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Ideas Reflected in the Plays of John Dryden

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by

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CHAPTER ONE

DRYDEN AND THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

DRYDEN AND THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The contribution of John Dryden to the literature of England long since has been judged at the bar of scholarly opinion and accorded what is doubtless its proper sentence: an historical significance in the development of criticism and prose style; a peculiar interest in relation to the evanescent type of the heroic play; a skill unequalled, perhaps, except by Pope, in satirical and didactic verse; an aesthetically negligible importance in the genre of comedy; and, withal, a poetic achievement unquestionably inferior to that of the most profound inspiration. James Russell Lowell has formed a trenchant estimate of the poet-laureate in saying that one feels "the whole of him" to be better than "any random specimens".¹ He occupied a unique position as the foremost man of letters in his times; he experimented in a variety of literary types, with some degree of at least temporary success in all; he left his mark upon the political and religious speculation of his day. And, however justifiably it may be concluded that

1. Among My Books, New York, 1898. p.8

Dryden has not the stature of a Shakespeare, or a Milton, or even a Keats, both his intrinsic worth and his eminence among his contemporaries provide ample reasons for inquiring into the intellectual background of his work.

Few critical problems have been attacked more often or more inconclusively than the question of whether or not Dryden's poetry and prose had any sound or consistent intellectual basis. "As to his opinions," A. W. Verrall writes, "he had no profound or coherent theory in politics, in religion, or even in criticism. His logic made him clear and his controversial tone increased his vigour, but the logic is of the moment; arguments for a given position are readily found and well put, but there is no system, not even in the matter of literary criticism."² Several incidents in the poet's life -- his tribute to Cromwell followed by exultation at the return of Charles, and, especially, his conversion to Rome upon the accession of the Catholic James -- have fostered the conviction that he was a time-server, a man of no deep-lying ideas or loyalties. Mark Van Doren, calling him a "turn-coat" and a "flatterer", asserts that the sensible view "seems latterly to be that there is little reason to be sorrowful over the behavior of a canny man of letters who never at any time pretended to be equipped with

2. Lectures on Dryden, Cambridge, 1914. p. 18

principles worth dying or becoming a pauper for".³ Macaulay, dean of the virulent critics of Dryden, admitting that the poet had to a preeminent degree the power of reasoning in verse, avers that "the theological and political questions which he undertook to treat ... were precisely those which he understood least".⁴ Samuel Johnson, Walter Scott, and Edmond Malone, on the other hand, regard his so-called apostasies as legitimate and in accordance with a single direction of thought; and Scott, in particular, is inclined to attribute to him a profoundly, if not a systematically, philosophic mind.⁵ Most of the critics, friendly or unfriendly, stress the fact that, whether it represents his own opinions or not, the poetry of Dryden is primarily intellectual rather than emotional and that his mind displays something of the delight of the scholastic in playing with ideas. Except for the attempt of Scott to unify Dryden's ideas, the critics, until recent years, have been content to generalize about the poet without specifically analyzing the thought-content of his varied work. And to none of them has it seemed worthwhile to study him in relation to his age: to determine what attitudes widely prevalent in the seventeenth

3. The Poetry of John Dryden, New York, 1920. p. 321

4. The Works of Lord Macaulay, London, 1866, vol. 5, p. 116

5. The Works of John Dryden, illustrated with notes, historical, critical, and explanatory, and a life of the author, by Sir Walter Scott. Revised and corrected by George Saintsbury. Edinburgh, 1882-1883, vol. 1, p. 241.

century are most frequently expressed by him.

Macaulay says, with much truth, that no man exercised so much influence on the age as Dryden, for the reason that "on no man did the age exercise so much influence".⁶ Louis Bredvold⁷ is one of the first of modern scholars, recognizing this interplay of influences, to maintain that the ideas of Dryden should be evaluated and linked with the currents of thought amidst which he lived and wrote. The purpose of his book, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden,⁸ is to establish the poet not as an opportunist who changed his opinions with his coat, not as a man of no serious convictions, but as a thinker who, after a short period of indetermination, followed a clear path of religious, poetical, and philosophic belief. Admitting that in the early work there are suggestions of Hobbism and Cartesianism, he discounts them as passing phases -- if they deserve even that name --, and affirms, as his major contention, that from the writing of Religio Laici⁹ to the end, Dryden was a Pyrrhonist¹⁰, his skepticism producing in religious thought a fideism which guided him logically to the Roman church, and

6. Op. cit., p. 104

7. Professor at the University of Michigan. Kathleen Lynch, Claude White, Merritt Hughes are others. Cf. bibliography.

8. University of Michigan Press, 1934.

9. He does not suggest a sudden change at this time, but merely points to the poem as providing the first definite evidence.

10. Cf. pp. 13, 14, 15.

in politics a Toryism which made zeal and revolution and the deposition of kings repugnant to him. A large part of his treatise is given over to a discussion of Roman Catholic apologetics in England: the presence of fideism even within the Mother Church, the unquestionable contacts which Dryden had with fideistic writers, and the evidences of them in Religio Laici. The preponderance of his study, which contributes many hitherto uncompiled facts about Pyrrhonism in England and on the continent, and which succinctly reviews the scientific movement of the times, is focused upon the milieu in which the poet lived, and upon the problem of determining his real opinions from what he wrote. Although he quotes passages from the plays which seem to him at least to indicate the scope of the poet's intellectual curiosity, he minimizes their importance as reliable bases for deducing seriously held ideas, on the ground that the exigencies of character and situation condition the nature of the views expressed and render it dangerous to assume that the writer ever is speaking in his own person.

The present study of the dramatic works of Dryden has been undertaken with full awareness of the hazard of attempting to convert objective drama into subjective autobiography, and, moreover, with full cognizance of Dryden's extensive dependence upon French sources. The aim of the

study, however, is such as to make the first of these irrelevant, and the technique employed such as to obviate the difficulties of the second. The purpose of this analysis is, not to discover and to unify the ideas of an important literary figure, but to show how the trends of thought in the seventeenth century, the important intellectual movements of his day, are reflected in the heroic plays and comedies of the poet laureate. And, incidentally, a discovery of the prevailing "echoes", the dominant philosophic strains, even though they may be voiced by characters who receive unsympathetic treatment, will give some evidence of the type of idea to which Dryden was most amenable, and, taken in conjunction with his non-dramatic work, may supply a guide for determining what his own attitudes really were. The culling of ideas from the plays has been prefaced by consideration of the sources used in individual instances, especially the comedies of Molière, Thomas Corneille, and Quinault, and the heroic romances of Madame de Scudéry, Comberville, and La Calprenède¹¹, with the conclusion that, although

11. Details of plot or names of characters were borrowed from the following plays of Molière: Amphitryon, Le Mariage forcé, L'Étourdi, L'École des Maris, Le Dépit Amoureux, Les Précieuses Ridicules, Les Facheux, L'École des Femmes, Le Médecin malgré lui, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac; from L'Amant Indiscret of Quinault; and from Le Feint Astrologue of Corneille. In addition, Dryden's borrowings from Mme. de Scudéry's Le grand Cyrus and Almahide and from La Calprenède's Cleopâtre have been noted.

plot-devices and names of characters are often borrowed¹², the reflective passages constituting the principal concern of this study owe almost nothing to source material. In some cases, moreover, as in The Tempest and Troilus and Cressida, the originals are an invaluable aid for corroborating, in the light of changes made, the conceptions of human character and of ethics implied in the unborrowed works of the dramatist.

The century in which Dryden wrote was one of absorption in ideas: logical expansions of the thought of the Renaissance; persistent efforts to synthesize the naturalism of the new era with the religiosity of the Middle Ages; the beginnings of reaction against the confident optimism of man's intellectual re-birth -- all united to produce a philosophical diversity and complexity well calculated to challenge the minds of literary men. The humanism of the sixteenth century, Janus-faced, looking with equal interest into the well of the past and the crystal of the mundane future, resulted, on the one hand, in the recrudescence of such ancient systems of thought as Platonism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism, and, on the other, in the development of the natural sciences and the technique of inductive experimentation. As Nature tended to supersede Heaven and Hell,

12. Sir Martin-Mar-all and the main plots of Secret Love and Amphitryon are little more than translations from the French.

metaphysical abstractions began to lose their compelling reality for many men, and materialists like Thomas Hobbes affirmed the adequacy of philosophic monism to explain the universe. Materialism was not to reign undisputed, however, any more than science was to progress unopposed, for groups like the Cambridge Platonists and certain rational theologians tried to effect a compromise between the curiosity of reason and the dogmas of faith. Members of the Cambridge circle became the chief exponents in England of Cartesianism, which took its starting point from the immaterial, reasoning ego and derived from that certainty of God and of the existence of the objective world; the dualism of Descartes, they perceived, was not incompatible with that of their own Platonism, and some such division was necessary to preserve the integrity of both reason and faith. Neither materialists nor scientists nor Cambridge Platonists had lost the assurance that man can cope successfully with the problems of his existence through the functioning of reason; but alongside of them arose still another school of thought, skeptical in character, which countered their positive assertions with the intellectual nihilism of complete doubt.

William James has said that every world-philosophy is nothing more than an expression of the temperament of its creator; and, similarly, it is a truism that a writer will be

influenced by those trends of thought, to which his personal character is particularly receptive. In the preface to Religio Laici, Dryden states that he is "naturally inclined to skepticism in philosophy"; and this declaration is verified by the discovery that, insofar as the plays provide evidence, he was touched very little by the pure rationalism of Descartes, the idealism of the Neo-Platonists, or the dogma of the Stoics; whereas he unmistakably was influenced by those systems which at that time appeared to put less strain upon credulity -- the materialism of Hobbes and the Pyrrhonism of Montaigne.

In 1591 Galileo had discovered the laws of motion and had affirmed that physical phenomena may be explained by the laws of moving matter; and on the mechanistic conception of the universe suggested by that belief, Hobbes founded his philosophy. His world-view is based upon a monism which posits sense and the passions as fundamental in human behavior:

The universe, that is, the whole mass of all things that are, is corporeal, that is to say, body, and hath the dimensions of magnitude, namely, length, breadth, and depth; also, every part of body is likewise body, and hath the like dimensions, and consequently every part of the universe is body, and that which is not body is no part of the universe: and because the universe is all, that which is no part of it is nothing, and consequently nowhere.¹³

13. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan. In The Complete English Works of Thomas Hobbes, edited by William Molesworth, London, 1839, p. 672.

All mental processes are derived from sensations, which are merely aspects of motion caused by bodies pressing upon the organs of sense:

For there is no conception in a man's mind, which hath not at first, totally, or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of Sense.¹⁴

In motions toward or away from an object originate the passions, and they are the source of all voluntary action on the part of man. The man who has no passions, Hobbes iterates more than once, is dead; and thoughts merely serve as spies or scouts for the desires, "to range abroad, and find the way to the things desired... for as to have no desires is to be dead, so to have weak passions is dullness".¹⁵ Reason is nothing more than "'reckoning', that is adding and subtracting of the consequences of general names agreed upon for the 'marking' and 'signifying' of our thoughts....".¹⁶ Truth is an attribute not of things but of speech; for things are as they are, and only what is said about them is subject to error. The purpose of ratiocination is not to arrive at truth absolutely conceived, but to secure for the individual whatever he wants.

The ethics of Hobbes is wholly individualistic and nominalistic. Passions in themselves, he affirms, are neither good nor bad; they simply exist:

14. Ibid., p. 1.

15. Ibid., p. 62.

16. Ibid., p. 30.

Whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calleth good: and the object of his hate and aversion, evil; and of his contempt vile and inconsiderable. For these words of Good, Evil, and Contemptible are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: there being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common rule of good and evil, to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves.¹⁷

The constitution of a man's body, moreover, is in constant mutation, and it is consequently impossible that the same things should always cause in him the same reactions, or that he should be capable of a wholly consistent behavior. The specific virtues, as explained by Hobbes, are related to opinion and to utility rather than to truth. For him, man is completely self-regarding and cannot act from, or be appealed to by, any motive extraneous to his own best interests. In a natural condition, every man is in a real or potential state of warfare against his fellows. Competition, desire for glory, and, chiefly, fear lest they be deprived of life cause men to be in constant strife. Fear and a desire for comfortable existence impel them to devise a central power or authority which can maintain peace and guarantee safety. The reason, then, formulates the conditions of a Commonwealth founded upon the basic law of nature "by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same".¹⁸

17. Ibid., p. 40.

18. Ibid., p. 134.

Man deliberately chooses to impose upon himself limitations designed ultimately to convert a formal freedom into a real security.

The life of man is a progress from the satisfaction of one desire to that of another. Specifically, it is lived in accordance with a few dominant instincts, chief among which are the instinct for self-preservation and its concomitant, the desire for power; and reason, although it serves a useful purpose in pandering to the Self, is a definitely subordinate force.

For the Passions of men are commonly more potent than their Reason.¹⁹

Hobbes gives the measure of his own materialism and ethical opportunism when he states that the life of natural man is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short".²⁰

Hobbes is related in various ways to the new science, which, since Bacon's exposition of the inductive method, had increasingly allied itself with humanistic interest in the physical aspects of the world. Deriving the content of man's mind wholly from the five senses, Hobbes points toward the empiricism of scientific method at the same time that, actually, he remains a nominalist; rebelling against the formalism of scholastic reasoning, he

19. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

suggests the claim of science to intellectual emancipation from the strictures of tradition. His system, moreover, as has been noted, owes something to Galileo's discovery of the laws of motion. Yet Hobbes was not a scientist, nor was his philosophy in any sense an outgrowth of the experimental method. That method, however, did receive a tremendous impetus in 1660, nine years after the publication of the Leviathan, with the establishment of the Royal Society by a group of men among whom were Roger Boyle, Sir Christopher Wren, and John Evelyn. Thomas Sprat, historian of the Royal Society, defines its aims thus:

Its Purpose is, in short, to make faithfull Records of all the Works of Nature or Art, which can come within their Reach; that so the present Age, and Posterity, may be able to put a Mark on the Errors, which have been strengthened by long Prescription; to push on those which are already known to more various Uses; and to make the way more passable to what remains unrevealed... And to accomplish this, they have endeavor'd to separate the Knowledge of Nature from the Colours of Rhetorick, the Devices of Fancy or the delightful Deceit of Fables.... They have attempted to free it from the Artifice and Humours, and Passions of Sex; to render it an Instrument; whereby Mankind may obtain a Dominion over Things, and not only over one another's Judgments: and lastly, they have begun to establish these Reformatations in Philosophy, not so much by any solemnity of Laws or Obstantious Ceremonies, as by solid Practice and Examples....²¹

Devoted to truth as the society was, its historian makes

21. Thomas Sprat, The History of the Royal Society of London For the Improving of Natural Knowledge, London, 1722, p. 61.

clear that its members did not pretend to encroach on the domain of religion, but drew a sharp line of division between the provinces of it and science. Nevertheless, Sprat expresses confidence that the future will erase this line:

...yet, when they shall have made more progress in material Things, they will be in a Condition of pronouncing more boldly on them spiritual matters too. For though Man's Soul and Body are not only one natural engine (as some have thought) of whose Motions of all Sorts, there may be as certain an Account given as those of a Watch or a Clock; yet by long studying of the Spirits of the Blood, of the Nourishment, of the Parts, of the Diseases, of the Advantages, of the Accidents which belong to human Bodies, there may be, without Question, very near Guesses made, even at the more exalted and immediate Actions of the Soul; and that too, without destroying its spiritual and immortal being.²²

Though less bold than Hobbes' categorizing of religions among the fairy tales of the world, this statement points in the direction of a physical interpretation of soul, and is the more significant because Sprat was an Anglican clergyman who became a bishop.

