

THE ART OF RANK:
A REVALUATION OF JOHN DRYDEN'S SATIRES

by

Richard Tucker Whitescarver

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

English

APPROVED:

Dr. Ruth Salvaggio, Chairperson

Dr. James Lynch

Dr. Hilbert Campbell

August, 1984
Blacksburg, Virginia

THE ART OF RANK:
A REVALUATION OF JOHN DRYDEN'S SATIRES

by

Richard Tucker Whitescarver

(ABSTRACT)

The three major satires by the seventeenth-century poet John Dryden are reassessed for their mutual similarities to literature with burlesque elements. Focusing on his greatest satire, "Absalom and Achitophel," this study shows Dryden's political, intellectual, and literary appropriateness for incorporating in the poem sexual and scatological imagery which is hidden by syntactical ambiguity. Dryden's satiric style is unified by this burlesque and ambiguity, and thus, the conservative appearance of "Absalom and Achitophel" is shown as hiding its true kinship with the vulgar comedy of "Mac Flecknoe" and the savage satire of "The Medall."

Dryden's covert analogy in "Absalom and Achitophel" is revealed as equating King Charles II's physical body with the "Body Politique" of his politically troubled State, and Dryden's own analogy between himself and the physician/satirist thus leads to his prescription of a purge to restore the State's good health. This burlesque image is in keeping with the traditional elements of satire, the intellectual and

social environment of Restoration England, and also the conservative ideology of Dryden, for his purge metaphor constitutes a defense of the King's control, despite the burlesque elements. Furthermore, despite the iconoclastic appearance of this reading, Dryden scholarship supports it in many ways, especially recent criticism on Dryden's ambiguity, for which this study is a comprehensive test case.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the kind help over many years of Dr. Ruth Salvaggio. She oversaw my first look at Dryden, and I feel that I have been using her keen vision ever since.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction: The Traditional Position Of "Absalom and Achitophel" Among Dryden's Satires And The Major Components Of A New, Burlesque Reading	1
II.	An Analysis Of "Absalom and Achitophel"	
	A. Definition Of The Poem's Milieu	
	1. The Political And Intellectual Milieu Of John Dryden And The Poem	9
	2. Restoration Burlesque: "The Augustan Nose" For Satire	18
	3. Dryden's Critical Theories On Style And Satire	29
	4. Criticism On Dryden And A New Dryden Of Ambiguity And Hidden Purpose	32
	B. Textual Analysis Of The Satires, Principally "Absalom and Achitophel"	
	1. Similarities Among The Satires And Dryden's Use Of Sexual Imagery	41
	2. Scatological Imagery And The Purgation Of The "Body Politique"	50
III.	Conclusion: Overview Of Dryden's Conservative Stance And Of This Reading's Place In Dryden Scholarship	63
IV.	Notes	66
V.	Bibliography	73
VI.	Vita	77

"Absalom and Achitophel" stands as a touchstone among John Dryden's works and among Restoration literature. Published in 1681, the satire has retained its solid position for many reasons. As a political poem, it continues to receive attention for its examination of the Exclusion Crisis and the supposed Popish Plot that embroiled England and resulted in many divisions and executions before a cool-headed Charles II rose to quell those opportunistic rebels the Earl of Shaftesbury and Charles's bastard son the Duke of Monmouth, who sought to exclude the Catholic Duke of York from succeeding to the throne by their inflaming of Protestant England's fears of a religious takeover. Dryden's presentation of such an important national issue, his defense of Charles II as King David, and the violent outcry from the newly formed Whigs against the poem also make "Absalom and Achitophel" a tremendously public poem worthy of study as a central document of an age in which poems were still part of a "public address system" that spoke loudly and to attentive audiences that spoke back. In addition to this broader, historical significance of the poem, "Absalom and Achitophel" also is seen as a brilliant example of the full and furthermore satiric use of the heroic couplet. Writing at age fifty, Dryden has a command of the form that is truly deserving of his poet laureatship, and his witty, elevated style made the anonymous poem's author immediately recognizable.¹ Finally, "Absalom and Achitophel" is seen as the perfect statement of Dryden's conservatism, reflecting in its straightforward style a faith in the rule of monarchs and an equally as strong distrust of insurrectionists who would disturb order and threaten to cause a repeat of the civil wars of the 1640's.

Such a historical, literary, and personal touchstone has naturally been worn smooth over the years by those who have recognized its significance and have therefore examined it closely. But what has been worn smooth has become slippery, and some notions about Dryden and his work have even become worn out under the pressure of the last twenty years of critical handling. The detected presence of prevalent ambiguities, dualities, and mixed purpose in Dryden's work has forced conservative critics to at least defend their views of his straightforward style and beliefs. In the process, the politics, religion, literature, philosophy, and science of the Restoration have been re-examined for the truly bedrock foundation of intellectual life upon which Dryden's art is consciously and unconsciously built, and the Dryden that is emerging from these re-examinations is a more complex and shrewder poet than we have seen before.² Defender of the faith in status quo, Dryden, we are discovering, had a much harder job than we imagined, for the status of the status quo was characterized by intellectual dualities and shifting, not single-minded purpose and immobility. Tensions in many intellectual areas were vibrating the whole nation, and it seems unlikely that Dryden, personally disposed toward ratiocinative shifting and writing with the heroic couplet which favored such oscillation, would have remained unmoved.

The unlikelihood becomes even greater when one scrutinizes "Absalom and Achitophel." Written during and concerning a time of social and political turmoil, reflecting both personal revenge and professional duty on Dryden's part, and containing satirical portraits

of wildly shifting characters, "Absalom and Achitophel" is full of tensions from the moment of the very first lines when the Biblical/political parallels begin and Charles's controversial promiscuity is, however wittily phrased, laid bare for all to see and judge. A poem surrounded by such counterbalancing forces, great and small, might be expected to contain some significant tensions of its own, but most critics have unfortunately focused instead on such studies as determining whether the poem is structured as an epic, or a hybrid epic, or a satire, or a classical oration, or whether Dryden has debased Biblical scripture a little or a lot. Such source studies and also the more abstract studies of Restoration ideology only achieve in a study of Dryden their greatest value when they are tested in the lines of the poem itself and other poems in the canon similar to it in purpose, setting, imagery, and other specific elements.

I am of course alluding to the relationship of "Absalom and Achitophel" to Dryden's other major satires, a relationship which has been largely ignored to the detriment of our understanding of the poem and Dryden's satiric style. This study seeks to show that there are significant links among these satires and that "Absalom and Achitophel" constitutes a both subtle and obvious combination of these links that makes it the poem to study to define Dryden's satiric style.

Critics, however, have not often seen these links. "The remarkable feature of Dryden's satires is that he never repeated himself."³ Michael Wilding expresses here in his essay "Dryden and Satire" a common critical opinion of the uniqueness of the three major satires.

"Mac Flecknoe" with its vulgar comedy, "Absalom and Achitophel" with its overall dignified tone, and "The Medall" with its savage character sketches are viewed as distinct and separate types of satire. Thus, "Absalom and Achitophel" apparently stands aloof from the vulgarity and virulence of the other two poems. Critics have tended to separate "Absalom and Achitophel" like a well-behaved little boy from the "bad influence" of the other two, rowdier satires, whose "behavior" has been excused because of less important themes in "Mac Flecknoe" and Dryden's personally hotter temper on the occasion of "The Medall" (Ward, p.180). However, a close textual analysis of "Absalom and Achitophel" shows it not only thematically tied to "Mac Flecknoe" and "The Medall" by the respective associations with father/son royalty and Shaftesbury but also stylistically linked to both poems through similar imagery and a sharp, although covert, tone. The cryptic epigraph and intriguing preface of Dryden's "good little boy" prompt investigations that reveal sexual and scatological imagery in it similar to that recognized in its bawdier brothers.

A critic once claimed that Dryden "raised English satire to the rank of an art."⁴ If we invert this just claim, however, we would be even closer to the truth. The art of rank that Dryden apparently perfected in his "lower" satires is what will be examined for signs of its insidious application in the "higher" "Absalom and Achitophel." Granted, Dryden's "Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" (1692) proves that he was aware of a variety of satire types, but the extent of the links among his own satires suggests that Dryden per-

sonally had one predominant style which differed more in surface sharpness of tone than in type among the three satires. Typically, Dryden balances the high with the low by presenting comic characters in majestic roles and chastizing to a degree appropriate to the occasion. He often damns with feint praise, but never so shrewdly faintly as in "Absalom and Achitophel."

The central characteristics of Dryden's satire that thus emerge are a sexual attack, a scatological attack, and a pervasive use of ambiguity, which manifests itself in puns, allusions, cryptic metaphors, and uncertain syntax that enables Dryden to incorporate multi-level meanings appropriate to a consideration of his mixed audience and often mixed purposes.⁵ To prevent these iconoclastic characteristics of Dryden's style from seeming to degrade the lofty grandeur of all his other works, however, it is necessary to remember that these works under discussion are satires and were permitted a certain license by historical tradition and Restoration custom. How much burlesque license they did take must be determined by close textual analysis, but if the "low" style of other Restoration writers is any indication, Dryden could go very far down before having his license revoked by contemporary taste.

It is also necessary to understand Dryden's sexual and scatological references in the larger context of the main issues in "Absalom and Achitophel." Indeed, "issues" is itself a word pregnant with meaning, for it was the existence of one of Charles's illegitimate issues, Monmouth, that provided the public with a handy alternative to the Duke of York and contributed greatly to the Exclusion Crisis at the heart

of the poem. Dryden's use of the "Body Politique" metaphor, in the prefatory "To The Reader" and in the poem, is thus topically appropriate also, for it reminds us of the public/private dual nature of politics and satire. Just as in satire personal insult is linked to public reputation, so the personal lives of political figures affect their public images, and the greater the mismanagement of one's personal life, the greater the susceptibility of one's public image to ridicule. Despite Dryden's witty opening of the poem "excusing" King David's polygamy, King Charles found himself in a difficult political situation partly due to a personal preference (licentiousness) that affected public policy. Similarly, Monmouth's tremendous popularity with the public was partly the result of his striking personal handsomeness and his strong personal ambition.⁶ The public also was physically involved in the political situation, some of them literally up to their necks, for thirty-five executions resulted from the trials concerning the Popish Plot.⁷

The role that the hysteric public generally played in forcing Charles and others to take certain actions, though, was a more abstract, public function in terms of the forces at work in the poem, and this should remind us of the public, professional roles played by Charles as a king trying to maintain control and by Monmouth and others as rebels trying to wrest control from him. In this sense, those who complain about a vague, aloof Charles at the ending of "Absalom and Achitophel" have not understood the public role Dryden was championing. By the same token, however, those who praise Dryden's distanced, punitive

king at the ending have forgotten, I believe, the opening portrait of Charles which is more personal and lampooning. It is essential that both sides of Charles's life be seen existing simultaneously in the poem in order for us to understand the tension that goes beneath the surface level of the poem.

On the surface, "Absalom and Achitophel" tells the Biblical story of King David, his son Absalom, and the latter's corrupt advisor Achitophel as it relates to King Charles II, his illegitimate son the Duke of Monmouth, and the Whig leader the Earl of Shaftesbury. Dryden paints a picture of a peace-loving, if yet prolific, king who loves his son, who possesses many noble characteristics. Both King and son are in the midst of rebellious malcontents; however, and Charles sees not only the public using the Popish Plot as an excuse to threaten his power but also the advisor Shaftesbury using Monmouth's pride to seduce him into fighting for a bar sinister succession. Dryden in his character sketches satirizes Whigs and praises Tories, and the King's merciful reserve is compared to the people's audacious uprising. In time, however, Charles is forced to take action, and the poem ends in a literally thunderous reassertion of apparently divine rule that is vague on details supposedly because certain political confrontations had not actually occurred yet, as Dryden states in "To The Reader."⁸

However, a different interpretation of "To The Reader," which prefaces the poem, produces a somewhat different reading. Dryden's last words to the reader before beginning his poem refer to the "Body Politique" and to the satirist's role as a helpful physician prescribing

"harsh Remedies" to help eliminate that Body's vices ("To The Reader," p.5, ll.129). These parting words, I feel, should start us examining the poem for a possible expansion of this analogy, and this study contends that such a large scale analogy does exist, that the figure of Charles is central to the analogy, and that the analogy has a burlesque style which is consistent with Dryden's satires and Restoration literature. The analogy is basically an equation between the King and the government, which is a "Hot, Distemper'd State" in need of some relief from the ill humours of those factions that are fermenting and rising to threaten the government ("To The Reader," p.5, l.14). The harsh remedy that Dryden therefore metaphorically prescribes is a purgation of the King's State of political health, his body politic, and thus, the ending of "Absalom and Achitophel" reveals a royal flatulence similar to that at the end of "Mac Flecknoe."

The King literally and politically eliminates the rebels, but the metaphorical vagueness at poem's end is not just a screen. Charles has assumed his more abstract, public role, and so, despite the unsavoriness of Dryden's purgation image and Charles's removal of his son's faction, the King is not as bespattered by metaphorical implication as he might appear to be. There is still burlesque comedy at the end, but Dryden also yells out his political point above the belly laughs and flatulent thunder. The King is on his throne, and anyone who dares to shake his seat of power does so at great risk.

The other, sexual element of burlesque humor operating in the poem is found in both scattered phallic images and the more unified theme

of sexual force which is equated with political power. Before either of these elements can be accepted as existing in the poem and before the full textual analysis of "Absalom and Achitophel" begins, the historical and critical background of the poem must be examined to show that this burlesque is more generally appropriate than politically risky.

