotte Perrin (London: William Heinemann, 1919), pp. 337 and 339.

<sup>102</sup>Boyd, Elizabethan Music and Musical Criticism, p. 30.

<sup>103</sup>Collier, Essays Upon Several Moral Subjects, Part II, pp. 21-22.

<sup>104</sup>John Robert Moore, "Alexander's Feast: A Possible Chronology of Development," PQ, XXXVII (1958), 495-498.

<sup>105</sup>Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, p. 373.

<sup>106</sup>Plutarch's Lives, VII, 339.

<sup>107</sup>Plutarch's Lives, VII, 225.

<sup>108</sup>Plutarch's Lives, VII, 227.

<sup>109</sup>Plutarch's Lives, VII, 229.

<sup>110</sup>Plutarch's Lives, VII, 305.

<sup>111</sup>Plutarch's Lives, VII, 307.

<sup>112</sup>Plutarch's Lives, VII, 233.

<sup>113</sup>Plutarch's Lives, VII, 289.

<sup>114</sup>Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, p. 373.

<sup>115</sup>Renaissance commentators divided music into four modes, following the example of Macrobius who lived in the 5th century A.D. The four modes are: 1. Dorian, which bestows wisdom and causes chastity; 2. Phrygian, which incites men to warfare; 3. Aeolian, which appeases men's mental troubles and lulls them to sleep; and, 4. Lydian, which sharpens the

minds of the dull and makes men desire heavenly objects. See Boyd's Elizabethan Music and Musical Criticism, p. 244 on Ornithoparcus' use of Macrobius and pp. 295-296 for John Case's use of the conventional division in The Praise of Musicke (1586).

116 Collier, Essays Upon Several Moral Subjects, Part II, pp. 20-21.

117 Collier, Essays Upon Several Moral Subjects, Part II, p. 21.

118 Collier, Essays Upon Several Moral Subjects, Part II, p. 23.

119 Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 270.

120 Phillips, "Poetry and Music in the Seventeenth Century," p. 21.

121 Hagstrum, The Sister Arts, p. 206.

122 Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 273.

123 Dennis, "Letter to the Daily Journal," May 11, 1728 in The Critical Works of John Dennis, II, 416-417.

124 Johnson, "Life of Dryden," Lives of the Poets, I, 323.

125 Citations from Gray and Collins are from Roger Lonsdale, ed., The Poems of Thomas Gray, William Collins, Oliver Goldsmith (London: Longman's, Green and Co., 1969).

126 Sir Walter Scott, The Life of John Dryden, ed., Bernard Kreissman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), p. 415.

## VIII

### CONCLUSION

Enthusiasm provides an important frame of reference for the evaluation of Dryden's major verse throughout his poetical career. The term implies a value structure by which we can assess the activities of informed enthusiasts who vie with disillusioned ones for dominance: political, religious and artistic. Dryden's allusions to Rome, Greece, Israel and modern Europe widen the particular issues of enthusiasm in Dryden's London, linking past and present, England and the Continent. In every era the truly inspired enthusiast defends social stability and artistic genius and adapts himself fully to the world of nature. On the other side, the deluded enthusiast pretends to the inspiration of his counterpart but is, in fact, possessed by satanic forces that alienate him from God, nature and society. Because he upholds the values of a barbarian, the uncivilized enthusiast wages war with legitimate authorities in politics, religion and art. Though some of Dryden's figures, such as Flecknoe and Zimri, may be sincere in their enthusiasm, most of the poet's enemies are hypocrites whose mask of the "Saint" conceals a desire for personal gain. Generally, Dryden's satire has the intention of banishing rather than reforming; the reader clearly recognizes the frenzied behaviour of Achitophel, the Panther, Shadwell

and Alexander but he anticipates no amelioration of their conduct because these figures lack the self-awareness demanded for reformation. As governors of false kingdoms, Dryden's characters have condemned themselves to an isolation and a perdition reminiscent of that of Milton's devils. Shaftesbury's plot to unseat the king fails for lack of strong support; Shadwell governs his vast expanse of nothingness between Ireland and the West Indies; the Panther's current dominion will descend to the underworld at the end of the temporal world and Alexander's heroic enthusiasm has already succumbed to the superior hegemony of Christianity and the Christian artist.