The theology of the seventeenth century as well as the philosophy, and often through the direct influence of the new philosophy, proved in many cases to be in accord with the worldliness of Renaissance humanism and the individualism of the Protestant revolt against authoritarian

22. Ibid., pp. 82, 83.

Rome. Even Richard Hooker, the first to give cogent definition to the Anglican position in the closing years of the sixteenth century, emphasizes the importance of reason in theology. Unceasingly he deprecates blind zeal, and he admits, probably without seeing all the implications of the admission, that even the authority of the Bible resides finally in man's reason, which tells him that Scripture is the revelation of God. Much more definitely, the stress upon reason and upon utility appears in the sermons of John Tillotson, late-century Archbishop of Canterbury. On two occasions, at least, Dr. Tillotson was publicly accused of preaching the doctrines of Hobbes from his pulpit. The first of the accusations came as a result of his opposing the authority of the state to the conscience of the individual:

I cannot think that any pretense of conscience warrants any man, that is not extraordinarily commissioned as the apostles and first publishers of the Gospel were, and cannot justify that commission by miracles as they did, to affront the established religion of a nation, though it be false, and openly to draw men off from the profession of it, in contempt of the magistrate and the law.²³

At another time, Tillotson's statement to the effect that God is so necessary to the welfare and happiness

23. The Works of Dr. John Tillotson, edited by Thomas Birch, London, 1820, vol. 1, p. XLI.

of mankind that it would seem "as if the being of God himself had been purposely designed and contrived for the benefit and advantage of man",²⁴ was deemed by a contemporary to be "downright Hobbism".

The influence of materialism is to be seen particularly in the utilitarian and essentially hedonistic argument by which Tillotson vindicates faith. "Religious wisdom", he says, "is the best wisdom because it is for ourselves -- whose end is happiness."²⁵ He states unequivocally that the goodness of everything, even religion, is measured by its use.²⁶ He urges no transcendental or absolute proof as a reason for faith, but insists that a condition of faith is useful, not only with regard to man's future state, but also with regard to his present social relationships. Like Hobbes, he derives the religious emotion from the passion of fear, and, extending the idea further, declares that "fear and hope are the two passions which chiefly sway human nature and are the mainsprings of action".²⁷ Like Hobbes, he believes man to be largely, if not wholly, selfregarding, and to be, essentially, a creature of emotion, the difference between the two thinkers lying merely in the expedients

24. Ibid.,

25. Ibid., p. 328.

26. Ibid., p. 326.

27. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 495

which they suggest for the governance of man's selfish nature. It must not be thought, however, that Tillotson preached a pure materialism, for he accepted, on the whole, the Anglican position as formulated by Hooker. It is only that he expressed, perhaps almost unconsciously, the philosophic bias of his day.

Not wholly dissimilar to the ethical consequences of Hobbism were those of a second important movement in the thought of the seventeenth century -- the revival of Epicureanism by Pierre Gassendi.²⁸ The Renaissance had directed men's eyes to antiquity before the Protestant reformation, and, consequently, when the reformation dealt a blow to the authority behind Christian ethics, many turned to the philosophies of Greece and Rome for a way of life more immediately adapted to this world than decadent mediaeval Christianity was proving to be. So, in England, during the last years of the Elizabethan period, the works of such dramatists as Chapman and Massinger are permeated with Stoicism. In France, on the contrary, Epicureanism achieved a wide following. Systematic formulation of a modified Epicureanism²⁹ was made by Gassendi, a French priest and critic of Aristotle, in two treatises, De Vita Moribus et Doctrina Epicuri and Syntagma, the latter his most complete statement regarding the content of the

28. Dates 1592 to 1655.

29. Gassendi retains the definition of pleasure upon which the ethic of Epicurus is based. The first treatise was written in 1647; the second in 1655.

universe. Like Hobbes, he urged the necessity of outward conformity to the religion imposed by the State; but, having paid his respects to the conventional religious explanation of the cosmos, he worked out independently of it after the pattern of Epicurus, his own atomistic explanation. Gassendi cannot, according to Professor Brett³⁰, be called a materialist, despite his atomism. Mind for him is not a mere function of matter, nor does he admit, on the other hand, that the step from matter to mind is unique.³¹

The emphasis in Gassendi's revival of Epicureanism is upon physics rather than upon ethics; yet it is the latter which produced the most immediate influence upon French thought. With Epicurus, he pronounced the summum bonum to be pleasure. Epicurus had affirmed that it is always easy to get what is necessary and that, therefore, life according to nature is always possible. Gassendi accepts this natural life of Epicurus as his model. He tries to show, moreover, that the pleasure which is the end of action is not mere self-indulgence, but is, in the highest sense, moral. Speculating upon the concrete nature of the summum bonum, he ultimately relies upon the

30. Professor of Philosophy at Lahore University and author of The Philosophy of Gassendi, London, 1908

31. The Philosophy of Gassendi, p. 267.

Aristotelian paradox that the pleasurable good is what gives pleasure to the good man. Gassendi's real significance to ethical thought lies in his opposition to the ascetic ideal through his insistence that pleasure and virtue are not mutually exclusive.³²

It is more immediately relevant to see how Gassendi's re-statement of Epicureanism, together with the influence of Montaigne's skepticism, resulted in a new free-thinking and free-living group in French literary life. Between the years 1615 and 1625 there sprang up in Paris a coterie of young men known as libertins, some of whom were both free-thinkers and "free-livers"; and others of whom were merely free-thinkers. The former, in addition to being acquainted with Gassendi's Epicureanism, had come under the influence of the Italian Vanini, who, from 1615 to 1617, carried on a propagandist campaign in Paris and was finally burnt for heresy. His doctrine "Live according to Nature"--by which he meant not the universal Nature of the Stoics, but the individual nature of every man -- became the ideal of a number of poets who wrote heretical and immoral verses and in their lives practiced every conceivable mode of sensuality.³³ Frédéric Lachèvre, who had edited the works of the libertins³⁴, along with the philippics of

32. Ibid., Part III, pp. 183-195.

33. Arthur Tilley, From Montaigne to Molière, p. 237 ff.

34. Hereafter libertins and libertine, the nearest English single-word translation, will be used interchangeably.

their Jesuit accuser, Père Garassus, defines a libertin:

Un libertin est un homme aimant le plaisir, tous les plaisirs, sacrifiant à la bonne chère, le plus souvent de mauvaises mœurs, raillant la religion, n'ayant autre Dieu que la Nature, niant l'immortalité de l'âme et dégagé des erreurs populaires.³⁵

Other of the libertins, like La Mothe le Vayer, Molière, and in his later years, Cyrano de Bergerac, were unrestrained in thought only. Many had studied under Gassendi.

and all had read the essays of Montaigne, the skeptical passages of which particularly engrossed them. The movement expressed itself in diverse ways. La Mothe le Vayer, disciple of Gassendi, framed an attack on theology as a basis for religion in his Five Dialogues; and in his essay On Liberty and Servitude, he allied himself to the English Hobbes by trying to prove that man, being a creature of passions, to which he must ever be a slave, can enjoy no real freedom.

Though Molière was associated with the libertine group, he is not as indubitably a part of it as La Mothe le Vayer or Cyrano. He made no systematic attack on religion, nor was his life devoted to bacchanalian orgies. Nevertheless, as an independent thinker rather than a worshipper of authority, as a lover of the natural and a

35. Frédéric Lachèvre, ed., Le Libertinage au XVII^e Siècle, Paris, 1922, vol. 1.

contemner of artificiality, as a man of the world, he has a connection with the movement. Cyrano, not himself addicted to dissolute living, represents the more serious aspects of the libertine movement; in the Voyage to the Moon and Voyage to the Sun, he develops a satire upon religious institutions and upon the follies of mankind in general.

Although the libertines allude to Gassendi as a wise master, they perhaps owe even more to the naturalism of Montaigne. "Whoever contemplates our mother Nature in her full majesty and lustre," the essayist writes, "is alone able to value things in their true estimate."³⁶ Knowledge of the self is, for him, the end of intellectual research, and living for himself is the duty of every man.³⁷ Life is short and the power of responsiveness fleeting; therefore humankind must snatch at pleasures before they pass.³⁸ Such ideas, obviously, make for individualism in ethics and libertinism in conduct.

Montaigne, however, was not unqualifiedly an Epicurean. At the beginning of his career he had been a Stoic, and to the last, Stoical elements lingered in his thought; but, between 1570 and 1580, he encountered, through

36. Essays, of Montaigne, tr. by E.J. Trechmann, London, 1927. "Of the Education of Children", p. 156.

37. Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 338-339.

38. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 244.

the translation of Henri Stephen (1562), the writings of Sextus Empiricus, and subsequently became allied with the skepticism of ancient Greece. Sextus, who lived in the third century A.D., provides, in The Pyrrhonic Hypotyposes and Against the Mathematicians, the most important record of the Greek skeptical thought which took its origin in Pyrrho of Elis³⁹ and continued in Arcesilaus and Carneades of the New Academy, through Diogenes Laertius to Aenesidemus and Sextus himself. Pyrrho had been led to skepticism by recognition of the variability and unreliability of the sense perceptions! Mental representations of a single object differ in different animals, and two persons, even, may disagree as to whether the air is hot or cold. Nor is there any homogeneity among the impressions made upon the various senses: there is no way to establish the interconnections, if there are any, among the qualities of roundness and redness and sweetness in an apple; perhaps, moreover, there are other qualities which our senses are not sharpened to perceive. That knowledge is wholly relative is apparent when it is noted to what degree external conditions affect the senses: a man's physical state will color his mental images, and, on the objective side, the nearness or farness of the object alters the size of the mental reproduction of it. Furthermore, the

39. None of the works of Pyrrho are extant.

senses never come directly in contact with things but are always separated from them by some medium, in which the real attributes of the object may possibly be changed. The values of objects or occurrences may become greater or less in proportion to their rarity or frequency; and the widely varying customs of countries show the impossibility of a single, rigid moral standard. By such arguments, expressed in ten tropes, or propositions, the Pyrrhonists demonstrated the futility of trying to deduce the real world from sense experiences.⁴⁰ And sense experience, they continued, is man's only source of knowing; hence, since it is fallible and delusive, there can be no criterion of absolute Truth. As the Stoics achieved peace of mind by disciplining themselves to desire only the attainable, so the skeptics fixed the positive aspect of their thought -- if it can be called positive -- in the achievement of intellectual calm founded upon suspension of judgment.⁴¹

The aim of Pyrrhonism was ataraxia in those things which pertain to opinion, and moderation in the things which life imposes. The method... by which ataraxia or peace of mind could be reached, was peculiar to the Skeptic. It is a state of psychological equilibrium, which results from the equality of the weight of different arguments that are opposed to each other, and the consequent impossibility of affirming in regard to either one that it is correct.⁴²

40. Mary Mills Patrick, Sextus Empiricus and Greek Skepticism, accompanied by a Translation from the Greek of the First Book of the "Pyrrhonic Sketches" by Sextus Empiricus, Cambridge, 1899, Chapters I, II.

41. Referred to as ataraxia.

42. Ibid., p. 27.

Pyrrhonism became, in ethics, religion, and politics, synonymous with conservatism and preservation of the status quo, for if the reason cannot validate standards of any kind, there is no logical justification for inviting disturbance and the pains of readjustment by changes in ideas or institutions, the superiority of which to those already existing cannot be proved.

Although there were elements of skeptical thought in the fideism of Saint Paul or of Augustine, Pyrrhonism as a philosophical system was not heard of in the Middle Ages. With the coming of the Renaissance, however, it reassumed its earlier importance; and in 1562 a Latin translation of the Hypotyposes was published, while in 1621 the Greek text of Sextus Empiricus was printed for the first time. Other skeptical treatises⁴³ appeared at intervals, and by the advent of Montaigne there was a definite tradition of skeptical thought to challenge his attention.

Montaigne's statement of Pyrrhonic ideas, in the Apology for Raymond Sebond, became, as Bredvold puts it, "the classic and standard exposition of modern skeptical thought", the authority of which extends like a shadow "over the thought and literature of the whole seventeenth

43. Thomas Fitzherbert, Treatise concerning Policy and Religion, 1606 and 1610; Father Simon, Histoire critique du Vieux Testament, Df. also Pico della Mirandola's Examen Vanitatis Doctrinae Gentium, etc., 1520.

For the general account of the skeptical tradition I have relied upon Bredvold's The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden.

century, in England as well as in France".⁴⁴ Attempting to show the relativity of standards, Montaigne employs the ninth trope of Sextus Empiricus: citation of the wide divergence in customs and ideas among the peoples of the world. And in a summary and criticism of the philosophies of the ancients, he gives an exposition of the tenets of Pyrrhonism, pointing to the advantage which it has over other systems of thought. "Is it not better to remain in suspense, than to be entangled in the many errors that the human imagination has brought forth? Is it not better to suspend one's convictions than to get mixed up with those seditious and wrangling divisions?"⁴⁵ Concluding with a more positive declaration of allegiance, he states:

There is no theory invented by man that offers more likelihood and profit. It presents man naked and empty, confessing his natural weakness and ready to receive from on high some power not his own; stripped bare of human knowledge, suppressing his own judgment to leave more room for faith; neither disbelieving nor setting up any teaching contrary to the common observance; humble, obedient, docile, zealous, a sworn enemy to heresy and consequently free from the vain and irreligious beliefs introduced by the false sects.⁴⁶

He not only clears away the rubbish of dogma, but also shows the way toward that employment of skepticism in the cause of faith which his successor Pascal was to rely upon in the

44. Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, p. 30.