"Absalom and Achitophel" was published about November 9, 1681, a fortnight before the trial of Shaftesbury for treason, but the poem's environment of influences goes far beyond this one political event (Ward, p.167). I wish to examine four areas of this environment: the political and intellectual environment, the literary and social environment, the personal environment of Dryden's own life and theories, all three of which environments produced the poem, and finally the critical environment which was produced by the poem and which reflects in its patterns of studies a stylistic pattern in Dryden's work that has not been fully appreciated.

Dryden's intellectual state of mind is a matter of history. If this seems a deceptively plain statement, that is because it was intended to reflect the apparent receptiveness of Dryden's work to plain historical interpretations that often closes up during careful textual analysis. Mark Van Doren wrote in 1920 that Dryden's "poetry was the poetry of statement. At his best he wrote without figures, without transforming passion When Dryden became fired, he only wrote more plainly."⁹ Some critics have been trying for years to reverse or qualify this image of a dully declarative poet whose "great love

was the love of speaking fully and with finality" (Van Doren, p.68). Van Doren is correct in observing that "the story of Dryden's conquest of English poetry for the most part is the story not of his material but of his manner"; however, this manner is decidedly more lively, more complicated, and more shifting in its various statements (Van Doren, p.68).

Samuel Johnson is more aware of this lively side to Dryden. As Johnson states in his biography of the poet, "Next to argument, his delight was in wild and daring sallies of sentiment, in the irregular and eccentric violence of wit."¹⁰ Dryden's daring is indeed an important characteristic to note, but his ability to play with his first "delight" is what qualifies Van Doren's statement and signals a quality in Dryden upon which other critics have expanded. As Johnson says, "The favourite exercise of his mind was ratiocination," and:

When once he had engaged himself in disputation, thoughts flowed in on either side: he was now no longer at a loss, he had always objections and solutions at command: "verbaque provisam rem"-- give him matter for his verse, and he finds without difficulty verse for his matter.¹¹

Dryden's ability to act as a sort of poetic moderator for his own debatable subjects reflects more a delight in the play of language than any opportunism on his part. Besides what seems a personal disposition toward witty, rhetorical banter, there are other reasons for such playful impartiality.

Louis Bredvold in his seminal work The Intellectual Milieu Of John Dryden discusses the implications of Dryden's statement that he was "naturally inclined to skepticism in philosophy."¹² According to Bredvold, Dryden's period, his personality, and his style of writing were all influenced by pyrrhonism, which was the foundation for the sixteenth-century's anti-rationalism or philosophical skepticism. Opponents of this philosophy quickly and incorrectly equated it with atheism because its central theory viewed knowledge as arising from sense impressions, whose reliability cannot be tested, and therefore, "all that man can know is that he can know nothing" (Bredvold, p.19). Dryden would have been aware of the central use of this theory in religious and philosophical debate of the day, but once again, it is more the "manner" than the "matter" of this philosophy's influence that tells us the most about Dryden. The manner of thought here is very similar to Johnson's mental profile of Dryden: "Against every proposition, according to Pyrrho, the wise man will balance its contrary and consequently, by showing the futility of both arrive at the happy state of imperturbability" (Bredvold, p.18). Dryden shows such a cool and balanced judgement in "To The Reader" prefacing "Absalom and Achitophel" when he proclaims, "For, Wit and Fool, are Consequents of Whig and Tory: And every man is a Knave or an Ass to the contrary side" ("To The Reader," p.3, ll.5-6).

In his recognition of inherent dualities in philosophy and politics, however, Dryden is not absolutely indifferent and aloof. As Bredvold states, "In the modern world, as among the Greeks, the Skeptic

has often been a traditionalist, conservative in temper, a defender of the established order in politics and society, and a conformist in religion and practical conduct" (Bredvold, p.20). Dryden was indeed a conservative defender of the King in "Absalom and Achitophel," but the "manner" of his defense, not just the "matter" of it, must be recognized, and Van Doren's, Johnson's, and Bredvold's comments, I believe, reflect significantly on the ending of the poem, which I suggest is simultaneously both a conservative, plain statement and a daring balance of high and low, overt and covert wit.

Philosophical skepticism is not the only form of skepticism or intellectual theory that influenced Dryden, however. A skepticism influenced by scientific thought in the seventeenth-century also had an impact on Dryden, who was a member of the Royal Society. Bredvold discusses this influence, but a better overview of the general scientific influence on Dryden's work is Ruth Salvaggio's Dryden's Dualities. Salvaggio explains that besides the philosophical skepticism represented through Montaigne there was also a revisionist skepticism represented through Bacon which "doubts the validity of immediate matters only as a means to some final knowledge" unlike the former philosophy's distrust of both initial and final knowledge (Salvaggio, p.27; see note #2). The cautiousness of the endings of Newton's two great works are presented as evidence of this scientific skepticism which was wary of "the danger of confirming conclusions which are neither supported by experimentation nor as yet fully examined" (Salvaggio, p.36). Newton's reluctance to choose either the wave or the corpuscular theory

of light is just one more example of those dualities which Salvaggio sees as permeating Dryden's culture and shaping his writing's stylistic doubleness. What was a matter of practice for the scientists of the day and a way of thought for the philosophers seems a natural manner of style for the foremost man of letters in the seventeenth-century to adopt and develop, and Salvaggio's examination of Dryden's drama, political poetry, religious poetry, and other works gives strong support for this contention. Whether he was struggling to choose sides on an issue, striving to write balanced verse to please all of a mixed, sophisticated audience, or juggling with calm content those opposing ideas which came to mind, Dryden was writing in dualities.

Dryden was also living in dualities. London in 1681 might have been one great city, but it was divided into many factions. As J.R. Jones states in The Restored Monarchy 1660-1688, "Harmony was not established; instead the nation was divided into hostile camps, Court against Country, then Whig against Tory, and Anglican against Dissenter."¹³ Even these factions were not without division. "Socially as well as politically the first Whigs were a heterogenous combination of interests: aristocrats, lesser gentry, urban tradesman, some of the leading London merchant oligarchs, lawyers, small-holders and tenant farmers" (Jones, p.24). Charles II himself was characterized by inconsistency, and his reign was marked most by this same quality which left even his political allies wondering what his next move would be (Jones, p.10).

In this uncertain and dualistic environment, Dryden was a personal

and professional witness to those political events central to "Absalom and Achitophel." The arrangement of the biographer Charles Ward's three chapters on the importance of these events in Dryden's life is curiously appropriate to Dryden's relationship to "Absalom and Achitophel." The order of chapters seven through nine is "The Angry World," "Political Commitment," and "Attacks and Counterattacks." Dryden's growing commitment to the King seems literally surrounded by political turmoil. Dryden obviously felt enough of this pressure to make him write a poem defining the forces at work in such a "boiling pot," but Dryden also possesses, as we have seen, a culturally and personally based disposition towards distancing himself that kept his topical preoccupation with politics from engulfing his style into journalistic plainness. That is why I would modify Ward's statement that, "Beginning with 1680 it is almost as if Dryden laid aside his role of poet and assumed that of historiographer royal" (Ward, p.148). Ward is primarily concerned here with Dryden's work mostly reflecting contemporary politics, but there is a tendency in Dryden scholarship to view the Royal Historian's style in the political poems as even more stylistically unambiguous than the Poet's. I believe that Dryden worked a double shift and that the job of being both conservative historian and adventurous poet at the same time paid double dividends in his ability to both defend and play with the King's image in "Absalom and Achitophel."

As the titles of Ward's chapters suggest, the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis basically went through three stages: an angry, mob like

beginning when persons were jailed on rumour or on the false testimony of the Popish Plot's star witness, Titus Oates; a middle period when politicians began committing themselves to either Whig or Tory side in the Exclusion issue now in the spotlight; and a final period that saw the rise of the Whigs on the furious upswing of anti-Catholic hatred after Oates outlined a plan that French and English Catholics had supposedly developed to kill Charles II and move his Catholic brother, the Duke of York, from his exile in France to the English throne. Dryden's play at this time, The Spanish Friar (1679/80), could be said to have helped the King in its attack on outside forces through its presentation of the pimping, lusty, greedy character of Friar Dominic, but the editors of the California edition of Dryden's works have noted that when the play is read in the political context of the day, "some of the speeches would seem to have been calculated to make both Whigs and Tories uneasy."¹⁴ Dryden was falsely accused, when he dedicated the play to a Whig, of politically defecting because his pension had not been paid, but his reason for the dedication, or preface rather, at such a time is unclear. Perhaps, more than any of these reflections on Dryden's politics, the play simply reflects in its wild success the political wildfire that was consuming the nation (Ward, pp.146, 148).

The middle period, in which Charles dissolved Parliament twice to avoid facing the Whig's Exclusion Bill, appropriately enough saw two works by Dryden concerning these events (Ward, pp.157, 159).

"The Epilogue Spoken to the King at the opening the Play-House at

Oxford" was delivered to Whigs and Tories during an evening of diversion before the Parliament reconvened, and it pleads for a moderation that will prevent such violence as that which led to the execution of Charles I and shook the nation (Ward, p.159). Seizing the opportunity to rout the Whigs, Charles II once again dissolved Parliament, and after Shaftesbury's forces scattered, Charles followed up with his state-of-the-union appeal, "His Majesties Declaration to all His Loving Subjects, Touching the Causes & Reasons that Moved Him to Dissolve the Two Last Parliaments" (Ward, p.160). This tract is important for at least two reasons. First, it brings to a royal peak a pamphlet war that had been raging during these years of turmoil, and secondly, it produced among the reactions to it an anonymous tract apparently written by Dryden that defends Charles's position and does so with ideas very similar to those appearing five months later in "Absalom and Achitophel" (Ward, p.160). Critic W.K. Thomas and others feel that the pamphlet war greatly influenced Dryden, even leading him, they propose, to model his "Absalom and Achitophel" after one particular tract in circulation.¹⁵ "His Majesties Declaration Defended" constitutes Dryden's first direct defense of Charles, and it is appropriately in large part a direct response to another tract supposedly produced by Shaftesbury that attacked the King.¹⁶ These tracts are examined in the textual study later.

The final period of political turmoil grew out of the arrest of the Earl of Shaftesbury and Lord Howard of Escrick, but although this final stage marked the advance instead of the defense of the royal party against the Whigs, it was still a period, as Ward says, when

their "menacing force still existed" (Ward, p.164). As Ward notes, "both sides were bracing themselves for the showdown," which turned out to be the trial of Shaftesbury shortly after "Absalom and Achitophel" was published (Ward, p.164). The arrest of Shaftesbury makes it appear as if the King had finally conquered the Opposition, but Shaftesbury was assured of a packed jury empanelled by London's Whig sheriffs, and he did in fact go free after a verdict of ignoramus was returned (Ward, p.164). Dryden's direct attack in "The Medall" against the Whigs, who had struck a commemorative medal upon Shaftesbury's release, did indeed align him with the King, but during these months, there was still a great deal of political uncertainty in the air, and it is tempting to see this uncertainty's influence in the way Dryden hid his sexual and scatological metaphors in "Absalom and Achitophel." Politically, Shaftesbury was in jail, but everyone anticipated his release; and personally, although Dryden's sons were being helped through King's Scholarships, Dryden's salary was only being paid in half, a sum, according to Ward, which "could hardly have been sufficient to provide more than the bare necessities in a period of creeping inflation" (Ward, p.178).

This is not to suggest that Dryden carried his principles in his purse, that he hid the purgation images on the chance that triumphant Whigs would be appeased by the comical Charles they saw, although charges of opportunism concerning Dryden are only slowly dying off. The poem is a conservative defense, but Dryden's income is just one more example of uncertainty in his environment that might

have made him less apprehensive about describing a side of Charles that balanced out the other, officially godlike side. Dryden the historiographer royal has a wide conservative stance within which Dryden the poet can afford some fancy footwork without upsetting his fundamental position. And even with all these very real dualistic forces at work on Dryden, he is still that very imaginative poet who can majestically, or comically, distance himself from his subject as he sports with ideas. As Mark Van Doren notes, "He had no superstitions about the divine right, but he had no faith in democracy" (Van Doren, p.143). Perhaps, this was enough of a license for a playful poet to begin mixing both parties in burlesque metaphors.

Exposition and justification of Dryden's risky and risqué metaphors, however, should not have to rely solely on his demonstrated playfulness. As was suggested earlier, these metaphors are literarily as well as perhaps politically and intellectually appropriate, and in the section following this one, I will examine evidence in and concerning Dryden's plays that shows both his "correction" of the King and his hard lesson learned about overt correction. Such evidence helps further explain why Dryden might have wanted to disguise his burlesque advice to the King.

The present section, however, seeks precedents for Dryden's burlesque in writings outside his works. Sexual and scatological images in Dryden's poetry, especially in "Mac Flecknoe," and his reference to the "Body Politique" in "Absalom and Achitophel" suggest by their presence in such a distinguished writer's work a larger,

literary tradition involving burlesque elements. This is, of course, the case in the Restoration, and one of the obvious reasons was Charles's preference for French farce and liveliness in the previously closed theatres and once Puritan controlled society (Ward, p.26). Many were quick to acquire Charles's taste for exciting drama. There are other reasons, however, for the presence of such sexual and scatological imagery, and they involve the more abstract, philosophical Augustan attitudes toward the body, some of which are reflected in the discussion earlier on the King's public/private image and satire's central concern with such a duality. Both literary and philosophical attitudes will be discussed here, but a possibly direct source of such physical imagery in the poem deserves attention first.