Dryden's poems depict a simple moral situation capable of rich extension and variation realized in a world in which the crown provides the dominant symbol. Ultimately, all of his poems portray the same dramatic situation as Absalom and Achitophel, one in which rebels unsuccessfully challenge legitimate government. Dryden's best subjects--Charles-David, Anne Killigrew, the Hind, Adam, St. Cecilia--possess the valued crown which the worst enemies of the realm try to steal. Mac Flecknoe pictures the most homogeneously bourgeois group of dissenters in Dryden's poems, but in other works such as Absalom and Achitophel, The Medall, The Hind and the Panther and Alexander's Feast, class lines are crossed and a mindless mob is formed. Any follower of the rabble, regardless of his social standing, who desires

to reduce the realm to "the dregs of a democracy" qualifies as an enthusiastic opponent of Dryden's ordered courtly world.

Opposed to the tyranny and madness of mob rule, the truly inspired monarch governs with humanistic moderation. David, the forgiving yet just king, the infinitely patient Hind whose hegemony follows the example of the unfallen Adam, the emperors of the arts and the isolated citizen who masters his own particular realm, qualify for rightful kingship. These figures are vigorous protectors of the arts whose crowning achievements are manifested in their exercise of artistic supremacy. David, the patron of artists and orators, ends the growing rebellion against his authority with language, the Hind's rhetoric overcomes the sophistic arguments of the Panther, St. Cecilia triumphs over the discordant arts of the pagans and Dryden's own wit immortalizes the eternal darkness of Shadwell. Only the rabble resorts to arms and physical warfare which prove ineffective weapons against the truths uttered by the inspired man of God.

The crown provided Dryden with a viable symbol of proper enthusiasm, a meaning which a court patronage of more than twenty-five years deepened. After 1700, we find no one quite like Dryden in English poetry because the Stuart defence of the divine right of kings had become meaningless for the majority of Englishmen after 1688. In contrast to Dryden, Pope, for example, enjoyed only a brief

period of patronage which ended with the commencement of Hanoverian rule when the poet was just twenty-six years old, three years younger than Dryden was at the beginning of the Restoration. For Pope the celebration of a divinely appointed monarch was impossible even during the reign of the last Stuart, and after 1714, satire against barbarians sitting upon the British throne enlivened some of Pope's best verse. His "Epistle to Augustus" attacked the indiscriminate artistic taste of George I and his Dunciad singled out the Hanoverian king, along with Colley Cibber and Dryden's old enemy, Settle, as the chief pawns of the goddess, Dulness.

Although the divine analogy ceased to be an important political fact in 1688, Dryden abandoned the celebration of political princes even before the Glorious Revolution. Threnodia Augustalis bids farewell to the praise of contemporary monarchs while the rest of his poetical career witnesses the celebration of new monarchical figures who govern inspired kingdoms in areas remote from politics. So all-encompassing is Dryden's influence on Augustan poets that it is fair to say that his verse career anticipates the development of eighteenth-century poetry. The social verse and satire of Dryden's early and middle years can be found in his immediate heirs, Prior, Gay and Pope. The more oracular voice of the later poems, which depict the artist as a hero, emerges in the later verse of Pope and in



the works of Thomson and Young, reaches a peak in the mid-century poems of Collins and Gray, and combines with the more conversational style of Cowper in the late century. In this simplified version of eighteenth-century poetic history, the works of Dryden's early career predominate in the early part of the new century while the last half of the century follows the example of the last sixteen years of Dryden's career.

Like Dryden, the eighteenth-century poets display interest in two kinds of enthusiasm, one invigorating and the other destructive. Thomson's The Seasons energetically praises a refined and philosophical form of religious inspiration while it deplores the irregular forms of the religious zealot. Despite their belief in the prophetic and enthusiastic powers of the poet, the strict Pindaric forms of the odes of Gray and Collins defy any suggestion that they thought the poet should be unrestrained or casual in his expression. Although Johnson's Imlac praises the enthusiasm of the poet in Rasselas, his Dictionary explicitly denounces the vanity of the beliefs of the religious enthusiast, and even Pope's Dunciad unleashes a torrent of abuse against political, religious and artistic enthusiasm in the voice of the frenzied poet.