45. Essays, vol. 1, p. 500.

46. Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 501-502.

next century.

Blaise Pascal, allied with the Port-Royal group, held, as it did, to the religious principles of St. Augustine; but he found no essential contradiction between the Augustinian depravity of man, allayed by grace of beneficent deity, and Montaigne's picture of man wandering in ignorance and error, with only faith to guide him.

Pascal, too, discounts human reason and, with a fervor alien to a naturalist like Montaigne, throws himself into the arms of God. Men, he writes, are incapable both of certain knowledge and of absolute ignorance:

We sail within a vast sphere, ever drifting in uncertainty, driven from end to end. When we think to attach ourselves to any point and to fasten to it, it wavers and leaves us; and if we follow it, it eludes our grasp, slips past us. This is our natural condition, and yet most contrary to our inclinations; we burn with desire to find solid ground and an ultimate sure foundation whereon to build a tower reaching to the Infinite. But our whole groundwork cracks, and the earth opens to abysses.

Let us, therefore not look for certainty and stability, our reason is always deceived by fickle shadows.....⁴⁷

Beginning, then, with the skeptic's estimate of reason, Pascal travels far from complete suspension of judgment in seeking to compensate the deficiency of intellect by the vigor of faith in metaphysical concepts. He evinces the consistent tendency of Pyrrhonism to find its own position untenable and to compromise with ideas which, though not demonstrably true, bear the weight of pragmatic necessity.

47. Thoughts, tr. by [?] Craig, Boston, 1849, p. 29.

Similarly connected with Port-Royal was Charles de Saint-Evremond, intellectually the product of a union between Skepticism and Epicureanism. An acknowledged student of Montaigne and of Gassendi, he maintains, in his maxims and conversations and plays, a tone of worldly tolerance and urbanity. Like Montaigne, he recognizes the advisability of suspended judgment:

Il veut montrer aux dogmatistes de tous les partis, que nul d'entre eux n'est à l'abri de la critique et des objections; que tous, par conséquent, doivent mettre la paix et la charité au-dessus des systèmes, des opinions et des disputes. Voilà le dernier mot de sa philosophie.⁴⁸

And, although there is a touch of Christian deism in his work⁴⁹, he, for the most part, has the attitude of an Epicurean, in the popular sense of that name, affirming that "à parler sagement, nous avons plus d'intérêt à jouir du monde, qu'à le connoître".⁵⁰ Contemporary with Pascal and Saint-Evremond were two other French writers of the Pyrrhonic school, Pierre Charron and François la Mothe le Vayer, each of whom, after the fashion of Montaigne, deprecates reason and pays homage to the philosophic soundness of skeptical principles.

Pyrrhonism, especially in its fideistic aspects, appears in English thought, as well as in French, during

48. Oeuvres Mêlées de Saint-Evremond: Revues, annotées et précédées d'une Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de l'auteur, par Charles Giraud, Paris, 1865, p. CXLIII.

49. Ibid., p. CLIV.

50. Ibid., p. 60.

the seventeenth century. Sir Thomas Browne, curious type of the Renaissance man, one eye on the "O altitudes" of faith, the other on reasoned investigation of this world; a critic of knowledge who was an inordinate gatherer of it, has no illusions about the claims of dogmatic philosophy:

We do but learn to-day, what our advanced judgment will unteach us to-morrow; and Aristotle doth but instruct us, as Plato did him; that is, to confute himself. I have run through all sorts, yet find no rest in any; our first studies and junior endeavors may style us Peripateticks, Stoicks, or Academicks, yet I perceive the wisest heads prove, at last, almost all Skepticks,⁵¹ and stand like Janus in the field of knowledge.

He too, however, subordinates his doubt to faith; teaches "His haggard and unreclaimed reason to stoop unto the lure of faith".⁵²

Though Browne's skepticism is basic to his thought, he admits no forthright indebtedness to Pyrrho; Joseph Glanville, on the contrary, evinces a familiarity with the Greek philosopher, and his book, The Vanity of Dogmatizing,

...is levied against dogmatizing and attempts upon a daring Enemy, Confidence in Opinion. The knowledge I teach, is ignorance; and methinks the Theory of our own natures, should be enough to learn it us. We came into the world, and we

51. Works, ed. by Charles Sayle, vol. I, p. 99.

52. Quoted from Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background, London, 1934, p. 59.

know not how; we live in't in a self-nescience, and go hence again and are as ignorant of our recess. We grow, we live, we move at first in a Microcosm, and can give no more Scientific account of the state of our three quarters confinement, than if we had never been extant in the greater world, but had expir'd in an abortion... We breathe, we talk, we move, while we are ignorant of the manner of these vital performances. The Dogmatist knows not how he moves his finger; nor by what art or method he turns his tongue in his vocal expression.⁵³

In the body of the book, Glanville treats of the impossibility of understanding the unity between body and soul, of the inadequacy of sense-experience, of the fallacies of the imagination, of the purely speculative character of causation -- in brief, of the unknowability of the universe.

Yet he, like his French contemporaries, executes a volte face from doubt to religious faith:

Though I confess, that in Philosophy I'm a Seeker; yet cannot believe, that a Skeptick in Philosophy must be one in Divinity.⁵⁴

It is evident, from the names of the writers and the fame of their work, that skepticism was a trend of thought to be reckoned with in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Not always was it strictly Pyrrhonic in method and content, however, although the underlying distrust of human reason remained always fundamental in it; the later Pyrrhonists tended more and more to diverge from the purely skeptical state of suspended judgment -- that is, from a complete

53. The Vanity of Dogmatizing, with a biographical note by Moody Price, Columbia University Press, 1931
Preface.

54. Ibid.,

negativity -- to a comfortable peace in the irrationally accepted dogmas of religious belief.

Both the materialism of Hobbes and the skepticism of the new Pyrrhonists were products of the questioning temper of the Renaissance; and it is the present purpose to show that Dryden, not possessed of the type of mind which, confronted by disquieting truths and disruptive forces, seeks escape in philosophic idealism, definitely reflects in his plays the attitudes of the searching mind, sometimes expressing itself in materialistic monism; sometimes refusing to go beyond the safe borders of an honest doubt.

DRYDEN AND HOBBS

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DRYDEN AND HOBBS

The period of Dryden's dramatic composition coincided with that of widespread concern among the members of the Anglican clergy, the Royal Society, and thinking people generally regarding the materialistic and, it was feared, the atheistical writings of Thomas Hobbes. Biographical data concerning the poet supplies the information that he knew Hobbes; and it is not surprising, therefore, in view of the personal acquaintance and eminence of both, to find mention of the philosopher in Dryden's prose. Although John Aubrey, the over-zealous biographer of Hobbes, affirms that the two were friends,¹ the references to Aubrey's idol in the poet-laureate's prefaces and essays are sometimes deprecatory in tone. He appraises Hobbes' translation of the Iliad by saying that he turned to poetry, as to mathematics, "too late";² and of Lucretius he says that, "like our poet and philosopher of Malmesbury", he is "everywhere confident

1. John Aubrey, Brief Lives, ed. by Andrew Clark, Oxford, 1898, p. 372.

2. Preface to Fables [1700] p. 508, The

of his own reasons" and always bidding his reader "attend, as if he had the rod over him..."³ In the same preface in which he criticizes the translation, however, he cites casually, but with apparent agreement, Hobbes' theory of the continuity of thought.⁴ These allusions come late in the poet's life, and are consequently not wholly relevant in determining the extent of Hobbes' influence upon the plays of his early and mid-career. The earliest prose reference to the philosopher, in the Essay on Heroic Plays,⁵ expresses approval of his repudiation of "immaterial substances".⁶

Aubrey asserts that Dryden was not only a friend of Hobbes, but even incorporated his ideas in his plays.⁷ And an examination of the speech, the plot situations, and the motives of character in those plays brings to light a considerable number of similarities to the convictions of Hobbes regarding human nature, religion, and political theory.

Self-preservation, Hobbes declares, is a law of nature; it is the determinant in formulating of civic organization, and it even becomes synonymous with "right", for it can be no man's duty to do anything that might menace his own existence, nor can it be a moral obligation to keep an agreement which would imperil safety.⁸ Dryden's characters

3. Preface to Sylvae, 1685 . p. 492, Ibid.

4. Preface to Fables, p. 504.

5. 1672. Prefaced to The Conquest of Granada.

6. Scott and Saintsbury, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 24.

7. Aubrey, op. cit.

8. Hobbes, op. cit., pp. 134, 204.

are almost uniformly self-centered, those of the "heroic" plays as well as those of the comedies; their conceptions of the virtues are selfishly utilitarian. The law of self-preservation is, to more than one, a categorical imperative, to which they give voice and according to which they act. Bertran, prince of the blood in The Spanish Friar, who proves at the end not to have been a villainous person, avers that

Self-preservation is the first of laws;⁹
 And if, when subjects are oppressed by kings,
 They justify rebellion by that law,
 As well may monarchs turn the edge of right
 To cut for them, when self-defense requires it."¹⁰

Duties to parents, as well as to kings, are automatically abrogated by conflict with the instinct for self-protection; and Alphonso, hero of Love Triumphant, Dryden's last play, says in defense of his rebellion against his supposed father, Veramond:

When kings and fathers, on their sons and subjects
 Exact intolerable things to bear,
 Nature and self-defense dispense with duty."¹¹

Women, like men, justify their acts by similar reasoning; and Almeyda, strong-minded heroine of Don Sebastian, defends her instigation of the murder of the tyrant, Muley-Holoch:

When force invades the gift of nature, life,
 The eldest law of nature bids defend;
 And if in that defense a tyrant fall,
 His death's his crime, not ours."¹²

And Morsyma, libertine, comic personage, agrees that "self-

9. cf. Abssalom and Achitophol, line 543 in Best of Dryden:
 "And self-defense is Nature's oldest law".

10. IV. II. 69, vol. VI.

11. III. I, 420, vol. VIII.

12. IV. IV. p. 428, vol. VII.

preservation is a point above honour, and religion, too."¹³

For Hobbes, self-defense is the only just reason for violating the social contract whereby the monarch has become sans peur et sans reproche. Dryden even allows a king, who might be expected to deny the prerogative of the commonalty, to sanction any act of private individuals springing from nature's "eldest law". For Montezuma, the Indian emperor, can see no wrong in killing the invaders of his court, because

....each private man
In his defense may justly do the same..."¹⁴

Sosis, the hoodwinked slave in Dryden's version of Molière's Amphitryon, is quite willing to deny his own existence to appease Mercury, and "not think at all for self-preservation".¹⁵

Self-preservation is a corollary of self-love; and in both comedies and serious plays appear frank admission by characters that they are primarily moved by selfish impulses. Tricksey, one of the despicable strumpets of Limberham, feels that she would be impatient of rivalry, "for I am apt to be partial to myself";¹⁶ Abdalmolech, one of the few admirable persons in The Conquest of Granada, ruminates upon woman's cozenage, saying that "man's self-love

13. III, II, 399, vol. VII.

14. IV, III, 382, vol. II.

15. Amphitryon, II, I, 38, vol. VIII.

16. VI, I, 41, vol. VI.

still favors the deceit";¹⁷ and the beloved of Prince

Arthur implores him:

Believe thyself, thy youth, thy love, and me;
They, only they, who please themselves are wise...¹⁸

King and Commoner alike admit to an ethical Narcissism.

Muley-Moloch would put the whole world on the rack, "so I be safe, I care not";¹⁹ an Egyptian soldier in Cleomenes lustily cries, "Everyone for himself". As the threat of death dispenses with filial obligation in a crisis, so does self-love ever justify it; and the Emperor, with reference to Aureng-Zebe, declares

Say, I'm a father, but a lover too;
Much to my son, more to myself I owe.²⁰

Unheroic persons confess that they are moved by "interest", and heroic ones, upon occasion, not only obviously act from it, but also generalize upon the importance of it as a determinant of conduct. When they speak of "interest", they refer to some form of personal ambition as opposed to unselfish concern for others, and in the comedies the term is usually used to signify a desire for wealth. Whether uttered by the hero or the villain of the piece, the following passages have the ring of Hobbes.

The best of men
Some interest in their actions must confess;
None merit, but in hope they may possess.²¹

declares Arimant, the virtuous, if somewhat spineless

18. IV, I, 167, vol. VIII.

19. Don Sebastian.

20. I, I, 213, vol. V. cf. Amphitryon, p. 7, vol. VIII. That Dryden was not merely using the principle of self-love for dramatic purposes is shown by the following line:
"All things of honor have, at best, somewhat of ostentation in them, and self-love."

creature of the heroine in Aureng-Zebe; and Indamora, openly using him to her own ends, reminds him:

You first betrayed your trust, in loving me,
And should not I my own advantage see?
Serving my love, you may my friendship gain.²²

Mercury, in Amphitryon, in more expansive fashion, paints a damning picture of man governed by selfish designs:

Such bargain-loves as I with Phaedra treat,
Are all the leagues and friendship of the great;
All seek their ends, and each would other cheat.
They only seem to hate, and seem to love;
But interest is the point on which they move,
Their friends are foes, and foes are friends again,
And, in their turns, are knaves and honest men.
Our iron age is grown an age of gold
'Tis who bids most; for all men will be sold.²³

Melesinda, Indamora's unwitting victim, willing to persuade her husband to be merciful, promises:

And, if your virtue fail to move his mind,
I'll use my int'rest that he may be kind.²⁴

Lorenzo, the opportunist friend of Torrismond's, in The Spanish Friar, affirms that "it is interest governs all the world"; and the greed and ambition of the clergy.²⁵

Philocles generalizes to constitute a law of conduct, saying that interest "makes all seem reason that leads to it".²⁶

When Almenzor protests that he has no price and thinks himself above reward, Boabdilin retorts:

21. III, I, 239, vol. V.
22. IV, I, 94, vol. VIII.
23. III, I, 238, vol. V.
24. III, I, 242, vol. V.
25. To be treated at length.
26. IV, I, 480, vol. II.

Then sure you are some godhead; and our care
Must be to come with incense and with prayer.²⁷

He suggests, somewhat remotely perhaps, Hobbes' assertion that the "'worth' of a man is as of all other things, his price..."²⁸ The devotions which Bosbdelin ironically proposes would, indeed, have been misplaced, for a little later, Almanzor protests against the scruples of her unwillingness and wishes her to yield to him at once in one "tumultuous minute".