The tract mentioned earlier, written in response to Charles's explanations of his Parliament dissolutions and supposedly produced by Shaftesbury, was very carefully read by Dryden. His own tract, "His Majesties Declaration Defended," is a point-by-point rebuttal of Shaftesbury's, "A Letter from a Person of Quality to his Friend concerning His Majesty's late Declaration," and many of the ideas developed in rebuttal appear later in "Absalom and Achitophel."¹⁷ One of the passages in Shaftesbury's tract is fascinating, for it does indeed discuss the King's public/private dual nature, but in its smug insistence on the People controlling everything that the King does except his eating, drinking, and apparently excreting, it raises the intriguing possibility that this is one more important point of rebuttal that Dryden expands and turns against Shaftesbury in "Absalom

and Achitophel":

Besides the King is a publick Person, in his private Capacity as a Man, he can only eat and drink, and perform some other Acts of Nature; but all his actings without himself, are only as a King, and in his Politick Capacity he ought not to Marry, Love, Hate, make War, Friendship or Peace, but as a King, and agreeable to the People, and their Interest he governs.¹⁸

The editors of the California edition of Dryden's works apparently do see a rebuttal on this point by the poet, if not to the tract passage itself then to the basic concept, for they cite the passage as a reference to specific lines in "Absalom and Achitophel." Here, the possibility of a connection between tract and poem becomes even more intriguing because these particular lines in the poem are strong textual evidence for the purgation metaphor associated with Charles. I believe that Dryden in expanding upon the tract's point hoped both to refute its author's limitations on the King and to agree ironically with the allowances granted Charles, together a standard satirical one-two punch. Thus, Dryden will agree that the King should keep command of his bodily functions, but he will not divorce totally the private from the public King and will insist instead via the poem that the King discharge his bodily as well as his royal duties over a faction that would only grant him control of the former. The lines in "Absalom and Achitophel" are spoken by King David/Charles at the poem's end in his long concluding reply to the rebels and his speech on government: "That one was made for many, they contend: / But 'tis to Rule, for that's a Monarch's End" ("AA," 11.945-46). These lines will

be discussed later in context with other purgative passages in the full textual analysis, but the puns here on "butt" and "end" give some indication of what physically as well as politically rules over the rebels when the King finally asserts his authority.

Whether or not Dryden saw this tract as a direct source for his poem's imagery, he must have seen burlesque elements in literature all around him. Even his own plays and his own person, in the character Mr. Bayes, are satirized in the infamous burlesque The Rehearsal in 1672 by the Duke of Buckingham and other of Dryden's colleagues (Ward, p.84). Beyond this one spoof of heroic plays, however, there is another form of burlesque satire that is unfortunately thought of as only Jonathan Swift's territory but which was practiced by other important figures and performed for them a vital function. In her illuminating article "That Poultry Burlesque Stile: Seventeenth-Century Poetry And Augustan 'Low Seriousness,'" Dona Munker makes some statements that lift this style out of the usual level of doggerel. After lamenting the fact that "Dryden's and Prior's ventures into the 'poultry Stile' are virtually ignored" and that Rochester's are considered "merely obscene," she defines the style and its function in an overview worth quoting in full:

The vernacular four-foot style of the Restoration era is not a "poultry" tradition at all; nor is this "other" Augustan verse satire a light-minded aberration from the poetic norms established by Waller, Cowley, and Dryden. The mode of Rochester, Prior, and Swift is deeply rooted in late Sixteenth- and early Seventeenth-Century conventions which, in turn, stem from satiric traditions far older than the heroic couplet--as old, indeed, as Western civilization

itself. It represents a significant attempt to fill a need that the poetry of the heroic couplet and of elegant statement apparently could not fulfill: the need for a form of serious satire that could deal with the "fragmentary and commonplace," with the import, and the importance of, ordinary, immediate social experience.¹⁹

Munker goes on to explain that Dryden, "despite his stated disapproval of short-stress verse and burlesque diction for elevated or tragic satire, nevertheless exploits the ironic as well as the comic value of the short line and the 'low' style" (Munker, p.17). In her tracing of the stages of this style over the centuries, Munker reveals in her examples from Donne, Suckling, Butler, Rochester, Prior, and Swift the characteristic use of an often ironic persona, of a surprising amount of syntactical ambiguity and complexity, and of imagery that is "intentionally 'low' or vulgarly colloquial" in its deflation of aristocratic pretensions (Munker, p.17). Each of these writers used these elements to various degrees, but of particular interest to this study at hand on Dryden are those writers of satiric epigrams. Munker shows that although the many satiric epigrams of the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century tried to remain as aloof and indirect as their ancient models, they often separated themselves from their targets by employing instead a "grotesque magnification of realistic detail," such as the scatological and sexual epigrams against the Puritans (Munker, p.18). The English and European love of such grotesque imagery is seen by Munker as a major factor "in the evolution of the English character-epigram" (Munker, p.17). Dryden's expanded use of the epigrammatic character-

sketch is extensive in "Absalom and Achitophel," and the grotesquerie and other characteristics of burlesque that do surface in the poem are only the tip of this iceberg of literary "lowness."

Perhaps, the greatest revelation about this "paultry burlesque," however, is not just that it existed and has a long tradition in literature, but that it strives to place in perspective the physically real nature of our existence with the ideal. Munker's analysis of Swift's "The Lady's Dressing-Room" helps to clarify this point about understanding our "commonplace" side and to provide indirectly an explanation of Dryden's presentation of Charles. As Munker reminds us, "Swift rubs Strephon's nose in the ugly reality of reeking petticoats and loaded chamber-pots," but Swift shows that it is Strephon's insistence that women are goddesses of love that is at fault, for it only leads later to his shift to an equally blind disgust towards their animalism (Munker, p.19). The beauty and the beast in all of us are naturally joined together, and no either/or fallacy can separate them. Swift realizes this in his pitying of unhappy Strephon, and I think Dryden realizes this in his combination of a private and a public King.

Dryden was entirely capable, however, of separating the object from the image, the real from the ideal for satiric effect. In "Language And Body In Augustan Poetic," Thomas Maresca demonstrates how Dryden's emphasis of Flecknoe's and Shadwell's corporeality has a theological base to its satire. The Incarnation is the perfect combination of the "intellectually conceived verbal and the sensually perceived physical," but in Flecknoe's distortion of the roles of

prophet, priest, and king, he fails to unite with the ideal, the Word.²⁰ His words are merely air; his essence is merely flesh. Flecknoe is "a travesty of Christ, a reductio ad absurdum of the divine tautology," and Maresca also feels that Flecknoe's reduction to flesh reveals the Augustan concern with the corpuscular theory in science. What Dryden, Pope, and Swift fear is a reduction to a purely material, chaotic world where words do not lift spirits but remain on the level of the flesh which uttered them (Maresca, pp.376, 387). Although Maresca acknowledges the divine combination of body and spirit, the implication seems to be that vivid, human physicality, even if tied to the spiritual, is somehow debasing. He notes about "Absalom and Achitophel" that Dryden "describes all of the poem's villains as markedly corporeal and leaves the poem's heroes vaguely ethereal and spiritual" (Maresca, p.378). As in many cases, it seems we prefer our "good guys" safely bland and kept beyond the physical taste of temptation, but Dryden is a sophisticated enough man and writer to show both the body and spirit, the private and public sides of a person without making them dully good.

Dryden is even sophisticated enough to criticize where criticism is due, without losing sight of the overall worth of a character or the function of a characterizing metaphor. His combination of praise and criticism concerning Monmouth shows this poise, and his description of Charles's promiscuity is a realistic perception of that private side that I believe is a little more critical of the King than most critics have acknowledged. In "Sexuality, Deviance, And

Moral Character In The Personal Satire Of The Restoration,"

John O'Neill explains that, "In the seventeenth-century satirist's view, character does not develop; it is exposed."²¹ Sexual behavior, such as infidelity, is a conscious action that immediately reflects, not eventually produces, a type of moral character. Overall, Dryden does defend Charles, and the monarch's behavior is placed in perspective, but Dryden's criticism of, in his own words, that "crying sin of keeping" mistresses was already public knowledge by 1678 in his play The Kind Keeper, banned by royal order after three days (Ward, p.128).

It is necessary to be reminded of Dryden's contact with a "low" style in order to remain open-minded as to its inclusion in "Absalom and Achitophel"; however, Dryden's purpose in the poem is to inspect and disinfect a political wound, and his professional sense of responsibility as a satirist as well as his playfulness as a poet is evident. The humor is not indiscriminate, and Dryden must have recognized the preoccupation of Restoration literature with a satire on man in general, a preoccupation that A.O. Lovejoy considers a genre which culminated in the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries. In his article "The Augustan Nose," which is one more study of the literary and philosophical foundations for the sexual and scatological "low" style, Philip Stevick discusses Lovejoy's definition of the genre which revolves around the idea that man's reason can lift him above the animals in terms of happiness and sociability but that he does not use it, and his animal instincts therefore override.²²

The satirist's job is to note the faults and to apply a remedy, and as was mentioned earlier, this overall duty Dryden analogizes to the physician's care of the patient and his prevention of the more drastic surgeon's remedies ("To The Reader," p.5, ll.8, 10). This analogy also is not a random metaphor, for this image of the satirist as physician is a popular one in Renaissance satire, where harsh remedies are characteristically prescribed in the extended metaphor. Critic Mary Randolph sees this medical metaphor as being transformed by scientific advances in the later seventeenth-century from the image of man's vices as ulcers and pustules to that of "ruling passions."²³ However, historian Mary Coate in contrast to Randolph's comments notes that the older, humour theories and the newer, experimental science theories were indeed struggling for supremacy in the same time period, but that, "Unfortunately, the belief in the theory of humours was the stronger factor; it coloured the pathology of the century, and it certainly arrested the progress of experimental diagnosis."²⁴ Ben Jonson's popular Every Man out of his Humour (1599) helped perpetuate this tradition, but more important than this, the "most significant of all the medical figures," according to Randolph, "is that of satire's operating as a purge, by way of either phlebotomy, laxative, or emetic" (Randolph, p.148). Dryden's purgation metaphor thus has a whole satiric tradition behind it, and the traditional reasons for prescribing purges in Renaissance satire, excess of food or humour or ingestion of poison, fit generally in with the diagnosis of Charles's royal indigestion from the

poisonous rebel plot in "Absalom and Achitophel" (Randolph, p.148).

Another possible burlesque influence on Dryden that is even older is Chaucer's hilarious "The Miller's Tale." Late in his career, Dryden even translated some of Chaucer's work, including some of The Canterbury Tales, and his critical analysis defending the medieval poet shows he was familiar with and entertained by his verses.²⁵ His knowledge, therefore, of the vainly handsome character Absalom and the fart that is expelled at his expense seems likely. Whether Dryden saw a parallel between Chaucer's Absalom and his own handsome Absalom, Monmouth, stopped by an expulsion, is unknowable, but Chaucer's sexual and scatological tales are part of that tradition of burlesque with which Dryden would have been familiar.

Dryden's contact with such images is not solely literary, however. Malone tells us that, according to good sources, Dryden himself had the habit of cleansing his body with a purge before engaging "in any considerable work," a habit satirically alluded to in The Rehearsal; furthermore, according to Restoration medical descriptions of distempers, the "Hot, Distemper'd State" that Dryden connects with the "Body Politique" in "To To The Reader" would have most likely been prescribed a purge as a remedy.²⁶ Purges were apparently as common then as aspirin is today.

The filth of Dryden's London was also unavoidable. As historian Roger Hart states, "The first thing a twentieth-century visitor would have noticed would undoubtedly have been the stench."²⁷

Bathrooms only appeared near the end of the seventeenth-century, and then only in very wealthy homes, and the open sewers were mentioned often in city records (Hart, p.25, 11). Of these sewers emptying into the Thames, the Fleet River was the most befouled, and "its obnoxious fumes were a reproach to public health" (Hart, p.11). It is interesting to note that Dryden's "The Medall," with its noxious images, was printed at a shop near Fleet Street, as indicated on its title page.

Just as Dryden's purging of Charles has a serious side, so Restoration associations with excrement also went beyond the burlesque joke that tried to laugh away ugliness. The infant mortality rate in Restoration London was enormous, and one major reason was, strangely enough, summer diarrhea. Historian Charles Creighton records that, "In each of three successive hot summers and autumns in London, 1669-71, that malady added some two thousand to the bill for the year in the course of some eight or ten weeks."²⁸ Scatological images were clearly unavoidable in Dryden's time, and their associations could range from the private joke to the public disease.

I think that there is an equally as wide a range of connotation in "Absalom and Achitophel," between Dryden's hidden private joke and his goal of correcting a public malady. Dryden is often seen, however, as a writer whose range is only great in terms of the variety of genres in which he writes, not his ability to display both high and low style or to mix them. The image of the neo-classical man of reason, abstract, even bombastic, soaring along in high heroic style

and not stooping to inspect everyday humans or their everyday functions, still persists. Dryden did much in this abstract way, but he also wrote "Mac Flecknoe" whose sexual and scatological imagery is decidedly low. Dryden produced works with both extremes of style and mixed them also, but one of the causes of our stereotyping of him is, ironically enough, his own critical discussions on style. His criticism has led us to confuse the stylish surface of "Absalom and Achitophel" with its substance, to translate poetic ease as thematic affability.