Dryden's own work after 1685 retains the symbol of the crown as a metaphor of value. Despite a shift from satire and panegyric to odes and a kind of fable-epic in

The Hind and the Panther, Dryden continued to explore the same themes that dominated his early verse. Religious piety receives more urgent and personal treatment in the later poems than in, for example, Absalom and Achitophel where Dryden almost buries his religion in his politics. The artist and the Catholic Church replace the deceased Charles II as Dryden's new monarchs, continuing the persistent royal figure and symbol. His best poems exhibit a strong tension between good and bad enthusiasts, a tension which accounts in part for the superiority of Absalom and Achitophel, The Hind and the Panther, and Alexander's Feast over The Medall, a cautious and defensive work which deals with only the negative aspects of enthusiasm. Positive enthusiasm is at least as important as the pejorative kind, though the contention that Dryden is primarily a poet of celebration may not be readily apparent from a reading of only Absalom and Achitophel and Religio Laici.

In Alan Roper's phrase, Dryden's "poetic kingdoms" of politics, art and religion are found together in nearly all of his poems. To give shape and permanence to his work Dryden searched the ancients, the Scriptures, Donne, Milton, Cowley and Spenser for the basis of his fairy-tale world of The Hind and the Panther. As the best known poet of the Restoration, Dryden must be read very closely for allusions not only to the work of others but also to his own poems. As his work was imitated not only by his admirers

but also by critics, his phraseology would be immediately recognized by his own readers. The "jolly God" is used in three different poems so that its latest use in Alexander's Feast recalls the God of Shaftesbury and Luther and comments ironically on the God of Alexander and the Greeks. Dryden also uses Cowley's College of Prophets twice for similar purposes and its final application in Absalom and Achitophel II forces us back to a consideration of the Nursery scene in Mac Flecknoe. Similarly, the "warbling Lute" in the 1687 Song is a sufficient description of the instrument, but the phrase intensifies in ironic undertone if we remember that Dryden also applied it to Shadwell's instrument.

Repetition of these isolated phrases and situations in Dryden's poems suggests that his outlook is consistent in the various matters for which I have proposed enthusiasm as the link. Dryden's verse persistently explores the same occurrences however unconnected they may at first appear, and the vocabulary of these poems strengthens the continuity between his earlier and later work. Until the end of his career, Dryden constantly sought new forms in which to express previously developed, undeveloped or latent themes, and perhaps his separation from the court was a fortunate event because it forced him to extend his artistic range. Like nearly all of Johnson's subjects in Lives of the Poets, Dryden lost the patronage that he cherished and was forced to leave the court and become one of the first modern men

of letters earning an income from private patrons and from booksellers. The exile in the latter part of his career helped to complete Dryden as an artist because it compelled him to examine the previously neglected private world. In his later poetry a growing identification with and sympathy for the feminine viewpoint softened and modified the impersonal, masculine exterior that characterized his poetry until 1685. This is not to contend that one dominion wields superiority over the other--we are the richer for having both sides of Dryden's poetry rather than only one.

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1667 Annus Mirabilis

1672 The Prologue to Witt without Money

1673 Prologue to Amboyna

1679 Prologue to Oedipus

1680 Prologue to The Loyal General

Prologue from The Kind Keeper

1681 The Prologue at Oxford, 1680

Absalom and Achitophel

1682 Prologue and Epilogue to The Loyal Brother

The Medall

Mac Flecknoe

The Second Part of Absalom and Achitophel

Religio Laici

Prologue and Epilogue from The Duke of Guise

1685 Threnodia Augustalis

- 1686 "To the Pious Memory of the Accomplisht Young Lady  
Mrs Anne Killigrew, Excellent in the two Sister  
Arts of Poesie and Painting. An Ode."
- 1687 The Hind and the Panther  
A Song for St Cecilia's Day. 1687
- 1688 Britannia Rediviva
- 1692 Eleonora
- 1696 An Ode, on the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell
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b. Prose

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- 1667 Dedication of The Indian Emperor
- 1668 The Essay on Dramatic Poesy  
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- 1670 Preface to Tyrannic Love
- 1671 Preface to The Mock Astrologer
- 1672 Dedication of the First Part of The Conquest of Granada  
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