Praise is the pay of heaven for doing
But love's the best return of good flesh and blood.²⁹

Success, for Hobbes, lies in being rewarded with what one wants; for him it could not be a subjective satisfaction from duty done, with no ensuing mark of achievement. Nor do the heroic characters in Dryden's plays ordinarily act from disinterested motives. Aureng-Zebe, type of the "heroic", in a long soliloquy, summarizes what seems to be a common view of those, like himself, intended to be essentially noble:

How vain is virtue, which directs our ways
Through certain danger to uncertain praise!
Barren and airy name! thee Fortune flies,
With thy lean train, the pious and the wise.
Heav'n takes thee at thy word, without regard,
And lets thee poorly be thy word, without regard,
And lets thee poorly be thy own reward.

27. V, II, 106, vol. IV.

28. Hobbes, op. cit., p. 76

29. IV, III, 194, vol. IV.

The world is made for the bold, impious man
 Who stops at nothing, seizes all he can.
 Justice to merit does weak aid afford;
 She trusts her balance, and neglects her sword.
 Virtue is nice to take what's not her own,
 And, while she long consults, the prize is gone.³⁰

Indamora shares her lover's opinion and proceeds to act upon it. She brutally prostitutes Arimant to her own ends: she tells him that he cannot help himself; that interest will compel him to serve her, though with no hope of compensation. Of her Dryden says in the dedication: "The procedure of Indamora and Melisinda seems yet, in my judgment, natural, and not unbecoming of their characters."³¹

In Tyrannic Love, Dryden pictures a Christian martyr who chooses to die rather than submit her person to the Emperor Maximin. She proselytizes the heathen philosopher Apollonius by pointing out that the great advantage -- and the only advantage -- of Christianity is the hope of reward which it proffers to strengthen man's weak virtue.³² She is obviously intended to be a paragon, despite the fact that she would sooner sacrifice her mother than forego her martyrdom. It would be partially understandable if fear of losing her immortal soul through sin had outweighed human sympathy; but fear of losing eternity is not her concern:

30. II, I, 236, vol. V.

31. p. 197, vol. V.

32. "Virtue grows cold without a recompense." II, III, 404.

she is reluctant to lose her "crown of martyrdom". She is, in short, spiritually ambitious. Her mother, Felicia, is also wholly self-centered, for not a moment's reflection does she need to decide that her daughter must yield to Maximin so that she herself may live. Roderick, who is rewarded with the fair and faithful Julia, has no scruples against immolating his sister upon the altar of his egotism, for he will see her dead or in abject suffering before he will marry her to one who, though he has been an enemy, is now peaceful and friendly. He and St. Catherine alike are fundamentally selfish.

The protagonists of serious plays, supposed to follow the pattern of heroism laid down by Dryden in the Essay on Heroic Plays, are likely to be blinded to ethical distinctions by egoism. Almanzor, superman of The Conquest of Granada, accosts the chaste Almahyde in the dead of night, insisting that she submit to him. With the irreproachable virtue of the conventional heroine of romance she informs him that, if he really loved her, he could not ask "what honor must forbid". It is not unusual for the heroine of romance to elevate the somewhat less ethereal standards of her lover; but those standards seldom sink to the level of Almanzor's when he asks: "And what is honour, but a love well-hid?"³³ A short time after, when he hears that Almahyde has yielded to a

33. IV, II, 180, vol. IV.

rival, he reveals that this interpretation of honour applies only to his own relations with her, for he vilifies her and is by no means prepared to justify her on the supposition that she may actually love the other.

An analogous absorption in self is implied in Don Sebastian upon the discovery that Sebastian and Almeyda have been guilty of incest. He draws his sword and attempts suicide, exclaiming:

Then let me die, for I would think no more.
I'll boast my innocence above,
And let them see a sould they could not sully.
I shall be there before my father's ghost,
That yet must languish long in frosts and fires,
For making me unhappy by his crime. 34

Not a word does he say of his partner in guilt; every thought is of himself. Nor does he become aware of her sad plight for some minutes.

Celides, one of the two heroines in Love Triumphant, is rewarded and praised for braving her father's wrath to plead for the happiness of Victoria. Her boldness, however, may be born of the realization that only by disposing of Victoria can she herself win Garcia. It is legitimate to assume this motive in view of her earlier estimate of human altruism:

So, helpless friends, when safe themselves ashore,
Behold a vessel drive against a rock.
They sigh, they weep, they counsel, and they pray.

34. V. I, 460, vol. VII.

They stretch their unassisting hands in vain,
 But none will plunge into the raging main,
 To save the sinking passenger from death.³⁵

When Alphonso, in the same play, is banished with a curse by the jealous Veromond, he pleads that he may not receive his father's "dreadful imprecation" and feels that, if only he may be relieved of that, his exile will be a blessing. Admittedly alarmed as he is on his own behalf, he is later wholly unable to understand the reluctance of Victoria to hazard a similar malediction by fleeing with him. He knows that a father's curse is reputed to pursue a child even into the next world; but, though he tries to escape it himself, he is willing that his beloved should suffer it in order that he may gratify a passion for her.

So self-enclosed is the individual in Dryden's plays that bonds ordinarily thought sacred are as straws before the wind of two opposing wills. The poet might well have devised some of his "heroic" personages with the words of Hobbes in mind:

And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their end, which is principally their own conservation, and sometimes their delectation only, endeavor to destroy, or subdue one another.³⁶

Father and son, brothers, eminent warriors of the same court, and persons with no reason for ~~XXXXXXXX~~ enmity

35. V. I, 460, vol. VII.

36. Hobbes, op. cit., p. 111.

other than pursuance of a common ambition plot against and attempt to kill each other, sometimes marveling at their own cold-bloodedness and even half regretting it. Abdalla hates his brother Boubdelin,³⁷ because he wishes to possess his power, and, without a pang of conscience, schemes to depose him; he detests Abdelmolech because they are rivals in love. The brothers, Guyomar and Odmar, pass bitter words in their open competition for Aliboch, and Odmar threatens to kill the younger brother; Placidius,³⁸ who ultimately proves to be an admirable enough person, truly devoted to Valeria, dislikes Poyrpyrius because he has hindered his advancement and won the love of his lady; Aureng-Zobe and his father war almost to the death over possession of the son's betrothed; bitter hatred exists between Veramond and Alphonso⁴⁰ because of a dilemma in love. Jacinthe⁴¹ declares that she will kill her father if he withholds consent to her marriage with Wildblood; Oedipus and Adrastus have been enemies because both were kings and "each disdained an equal".⁴² Certainly Dryden need not have known Hobbes, to associate jealousy and hate as concomitants of love or ambition; but the consistency and inevitability of the ensuance of hatred and jealousy from common aim among heroic persons and, especially, among

37. The Conquest of Granada.

38. The Indian Emperer.

39. Tyrannic Love.

40. Love Triumphant.

41. an Arabian's Love.

42. I. I. I. vol. VI.

members of a family suggest the Hobbesian interpretation of human nature.

As bonds of kinship and friendship are subordinate to the desires of the self-centered individual, so the virtues in general are defined in terms of their utility to the self. Hobbes is an ethical pragmatist rather than a teleologist; honor is "the opinion of power"; what man desires is good, what he hates, evil; covetousness is a vice because one man resents another's possession of riches; ill fortune and losses are dishonorable.⁴³ These definitions reveal the utilitarian implications of Hobbesian moral philosophy. Dryden's seriously drawn personages very often entertain an understanding of the virtues akin to that of Hobbes; very often follow the letter, not the spirit of the law; very often indulge in moral casuistry to rationalize the desires of the senses. Don Manuel, in The Rival Ladies, faces the necessity of either surrendering his sister to a bitter enemy or staining his honor by refusal to keep a promise. He neatly evades the issue by the following plan:

I'll cut this Gordian knot I cannot lose:
To keep his promise, Roderick shall have her,
But I'll return and rescue her by force;
Then giving back what he so frankly gave,
At once my honour and his love I'll save.⁴⁴

Roderick, too, is prevented only by force from killing Manuel when he is helpless and at his mercy; yet Roderick

43. cf. Chapter 10, Hobbes, op. cit.

44. IV, III, 199, vol. II.

is rewarded as a hero at the conclusion. Success and boldness of attempt are the criteris of good, rather than motive or inner probity:

But daring courage makes ill actions good,
'Tis foolish pity spares a rival's blood.

In the same play, a robber, who undergoes a lightening-change into a humanitarian, asserts, without being contradicted by his captors, that he has been punished enough "in missing of my wicked aim".⁴⁵ Honor, virtue, duty, are often merely formal. St. Catherine obviously represents an effort on the poet's part to portray a noble woman, keenly alive to problems of conduct. But spiritual ambition is not her only flaw; her consciousness of self does not end with aspiration to martyrdom. Death she covets as a pathway to immortal remembrance; but she cannot endure the humiliation of being nakedly displayed in the market-place. Such an exhibition, she asserts, will despoil her chastity. Chastity, for her, seems to be purely external and to bear no relation to an inner awareness of her own virtue. Somewhat similar to St. Catherine's understanding of chastity is Berenice's ideal of honor. She steadfastly refuses to yield to Porphyrius or to impair

45. I, I, 145.

her husband's honor in any way. Superficially, she appears to uphold a high standard of marriage and personal integrity. And yet her speeches show an emphasis on the letter of duty and a disregard of the spirit. "The desires and other passions of men," Hobbes says, "are in themselves no sin. No more are the actions that proceed from those Passions, till they know a Law that forbids them."⁴⁶ It is the formal obligations upon which Beronice insists. She admits her love for Porphyrius; she rejoices when Maximin is dead; spiritually, if not physically, she is unfaithful long before he dies. Maximin himself wishes heartily that she would leave him to the enjoyment of his new love. In a love scene⁴⁷ between her and Porphyrius she indulges in what amounts to coquetry and moral sophistry. She decries her own charms to inflame her lover the more. Although she has shown her preference plainly and has admitted that she once had been about to yield, she declares: "I never did accept your love" and "I never did admit your love to me, but only suffered it." She plays with love, granting certain liberties, taking no measures decisively to suppress her, or his, passion, yet refusing to make a final surrender.

The Preface to Secret Love, a tragi-comedy little

46. Hobbes, op. cit., p. 114.

47. III, I, vol. III.

altered from its source in Madame Scudery's Le Grand Cyrus, offers an enlightening commentary on Dryden's view of character. He had been accused of making his hero unadmirable. Philocles, after vainly suing for the Queen's permission to marry the one he loves, discovers that the Queen herself has a fatal passion for him; and thereupon, the glory of a crown gleams more brightly than the worth of a mistress. He tries to justify his own vacillation, he alters his behaviour toward his mistress, and he never definitely renounces ambition until matters are taken from his hands by the decision of the Queen to remain unmarried. Of him, Dryden says: "But neither was the fault of Philocles so great, if the circumstances be considered, which, as moral philosophy assures us, make the essential differences of good and bad."⁴⁸ A second instance of an enlightening prefatory comment appears in relation to the tragedy Cleomenes. The London fops had accused the poet of making his hero inhumanly unresponsive to the passionate suit of Cassandra. Dryden justifies himself in terms of human nature: "A man," he says, "might have pleaded an excuse for himself, if he had been false to an old wife, for the sake of a young mistress; but Cleora was in the flower of her age, and it was yet but honeymoon with Cleomenes; and so much for nature."⁴⁹

48. p. 420, vol. II.

49. Vol. VIII, p. 221.

A more blatant instance of blunted moral sensibilities occurs in The Spanish Friar. Torrismond, returning from a brilliant military campaign, secretly marries the usurping queen, whom he passionately loves. Later, his foster-father apprises him that his wife has engineered the murder of his father, the deposed king; and the newly-made emperor must choose between love and duty. He wavers between the two until it becomes known that the infamous plot has failed and that the aged man still lives; whereupon the son clasps his wife to his bosom, rejoicing that all has ended happily. The sophistry of separating the intent from the act is not apparent to him. With John Stuart Mill he would say that only overt conduct is ethically important; in accordance with the psychology of Hobbes, he satisfies a desire at the expense of moral depth. Finally, Almanzor, type of the heroic, gives the measure of his moral standards when he says to Almehyde:

The duty of poor honour were too hard,
In arms all day, at night to mount the guard.
Let him, in pity, now to rest retire;
Let these soft hours be watched by warm desire.⁵⁰

Dianet, a very minor figure in Aureng-Zebe from whom there is no reason to expect reflections of any sort, hints at Hobbes' definition of honor as the mere reputation of power:

50. IV, III, 192, vol. IV.

The points of honor poets may produce --
 Trappings of life, for ornament, not use.
 Honor, which only does the name advance,
 Is the mere raving madness of romance.⁵¹

Dryden's affinity to Hobbesian psychology is further evidenced by a recurrence of the theme of inconstancy and emotional vacillation. "And because the constitution of a man's body is in continual mutation", Hobbes writes, "it is impossible that all the same things should always cause in him the same appetite and aversions....".⁵²

Ethically, this is significant because such a psychology produces neither a consistent behaviour nor a stable character reacting in a predictable way. The comedies abundantly illustrate the principle of Hobbes; but because the comedy, as a form of art, is more artificial and conventionalized, it is advisable to analyze, first, the serious plays, and to note, finally, that, in the case of Dryden, there is a remarkable sameness of emotional instability in comic and heroic plays.

When Lyndaraxa, inhumanly cruel and selfish aspirant to power in The Conquest of Granada, asserts:

There's no such thing as constancy you call
 Faith, 'tis not hearts; 'tis inclination to all.⁵³

Hobbes is called to mind; but it is even more significant.

51. II, I, 237.

52. Hobbes, op. cit., 40-41.

53. III, III, 173, vol. IV.

moral stature. Change of political allegiance on the part of the hero is a characteristic mark of the French romances of Scudery upon which Dryden drew for a source; but the poet's independent defense of Almanzor is a justification in terms of human nature and accords the right to consider Almanzor as something more than a conventional figure.

Other characters experience unexplained vicissitudes of affection and arbitrary metamorphoses of opinion. Denouements depending on the impulsive bestowal of love by a principal personage upon someone whom he has hardly so much as noticed hitherto are frequent. Gonselvo has eyes for no one but the independent Julia. Throughout the play,⁵⁶ he voices hyperbolic assertions of what he will do to serve her, and of the impossibility of his living without her. Meanwhile, though his page, the disguised Hippolito, serves him faithfully, there is no evidence of his suspecting her or of any evolution of attachment for her. Yet, when Hippolito reveals her identity, he is instantaneously as assured of the depth and constancy of his love for her as he had previously been of his ardor for Julia. There is no adequate motivation; the language employed is not that of

56. The Rival Ladies.

Platonic love-at-first-sight: his passion simply has found a new object. A similar phenomenon marks the conclusion of the tragi-comedy Love Triumphant. Garcia, who, through four acts, has spurned the love of Alides and schemed to win her sister, perceives the attractions of Celides in a trice, as she persuades the king to sanction her sister's love. Likewise, Almeria suddenly is seized by a natural, rather than a Platonic, love for Cortez, to whom she has been a bitter enemy.⁵⁷ The comedies, too, often conclude with complete reversals of love,⁵⁸ and with quite as much reason as there is for them in the heroic plays. The emotion, however, makes no pretense of being deep-rooted in the non-serious, libertine characters.