"A Discourse Concerning The Original And Progress Of Satire" is naturally a central statement of Dryden's knowledge and practice of satire. Critics who exaggerate Dryden's moderation, however, might interpret his objections to Juvenal's sharp satires as complete censorship of severe correction and images. They would do so from a misunderstanding of a matter of style. What Dryden objects to is the bluntness of Juvenal's correction, his "Chastisement."²⁹ As Dryden suggest, it is possible, moreover preferable, to be both severe and stylistically moderate at the same time:

How easie it is to call Rogue and Villain,
and that wittily! But how hard to make a Man
appear a Fool, a Blockhead, or a Knave,
without using any of those opprobrious terms!
To spare the grossness of the Names, and to
do the thing yet more severely, is to draw
a full Face, and to make the Nose and Cheeks
stand out, and yet not to employ any depth
of Shadowing. (Discourse, p.70, ll.28-34).

This is the style of Dryden's character sketching in "Absalom and

Achitophel," and his hidden analogies and puns allow him this masked severity.

Dryden also suggests that such satiric fineness is not offensive, even to those who recognize its sharpness. "Neither is it true, that this fineness of Raillery is offensive. A witty Man is tickl'd while he is hurt in this manner, and a Fool feels it not" (Discourse, p.71, 11.2-4). Despite this optimism, Dryden probably weighed the severity of his metaphors, the power and wit of those figures associated with them, and the uncertainty of the political situation and considered it best to be cautious in blatantly revealing his burlesque, but his personal preference for the covert correction as being more stylish is another reason for its use in "Absalom and Achitophel." There is a chance that such secret wounding may be more severe, but Dryden persists in his preference of the fine stroke:

If it be granted that in effect this way does more Mischief; that a Man is secretly wounded, and though he be not sensible himself, yet the malicious World will find it for him: Yet there is still a vast difference betwixt the slovenly Butchering of a Man, and the fineness of a stroak that separates the Head from the Body, and leaves it standing in its place. (Discourse, p.71, 11.5-11)

Dryden admittedly prefers the gracious manner of Horace to that of Juvenal's bluntness, but he ultimately ranks Juvenal above Horace in witty performance (Discourse, p.71, 1.26;p.72, 1.19). In its combination of graceful style and sharp points, "Absalom and Achitophel" seems to combine the best which Dryden sees in both

these major ancient models.

Other of Dryden's writings also reveal a lesson about blunt correction that he might have applied to "Absalom and Achitophel" to produce its severe gracefulness. Some of his poetry and plays before "Absalom and Achitophel" corrected Charles either in their indirect criticism of his personal behavior or, and more predominant, in their call for harsher action on his part to control insurrection. Mark Van Doren has noted lines in Annus Mirabilis (1666) that risk a disrespect of Charles, but Dryden's extremely bawdy play The Kind Keeper in 1678 risks the greatest reflection on Charles. As has been mentioned, the play criticized the popular practice of keeping mistresses, a habit which both Charles and James indulged in, and was banned by royal order after three days despite its great popularity. James was changing mistress at the time, and his popularity was at a low mark, so this might explain the ban by a monarch not usually sensitive about the subject of mistresses, but in his comments on the play's termination, Dryden seems to suggest that its overtness caused the ban: the "crime for which it suffered was that which was objected against the Satires of Juvenal, and the Epigrams of Catullus--that it expressed too much of the vice which it decried" (Ward, pp.128, 141). Indeed, various accounts of the play after its publication attest to its extreme lewdness (Ward, p.352, n.15). I believe that the lesson learned here, directly tied to Juvenal's satires, about grossly displaying reflections on Charles's character is translated to "Absalom and Achitophel." Dryden could get away with

his mostly witty account of Charles's "polygamy" but would have been more cautious about more overt correction ("AA," 1.2).

Dryden is not one to shy totally away from advice, however; and his play The Spanish Friar (1679/80) is an open call for the King's harsher treatment of insurrection:

Mercy is good, a very good dull virtue;
But kings mistake its timing and are mild,
Where manly courage bids them be severe:
Better be cruel once, than anxious ever. (Ward, p.147).

What is unique about "Absalom and Achitophel" is that it blends this political correction which was not banned with that type of personal satire in The Kind Keeper which was banned but which is very appropriate to satire. Dryden in the poem's metaphors is still calling for that same policy of harshness he extolled in The Spanish Friar, but the sexual and scatological reflections on the person of the King were more than close enough to those in The Kind Keeper for Dryden to exercise caution to avoid a similar fate. The importance of Shadwell was negligible compared to the King's, so Dryden in "Mac Flecknoe" did not need such a degree of caution, but the stakes and message were higher in "Absalom and Achitophel."

Overall, then, the political, intellectual, literary, social, and auctorial milieus of John Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel" favor the creation of a poem of greater sophistication, ambiguity, and burlesque than has heretofore been seen. The state of criticism on the poem, however, is not as lively. Still, I think it is valuable to consider here just what is accepted about Dryden's art of rank

because the deceptive nature of his work is reflected in the areas both chosen and neglected by the critics.

From its first reception to the present, the poem has not received the full appreciation it deserves. Dryden's intimates may very well have expected and understood the burlesque nature of wordplay in "Absalom and Achitophel"; however, his contemporary detractors in the verse rebuttals to the poem take offense at only the obvious, such as allusions to Charles's promiscuity ("Before Polygamy was made a sin"), and they do not cite other attacks on Charles's "Body Politique."³⁰ Similarly, the current criticism on Dryden also does not show any such winking familiarity with the poem's inside jokes, but it does show in a scattered form the makings for such an intimacy. Grouped according to the poem's structure and style, Dryden's general stance, sexual and scatological imagery in the poem and other works, and evidence of syntactical and philosophical ambiguity, Dryden criticism begins to reveal some uncommon statements about a poem which has seemed a commonplace statement of Dryden's directness.

W.K. Thomas in his book The Crafting Of Absalom and Achitophel discusses the major views of the poem's structure, which is basically seen as either that of a large poem with many genres, of a kind of epic, or of a historical/narrative poem (Thomas, p.164). Thomas sees the poem as a heroic satire, but more than this, he sees it as being based, like "The Medall," on the structure of a classical forensic oration. As his immediate model for the poem, Dryden sup-

posedly chose one of the tracts from the pamphlet war surrounding the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis. Thomas D'Urfey's "The Progress of Honesty" is seen as giving Dryden a framework upon which to build his oration, but overall, Thomas's comments on Dryden's adaptations of form, his general mixing of high and low styles, suggest a poet who was amalgamating more than imitating (Thomas, p.171). Dryden's own categorization of the poem as a Varronian satire, comedic narrative with a mixture of forms and a mixed audience of vulgar and learned, says the most about a poem which has received such a mixture of structural readings from critics (Thomas, pp.166, 168). His adaptability, his ability to incorporate whatever materials seem appropriate, might account for these differences of opinion.

This pragmatic adapting seems to be reflected in the studies of Dryden's use of Biblical scripture. A.L. French believes that Dryden's poetic use of scripture, especially compared to Marvell's use, is undeveloped and unorganized, but Leon Guilhamet sees Dryden's "debasement" of scripture as an intentional manipulation that serves to make the Church of England, like any other faction, subservient to the King, whose control is essential.³¹ Dryden's parallels with his Biblical models may not be perfect, but scriptural reverence is not his main goal, and so Guilhamet's view seems more accurate in its recognition of Dryden's overriding political purpose. Dryden's scriptural accuracy aside, however, it is his flexibility in borrowing from many types of literature and custom tailoring them to his own style and purposes that should be revealed by these studies.

More concrete evidence of Dryden's adapting is his apparent altering of lines found in the third and subsequent editions that were omitted from the first edition. Edward Saslow has traced the theories surrounding this omission, which was apparently the printer's fault, and notes that the added lines make the satire on Shaftesbury more personally abusive.³² Dryden indeed plays with words in his restoration of these lines, but it is his overall wordplay that is more important. Bruce King in his study of wordplay in "Absalom and Achitophel" proposes that there are no less than twelve different types of puns in the poem.³³ King suggests that Dryden's type of punning, in which the speaker's voice keeps the wordplay in a certain perspective, marks a transition between Shakespeare's and Donne's poetry where the pun controls the context and Pope's and Swift's poetry where the speaker assumes control (King, p.330). As has been suggested, Dryden's hidden wordplay in the poem is extensive, but his overall direction of it is what keeps it supporting a central, conservative cause instead of fragmenting into isolated insults against the King and others.

Dryden does support the King, but his subtlety of political stance is in question. The traditional view of Dryden's presentation of Charles is basically the same as that expressed in Albert Ball's "Charles II: Dryden's Christian Hero."³⁴ Earl Miner and others concur with this view of Charles's divine-right rule and God figure in the poem, especially of his thunderous reassertion of such rule at the poem's end.³⁵ Bernard Schilling shifts Dryden's defense away from

the purely religious to a more comprehensive defense of the political and social beliefs that were an implicit part of Dryden's culture, what Schilling refers to as "the conservative myth."³⁶ However, Schilling excuses the poem's possible dullness by saying that this is simply the result of Dryden's repeated insistence on these conservative values (Schilling, p.305).

This last view does not grant Dryden much sophistication, either as a poet or a political observer, and Dustin Griffin, in noting this tendency, suggests that the poem is more urbane, secular, and witty than critics give it credit for being. The King is not Miltonically godlike but rather politically shrewd, and the poem's ending reflects Dryden's awareness, Griffin believes, of the "political expediency of supporting the King."³⁷ Dryden is certainly not ignorant of the King's religious symbolism, but he chooses to keep the poem, like Charles, on a human level (Griffin, p.364).

Reflected in the criticism, the first two steps toward a re-valuation of Dryden's satires are, therefore: first, a recognition of Dryden's playful and serious adaptations of his sources and styles and, secondly, a crediting him with a similar flexibility in his conservative stance that allows for the personal, human element in characters which is so essential to satire and so obviously a part of Charles's promiscuous, embattled reign. The third step is a recognition of the specifics of this human element.

The significance of the decidedly human corporeality in Dryden's satires has been examined by the critics, but they stop short of

valuable applications to "Absalom and Achitophel." Robert Willson as well as Thomas Maresca in their articles detailing Dryden's metaphorical corruption of food, flesh, and humours help reveal the power and reasoning behind physical satire in "Absalom and Achitophel" and "Mac Flecknoe."³⁸ Jerome Donnelly's study of movement and meaning in "Mac Flecknoe" adds to such an appreciation of the complexity of physical satire, as do other articles which go beyond the obviousness of disease imagery in "The Medall."³⁹ Too often, however, in these and other studies there has been a targeting of the obvious. Flecknoe, the rebels, and Charles the polygamist are fair game, but King Charles resides on sacred ground upon which no one can hunt.

To be able to see through Charles's nebulosity in "Absalom and Achitophel" as more than just the heavenly clouds of divine rule requires a comprehensive explanation of those Dryden disparities that have puzzled critics for centuries. The revaluative fourth step towards Dryden's satires thus concerns stylistical ambiguity which serves to unify the four total areas of criticism as a rationale for this reading of the poem. In trying to explain the ambiguities detected in Dryden's works, some critics have tried to show Dryden as a victim of his own time who tries unsuccessfully to hold back with a conservative defense an increasingly advancing society. This is essentially Laura Brown's position in "The Ideology of Restoration Poetic Form: John Dryden." Brown sorts through the major broad theories, Pyrrhonic and otherwise, that might account for the "skepticism, paradox, subversion, absurdity, or irony" that recent

readings have seen as the "central achievement" of Dryden's works despite these contradictions being generally unacknowledged in the criticism.⁴⁰ Seeking to restore an intellectual foundation for such disparity and refuting those critics who praise Dryden's reconciliation of opposites, Brown believes instead that, "Dryden's form is not organic. It does not produce unity from disparity, though some individual poems claim to do so. It is defined precisely by its failure to reconcile, by its persistent reiteration of contradiction". (Brown, p.405). Contrary to critics who say Dryden "suspends judgement," Brown says his form "asserts a conviction," but this conviction is "blind." "In its blind advocacy of a conservative and static ideal, it sees the realities of a progressive and dynamic historical process" (Brown, p.405).

In its attempts to resolve Dryden's ambiguities, though, Brown's study seems to create some unresolved ambiguities of its own. It credits Dryden with seeing his society's progression but blinds him with a conservative label, which makes him seem like a belligerently senile party voter. Dryden should not be labeled "static" or regressive for following his age's common use of classical models or for advocating a political status quo when the "dynamic," new progressives threaten to repeat the civil wars Dryden had already witnessed once. The turbulence of Dryden's times, while certainly influencing him, was not great enough to keep such a poet of balance and poise an intellectual shut-in fearful of engaging contrary minds.

Dryden not only braved but also enjoyed such blustery discussion,

and on a decidedly conscious level for significant reasons. By expanding upon a brief remark by Samuel Johnson on the poet, Harold Love in "Dryden's 'Unideal Vacancy'" tries to explain Dryden's paradoxical metaphors as Augustan conceits, similar to metaphysical conceits but used for shock value against an audience philosophically accustomed to Cartesian directness and certainty.⁴¹ Such reasoning might seem to explain an occasional ambiguity on Dryden's part, but shock value by definition does not seem to go far in explaining Dryden's pervasive use of ambiguity or his underlying dualities.

Ruth Salvaggio's study, mentioned earlier, on Dryden's Dualities is both faithful to Dryden's milieu and to his poetic style. What seems essential for studies in cultural influences is a close cross-referencing with the author's works, and Salvaggio provides this, but she also remains open to a perception of Dryden's apparent delight in ambiguity. Dryden himself shows an awareness of and expertise with syntactical ambiguity in one of his letters, which examines the grammatical structure of another poet's verse and teases out the meaning.⁴² What Dryden did incidentally to another's work, he did methodically to his own. As Salvaggio shows, in All For Love, in "Religio Laici," in "Absalom and Achitophel," in "Alexander's Feast," in "A Song For St. Cecilia's Day, 1687," and in other works, Dryden showed far more delight in than fear of contradictions, and he sought structural dualities in character pairings, subjects, and metaphors to enable him to entertain formally such delight.

Perhaps, the most provocative observation on Dryden's delight

in form is one made by Michael Wilding that reflects not only the poet's playful ambiguities and combination of high and low dualities but also that burlesque tradition which has been discussed. Wilding in "Dryden and Satire" discusses the three major satires, exploring the burlesque of imagery and alliteration in "Mac Flecknoe" and the savagery of personal insults in "The Medall."⁴³ His most suggestive comments, however, center on the last lines of "Mac Flecknoe":

Sinking he left his druggert robe behind,
 Borne upwards by a subterranean wind.
 The Mantle fell to the young Prophet's part,
 With double portion of his Father's Art.⁴⁴

The poem's alliterative pun on Flecknoe that is implied in the final rhyme ("Prophet's part": "Father's (F)art") shows that Dryden could blend his age's emphasis on burlesque qualities with his own syntactical dexterity to create yet another level to the satire that climaxes the scatological imagery filling the poem. Moreover, this bit of evidence will be shown, in the textual analysis following, to provide a valuable link between the endings, images, and styles of "Mac Flecknoe" and "Absalom and Achitophel," thus strengthening the validity of the three satires' unity and of the purgation metaphor.

Dryden provides in his poetry such clues to livelier reading, but he prefers, as his "Discourse on Satire" shows, not to be "Juvenal" by blatantly revealing them. Instead, he courts his audience. Speaking in "To The Reader" about the open-ended ending of "Absalom and Achitophel," Dryden sees hope for a future peace between Absalom and David: "And, who knows but this may come to pass? Things were

not brought to an Extremity where I left the Story" ("To The Reader," p.4, ll.31-33). The text, however, suggests that this is exactly where things are metaphorically brought to in the poem. If the sewer "course" and sometimes cryptic nature of scatological satire in "Mac Flecknoe" are kept in mind, Dryden's epigraph to "Absalom and Achitophel" becomes an intriguing invitation to the poem's later double entendres on various extremities. Taken from Horace's Ars Poetica, the epigraph in full translation reads: "A poem is like a picture: one strikes your fancy more, the nearer you stand; another, the farther away."⁴⁵

Many readers have stood back and enjoyed Dryden's picture-perfect aim at the obvious targets in the poem, but not enough have stepped closer to inspect all of his striking marksmanship and to satisfy a wary curiosity about one's perception of the poem that this elliptical epigraph should have generated. The popularity in the seventeenth-century of the Biblical Absalom/Achitophel story, and specifically of its political parallels in the Restoration, assured the immediate recognition of Dryden's poem as a political statement, so the riddle quality of the epigraph suggests a purpose beyond that of stating the obvious for a public unneedful of reminders or that of suggesting that Whigs will enjoy the poem if they do not read too closely.⁴⁶ Dryden's epigraph to "The Medall" is, by contrast, unambiguously and specifically applicable to the situation discussed in the poem.⁴⁷

Promised revelation in the epigraph to "Absalom and Achitophel"

leads to a metaphorical rankness in the poem that is similar to that found in Dryden's other major satires, but general similarities among the satires should perhaps be mentioned first. "Mac Flecknoe" was formally published, in a poor, unauthorized version, in early October, 1682, but it had been circulating privately and popularly since 1678. The historical ties are obviously closest between "Absalom and Achitophel," published in November, 1681, and "The Medall," in March, 1682, both of which obviously have the similar subject of satirizing the Whigs and Shaftesbury who have been so impudently bold.⁴⁸ However, Dryden's three major satires all came within a very short span in his career, and his mood could be said to have been generally satiric during these years of political turmoil.⁴⁹

All three satires are also similar in their presentation of the corruption of a "royal" act. "Mac Flecknoe" turns "royal" succession into a burlesque of inverted values. "Absalom and Achitophel" shows wicked dissent corrupting the good and seeking to undermine the King, and "The Medall" records the perversion of the practice of honoring hero-saviors. Whether those attempting succession are shown as bad writers, corrupt politicians, or numismatic narcissi, the poems have this topical similarity, which is centered on pride, and they will be shown to have metaphorical links as well.

Although "Absalom and Achitophel" and "The Medall" seem to be poetically fathered by the same political event, the former anticipating Shaftesbury's trial and the latter recording its consequences,

"Mac Flecknoe" and "Absalom and Achitophel" in many ways appear to be the real twins. "Mac Flecknoe" and "The Medall" are both associated with scatological imagery, but "Mac Flecknoe" supplies more evidence supporting the charge that "Absalom and Achitophel" is equally rank. Though the text of "Absalom and Achitophel" is the principal source of this evidence, the contribution of "Mac Flecknoe" to the argument lies not merely in providing some vague guilt-by-association to condemn the other satires. "Mac Flecknoe" and "Absalom and Achitophel" have parallels beyond those of associations with epic elements, themes involving kingly figures, and the subject of succession.⁵⁰ Dryden himself in his "Discourse on Satire" grouped both poems under Varronian satire (Wilding, p.214). Furthermore, each poem's conclusion is a long overview of affairs that contains the identical, "He said," spoken by a kingly figure, who has a habit of nodding and who overindulges in sex.⁵¹

Examination of the two poems' beginnings also reveals similarities. As mentioned above, one of the largest concerns in the poems is obviously the point of royal succession, and both the reigning monarchs' promiscuity and the special qualities of that favorite son are points that are introduced immediately in both poems. Thus, in "Mac Flecknoe" we are presented with a figure who mixes "business" with pleasure:

This aged Prince, now flourishing in Peace,
 And blest with issue of a large increase;
 Worn out with business, did at length debate
 To settle the succession of the State. ("Mac," 11.7-10)

Similarly, in "Absalom and Achitophel" we are shown a ruler who religiously follows the edict of Biblical times, "Before Polygamy was made a sin," and who, therefore, "Scatter'd his Maker's Image through the Land" ("AA," 11.2, 10). Furthermore, just as "With secret Joy, indulgent David view'd / His Youthfull Image in his Son renew'd:" so Flecknoe, "pond'ring which of all his Sons was fit / To Reign, and wage immortal War with Wit" perceives that "Sh-- alone my perfect image bears" ("AA," 11.31-32;"Mac," 11.11-12, 15). The tone of these poems' openings also is a similar, mock-majestic, rumbling solemnity, which has the effect of distancing the speaker in his broad historical perspective from the figures he sees or alludes to who are out of step with the ancient grandeur they affect. As most satires and especially Augustan ones do, these poems and particularly this tone serve to remind us that standards have been set but not met by anyone presented.

Both satires, then, are framed by these introductory images of a sexual nature and by those concluding images, already hinted of, of a scatological nature. The validity of this bawdy/dirty frame will grow as the burlesque elements of each satire are revealed, and "Mac Flecknoe" will reveal its emphasis on the scatological while "Absalom and Achitophel" will display its roughly even balance of both scatological and sexual images.

The opening line of "Mac Flecknoe," "All humane things are subject to decay," sets the theme for all the images of filth and vice to follow in the poem. The main action in the poem, the royal procession

to crown Mac Flecknoe, is begun with appropriate classical and Biblical allusions to greatness, but the "Royal Barge" is more like a garbage scow in the procession on the Thames as the "little fishes throng" about it "As at the morning toast" of floating excrement ("Mac," 11.30, 43, 39, 49, 50). Whether by land or by water, as his abbreviated name "Sh--" readily suggests, Mac Flecknoe's (Shadwell's) excremental associations are emphasized. News of the coronation has spread to excite the town, and the fate of bad writers' works to be used for toilet paper is suggested for his voluminous work, as:

From dusty shops neglected Authors come,
Martyrs of Pies, and Reliques of the Bum.
Much Heywood, Shirly, Ogleby there lay,
But loads of Sh-- almost choakt the way. ("Mac," 11.100-03)

The names of these obstructed streets, such as "Pissing-Ally," are just small reminders of the nature of much of the poem's imagery ("Mac," 1.47).

"Mac Flecknoe" also contains sexual imagery, most of it centered in the description of the "Brothel=houses," whose "Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys" impinge upon the Nursery of future Queens, Heroes, and Actors that "erects its head" nearby ("Mac," 11.70, 71, 74). There are also suggestions of sexual puns in "Mac Flecknoe" which are especially important in that they reappear in "Absalom and Achitophel." References to a romantic tragicomedy, Love's Kingdom, and an opera, Psyche, by Shadwell have phallic connotations in their

mocking references to "Sceptre," "rule of Sway," and "Loyns" and to that strict chastity ("righteous Lore") which characters in Love's Kingdom practiced. In this part of the mock coronation, Shadwell thus:

In his sinister hand, instead of Ball,
 He plac'd a mighty Mug of potent Ale;
Love's Kingdom to his right he did convey,
 At once his Sceptre and his rule of Sway;
 Whose righteous Lore the Prince had practis'd young,
 And from whose Loyns recorded Psyche sprung. ("Mac,"
 11.120-25)

Shadwell's sexuality, like his writing, is in an impotent form overall, but Dryden's use of these puns is not always connected to impotency.

The phallic symbols of "Sceptre" and "rule of sway" reappear in "Absalom and Achitophel," but instead of ironically contrasting physical sexuality with intellectual sterility, Dryden shows these symbols as a potent force, either comically burlesque or politically corrupt. Amidst the openly sexual associations of the beginning of "Absalom and Achitophel," the speaker seems to suggest this metaphorical equation when he speculates that Absalom's "Imperiall sway" resulted from either his conception ("Whether, inspir'd by some diviner Lust, / His Father got him with a greater Gust") or his own "manly beauty" ("AA," 11.22, 19-20, 22). It is true that "Sway" also and obviously refers to the King's dominion over his subjects that Dryden seeks to defend, but, as Dryden confronts us with in the first lines, the distinguishing mark of Charles's reign

is "his Maker's Image" he has sexually "Scatter'd" "through the Land" ("AA," 1.10).

Dryden used these sexual images linked to political associations even before "Absalom and Achitophel" in two of his plays. In The Conquest of Granada (1671-72), the scheming character Abdalla in Part I of that two-part play refers to a time ripe for rebellion: "The Granadins will gladly me obey; / (Tir'd with so base and impotent a sway.)"⁵² Similarly, political reversals are sexually charged. Almahide in the play, "To lawless Rebels is expos'd a prey, / And forc'd the lustful Victor to obey" (IV.i.11.18-19). In Part II of The Conquest of Granada, the sexual associations of "force" are mentioned with insistence: "But you bold Lovers are to force your Fate. / This force you us'd my Maiden blush will save; / You seem'd to take what secretly I gave" (II.ii.11.50-52). In The Spanish Friar (1679/80), the political and pandering dealings focused in Father Dominic are a general suggestion of these two behaviors' connection in Dryden's mind, as are the rebels' attempts to "debauch a King."⁵³

Thus, the words "sway" and "force" have a sexual background and context in "Absalom and Achitophel" and the repetition of "pillars" and "swords" emphasizes the specifically phallic connotations.⁵⁴ From Dryden's conservative perspective, it is indeed true that "Kings are the publick Pillars of the State," but omit the "l" in "publick," and the covert burlesque in the line becomes apparent and adds to the King's overt sexual image begun in the first lines ("AA," 1.953). Other critics have noticed some of Dryden's sexual puns that reveal

this phallic emphasis. Paul Ramsey notes the sexual satire in a description of a minor character in the poem: "Yet, Corah, thou shalt from Oblivion pass: / Erect thy self thou Monumental Brass."⁵⁵ It is rewarding, furthermore, to keep in mind this passage's "Oblivion" when looking back to the "Act of Oblivion" in "To The Reader" and looking forward to the rebels' ultimate fate of purgation. Anatomical associations, both sexual and scatological, tie them all together.

The argument for Dryden's deliberate emphasis on sexual imagery, however, does not rely solely on isolated words and possible puns. David's/Charles's "polygamy" is discussed openly; indeed, the first twenty lines or so are solely concerned with a description of that time, "When man, on many, multiply'd his kind" ("AA," 1.3). But as has been suggested, the overall pattern of this imagery equates sexual power and especially phallic force with political power. "Absalom and Achitophel" remains, according to satiric traditions, on the personal level to comment on its political subjects. Achitophel's advice on how to "force" the issue of succession is couched in this obviously sexual way:

If so, by Force he wishes to be gain'd;
 Like womens Lechery to seem Constrain'd,
 Doubt not, but when he most affects the Frown,
 Commit a pleasing Rape upon the Crown. ("AA," 11.471-74)

It is understandable, then, that Achitophel's earlier advice to Absalom is that, "Manly Force becomes the Diadem" ("AA," 1.382).

Dryden applies this sexual imagery of rape not only to physical persons (Charles, Monmouth) but also to honorable abstract qualities. "Grace" and "Virtue" in the poem are personified as female figures whom the rebels seek to seduce. For example, Achitophel's seduction of Absalom is described in these terms: "While fainting Vertue scarce maintain'd her Ground, / He pours fresh Forces in, and thus Replies:" ("AA," 11.374-75). Similarly, the rebels are not content to "look on Grace's hinder parts," and so they move "To tempt the terror of her Front and Dye" ("AA," 11.1008-09). Many critics have commented on this last passage's reflection of the Biblical story where God allows his "back parts" to be seen but keeps his too powerful face hidden.⁵⁶ While this may also be one more semi-comical allusion to Charles's godlike backside, the sexual pun on "Dye" seems more obvious. Concerning other areas of the poem, statements on the masses who must "submit" to David's raids on the treasury are not blatantly sexual by themselves, but the poem's overall pattern of imagery strongly suggests a suggestive portrait of Charles and the rebels ("AA," 11.93, 394).