Inconsistencies, moreover, are not limited to love situations. Unexpected and unmotivated reform of wicked persons and sudden religious conversion sometimes appear. For no adequate reason Almeria decides to bestow her dying benediction upon her rival for Cortez' love and sentimentally to join their hands. For a reason not made clear Veramond pardons Alphonse.⁵⁹ Morst changes from a deep-dyed villain without warning: at one moment he says that he desires

Renown and fame
And pow'r, as uncontrolled as is my will.⁶⁰

57. The Indian Emperor.

58. cf. An Evening's Love; Sir Martin Mar-all, especially.

59. Love Triumphant.

60. Aureng-Zebe. V. I. 281, vol. V.

A moment later, he exclaims:

Renown and fame in vain I courted long....
Now you Indamora have given me virtue for my guide,
And with true honor ballasted my pride,
Unjust dominion I no more pursue.⁶¹

Yet Indamora has only repeated what she and others have pointed out to him before, with complete failure. In equally uncereemonious fashion, Apollonius, pagan philosopher to the Emperor Maximin, in the midst of an eloquent defense of paganism, stops short with:

Where truth prevails, all arguments are weak.
To that convincing pow'r Christianity I must
give place.⁶²

And even more disconcerting change occurs in The Rival Ladies when, after Gonselvo has mercifully spared his life, a robber, not only expresses boundless gratitude and pledge of service, but even dedicates his life to humanitarian pursuits.⁶³

The precipitancy and irrationality of these transformations not only suggest Hobbes' principle of mutation, but create as well an appearance of automatism which may be related to a mechanistic philosophy of life. In at least two instances, Dryden directly attributes such "mutation" to bodily cause. The naive Hippolito, who at first is sure that he must possess Miranda, declares, once he has been wounded:

62. II, III, 405, vol. III.

63. I, I, 146, vol. I.

The fault was only in my blood, for now
'Tis gone, I find I do not love so many.⁶⁴

Similarly, the bold courage of the boy Cleonidas⁶⁵ wanes as he is deprived of food. Sosibius, priest in Cleomenes, phrases, in more reflective vein, the same materialistic basis of change:

Man is but man; unconstant still and various;
There's no to-morrow in him, like to-day.
Perhaps the atoms rolling in his brain
Make him think honestly this present hour;
The next, a swarm of base, ungrateful thoughts.⁶⁶
May mount aloft; and where's our Egypt then?

Women and aging persons are especially prone to inconstancy. The comedies are filled with allusions to woman's untrustworthiness, and the serious plays do not lack references to it. It is not merely an outgrowth of a sophisticated society, but is a natural instinct.⁶⁷

Heroic characters customarily expect inconstancy even in those whom they love. When Almanzor is told that Almahyde has yielded to Abdemelech, he publicly denies it, but the moment he is alone, he admits that he has defended what he knows to be false, for

64. The Tempest, V. I. 212, vol. III.

65. Cleomenes.

66. III. I. 305, vol. VIII.

67. cf. Ferdinand in The Tempest:

Nature has done her part, she loves variety: --
Why did I think that any woman could
Be innocent, because she's young. No, No!
Their nurses teach them change, when, with two nipples,
They do divide their liking. IV. I. 182, vol. III.

She was as faithless as her sex could be;
And, now I am alone, she's so to me.⁶⁸

Alphonso displays the basest suspicions of Victoria's virtue. When she assures him that he can trust her honor, he replies:

That may be chafed into a warmth, Victoria
Talk, seeing, touching, are incendiaries;
And these may mount your young desires like straw,
To meet the jet that draws you.⁶⁹

Although Indemora never wavers in her loyalty to her lover, the fact that the Emperor is known to be his rival awakens a consuming jealousy in Aureng-Zebe. He is prepared to believe anything of her, and he frankly tells her that he is equally miserable when he possesses her and when he does not. Later he suspects her of misconduct with Morat; and it is only his weakness, which apprises him that he cannot live without her, that brings him to Indemora's feet. The chief burden of Troilus' anxiety, as Uressid leaves Troy, is the fear that she may not be strong enough to resist the handsome Grecian soldiers. Captain Towerson, English hero of Amboyna, returns to the Dutch island half expecting to find that his Ysabinda has been untrue. Cydaria, the secondary heroine of The Indian Emperor, is ready to believe the worst of Cortez upon seeing him execute the formality of kissing

68. Part II, IV, III, 201, vol. IV.

69. III, I, 419, vol. VIII.

a lady's hand. Alms Hyde voices the belief that distrust is necessary to the development of the highest love:

Distrust in lovers is too warm a sun,
But yet 'tis night in love when that is gone.⁷⁰

It is, of course, true enough that self-preservation conceived of as a basic human instinct was not new with Hobbes and that it might have been arrived at by independent reasoning; that transferences of loyalty were a convention of French romance; that Dryden probably lacked the artistic genius necessary to gradual and complete characterization and to convincing denouements. But it still must be said that the reasoned statements in the serious plays concerning selfish instincts in man sound extraordinarily like Hobbes, and that the Dryden character, even when he declares himself otherwise or is declared by the author, in a preface, to be otherwise, bears a relation to the principles of Hobbesian psychology and ethics.

Analysis of the ethical problems which appear in the plays gives rise to the question of the extent to which human beings are responsible for their conduct and involves the enigmas of Free Will. The seeming paradox of omnipotent divine law and human moral responsibility functioning

70. III, I, 158, vol. IV.

71. See *ibid.* III, I, 158, vol. IV.

simultaneously; of beneficent deity and the existence of sin has always been too high a hurdle for theologians. Hooker evaded the problem, as it inevitably must be evaded, by stating in ^{Of} The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity that the Will is free "to take or refuse any particular object whatsoever being presented unto it"; that God, by virtue of his omniscience, foreknows but does not predestine; that He, for a reason not ascertainable by man, chose to accord the ability to decide between good and evil.⁷¹ The seventeenth century, with its religio-political problems, its conflicting tendencies of humanism and puritanism, its acquaintance with Descartes and Hobbes, was keenly alive to philosophic questions as basic as that of free will. Free will became a theme for polemic with churchman, scientist, and philosopher. In De Cive, Thomas Hobbes had relegated it to the dust-heap of scholastic nominalism, just as he later did in the better-known Leviathan:

And therefore if a man should talk to me of... a 'free will'; or any 'free', but free from being hindered by opposition, I should not say he were in an error, but that his words were without meaning, that is to say, absurd.

More positively, he describes the Will as the "last appetite or aversion, immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof."⁷² He continues:

The definition of the 'will', given commonly by the Schools, that it is a 'rational appetite', is not good. For if it were, then could there be

^{Of}
71. Richard Hooker, The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, ar-

no voluntary act against reason. For a voluntary act is that, which proceedeth from the 'will', and no other. But if instead of a rational appetite, we shall say an appetite resulting from a precedent deliberation, then the definition is the same that I have given here. Will therefore, is the last appetite in deliberating.⁷⁴

The materialism and determinism of such definitions were despised by the Church and feared by the Royal Society, which was concerned lest atheism and moral irresponsibility be thought adjuncts of the "new science". Many replies to Hobbes were forthcoming, among which were those of Robert Boyle, the Earl of Clarendon, and Dr. Bramhall, Bishop of Derry. The last-mentioned, Hobbes had met in public discussion in Paris; and later, when a reply of his to Bramhall's defense of free-will had been surreptitiously published, he entered upon a debate concerning "Liberty, Necessity, and Chance."⁷⁵ He maintained that obviously man is free to do what he wills, but not free to will. Every act of man flows from a first Cause; is determined by a chain of causes, each functioning necessarily, in accord with the Creator's plan. An untold number of influences and forces make a man what he is, and he cannot see all the links in the chain. A man can, to be sure,

71.(cont'd) ranged by John Keble; revised by Church and Paget, Oxford, 1888, Book I, p. 222.

72. Hobbes, op. cit., p. 32.

73. Ibid., p. 48.

74. Hobbes, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

75. Liberty, Necessity, and Chance, vol. V, Complete English Works.

drink water or not drink water; but he cannot will to be thirsty or not to be thirsty. If he is thirsty yet does not drink, it is because some other force stronger than thirst moves his will. This interpretation of Will reduces itself to an absolute necessitation and to the Deistic belief that whatever is, is right, since nature, established from the first Cause, "cannot err". 76

Dryden has almost nothing to say in his prose concerning Free Will,⁷⁷ and there are no reasoned treatments of it in his non-dramatic poetry. In the dedication to The Rival Ladies, however, in praising the work of the Earl of Orrery, he unequivocally announces himself a determinist:

Here in is no chance, which you have not foreseen; all your heroes are more than your subjects, they are your creatures; and though they seem to move freely in all the sallies of their passions, yet you make destinies for them, which they cannot shun. They are moved (if I may dare to say so) like the rational creatures of the Almighty Poet, who walk at liberty, in their own opinion, because their fetters are invisible; when, indeed, the prison of their will is the more sure for being large; and, instead of an absolute power over their motions, they have only a wretched desire of doing that, which they cannot choose but do.⁷⁸

Weight of evidence from the plays, notwithstanding the presence of antithetical statements, leaves little doubt

76. Hobbes, op. cit., p. 25.

77. cf. references to fortune and fate, however.

78. Dedication to The Rival Ladies, pp. 132-33, Vol. II.

and Gabriel. After temptation has begun to assail Eve through dreams, God sends six angels down for protection. Among them are Raphael and Gabriel, who, when Adam asks to whom he owes his gratitude for existence, proceed to instruct him in divine philosophy. Raphael assures Adam that God has formed him with will "unbounded as a deity", and freedom to choose good and shun evil, neither demanding anything of which man is incapable, nor compelling him to prefer the good. Gabriel adds that, though man is made good by his Creator, it is his mission and responsibility to sustain his natural state of undefilement. Adam is by no means philosophically naive, and, like Hobbes, he wishes to know how God can bestow a power which would make the created equal to the Creator. Raphael replies that, while, it is true, God cannot give away his boundless power, he can award unlimited liberty of choice:

So orbs from the first Mover motion take
Yet each their proper revolutions make.⁸¹

But, Adam asks, if certain things and events have been preordained by Heaven, what is to prevent man's free-will from rendering these decrees void? Gabriel evades the issue by answering that man alone "boasts an arbitrary

⁸¹. IV, I, 153, vol. V.

state"; that all else in nature follows the pre-conceived, Divine plan, unchanged by God or man. The recalcitrant Adam, however, turns to the very language of the Sage of Malmesbury:

Yet causes their effects necessitate
In willing agents; where is freedom then?
Or who can break the chain which limits men
To act what is unchangeably forecast,
Since the first cause gives motion to the last?⁸²

Replying to Bishop Bramhall, Hobbes expounds the same doctrine of cause and effect:

That which I say necessitateth and determineth every action.....is the sum of all those things, which being now existent, conduce and concur to the production of that action hereafter, whereof if anyone thing now were wanting, the effect could not be produced. This concurrence of causes, whereof every one is determined to be such as it is by a like concurrence of former causes, may well be called (in respect they were all set and ordered by the eternal cause of all things, God Almighty) the decree of God.⁸³

The creative and intellective powers of God function independently: creation, Adam is told, is the product of power and will, whereas foreknowledge is a product of the intellect and infers no necessity. God sees what man's choice will be, but man is not therefore less free to complete the chain of cause and effect. Adam reiterates Dryden's logic in the Preface to The Rival Ladies by affirming that because the chain of necessity is long, it

82. Ibid.

83. Hobbes, op. cit., p. 105, vol. V.

is not the less binding, and that because man feels himself to be free, he is not, for that reason, free. The divine emissaries rebuke Adam for impiety, but he protests his humility, saying that he argues only to be better taught. Thereupon, he again approximates the language of Hobbes in stating the relation between causality and necessity:

For whate'er cause can move the will t'elect,
Must be sufficient to produce the effect,
And what's sufficient must effectual be
Then how is man, thus forced by causes, free?⁸⁴

Raphael points out that often man will deny his assent when the cause is sufficient; his pupil agrees with Hobbes that any cause which does not actually produce the effect is not sufficient. The angel concludes his share of the argument by asserting that the causal chain appears necessary only in retrospect when the whole springs into view. What is done is necessarily done, but it need not have been as it is. Adam, then, turning to the problem of evil, desires to know why Heaven does not prevent the evil it foresees rather than sanction -- even will it -- by remaining passive? It is better, he thinks, to be "constrained to good, than free to ill". He is informed that, if there were no freedom to sin, there could be no rewards and punishments, which statement is, of course, a side-stepping of the issue. Adam, left alone, remains depressed by the

84. Ibid., pl54.

conditions of human existence. He has probed all of the vulnerable spots in his opponents' defense, and he has the last word in the debate:

Hard state of life! since Heaven foreknows
my will,

Why am I not tied up from doing ill?

Why am I trusted with myself at large,

When he's more able to sustain the charge?

Since angels fell, whose strength was more
than mine,

'Twould show more grace my frailty to confine,

Foreknowing the success, to leave me free,

Excuses him, and yet supports not me.⁸⁵

Adam does not here share the attitude of Hobbes toward the problem of evil: he, in dissatisfaction, accuses God of injustice; whereas Hobbes affirms that God's power is a sufficient justification of his every move.

Although Lucifer alludes to the free-born soul, both he and Asmodeus speak often of Fate and attribute their failure to it. After Eve has succumbed to temptation and Adam has chosen to share her guilt, Adam again questions the justice of God in giving strong appetites to make formal freedom meaningless. "Where appetites are given," he asks, "what sin to taste?"⁸⁶ The physical determinism implicit in his words recalls the similar implications in Hippolytos' discovery that excess blood has caused his passion for Miranda; in Prospero's conviction that it is vain to bridle

85. IV, I, 155, vol. V.

86. V, I, 167, vol. V.

nature; and in the change in young Cleonides when hunger assails him. Eve shows Adam's belief that man has not been treated fairly:

The laws were hard, the power to keep them, weak.
Did we solicit Heaven to mould our clay?
From darkness to produce us to the day?
Did we concur to life, or choose to be?
Was it our will which formed, or was it he?
Since 'twas his choice, not ours, which placed
us here.

The laws we did not choose why should we bear?⁸⁷

Although the concluding lines imply the freedom to disobey, the first line suggests the inequalities of physical necessity.