Sexual references are, in fact, an important part of the poems' character sketches of almost every main figure, namely Shadwell, Charles, Monmouth, and Shaftesbury. One structural link that ties three of these figures together is the identical tag line, "He said," which follows Flecknoe's, Achitophel's, and David's speeches and which somewhat resembles Milton's repeated line, "He ended," in the final book of Paradise Lost which is a tag comment on speeches.⁵⁷

These figures are more importantly linked, however, by similar associations with extremes and extremities and with phallic swaying.⁵⁸ We have already seen that Flecknoe is a "hoary Prince" in a procession passing brothels ("Mac," 1.106). Shaftesbury, in addition to being Achitophel the "seducer" and potential "rapist" of the crown in "Absalom and Achitophel," is in "The Medall" the "lowdest Bagpipe" in a diatribe that would make Chaucer's piping, randy Miller blush, for "His open lewdness he could ne'er disguise."⁵⁹ Additionally, Flecknoe and David are both considered "pillars of the State" that are as sexual as they are political ("Mac," 1.109;"AA," 1.953). Some disgruntled subjects are even described as in favor of "laying Honest David by, / On Principles of pure good Husbandry," and Absalom is similarly described in terms suggestive of "breeding" as one who "seem'd as he were only born for love" ("AA," 11.507-08, 26).

Scatological images are also spread over all three satires and suggest through their patterns the development of similar images in "Absalom and Achitophel." The "rising Rebels" in "Absalom and Achitophel" are associated with "Channels," "Lake," "Flood," "every hostile Humour," and especially "Course," while such aquatic images are equated in "Mac Flecknoe" with the Thames's sewage, with its "Morning Toast."⁶⁰ There may be a hint, then, of a pun, as well as a Biblical reference in the "Regions Waste, beyond the Jordan's Flood" ("AA," 1.820). The implications are even stronger in the "unresisted course" Dryden takes in "The Medall" ("AA," 1.1020). Shaftesbury is an even more "daring Pilot in extremity" in this

vitriolic rejoinder to the rebel's acquittal ("AA," 1.159). The rebels' "Fumes of Madness" have created a "pox'd Nation," which must purge itself of the "swelling Poyson" before "the Calmness that succeeds" can be achieved ("Medall," 11.271, 266, 294, 255). The political climate must thus weather an internal storm:

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. ("Medall,"
11.252-55)

Supposedly behind the meaning of this passage is the common Renaissance belief that national character, besides individual character, is formed by climate; however, the emphasis in these lines seems to be on a temporary state of internal strife which forces its own purgation and the subsequent relief.⁶¹ The images suggest a concern with physical health as much as, if not more than, mental health:

The swelling Poyson of the sev'ral Sects,
Which, wanting vent, the Nation's Health infects,
Shall burst its Bag; and fighting out their way
The various Venoms on each other prey. ("Medall," 11.294-97)

To prevent such an infection, Dryden, as the physician/satirist he calls himself in "To The Reader," must prescribe a proper venting of these ill-humoured men. This is exactly the prescription Dryden had already written out in "Absalom and Achitophel." The historical ties between the two poems could not be any tighter, and other, metaphorical similarities have already been discussed, but perhaps the

greatest similarity to be noted is that the "inborn Broyles" associated with Shaftesbury's rebellion in "The Medall" parallel an extended metaphor of extreme internal distress in "Absalom and Achitophel" ("Medall," l.318).

To explain Dryden's purgation effect in the poem, it is best to return to his causative reasoning in "To The Reader" and quote in full his last paragraph, which develops the medical analogy:

The true end of Satyre, is the amendment of Vices by correction. And he who writes Honestly, is no more an Enemy to the Offendour, than the Physician to the Patient, when he prescribes harsh Remedies to an inveterate Disease: for those, are only in order to prevent the Chyrurgeon's work of an Ense rescindendum, which I wish not to my very Enemies. To conclude all, If the Body Politique have any Analogy to the Natural, in my weak judgement, an Act of Oblivion were as necessary in a Hot, Distemper'd State, as an Opiate would be in a Raging Fever. ("To The Reader," p.5, ll.6-15)

Critics have always considered these words to be Dryden's call for moderation, but the "harsh Remedies" analogous to the satirist's work have not been duly credited. The crucial last sentence in the passage defines Dryden's prescription as an "Act of Oblivion" for the ill political State. Dryden seems to be technically alluding to the Act or Bill of Oblivion, applied in both 1660 and 1690, "exempting those who had taken arms or acted against Charles II and William III respectively from the penal consequences of their former deeds."⁶² This parallels both the general definition of "oblivion" in The Oxford English Dictionary as "forgetfulness"

and also Dryden's own words in 1700 cited at that dictionary entry: "Among our crimes oblivion may be set; But 'tis our King's perfection to forget." These are good general explanations of Dryden's phrasing and would probably be the standard gloss made by his contemporaries as well, but they do not fully explain Dryden's emphasis on the medical analogy in his preface or poem. "Distemper" in the Restoration was a term for a general category of human diseases, ranging from the gout that Dryden suffered to cancer, and purgation was a common prescription for them.⁶³ Dryden's apparent association of this act of pardon with one of those "harsh Remedies" seems unlikely, especially since he recommends harsher, not softer, treatment of the rebels in his past works and in the poem itself. There are more compelling reasons, however, for believing Dryden equated this "Act of Oblivion" with purgation, and these involve his metaphorical representation of the rebels.

As discussed before, the three common causes of a condition requiring purgation were indigestion, the presence of an unbalanced humour, or the presence of a poison (Randolph, p.148). The "swelling Poyson" equated with the rebels in "The Medall" is one reason for purgation already examined in Dryden's work, and the association of the rebels in "Absalom and Achitophel" with "every hostile Humour" provides another cause for purgation ("Medall," 1.294;"AA," 1.138). Critic Ruth Wallerstein links Shaftesbury's character in the poem to that Melancholy which men over centuries had come to associate more with physical and mental instability than with divine genius as before,

so according to Restoration purgation practices, he was a prime candidate, for physicians gave strong doses to melancholy and mad people.⁶⁴ Dryden was all too familiar with the practice of satirizing humours, for he himself had been satirized as a humour character by Shadwell in The Humorists (1671), and others had similarly lampooned him.⁶⁵

I believe Dryden recognized and utilized both of these common reasons for purgation, but indigestion, the first cause listed, appears to be the one Dryden chose to begin developing the metaphorical illness in the poem. The truly strong undercurrents of humor and "humour" only start to flow when David's subjects accept the rebels' cause:

For 'twas their duty, all the Learned think,
T' espouse his Cause by whom they eat and drink.
From hence began that Plot, the Nation's Curse,
Bad in its self, but represented worse;
Rais'd in extremes, and in extremes decry'd:
Not weigh'd, or winnow'd by the Multitude;
But swallow'd in the Mass, unchew'd and Crude.
Some Truth there was, but dash'd and brew'd with Lyes,
To please the Fools, and puzzle all the Wise. ("AA,"
11.106-15)

Critics such as Thomas Maresca have cited these images of food, eating, and humours as being symbolic of the debasing rebellion, but none have followed this line of thought and imagery all the way to the poem's end.⁶⁶

What does metaphorically develop is that this political ingestion soon aggravates "every hostile Humour" to the point where the fermen-

tative "Foam" figuratively threatens Charles's government ("AA," 11.110, 113, 138, 141). Perhaps biting off more than he can chew by fighting the rebellion, Charles thinks to "soften" his position with "Concessions from the Throne" but discovers instead that "Lenitives fomented the Disease" ("AA," 11.925, 926). A "lenitive," though it generally means "to soften, assuage, soothe," is usually associated with medicines, which are "mitigating, soothing; gently laxative."⁶⁷ Instead of relieving the condition, however, this remedy is worsening it, and so, drastic action is required, for David can no longer afford to be lax in his handling of the distasteful matter.

Connecting the nation's internal distress with Charles's intestinal distress requires that the King be seen as the embodiment of the State, which is threatened by inner turmoil. Dryden himself seems to suggest the connection in his "Body Politique" analogy, but there are other signs that the King is such a focal point in the poem. Both scatological and sexual images, and consequently the whole poem, come together in the person, or rather "parts" of the person of Charles, for as the King states, "A King's at least a part of Government" ("AA," 1.977). Achitophel, in keeping with his attempts to manipulate Charles's sexually described politics, wants to "plunge him deep in some Expensive War," for which he will have to "give on till he can give no more" from his exhausted funds, and thus "be Naked left to publick Scorn" ("AA," 11.394, 389, 400). In the area of scatological punning, Charles himself speaks of those

who would "divert my Native course" and therefore compel him "to shew I am not Good by Force" ("AA," 11.949, 950). Moreover, there are hidden equations between the King and a butt, or ass, in lines such as, "But 'tis to Rule, for that's a Monarch's End" ("AA," 1.946). This line has already been shown as connected to Shaftesbury's tract on the private/public, physical/political nature of the King that Dryden responded to in his own tract.⁶⁸ The puns may appear to be scattered in the poem, but the scatological patterns are developed and unified. The King's military and sexual aggression are also nicely mixed as the reader's mind slips from connotation to connotation: "Must I at length the Sword of Justice draw?" ("AA," 1.1002).

Figuratively equating a ruler with his realm would not have been difficult for a seventeenth-century public to do, and the practice is repeatedly used by Dryden. Besides, therefore, the sexual and scatological similarities between main figures, even the respective cause or institution linked to each figurehead acquires its advocate's reputation in a form of guilt-by-association. Thus, the State (Charles or Shadwell) is infected by a Plot (Shaftesbury) or other inborn discord (Shadwell's bad writing) that swells the ranks of rebels and the righteous indigestion (prideful or not) of the King. The offending parties or qualities must either be purged and/or passed on as a legacy.

The text further develops the analogies. The "base Ends" of the rebels, who would "mend the Parts by ruine of the Whole" government,

are equated through Shaftesbury with "a shapeless Lump, like Anarchy" and are intent on not just refinement of the government but on innovation, for "Innovation is the Blow of Fate" ("AA," 11.806, 808, 172, 800). The connection between this "Blow" and the implied, parting "fart" in both Shadwell's exit in "Mac Flecknoe" and Charles's "Peals of Thunder" in "Absalom and Achitophel" is strengthened somewhat by both poems' similar rhyme pairings, in addition to those similarities previously examined ("AA," 1.1027). The final four end-rhymes in "Mac Flecknoe" are "behind," "wind," "part," and "(F)art" and parallel the combination of "Descent," "Bent," "wind," and "behind" that occurs early in "Absalom and Achitophel" ("Mac," 11.214-17; "AA," 11.256-59). The pairings in "Absalom and Achitophel" refer to a discussion of personified "Fortune" and "Fate" that speaks of the importance of seizing opportunity ("AA," 11.256, 253). While not apparently scatological themselves, these lines parallel the references to "Fate" and seized opportunities in Dryden's definition of innovation quoted above. Thus, the "Blow of Fate" becomes a purgation of the Person (State) of Charles and the fate of the rebels.

Other hints have also surfaced about this purgation, most of them involving Dryden's use of references or tone that suggests less than reverent thunder. A.L. French misses the serious, conservative side to the ending of "Absalom and Achitophel," but he recognizes the burlesque side in the ending's tone: "'And Peals of Thunder shook the

Firmament,' despite the classical associations, sounds very nearly mock-heroic, the Almighty and David amounting to little more than a pair of figures from a heroic drama whom Dryden finds it hard to keep a straight face over."⁶⁹

The tone is mixed at the ending, and Dryden's straight face over laughable thunder in "The Medall" is similar. Dryden himself had translated the passage from the Aeneid which he quotes part of as the epigraph to "The Medall," and this passage, which shows Jove defeating the haughty Salmoneus who tries to rival him, refers to thunder:

Salmoneus, suff'ring cruel Pains, I found,
For emulating Jove; the rattling Sound
Of Mimick Thunder, and the glitt'ring Blaze ⁷⁰
Of pointed Lightnings, and their forky Rays.

Even though Jove defeats Salmoneus with a lightning bolt, the full passage refers more to thunder than to lightning, and the hubris associated here with Shaftesbury is reminiscent of his tract on Charles's person which has been found, along with Dryden's rebuttal to it, to refer to bodily functions. Elsewhere in "The Medall," Dryden refers to the "audacious Force" of the rebels which, if unchecked, could grow to the point where, "God were not safe, his Thunder cou'd they shun / He shou'd be forc'd to crown another Son" ("Medall," 11.221, 215-16).

It would seem appropriate, then, if Dryden were to direct this thunder justly back upon those rebels whom he shows trying to rival or avoid it. Described by Achitophel as "Old David," Charles is

"setting in his Western Skies, / The Shadows lengthning as the Vapours rise," but this seems more like the scatological image of Flecknoe than like dotage, and Charles at the end of the poem is both willing and able to perform such action ("AA," ll.262, 268-69).

Therefore, although both sexual and scatological images are ammunition in this political war, the final battle royale between the rebels and the King involves purgation. The pivotal government passage in the poem reveals this battle, for it speaks of rebellion and the potential "fall" of government that will occur unless those nodding, "ancient Fabricks" are patched and loyalists "Buttress up the Wall."⁷¹ Bruce King has noted that these "Fabricks" refer to "the covering of a building" or allude to "Christ's seamless garment," but I believe they are far from being merely technical or religiously sacred (King, p.335). The "ancient Fabricket" mentioned in "Mac Flecknoe" has been replaced by brothels, but more importantly, there seem to be echoes of Shadwell's fleshy "goodly Fabricket" and Flecknoe's/Shadwell's "Drugget robe" which is associated with both the poem's scatologically falling fabric and the opium habit which produces soporific nodding ("Mac," ll.66, 25, 214, 127).

The King's decision on the matter helps support this anatomical reading, for he concludes, in a scatological pun that states his and Dryden's remedy, that, "Thus far 'tis Duty" ("AA," l.803). The climactic action in the poem is thus the same as that in "Mac Flecknoe" at the poem's end. There is a more serious reason

for this "Duty," however, for the "Tampering World" of the rebels, like the human body where "Humane Laws controul," is subject to expulsion from a higher source ("AA," 1.809, 807). The full passage is worth quoting here to see these many images and points at work:

All other Errors but disturb a State;
 But Innovation is the Blow of Fate.
 If ancient Fabricks nod, and threat to fall,
 To Patch the Flaws, and Buttress up the Wall,
 Thus far 'tis Duty; but here fix the Mark:
 For all beyond it is to touch our Ark.
 To change Foundations, cast the Frame anew,
 Is work for Rebels whose base Ends pursue:
 At once Divine and Humane Laws controul;
 And mend the Parts by ruine of the Whole.
 The Tampering World is subject to this Curse,
 To Physick their Disease into a worse. ("AA," 11.799-810)

This last line quoted should remind one of the disease that is churning away at Charles and of Dryden's role as physician/satirist, but Dryden is not just prescribing a purge here. In the same line in which he prescribes, he also insists that his readers "fix" their attention on the political foundation which this disease is threatening. The warning, however, is directed at both Charles and the rebels, for Dryden does advocate reasonable, legal negotiations between the People and the King. Charles is justified in expelling the rebels, for they are bent on wholesale disruption, not patching, but he does not have the license to become a tyrant king. This, I believe, constitutes Dryden's moderation in the poem, not any naive, wishful thinking that everything will be fine if both sides will just calm down. Dryden knows and shows that action is "necessary

in a Hot, Distemper'd State" but that this correction, like satire, must not be overdone and that "Prudent men" must be cultivated on both sides of the party lines ("To The Reader," p.5, 1.14;"AA," 1.796).

Dryden's prescription here prepares the reader for Charles's subsequent lamenting, "Oh curst Effects of necessary Law!" right before his own "Act of Oblivion" that expells the rebellious Plot ("AA," 1.1003). The concluding lines to "Absalom and Achitophel," which complete the purgation theme, are nebulous, but they are no more vague than the concluding lines to "Mac Flecknoe" which reveal their sharp puns. Indeed, Charles's emotional state leading to his outburst of speech and action parallels Flecknoe's "Opiate" "Poppies" laurels and physical condition just before his own feverish outburst ("Mac," 11.126, 138). Dryden might have meant such an allusive parallel in the final lines of "To The Reader" where the "Oblivion" and "Opiate" cures are paired, but regardless of this, the tongue-in-cheek tone of "Mac Flecknoe" seems to have transferred, along with the identical "He said" and nodding, into these final lines of "Absalom and Achitophel":

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 Restor'd,
 And willing Nations knew their Lawfull Lord. ("AA,"
 11.1026-31)

Just as in "Mac Flecknoe," the results of the issue of succession

in "Absalom and Achitophel" are technically settled only in these last two lines, and the "Firmament," etymologically a "firm support or foundation," is both physically and politically the seat of government that Charles protects by purging with thunderous authority.⁷² Also as in "Mac Flecknoe," the final line's alliteration sends a message. The remedy has restored the proper relationship between subjects and the King, and in this "Series of new time," the sexually political antagonism earlier has been replaced by the calm, reciprocal relationship connoted by the sexually Biblical "knew," which pairs its "n" sound with that in "Nations" to create an even balance with the two "l" sounds of the concluding "Lawfull Lord."

In the Biblical or any other sense, Dryden "knows" his political characters frontwards and backwards. He knows that "if a Poem have a Genius, it will force its own reception in the World," but what has forced its way through the more than three-hundred years since the poem appeared is a too conservative view of Dryden's aims and achievements in the poem. As Dryden himself describes it in "To The Reader," his satire "prescribes harsh Remedies"; but his style is preventative medicine, and the aim is both to avoid that blatantly crude satiric style which Dryden disdained and also to purge the nation of rebellious factions ("To The Reader," p.3, l.13;p.5, l.11).

In "Absalom and Achitophel, Part II," where Shadwell's/Og's presence forms another link with "Mac Flecknoe," we are warned in no uncertain scatological terms to "stop your noses, readers, all and some."⁷³ Only the warning, blatantly crude, is absent in

"Part I." The shock to one's senses and one's sense of humor is there in the poem for the taking.

Dryden's age was a time of both great deception and great clarity. The platforms and the power struggles of the great were mostly open to the public view, but the smooth political surface was ingrained with the "plots, oaths, vows, and tests" that made directness a saintly virtue only if one was seeking martyrdom (Ward, p.131). It is no wonder Dryden's work has a similarly shrewd depth to it. Regardless, though, of the sagacity in not baring extremes to everyone's direct view, Dryden seems to conclude that syntactical disguise is no more especially sinful than political disguise is especially politic. Yet the subtlety of Dryden's syntax and imagery has kept readers from seeing just what kind of a conservative position in which Charles is placed in the poem.

Dryden does take a conservative stand in "Absalom and Achitophel," but it is a much more complexly balanced stand than we have previously been willing to grant him capable of maintaining. The coin, or medal, of the realm has two sides, like every issue, and Dryden shows to some degree that "every man is a Knave or an Ass to the contrary side" ("To The Reader," p.3, l.6). He has Charles and Flecknoe discharging their offices, as well as their bodies, with a royal flourish, and, at the same time, presents a relatively admirable rebel in Monmouth, who is surrounded by baser beings. Dryden balances his literary traditions also, for he uses both heroic couplet stateliness and burlesque satire. He is the physician/satirist who must hurt to

heal, but he prefers a graceful "execution" to the hatchet work of lower satires. The rank viciousness of "The Medall" and the bawdy humor of "Mac Flecknoe" have been acknowledged but not the interpolated fact that "Absalom and Achitophel" "slides between them both into the best" ("Medall," 1.250).

In his shrewdly moderate way, Dryden keeps following that advice he gave in the epilogue to the King and Whigs at Oxford, "'Tis Wisdoms part betwixt extreems to Steer."⁷⁴ Like the very heavy balancing poles of tightrope walkers, Dryden's "handful" extends on either side to many opposite extremes, but it finds through Dryden's poetic touch a focal point that amazingly balances the public with the private life, the high with the low, the overt with the covert. Dryden is able to handle so many weighty issues: his political age and his own political convictions, the traditions of satire, his own satire, and the cultural environment that all satire must truthfully reflect, and his own tenuous position as a writer and a man facing uncertainty and perhaps deciding his fate with his poetry. His outrageous balancing act, however, is successfully completed without any fundamental fall from his conservative ideology.

Such a performance truly shows the touch of genius, but this, as this study has tried to show, is not Dryden's only performance during that time in the seventeenth-century. Dryden in the 1680's moved in his work into the major political and religious issues of his day, publishing "Religio Laici" the same year as "The Medall" and "The Hind and the Panther" in 1687. Perhaps, it would be

critically worthwhile to examine his work in this and other periods with the assumption that in this movement into new areas he did more tightrope walking than striding. What Dryden deserves perhaps more than anything else is a recognition of his "lightness of foot," his witty puns and syntax that keep his lines and thoughts from plodding. Dryden's sexual and scatological imagery is especially appropriate for his satires, and it is probably confined to this genre for the most part in his works; however, its dominant presence in these poems justifies reinspection of Dryden's other works, reinspection for either these images or for borrowings from less majestic traditions of a particular literary genre. A more "human" view of Dryden is needed in which he is allowed the vice or virtue of being part of, and sometimes incorporating, all of the society, from top to bottom, in which he lived. These revaluations must wait, but I feel that this study at hand outlines in its review of criticism the major criteria for a refinement of our view of Dryden the writer and that it applies fully these criteria and others to our view of Dryden the satirist, whose "Absalom and Achitophel" is perhaps the best example of his divided interests and singular genius.

Notes

¹ Charles E. Ward, The Life of John Dryden (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p.168. Further references are cited parenthetically. See Ward also for descriptions of political struggles of the time.

² Ruth Salvaggio, Dryden's Dualities, English Language Studies, Mo 29 (Univ. of Victoria Press, 1983). Further references are cited parenthetically. The importance of Salvaggio's overview is discussed in the text.

³ Michael Wilding, "Dryden and Satire: 'Mac Flecknoe,' 'Absalom and Achitophel,' 'the Medall,' and Juvenal," in Writers and their Background, ed. Earl Miner (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1972), p.233. Further references are cited parenthetically.

⁴ David Nichol Smith, John Dryden (Cambridge, 1950; rpt. U.S.A.: Archon Books, 1966), p.56.

⁵ Salvaggio, Dryden's Dualities. Dryden's mixed audience and style is discussed throughout the book, but especially in Chs.1 and 2.

⁶ H.T. Swedenberg, Jr., ed., "Commentary," in The Works of John Dryden (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), vol.2, p.239, n.18. Further references to this "Commentary" are hereafter cited as such.

⁷ "Commentary," vol.2, p.216.

⁸ John Dryden, "To The Reader," in "Absalom and Achitophel," in The Works of John Dryden, ed. H.T. Swedenberg, Jr. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), vol.2, p.4, l.32. Further references to "To The Reader" are cited parenthetically as such. Further references to "Absalom and Achitophel" are cited parenthetically as "AA."

⁹ Mark Van Doren, The Poetry of John Dryden (New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1920; rpt., 1969), p.67. Further references are cited parenthetically.

¹⁰ Samuel Johnson, "Life of Dryden," in Lives of the English Poets (New York: Octagon Books, 1967), p.188. Further references are cited parenthetically.

- 11 Johnson, p.188.
- 12 Louis Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1966), p.15. Further references are cited parenthetically.
- 13 J.R. Jones, "Introduction: Main Trends in Restoration England," in The Restored Monarchy 1660-1688 (London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1979), p.22. Further references are cited parenthetically.
- 14 "Commentary," p.228.
- 15 W.K. Thomas, The Crafting of "Absalom and Achitophel" (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1978), p.171. Further references are cited parenthetically.
- 16 "Commentary," p.229.
- 17 "Commentary," p.229.
- 18 "Commentary," p.282, n. to l.945.
- 19 Dona E. Munker, "That Paultry Burlesque Stile: Seventeenth-Century Poetry And Augustan 'Low Seriousness,'" Seventeenth-Century News, 33, No.1 (1975), 15. Further references are cited parenthetically.
- 20 Thomas E. Maresca, "Language And Body In Augustan Poetic," Journal of English Literary History, 37 (1970), 379, 374. Further references are cited parenthetically.
- 21 John H. O'Neill, "Sexuality, Deviance, And Moral Character In The Personal Satire Of The Restoration," Eighteenth-Century Life, 2, No.1 (1975), 16. Further references are cited parenthetically.
- 22 Philip Stevick, "The Augustan Nose," The University of Toronto Quarterly, 34, No.2 (1965), 114. Further references are cited parenthetically.
- 23 Mary Claire Randolph, "The Medical Concept In English

Renaissance Satiric Theory: Its Possible Relationships And Implications," Studies in Philology, 38, No.2 (1941), 126. Further references are cited parenthetically.

24 Mary Coate, Social Life in Stuart England (London: Methuen & Co., 1924; rpt. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971), p.153. Further references are cited parenthetically.

25 Ward, pp.309, 297.

William Frost, ed., John Dryden Selected Works, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), p.xxvii. Further references are cited parenthetically.

26 Edmond Malone, The Critical And Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden (London: H. Baldwin & Son, 1800), vol.1, Part I, p.520. Further references are cited parenthetically.

"An Account of the causes of some particular rebellious distempers," Early English Books 1641-1700 microfilm series [London, ?1670], reel 46: 44.

27 Roger Hart, English Life in the Seventeenth Century (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1970), p.10. Further references are cited parenthetically.

28 Charles Creighton, "Medicine and Public Health," in Social England, eds. H.D. Traill and J.S. Mann (Cassell Co., Ltd., 1903; rpt. New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), vol.4, 646. Further references are cited parenthetically.

29 John Dryden, "A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire," in The Works of John Dryden, ed. H.T. Swedenberg, Jr. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), vol.4, p.70, l.19. Further references are cited parenthetically as Discourse.

30 "Some responses to 'Absalom and Achitophel,'" in Dryden: The Critical Heritage, eds. James and Helen Kinsley (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), pp.131-35.

31 A.L. French, "Dryden, Marvell and Political Poetry," Studies In English Literature (1500-1900), 8 (1968), 406. Further references are cited parenthetically.

Leon M. Guilhamet, "Dryden's Debasement of Scripture in

'Absalom and Achitophel,'" Studies In English Literature (1500-1900), 9 (1969), 413. Further references are cited parenthetically.

32 Edward L. Saslow, "Shaftesbury Cursed: Dryden's Revision of the Achitophel Lines [180-91]," Studies In Bibliography, 28 (1974), 276, 282. Further references are cited parenthetically.