Other plays provide evidence that Dryden was not only interested in the problem of free will, but was inclined, as well, to reveal in his long passages regarding the matter the insubstantiality of man's freedom. The Prospero of Dryden's⁸⁸ revised Shakespeare, is, like his prototype, master of the situation in the first acts of the play. But once the lovers have upset his machinations, he concludes that men must ever try in vain to guide their own destinies, destinies either established by inscrutable fate or tossed up by incalculable chance:

.....
Perhaps my art itself is false.
On what strange grounds we build our hopes
and fears!

87. V. I. 173, vol. V.

88. III. V. 175, vol. III.

always perceive his own limitations because he sees not the entire chain of causality, but only the "nearest links".⁹²

The assertion that, by virtue of its being the decree of Fate, whatever is, is just, is likewise an Hobbesian principle, related to the philosopher's doctrine of Power:

Power irresistible justifieth all actions really and properly, in whomsoever it be found. Less power does not. And because such power is in God only, he must needs be just in all his actions.⁹³

An amplification of this idea, showing clearly its roots in Hobbism, occurs in one of the few passages in Amphitryon in which Dryden diverges from the original. When Jupiter vouchsafes that he loves because it is in the fates that he should, Phoebus replies that by such casuistry every wicked act might be condoned and every sinner freed from moral responsibility. But it is not clear to him what is meant by fate: is it a series of fortuitous events? is it causal necessity? or is it a power

That orders all things by superior will,
Foresees his work, and works in that foresight?⁹⁴

Jupiter reminds Phoebus that he, Jupiter, in his omnipotence, has made Fate and that therefore Fate cannot be fortuitous or unjust. It cannot be unjust to him, for he has willed

92. This is said repeatedly in Hobbes, vol. V. Cf. also Dryden's Preface to Rival Ladies.

93. Hobbes, p. 116, vol. V.

94. I, I, 18, vol. VIII.

it; it cannot be unjust to men, for he has created them, and they exist only for his will.

To those therefore whose power is irresistible, the dominion of all men adhereth naturally by their excellence of power; and consequently it is from that power, that the kingdom over men, and the right of afflicting men at his pleasure, belongeth naturally to God Almighty; not as Creator, and gracious; but as omnipotent. And though punishment be due for sin only, because by that word is understood affliction for sin; yet the right of afflicting, is not always derived from men's sins, but from God's power.⁹⁵

Dryden again echoes Hobbes when Maximin, in Tyrannic Love, says:

Our gods are gods, cause they have and will;
Who can do all things, can do nothing ill.⁹⁶

But the characters by no means always accept, in passive fashion, the doctrine that whatever is by virtue of omnipotence is right. It has already been observed that Adam boldly questions divine justice; and, after Jupiter has voiced his opinions, Mercury ironically remarks:

Here's omnipotence with a vengeance! to make
a man a cuckold, and yet not to do him wrong!⁹⁷

In many passages where references to fate are found, it is conceived of as a definitely malignant force,⁹⁸ and is spoken of as if it were something quite apart from God. This attitude is expressed in the non-dramatic poetry which

95. Hobbes, p. 346, vol. V.

96. V, I, 456, vol. VI.

97. I, I, 19, vol. VIII.

98. cf. Alphonso, Manuel, Goncalvo.

is likewise pervaded by the fate-theme. In Religio Laici, it is explained that reason guides men to belief in immortality as the sole refuge "from fortune and from fate";⁹⁹ in Annus Mirabilis, it is said that labyrinthine fate belks man's best efforts at self-direction:

In fortune's empire blindly thus we go,
And wander after pathless destiny;
Whose dark resorts since prudence cannot know,
In vain it would provide for what shall be.¹⁰⁰

The remaining passages, of some length, which pertain to free will are variously uttered by a villain, a heroine, and a hero; and all are characteristically Hobbesian. The Emperor Maximin, though making an exception in his own case, denies men to be free:

Free will's a cheat in anyone but me;
In all but kings, 'tis a willing slavery:
An unseen fate which forces the desire;
The will of puppets danced upon a wire.

Leonora's utterance forms a part of her consistent animosity toward the priesthood:

...I would not do this crime,
And yet, like heaven, permit it to be done.
The priest-hood grossly cheat us with free-will;
Will to do what -- but what heaven first decreed;
Our actions then are neither good nor ill,
Since from eternal causes they proceed;
Our passions, - fear and anger, love and hate, -
Here senseless engines that are moved by fate;
Like ships on stormy seas, without a guide,
Tossed by the winds, and driven by the tide.¹⁰¹

99. Fredvold, Best of Dryden, p. 200.

100. Ibid., p. 83.

101. The Spanish Friar, III, III, 467, vol. VI.

Alphonso speculates upon the unexpected twists of fortune which, though they seem fortuitous, are within the bounds set by heaven upon human life.

Which none can stop beyond the appointed limits,
And none can push beyond.¹⁰²

Indeed, Dryden appears often to veer away from rigid Causality toward Casualty. Although he quite definitely renounces the postulate of a world "from blind atoms wrought",¹⁰³ as inconsistent with the prevailing order in the universe, there are numerous allusions in the plays to the capriciousness of Destiny and to the "various turns of human fate."¹⁰⁴ Such passages, however, may do nothing more than assert man's inability to perceive causes or to foresee effects, for the weight of evidence is unquestionably in favor of belief in Heaven-ordained fate, often expressing itself in a physical determinism. As there are references to Chance, so are there allusions to the influence of the stars;¹⁰⁵ and Dr. Johnson implies that Dryden really placed faith in the pseudo-science of astrology.¹⁰⁶ Scott corroborates this statement of Johnson's, asserting that Dryden was a "firm believer" in astrology.¹⁰⁷ No reasoned defense or explanation of astrological influence occurs either in the

102. Love Triumphant, I, I, 385, vol. VIII.

103. Tyrannic Love, 410, cf. also To My Honor'd Friend Sir Robert Howard, on his Excellent Poems, Best of Dryden, p. 12.

104. The following passage is a sample of Dryden's mingling

plays or in the non-dramatic poetry, and consequently there is no basis for deciding whether the references to it are anything more than a literary convention. It may be relevant to point out that astrology is a subject for jest and ridicule in the comedy, An Evening's Love.

Constant employment of Fate as a theme in drama was customary among the writers of heroic plays; and probably Dryden does not use it much more extensively than Davenant or Otway.¹⁰⁸ Taken alone, the Fate-theme would be inconclusive in terms of ideas: it might be taken as a corollary of Platonic love-convention or as an inheritance from French romance. But as amplifying and corroborating the determinism in both specific passages and treatment of character, it takes on a meaning.

Necessitarianism may logically act to render moral considerations superfluous and to provide convenient basis for self-justification. Aside from innumerable blessings and maledictions of the stars in both comedies and heroic plays, there are instances in the latter of characters' seeking to evade ethical responsibility by attributing their conduct to Fate. Leonora, after planning the murder of an aged king

104 (cont'd) of the ideas of fate, chance, and fortune:
 Fate, now come back; thou canst not further get;
 The bounds of thy libration here are set.
 Thou knowest this place,
 And, like a clock wound up, strik'st here for me;
 Now, Chance, assert thy own inconstancy,
 And, Fortune, fight, that thou mayst Fortune be.
Conquest of Granada, III, I, 162, vol. IV.

105. Hobbes attributes to the stars a minor influence upon man, vol. V, p. 105.

in cold-blooded deliberation, and thereafter marrying his son with no thought of the equivocal position in which he is placed, disclaims all guilt, because she is a mere "senseless engine" which is moved by Fate.¹⁰⁹ Torrismond, her lover, finds in the Universe reason for sentimentalizing his misfortunes:

'Tis true, my hopes are vanishing as clouds,
Lighter than children's bubbles blown by winds;
My merits but the rash result of chance;
My birth unequal; all the stars against me.¹¹⁰

So, too, does Porphyrius, supine hero of Tyrannic Love, assign his predicament to the ill-will of heaven. Loving the wife of the king, who, though her husband hates her, will not leave him, Porphyrius cannot wholly renounce her. She will not tolerate his proposal to do away with the king, she will not allow her husband to put her from him; yet she encourages her lover's amorous inclinations. Their dilemmas, obviously, arise from their own choices, but Porphyrius repeatedly explains it by extraneous inimical forces. Ariment, slave to the unattainable Indamora, rails upon Fate and does not believe himself to be responsible for his passion; he is like one who

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106. Samuel Johnson, Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets, Oxford vol. 3, p. 48. 1905.
 107. Life, vol. I, p. 384.
 108. The Indian Emperor, 43 references to Fate or Fortune (approximately).
 All For Love, 43.
 Tyrannic Love, 43.
 Aureng-Zebe, 76.
 109. III, III, 467, vol. VI.
 110. I, I, 425, vol. VI.

Slides swiftly on, and sees the water near,
Yet cannot stop himself in his career...111

And Philocles, caught on the horns of a dilemma, perceives
that the situation has passed beyond his control:

Fate shoves me headlong down a rugged way,
Unsafe to run, and yet too steep to stay.112

A significant illustration of a consistently heroic character who attributes to fate a failure patently the result of his own headstrong will and breach of loyalty occurs in Don Sebastian, when Dorax, upon hearing that his rival has died for Sebastian, exclaims:

Had I been born with his indulgent stars,
My fortune had been his, and his been mine.113

Maximin, who changes his love as the wind blows, recognizing a dual influence of stars and "nature", repudiates all responsibility:

If to new persons I my love apply,
The stars and nature are in fault, not I....114

Dryden's heroic drama presents something of the same paradox to be found in Hobbes' Leviathan. The order of nature, for Hobbes, is irrevocably and absolutely determined; yet he constantly assumes that man can guide his own destinies through the formation of a commonwealth and the delegation of power to a king, who, though he rules by the right of

111. III, I, 62, vol. V.

112. IV, I, 498, vol. II.

113. IV, III, 440, vol. VII.

114. IV, 431, vol. VII.

nature inherent in the law of self-preservation, can himself formulate law, devise punishment, and assign reward. It is a convention of "heroic" drama that the protagonist should arrogate to himself the prerogatives of fate. "I alone am king of me,"¹¹⁵ Almanzor exclaims, and Maximin boasts that he is inferior to no god; but although they and the others overcome every physical obstacle and enjoy freedom from restraint, in the conventionally superhuman manner of the heroes of French romance, they inevitably fall victims to their own passion; they are guided by emotional determinism. In both Dryden and Hobbes there is a contradiction between the claims of the powerful individual and the actual necessity which conditions his behaviour.

As determinism tends to make ethics anomalous, so does it provide a rationale for the life of passion. Hobbes, moreover, in addition to nullifying freedom of will, further deepens the base of the passional life by teleologically subordinating reason to the desires. "Where Reason is against men", he implies, 'men will be against Reason',¹¹⁶ With few exceptions, the characters in Dryden's plays are in the grip of devastating passions, the laws of which are categorical, the force of which is irresistible. The predominance of love.

115. I. I, 43, vol. IV.

116. Jeremy Collier's *Aphoristic* paraphrase of Hobbes, *Essays upon Several Moral Subjects*, London, 1720, p. 141, vol. IV.

over other emotions is not a phenomenon unique to Dryden's plays. The French romances of Scudéry, La Calprenède, and Gomberville inevitably center about the passion of love. It is an important element in Corneille, who represents the conflict of love and honor; and the heroic drama of Davenant, Otway, and Orrery treat various aspects of it. Dryden, however, differs from his contemporaries in clearly defined ways. In both Dryden and the French romances there is much of the dialectic of love, much analysis of the vagaries of the emotion; in both, the characters have no existence apart from their central passion. Dryden, though, shows more clearly, using the familiar philosophic terms, the dualism of passion and reason; the vicissitudes of his personages are more inner, their language less précieuse than those of their French counterparts. The dramatic struggles portrayed by Corneille, and usually those represented by the English writers of "heroic" plays, show the difficult but certain triumph of honor over love; in only three plays of Dryden's does the struggle thus eventuate,¹¹⁷ and one of them was lifted bodily from Le Grand Cyrus. This persistent omnipotence of the passions Dryden probably derived from Hobbesian materialism, although he may also reflect the Epicureanism of the French "skeptical movement", by which he

117. Secret Love; Don Sebastian; The Indian Emperor (sub-plot).

was undoubtedly touched.

Kathleen Lynch has attempted to show that Dryden's presentment of love is markedly Platonic.¹¹⁸ In the Platonic plays of the Caroline period, she points out, Fate "exerts a unique authority." The lovers always love by destiny; the passion seizes upon them at first sight, and it is of no avail to deny the demands of it. An unsuccessful lover is expected to enjoy the lady's friendship if he may not have her love. His love "has such celestial purity that it discredits and subdues, although in many cases it does not wholly extinguish, physical passion". Self-love vanishes, in the Platonic play, and jealousy "has lost its tragic appeal and has become an intolerable offense". Moreover, the Platonic lover must be a fluent rhetorician and dilectician of love; he must be able to analyze the passion; to tell what it is; to asserbate its laws and decorum. Even at moments of bitter disappointment, he must be able to phrase gracefully figurative compliments to his lady. After asserting that Dryden was extensively influenced by this earlier drama, Miss Lynch writes the following appraisal:

Dryden's heroes prove his contention that men of heroic calibre are not exempt from

118. Kathleen Lynch, "Conventions of Platonic Drama in the Heroic Plays of Orrery and Dryden", P.M.L.A., June, 1929.

weaknesses of character. Although excellent Platonic philosophers on occasion, they speak not infrequently the natural language of passion and chafe under the restraints of their servitude. Dryden's heroines are better Platonists, yet they make concessions in love which will not bear the closest Platonic scrutiny.¹¹⁹

Miss Lynch thus says much to negate her principal contention, although not so much as an examination of the plays appears to demand. It is true that the characters love by fate, that they love at first sight often,¹²⁰ and that they cannot curb their passion. But the Platonic tone is wholly lacking. The love is not "celestially" pure: its object is possession, and there are frequent insistences upon present enjoyment lest Heaven prove not to offer fulfilment. The physical effects of the passion are often voluptuously described, as when Troilus exclaims:

I'm giddy; expectation whirls me round:
The imaginary relish is so sweet,
That it enchants my sense; what will it be,
When I shall taste that nectar?
Just such a passion does heave up my breast!
My heart beats faster than a feverish pulse:
I know not where I am, nor what I do.¹²¹

or when Aureng-Zebe threatens to "devour" Indamora's kisses with "hungry taste".¹²² The lovers usually speak the "natural," if somewhat exaggerated, language of passion, voicing clearly the struggle within them, and frequently using physical rather than etherially Platonic

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119. p. 470.
120. Often they do not. It is almost always a sudden seizure, however.
121. II, II, 314, vol. VI.
122. IV, I, 275, vol. V.

similitudes. Self-love is not extinguished to the point of eliminating jealousy. Honoria, whom Miss Lynch cites in this connection, pays verbal respect to self-sacrifice, but she is quick to quarrel with her rival. Aureng-Zebe, Almanzor, Cydaris, Troilus, Placidius, Antony -- all are furiously jealous; all permanently or temporarily hate seemingly successful rivals. There are but few instances of a disappointed lover's remaining a friend to the lady.¹²³ The world of Dryden's plays is distinctly that of passion-ridden characters, with almost none of the courtly decorum and preciousness of persons playing the game of love, and little of the spiritual implications of love. The use of Fate is not limited to the love-situation, and the prevailing insistence upon it as a force in human life makes it seem unnecessary to suppose the fate-motif to be merely a convention. If love-at-first-sight and love-analysis, in dialogue fashion, are Platonic in origin, they are dealt with by Dryden in a spirit so different as to negate the importance of earlier Platonic drama as a source for the treatment of love in the heroic plays.