33 Bruce King, "Wordplay in 'Absalom and Achitophel': An Aspect of Style," Language and Style, 2 (1969), 331. Further references are cited parenthetically.

See also J. Douglas Canfield, "Anarchy and Style: What Dryden 'Grants in 'Absalom and Achitophel,'" Papers On Language And Literature, 14 (1978), 83-87, for discussion of wordplay which involves extensive ambiguity.

34 Albert Ball, "Charles II: Dryden's Christian Hero," Modern Philology, 59 (1961), 25.

35 Earl Miner, Dryden's Poetry (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1967), p.132.

36 Bernard Schilling, Dryden and the Conservative Myth: A Reading of "Absalom and Achitophel," (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1961), p.1. Further references are cited parenthetically.

37 Dustin Griffin, "Dryden's Charles: The Ending of 'Absalom and Achitophel,'" Philological Quarterly, 57, No.3 (1978), 361, 360. Further references are cited parenthetically.

38 Robert F. Willson, Jr., "The Fecal Vision in 'Mac Flecknoe,'" Satire Newsletter, 8 (1970), 1-4. Further references will be cited parenthetically.

Thomas Maresca, "Language And Body In Augustan Poetic." See Note #20.

_____, "The Context Of Dryden's 'Absalom and Achitophel,'" Journal of English Literary History, 41 (1974), 340-58.

39 Jerome J. Donnelly, "Movement and Meaning in Dryden's 'Mac Flecknoe,'" Texas Studies In Literature And Language, 12 (1971), 569-82. Further references are cited parenthetically.

Cedric D. Reverand, "Patterns of Imagery and Metaphor in

Dryden's 'The Medall,'" Yearbook of English Studies, 2 (1972), 103-14.

40 Laura Brown, "The Ideology of Restoration Poetic Form: John Dryden," PMLA, 97, No.3 (1982), 395. Further references are cited parenthetically.

41 Harold Love, "Dryden's 'Unideal Vacancy,'" Eighteenth-Century Studies, 12, No.1 (1978), 74-89. Further references are cited parenthetically.

42 John Dryden, "Dryden To An Unidentified Person," in The Letters of John Dryden, ed. Charles E. Ward (Duke Univ. Press, 1942; rpt. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1965), p.15.

43 Wilding, pp. 208, 213. See Note #3.

44 John Dryden, "Mac Flecknoe," in The Works of John Dryden, ed. H.T. Swedenberg, Jr. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), vol. 2, ll.214-17. Further references to "Mac Flecknoe" are cited parenthetically as "Mac."

45 "Commentary," p.236.

46 "Commentary," p.230-31.

47 "Commentary," p.289.

48 "Commentary," pp.299, 209, 286.

49 See Ward, p.129, for discussion of Dryden's jaundiced view after The Kind Keeper was banned.

50 Frost, Introduction, p.xxvi. See Note #25.

51 "Mac Flecknoe," ll.211, 127, 9.

"Absalom and Achitophel," ll.1026, 10.

52 John Dryden, The Conquest of Granada, Part I, in The Works of John Dryden, ed. H.T. Swedenberg, Jr. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1978), vol.11, III.i.11.17-18. Further references are cited parenthetically.

53 John Dryden, The Spanish Friar, in Dryden: The Dramatic Works, ed. Montague Summers (New York: Gordian Press, 1968), vol.5, IV.ii.11.208, 106.

54 "Absalom and Achitophel," 11.330, 22, 760, 780, 939, 991; 382, 375, 122, 471, 842, 950, 1021; 233, 176, 874, 953; 761, 456, 953, 1002; 953.

55 Paul Ramsey, The Art of John Dryden (Lexington: The Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1969), p.110.

56 "Commentary," pp.284, 11.1006-09.

57 John Milton, Paradise Lost, in The Works Of John Milton (Columbia Univ. Press, 1931), vol.2, Part II, Book XII, 11.552, 606.

"Mac Flecknoe," 1.211.

"Absalom and Achitophel," 11.477, 1026.

58 "Mac Flecknoe," 11.162, 123.

"Absalom and Achitophel," 11.159, 330, 946, 939.

59 John Dryden, "The Medall," in The Works of John Dryden, ed. H.T. Swedenberg, Jr. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), vol.2, 11.35, 37. Further references to "The Medall" will be cited parenthetically as "Medall."

60 "Absalom and Achitophel," 11.819, 139, 137, 138, 1020.

"Mac Flecknoe," 11.50, 185-86.

61 "Commentary," p.297, 11.248-55.

62 "Oblivion," The Oxford English Dictionary.

63 See Note #26, "An Account"

64 Ruth Wallerstein, "To Madness Near Allied: Shaftesbury and His Place in the Design and Thought of 'Absalom and Achitophel,'" Huntington Library Quarterly, 6 (1943), 445-71.

John Pechey, A plain Introduction to the art of physick, Early English Books 1641-1700 microfilm series (London: Henry Bonwicke, 1697), reel 327: 11, p.139.

Oswald Crollins, Bazilica chymica, & praxis . . . or Royal and Practical Chymistry, Early English Books 1641-1700 microfilm series (London: John Starkey, 1670), reel 327: 11, p.163.

65 Michael W. Alssid, "Shadwell's 'Mac Flecknoe,'" Studies In English Literature (1500-1900), 7 (1967), 396.

66 Thomas Maresca, "The Context Of Dryden's 'Absalom and Achitophel.'" See Note #38.

67 "Lenitive," The Oxford English Dictionary.

68 See Note #18.

69 French, "Dryden, Marvell, and Political Poetry," p.412.
See Note #31.

70 "Commentary," p.289.

71 "Absalom and Achitophel," 11.801, 956, 793, 774, 680, 665, 802.

72 "Firmament," The Oxford English Dictionary.

73 John Dryden, "The Second Part of Absalom and Achitophel," in The Works of John Dryden, ed. H.T. Swedenberg, Jr. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), vol.2, 1.457.

74 John Dryden, "The Epilogue Spoken to the King at the opening the Play-House at Oxford on Saturday last. Being March the Nineteenth 1681," in The Works of John Dryden, ed. H.T. Swedenberg, Jr. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), vol.2, 1.30.

Bibliography

- Alssid, Michael W. "Shadwell's 'Mac Flecknoe.'" Studies In English Literature (1500-1900), 7 (1967), 387-402.
- "An Account of the causes of some particular rebellious distempers." In Early English Books 1641-1700 microfilm series. [London: ?1670], reel 46: 44.
- Ball, Albert. "Charles II: Dryden's Christian Hero." Modern Philology, 59 (1961), 25-35.
- Bredvold, Louis. The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1966.
- Brown, Laura. "The Ideology of Restoration Poetic Form: John Dryden." PMLA, 97 (1982), 395-407.
- Canfield, J. Douglas. "Anarchy and Style: What Dryden 'Grants' in 'Absalom and Achitophel.'" Papers On Language And Literature, 14 (1978), 83-87.
- Coate, Mary. Social Life in Stuart England. London: Methuen & Co., 1924; rpt. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971.
- Creighton, Charles. "Medicine and Public Health." In Social England. Eds. H.D. Traill and J.S. Mann. Cassell Co., Ltd., 1903; rpt. New York: Greenwood Press, 1969, vol.4, 630-46.
- Crollins, Oswald. Bazilica chymica, & praxis . . . or Royal and Practical Chymistry. In Early English Books 1641-1700 microfilm series. [London: John Starkey, 1670], reel 327: 11.
- Donnelly, Jerome J. "Movement and Meaning in Dryden's 'Mac Flecknoe.'" Texas Studies In Literature And Language, 12 (1971), 569-82.
- Eliot, T.S. Homage To John Dryden. London: L. and V. Woolf, 1927.
- . John Dryden. New York: Haskell House, 1966.
- French, A.L. "Dryden, Marvell and Political Poetry." Studies In English Literature (1500-1900), 8 (1968), 397-413.
- Frost, William. "Dryden's Theory and Practice of Satire." In Dryden's Mind And Art. Ed. Bruce King. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1969.
- , ed. John Dryden Selected Works. 2nd ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971.

- Garrison, James D. Dryden And The Tradition Of The Panegyric. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1975.
- Greany, Helen T. "On the Opening Lines of 'Absalom and Achitophel.'" Satire Newsletter, 2 (1964), 29-31.
- Griffin, Dustin. "Dryden's Charles: The Ending of 'Absalom and Achitophel.'" Philological Quarterly, 57, No.3 (1978), 359-82.
- Guilhamet, Leon M. "Dryden's Debasement of Scripture in 'Absalom and Achitophel.'" Studies In English Literature (1500-1900), 9 (1969), 395-413.
- Hart, Roger. English Life in the Seventeenth Century. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1970.
- Harth, Philip. The Contexts of Dryden's Thought. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968.
- Johnson, Samuel. "Life of Dryden." In Lives of the English Poets New York: Octagon Books, 1967.
- Jones, J.R. "Introduction: Main Trends in Restoration England." In The Restored Monarchy 1660-1688. London: The Macmillan Pres, Ltd., 1979.
- King, Bruce. "Wordplay in 'Absalom and Achitophel': An Aspect of Style." Language and Style, 2 (1969), 330-38.
- Kinsley, James and Helen, ed. Dryden: The Critical Heritage. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1971.
- Love, Harold. "Dryden's 'Unideal Vacancy.'" Eighteenth-Century Studies, 12, No.1 (1978), 74-89.
- Malone, Edmond. The Critical And Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden. London: H. Baldwin & Son, 1800.
- Maresca, Thomas. "The Context Of Dryden's 'Absalom and Achitophel.'" Journal of English Literary History, 41 (1974), 340-58.
- . Epic To Novel. Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1974.
- . "Language And Body In Augustan Poetic." Journal of English Literary History, 37 (1970), 374-88.
- McKeon, Michael. Politics And Poetry In Restoration England. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975.

- Milton, John. Paradise Lost. In The Works Of John Milton. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1931.
- Miner, Earl. Dryden's Poetry. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana Univ. Press, 1967.
- Munker, Dona E. "That Poultry Burlesque Stile: Seventeenth-Century Poetry And Augustan 'Low Seriousness.'" Seventeenth-Century News, 33, No.1 (1975), 15-22.
- O'Neill, John H. "Sexuality, Deviance, And Moral Character In The Personal Satire Of The Restoration." Eighteenth-Century Life, 2, No.1 (1975), 16-19.
- The Oxford English Dictionary. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1933; rpt. 1961, 1970.
- Pechey, John. A plain Introduction to the art of physick. In Early English Books 1641-1700 microfilm series. [London: Henry Bonwicke, 1697], reel 327: 11.
- Ramsey, Paul. The Art of John Dryden. Lexington: The Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1969.
- Randolph, Mary Claire. "The Medical Concept In English Renaissance Satiric Theory: Its Possible Relationships And Implications." Studies in Philology, 38, No.2 (1941), 125-57.
- Reverand, Cedric D. "Patterns of Imagery and Metaphor in Dryden's 'The Medall.'" Yearbook of English Studies, 2 (1972), 103-14.
- Salvaggio, Ruth. Dryden's Dualities. English Language Studies, Mo 29. Univ. of Victoria Press, 1983.
- _____. "Dryden's Syntax: A Reappraisal Of His Couplet Verse And His Public Poetry." Diss. Rice University 1979.
- Saslow, Edward L. "Shaftesbury Cursed: Dryden's Revision of the Achitophel Lines [180-91]." Studies In Bibliography, 28 (1974), 276-83.
- Schilling, Bernard. Dryden and the Conservative Myth: A Reading of "Absalom and Achitophel". New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1961.
- Scott, Sir Walter. Life of Dryden. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1963.
- Smith, David Nichol. John Dryden. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1966.

- "Some responses to 'Absalom and Achitophel.'" In Dryden: The Critical Heritage. Eds. James and Helen Kinsley. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971, 131-35.
- Stevick, Philip. "The Augustan Nose." The University of Toronto Quarterly, 34, No.2 (1965), 110-17.
- Summers, Montague, ed. The Spanish Friar. In Dryden: The Dramatic Works. New York: Gordian Press, 1968.
- Swedenberg, Jr., H.T., ed. Essential Articles for the Study of John Dryden. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1966.
- _____, gen. ed. The Works of John Dryden. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972.
- Thomas, W.K. The Crafting of "Absalom and Achitophel." Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1978.
- _____. "The Matrix of 'Absalom and Achitophel.'" Philological Quarterly, 49 (1970), 92-99.
- _____. "The Structure of 'Absalom and Achitophel.'" Revue de l'Université d' Ottawa, 39 (1969), 288-97.
- Van Doren, Mark. The Poetry of John Dryden. New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1920; rpt. 1969.
- Wallerstein, Ruth. "To Madness Near Allied: Shaftesbury and His Place in the Design and Thought of 'Absalom and Achitophel.'" Huntington Library Quarterly, 6 (1943), 445-71.
- Ward, Charles E., ed. The Letters of John Dryden. New York: AMS Press, 1965.
- _____. The Life of John Dryden. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1961.
- Wilding, Michael. "Dryden and Satire: 'Mac Flecknoe,' 'Absalom and Achitophel,' 'The Medall,' and Juvenal." In Writers and their Background. Ed. Earl Miner. Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1972, pp.191-234.
- Willson, Jr., Robert F. "The Fecal Vision in 'Mac Flecknoe.'" Satire Newsletter, 8 (1970), 1-4.
- Zwicker, Steven N. Dryden's Political Poetry. Providence, Rhode Island: Brown Univ. Press, 1972.

**The vita has been removed from
the scanned document**