There is a remarkable consistency in the representation of character in comedy and heroic play. Every exercise of reason by a Warner, a Woodall, or a Wildblood¹²⁴ is

123. Placidius, perhaps, in Tyrannic Love. Rather, a slave-master relationship exists between Arimant and Indamora, whom Miss Lynch cites as an example.

124. Sir Martin Mor-all, The Wild Gallant, An Evening's L

directed toward the fulfillment of a conscious Hedonism; none of them experiences a conflict of reason and passion. Serious characters, on the contrary, are torn by conflict; but there is no real lack of harmony in the interpretation of human nature, because the passions of heroic personages, like those of comic characters, always hold away.

The three principal figures in The Rival Ladies are motivated by a single passion which will not be thwarted, despite almost insuperable obstacles in the way of its satisfaction. Consalvo, ship-wrecked nobleman, whom two disguised maidens serve and secretly love, has seen Julia, already betrothed to Roderick. Instantly he has become enamoured of her, although she loves the man whom she is to marry. From the moment of first seeing her, Consalvo's life is absorbed by his passion. A friend says of him:

He trusts his passion
Like him that ventures all his stock at once
On an unlucky hand.¹²⁵

Julia tells him, not only that she cannot love him, but that his very presence is distasteful to her; but he merely declares, "Where passion rules, how weak does reason prove".¹²⁶ He loses the last vestige of rationality in imploring her only to say she loves him, even though he knows that she does.

125. III. I, 176, vol. II.

126. II. I, 175, vol. II.

not. His servitors bid him cast from mind this love which destroys his peace; but he replies, "I cannot".¹²⁷ Julia herself is no less the victim of love for the enemy of her brother. She recognizes that her love is wholly opposed to reason:

Too well I know it: for my love to thee
Is born by inclination, not by judgment;
And makes my virtue shrink within my heart.¹²⁸

Like most of the other heroes and heroines, she feels that she has not the strength to live once her lover is dead. Hobbes had said that to be without desires is to be dead; Dryden alters this to signify that failure to satisfy one's dominant desire is worse than death. Roderick, on the contrary, governed by hate, will sacrifice his sister and his honor to his passion, and will die himself sooner than see his enemy live on.

Love, in almost every instance, paralyzes the will. Almeria, in The Indian Emperor, when her hand is raised to kill her enemy, is assailed by a sudden lethargy which stops her stroke. At first she cannot explain it, but she soon realizes that love has come to direct her will. In the same play, Orbellan, confronted by the hero whom he was about to kill, guiltily pleads, "Forgive it as my passion's fault, not mine."¹²⁹ In many cases, the single passion with which

127. Ibid.

128. I, II, 157, vol. II.

129. III, II, 362, vol. II.

Dryden endues a character appears to be adventitious; to be something quite apart from his essential being; to have, in a word, the directive force of an extraneous power akin to fate.

The passions which constitute the essence of human nature as Dryden portrays it do not hold uncontested sway. When the dramatist proposes to give a serious portraiture of man, a dualism between passion and reason is apparent. A conception of man as constantly divided by two opposing forces -- one of emotion and one of intellect -- marked much of the philosophy and theology of the times. Descartes recognized it; Pascal and Montaigne were aware of it; and the commonwealth of Hobbes is based upon the voluntary exercise of reason in order to curb the natural passions, not in accord with an ascetic ideal, but only that they may not thwart themselves by ill-advised unrestraint. The sermons of Tillotson¹³⁰ stress the conflict between the naturally passional nature of man and the controls made necessary by society and religion:

We are naturally inclined to evil.....Do but let them children alone, and they will soon be habituated to sin and vice. And when they are once accustomed to do evil, they have lost their liberty and choice.¹³¹

130. of. Congreve's dedication to his own edition of Dryden's dramatic works. He says that Dryden was a profound admirer of the prose of Archbishop Tillotson, p. 19, vol. II.

131. John Tillotson, Sermons, vol. 3, p. 547.

But, recognizing that men are inclined to follow their passions, he nevertheless declares the power of the mind as a restraining agency.

In Dryden's plays, the dualism is, with few exceptions, purely nominal, for the characters themselves know how the conflict will eventuate. They are always cognizant of their own emotions, and often debate with themselves as to which is stronger in them, reason¹³² or passion. Abdalla and Abdelmelech, rival suitors in The Conquest of Granada, are madly, fatuously in love with the unscrupulous Lynderaxa. Both understand her true nature, and both are able to stand aside, so to speak, and look at themselves. When Lynderaxa departs, after planting in Abdalla's mind the idea of usurping his father's throne, he confesses:

How bold our passions are, and yet how blind!
She's gone; and now,
Methinks, there is less glory in a crown:
My boiling passions settle, and go down
Like amber chafed, when she is near, she sets
When further off, inclines, but not attracts.¹³³

That he can reflect intelligently upon his state alters not at all the fact that he is helpless in his passion. Love grips his will "like a lethargy"; his mind can toy with the idea of renunciation, but he is powerless to put it into

132. In connection with the general treatment of reason by Dryden, it is relevant to note the following passage:
Reason's a trick, when it no grant affords;
It stamps the face of majesty on words.

Conquest of Granada, III, I, 77.
These lines recall Hobbes' identification of reason

execution. The distinction suggested between Will and Reason recalls the objection of Hobbes to the scholastic definition of will as a rational appetite. The will, he maintains, is not rational, because, if it were, there could be no voluntary act against reason.¹³⁴ Trying to convince himself that reason may be paramount, Abdalla debates the matter with Zulema, a frank exponent of complete unrestraint.

Abdalla: Reason was given to curb our headstrong will.

Zulema: Reason but shows a weak physician's skill;
Gives nothing while the raging fit does last;
But stays to cure it, when the worst is past.
Reason's a staff for age, when Nature's gone;
But youth is strong enough to walk alone.¹³⁵

Later, when the more mature Abdelmelech, unveiling to Abdalla the depravity of Lynderaxa, advises him to forget her, lest his infatuation lead him from the path of duty, Abdalla replies:

Your counsels, Abdelmelech, move
My reason to accept them, not my love.
Oh, why did heaven leave man so weak defense,
To trust frail reason with the rule of sense!
'Tis overpoised and kicked up in the air,
While sense weighs down the scale, and keeps
it there;
Or, like a captive king 'tis borne away
And forced to countenance its own rebel's away.¹³⁶

132. (cont'd) with the adding and subtracting of names, and his definition of the virtues in terms of power.

133. Part I. II. I. 55, vol. IV.

134. Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 48.

135. II. I. 56, Part I, vol. IV.

136. Ibid., 61.

But Abdelmelech springs to the defense of Reason:

No, no; our reason was not vainly lent;
Nor is a slave, but by its own consent:
If reason on his subjects' triumph wait,
An easy king deserves no better fate.¹³⁷

This tribute to reason is ironical, because Abdelmelech, like Abdalla, remains in the grip of his passion, first encouraged, then repelled by Lynderaxa, until death at last releases him. Abdalla, in turn, rejects all pretension to rationality:

I cannot, will not, - nay I would not fly;
I'll love, be blind, be cozened till I die.
And you, who bid me wiser counsel take,
I'll hate, and, if I can, I'll kill you for her
sake. ¹³⁸

Almanzor maintains that love is an enchantment where the reason is bound, and would banish thought from the domain of love. He exhorts Almahyde to forget dull reason and tedious convention and to abandon herself to the ecstasies of passion. While Indamora is in prison, Ariment reveals his love for her; and, once she knows of it, she tells him coldly, frankly, that she intends to use him as a pawn in her game to defeat the Emperor's plans. "You know," she says assuredly, "you must obey me soon or late."¹³⁹ And she has understood him aright: he is a bondsman to passion, though his reason apprises him of his folly:

137. III, I, 61, vol. IV.

138. Ibid., 62.

139. III, I, 239, vol. V.

Why am I thus to slavery designed,
 And yet am cheated with a freeborn mind?
 Or make thy orders with my reason suit,
 Or let me live by sense, a glorious brute.¹⁴⁰

He is betraying his kind; he is hazarding his position,
 not to say his life, but he can only lament that it is so!

My virtue, prudence, honor, interest, all
 Before this universal monarch fall.
 Beauty, like ice, our footing does betray;
 Who can tread sure on the smooth, slippery way?
 Pleased with the passage, we slide swiftly on,
 And see the dangers, which we cannot shun.¹⁴¹

Similarly, the Emperor perceives the enormity of his plan
 to become the rival of the son who has preserved his kingdom.
 He is well aware of the perfidy of it, but he is never able
 to subordinate passion to duty or even to his own welfare.

"How can I help those faults which nature made?"
 he asks "Who cannot cure, must humour the disease".¹⁴²
 When Aureng-Zebe defies the treacherous Morat, even after
 his father's rivalry is known to him, the Emperor experiences
 momentary remorse:

I feel my virtue struggling in my soul,
 - But stronger passion does its power control.¹⁴³

He finally renounces Indemora only when his very life depends
 upon a reconciliation with Aureng-Zebe. Once Morat's plot to
 dispossess him has been revealed, however, the Emperor cries
 out in sincere anguish:

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140. Ibid.
 141. II, I, 220, vol. V.
 142. IV, 434, vol. V.
 143. III, I, 247, vol. V.

Why was my reason made my passion's slave?
 I see Heaven's justice; thus the powers divine
 Pay crimes with crimes.....144

Aureng-Zebe himself, like Almenzor, evidences a disparity between Dryden's intent and the reality which he has created. His heroic qualities are stressed in antithesis to the recreancy of other male characters; and even the villains of the piece are ready with acknowledgement of his superiorities. He pays verbal respect to reason and the principle of control, declaring that he stands "firm collected in his strength within"; but, actually, a mad jealousy blinds him to the virtues of Indamora when they are obvious; and, attributing his misfortune to Nature, he dissipates his energies in maudlin sentimentality:

I grow a fool, and show my rage again
 'Tis Nature's fault; and why should I complain.....145
 and With or without you, I can have no rest.
 What shall I do? Y'are lodged within my breast.
 Your image never will be thence displaced,
 But there it lies - stabbed, mangled, and defaced.146

His speech, moreover, is often characterized by an uncontrol that bespeaks a predominance of passion:

Love mounts and rolls about my stormy mind,
 Like fire that's borne by a tempestuous wind.
 Oh, I could stifle you with eager haste!
 Devour your kisses with my hungry taste!
 Rush on you! - eat you! - wander o'er each part,
 Kissing with pleasure, snatch you to my heart!
 Then hold you off, and gaze! - then, with new rage,
 Invade you till my conscious limbs presage
 Torrents of joy, which all their banks o'erflow.157

144. IV, I, 270, vol. V.

145. V, I, 295, vol. V.

146. Ibid., 297.

147. IV, I, 275.

The impression created by such an effusion is strengthened by the paucity of moral courage shown by Aureng-Zebe. He affirms that he had rather be dead than deprived of his father's love, and later he expresses the same feeling regarding Indamora's love. The strain of sentimentalism at times apparent in Dryden is a logical outgrowth of an individualistic, naturalistic philosophy which elevates the passions above reason. Aureng-Zebe not only indulges in weak sentimentality, but also makes occasional comments suggestive with regard to Dryden's understanding of human nature. When the king commands his son to be killed, the latter draws his sword and is about to kill the guard. The tragedy averted, he explains: "My virtue was surprised into a Crime".¹⁴⁸ His admission signifies the impotence of reason's defenses and is reminiscent of typical theological injunctions concerning the dangers of being surprised by the passions. Tillotson, for example, warns:

....the very best of us, those who have the firmest and most resolute virtue, were in infinite danger.... For a temptation may set upon the best men with so much violence, or surprise them at such an advantage, as no ordinary grace and virtue are able to withstand.¹⁴⁹

The Antony of All For Love is, not less than Aureng-Zebe, the man of passion. Aside from alterations in form and unity, perhaps the most fundamental difference between

148. I. I. 219, vol. V.

149. Tillotson, op. cit., vol. V, p. 517.

Dryden's play and that of Shakespeare lies in Dryden's divesting Antony of his "Roman thoughts" and his political stature, and making him the subject slave of love and its attendant fury - jealousy. Another basic change arising from the dramatist's conception of human nature marks his version of the Greek story of Oedipus. The stern ethical import of the Sophoclean tragedy is dissipated by the moral wavering of Oedipus, who is prevented only by the intervention of a ghost from returning to Jocasta's arms even after he has been apprised of the incestuous relationship.

The heroic play Tyrannic Love offers equal opportunity to study character at the mercy of emotion. Maximin, almost a burlesque-king, with his supreme egoism and wild defiance, admits:

I can no more make passion come or go,
Than you can bid your Nilus ebb and flow.¹⁵⁰

Madly in love with St. Catherine at a moment's notice, in equally short order his love turned to hate, he dictates that she shall die; but, once she is dead, his love resumes its first violence. The only way, in truth, that he can free himself from one passion is to deliver himself unreservedly to another. There is in Maximin no dualism: he sees no duty apart from self-indulgence. He asks:

How can I help these faults which nature made?
Who cannot cure must humour his disease.¹⁵¹

150. IV. I. 433, vol. VII.

151. Ibid., 437, vol. VII. Love is often described, in bodily terms, as a disease - an interpretation clearly in accord

None of the characters ever really frees himself from passion; yet in the long discussion of religious philosophy carried on by Maximin, St. Catherine, and the pagan Apollonius, the pagan and Christian agree that the highest nobility is

To keep the passions in severest awe,
To live to Reason, Nature's greatest law.¹⁵²

If that be a seriously entertained opinion of Dryden's, he fails once more in Love Triumphant to realize characters that are supposed to be noble. Celides, in love with Garcia, who, in turn, aspires to her sister, and ashamed of her inability to free herself from an unreciprocated passion, cries out:

.... O heaven unkind!
That gives us passions strong and unconfined,
And leaves us reason for a vain defense,
Too powerful rebels, and too weak a prince.¹⁵³

When the Queen explains to Garcia the dilemma in which Victoria is placed by her love for the banished Alphonso, he quickly perceives the inadvisability of his becoming involved in the tangle, but he is not, because of that, deterred from trying to win Victoria for himself. "My reason is convinced", he says, "but not my passion."¹⁵⁴ It is interesting, moreover, to note the efforts of Ximena to vindicate the behaviour of Alphonso on physical grounds:

And did not you, my lord, observe Alphonso,
How, though at first he could not rule his passion,
Not at the very first, for that's impossible

151. (cont'd) with a physical determinism. Cf. Prospero (III, II, 155):

Poor child! Thy passion, like a lazy ague,
Has seized thy blood; instead of striving, thou
humorest

And feedest thy languishing disease

152. II, I, 404, vol. VII.

153. IV, I, 440, vol. VIII.

fundamental human instincts and in his exegesis of the problem of free will. And all of the pertinent evidence irresistibly suggests that the psychology of Hobbes, basing man's activity upon the passions -- recognizing the reason, to be sure, but emphasizing the priority of the emotions -- had so permeated Dryden's thought as to condition, whether consciously or not, his creation of dramatic character.

A theory of government logically depends upon the opinions which its formulator has concerning the inherent possibilities of human nature. Democracy presupposes a sufficient degree of basic goodness in men to enable them to live together without the control of a strongly centralized authority; while monarchy allies itself with the supposition that men, in a natural state, are unwilling and, by reason of the character of their deepest instincts, unfit to guide the destiny of their social group in accordance with unselfish principles designed to promote the welfare of all. So, in the eighteenth century, the writings of Rousseau, who was convinced of the nobility of man as he exists prior to the corrupting influences of an artificial civilization, lent impetus to the democratic revolution; and as in the seventeenth century, Hobbes, with his panoply of selfish instincts and degraded motives, provided a new foundation for absolutist political philosophy. His, it is needless to say, was not

the first defense of absolutism, nor was it the only notable expression of it in that period, for James I. in the Basilikon Doron,¹⁵⁷ The Trew Law of Free Monarchies,¹⁵⁸ the Speech of 1609, and elsewhere, had established the Sovereign in what he looked upon as the incontrovertibly secure position of having received his power directly from God:

..... Kings are not onely Gods Lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon Gods throne, but even by God himselfe they are called Gods, and so their power after a certaine relation compared to the Divine power.¹⁵⁹

Hobbes retains the ultimately divine origin of kingship, but bases it more immediately upon the natural laws of self-preservation and the desire for comfort and aggrandisement. These are, to be sure, God's laws; but the head of the Commonwealth derives his prerogatives, not from gracious bestowal by Heaven, but through a compact formed by men to the end that their desires may not be thwarted by wholly unrestrained self-expression. A mere covenant, however, is not enough to suppress the tendencies of men to secure what they want at the expense of others: a common power is needed "to keep them in awe, and to direct their actions to the common benefit."¹⁶⁰ Consequently, they choose¹⁶¹ to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may

157. 1599.

158. 1598.

159. The Political Works of James I. with an introduction by O. H. Mollweil, Cambridge, 1918, p. 307.

160. Hobbes, op. cit., p. 157, vol. V.

161. The contract seems to take the form of a tacit agreement.

reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will...."162 This choice, it must be repeated, springs from fear, fear lest uncurbed individualism menace the safety or even the life of the individual. Starting from natural law, then, Hobbes agrees, finally, with James that the Sovereign is "God's lieutenant, who hath the sovereignty under God."163 Unlike the Stuart king, though, he does not say that monarchy is the only possible kind of government acceptable to God; he recognizes Democracy and Aristocracy as well, but, on a purely utilitarian basis, concludes that monarchy best satisfies the needs of man and most easily assures a state of peace. Its superiority is chiefly owing to two virtues inherent in it: the private interest of the monarch is always identical with the public interest, because the king's wealth and strength are increased by the wealth and war-strength of his people; the monarch, moreover, is subject only to the inconsistency of human nature, whereas the size of a governing assembly is conducive to disagreements arising from envy or interest. An all-powerful central government, Hobbes concludes, then, is based upon the laws of nature emanating from God, and it finds its most practicable form in the absolute dominion of a king.

Dryden was born into a family which was definitely allied with the Cromwellian party against Charles I; and among

162. Hobbes, 157, vol. V.

163. Ibid., 160.

the poet's early verses were the Heroic Stanzas¹⁶⁴ upon the death of the Protector. Even before the Restoration, however, he had formed bonds, through marriage and friendship, with the noble Howard family, the members of which had been loyal supporters of Charles I; and, when, in 1660, Charles II reclaimed the throne of England, Dryden became a Royalist and remained one to his death. In 1668, he was appointed to the laureateship and soon thereafter to the post of Historiographer Royal. Subsequently, although his pension was not paid promptly and although he was refused various requests for additional pecuniary aid, he wrote for the king's party, and steadfastly refused help from the opposing faction.¹⁶⁵ In 1681, at a time of political crisis, he produced his best satire, Absalom and Achitophel, in defense of royal prerogative against the aspirations of the bastard Duke of Monmouth and his adviser, the Earl of Shaftesbury. After the accession of James II, Dryden was re-appointed to his official positions only when he had changed from the Anglican to the Roman faith; but that the change was a mere matter of political expediency is made to seem unlikely both by the fact that, in The Hind and the Panther, the poet censured the religious policy of the king, and by the fact

164. Bredvold points out (*op. cit.*, p. 132) that Dryden avoids eulogy of "Commonwealth principles" even in this early poem.

165. Louis Bredvold, The Best of Dryden, Introduction, p. XX.

that when William and Mary assumed control in the Bloodless Revolution of 1688, he would not take the oath of allegiance to them.

Dryden frequently has been called a political time-server of no fixed opinions; and yet there is a consistent thread of monarchical sympathy running throughout the work of his middle and late career. Louis Bredvold has attempted to show that his position in politics was deeply rooted in a skeptical temperament which, placing but little confidence in man's ability to deal rationally with his environment, deemed it wiser to assure social stability by adhering to a settled and conservative form of governmental organization.¹⁶⁶ Adequate proof for his hypothesis is available from prose, poems, and plays; but an examination of the plays as a unit suggests that Dryden was strongly aware of the Hobbesian contributory influence in the same direction. Bredvold reminds the source-hunter of B. J. Pendlebury's statement that "monarchic sentiment and scorn of the crowd are typical of the heroic play, which was, in its origin, the expression of an aristocratic ideal";¹⁶⁷ and warns that, since such a literary tradition existed and since "there is no trace of Hobbes in Absalom and Architophel and The Medal,"¹⁶⁸ the expressions of absolutism in the plays can scarcely be taken as constituting Dryden's own views; The political poems, however, do voice

166. The Milieu of John Dryden, Chapter V, "Toryism."

167. Quoted from B. J. Pendlebury, Dryden's Heroic Plays, 1923, p. 78, in Bredvold, p. 136.

168. Bredvold, p. 137.

an unmistakable monarchism and at least contain nothing to contradict the theories uttered by characters in the heroic plays. It is to be wondered, moreover, whether the following passage from Absalom and Achitophel, does not reflect the poet's mental grappling with the principles of Hobbism, and does not imply the truth of the chief of them:

What shall we think! Can people give away,
Both for themselves and sons, their native sway?
Then they are left defenseless to the sword of
each unbounded, arbitrary lord:
And laws are vain, by which we right enjoy,
If kings unquestion'd can those laws destroy.
Yet if the crowd be judge of fit and just,
And kings are only officers in trust,
Then this resuming cov'nant was declar'd
When kings were made, or is for ever barr'd:
If those who gave the scepter could not tie
By their own deed their own posterity,
How then could Adam bind his future race?

...
Then kings are slaves to those whom they command,
And tenants to their people's pleasure stand.
Add that the pow'r, for property's allow'd,
Is mischievously seated in the crowd;
For who can be secure of private right,
If sovereign sway may be dissolved by might?
Nor is the people's judgment always true:
The most may err as grossly as the few;
And faultless kings run down by common cry.
For vice, oppression, and for tyranny.
If they may give and take where'er they please,
Not kings alone, (the Godhead's images.)
But government itself at length must fall
To nature's state, where all have right to all. ...169

Herein are many of the problems treated by Hobbes in Of Commonwealth, and the crux of his entire position lies in the question:

For who can be secure of private right,
If sovereign sway may be dissolved by might?

169. The Best of Dryden, pp. 156, 157.

None of the heroic plays is without its king, always a good Hobbit, in that power is the centrally important aspect of his kingship, who shares the opinion of Aureng-Zebe that

The world is made for the bold, impious man
Who stops at nothing, seizes all he can.¹⁷⁰

Montezuma, the most reasonable of Dryden's monarchs, believes that

Kings and their crowns have but one destiny:
Power is their life; when that expires, they die.¹⁷¹

Dryden does not hold with Hobbes or with James to the extent of hesitating to portray evil nature in monarchs, for most of his royal personages are the "villains" of the plays in which they appear; and occasionally they regret their arbitrary exercise of power and even forego a portion of it.¹⁷² And in almost every instance, the ruler suffers defeat in love and in his persecutions of his rival, with the implication that it is right that he should do so. But Hobbesian principles are likewise voiced by the heroes themselves; and, regardless of the circumstances of their utterance, it is clear that the political reasoning of Hobbes was a part of Dryden's intellectual store.

Torrismont, hero of The Spanish Friar, explains the usual method of securing sovereign power in much the same way as the philosopher of Malmesbury:

^{170.} Op. cit., p. 10.

^{171.} V, II, 404.

^{172.} cf. Veramond in Love Triumphant, the last play; Morst in Aureng-Zebe.

Kings' titles commonly begin by force,
Which time wears off, and mellows into right;
So power, which, in one age, is tyranny,
Is ripened, in the next, to true succession.¹⁷³

Boasdelin similarly explains the origin of his powers:

'Tis true from force the noblest title springs;
I therefore hold from that, which first made kings.

Hobbes doctrine is not lost sight of when the Spanish ambassador reminds him of the Janus-faced nature of his argument:

Since then by force you prove your title true,
Ours must be just, because we claim from you.¹⁷⁴

Although Hobbes recognizes the possibility of kingship by "institution", he affirms that force is a customary source of it, and that power once obtained thus is as legitimate and as binding as that of any other governing authority.¹⁷⁵ The same idea is expressed by the despicable Morat, who plots to supplant both his father and his brother:

.... who by force a sceptre does obtain,
Shows he can govern that which he could gain.
Right comes of course, whate'er he was before;
Murder and usurpation are no more.¹⁷⁶

And duties, even filial duties, are no more, for he tells his father:

You cancelled duty when you gave me pow'r.
If your own actions on your will you ground.
Mine shall heresafter know no bound.¹⁷⁷

As Hobbes says that the essence of political sovereignty is power, so he states also that God merits worship, not

173. IV, II, Vol. VI.

174. I, I, 47, vol. IV.

175. Hobbes, op. cit., p. 159.

176. V, I, 280, vol. V.

177. IV, I, 269, vol. V.

because of his mercy or his benevolence, but because of his omnipotence; and Morat draws the analogy between the earthly and the heavenly monarch:

What pow'r makes mine, by pow'r I mean to seize,
Since 'tis to that they their own greatness owe
Above, why should they question mine below.¹⁷⁸

The power enjoyed by the ruler, according to the philosopher, must be indivisible: it must be greater than that of any single subject, and greater than the combined power of all of them.¹⁷⁹ Montezuma, probably, the most intolligent of Dryden's sovereigns and less given to rhodomontade than most of the others, phrases this principle when he says:

That monarch sits not safely on his throne
Who bears, within, a power that shocks his own.
They teach obedience to imperial sway,
But think it sin if they themselves obey
My crown is absolute, and holds of none.
I cannot in a base subjection live¹⁸⁰

Maximin, in similar fashion, inveighs against any division of power, and asserts that when king and assembly both lay claim to power, one or the other must be possessed of only nominal authority:

That senate's but a name;
Or they are pageant princes which they make,
That power they gave away, they would partake.
Two equal powers two different ways will draw,
While each may check, and give the other law.
True, they secure propriety and peace;¹⁸¹
But are not fit an empire to increase.
When they should aid their prince, the slaves
dispute;
And fear success should make him absolute.

178. IV, I, 270, vol. V.

179. Hobbes, 168, 169.

180. I, II, 339, vol. II.

181. Hobbes says that division of power is a threat to peace, p. 177, vol. V.

They let foe conquer, to secure the state,
And lend a sword, whose edge themselves rebate.¹⁸²

Such a Senate, Hobbes writes, must ultimately surrender its powers, temporarily at least, to one man who, by virtue of unified action, can accomplish results:

.... there is no great commonwealth, the sovereignty whereof is in a great assembly, which is not, as to consultations of peace, and war, and making of laws, in the same condition, as if the government were in a child. For as a child wants the judgment to dissent from counsel given him, and is thereby necessitated to take the advice of them, or him, to whom he is committed; so an assembly wanteth the liberty, to dissent from the counsel of the major part, be it good or bad. And as a child has need of a tutor, or protector to preserve his person and authority: so also, in great commonwealths, the sovereign assembly, in all great dangers and troubles, have need of....dictators..... which are as much as temporary monarchs, to whom for a time, they may commit the entire exercise of their power...¹⁸³

Employing a figure vaguely reminiscent of the Leviathan,

Bosdelin characterizes the people and their legislative bodies:

See what the many-headed beast demands. -
Cursed is that king, whose honour's in their hands.
In senates, either they too slowly grant,
Or saucily refuse to aid my want....¹⁸⁴

Veramond rivals Maximin as a spirited exponent of absolutism, for he declares that his will is law, and that "kings are not kings, unless they be obeyed",¹⁸⁵ He justifies his own usurpation of Ramirez's throne by the argument of superior power:

182. Tyrannic Love, I, I, 386, 387.

183. Hobbes, op. cit., p. 177.

184. I, I, 130, vol. IV.

185. III, I, 429, vol. VIII.

Then, when he lost the power, he lost the claim,
And marks of sovereign right.¹⁸⁶

When Alphonso asks Veramond how his conscience can permit him to enjoy a throne obtained by force, he, implying that human nature generally would find the answer easy, tells the boy to ask that question of himself when he is king.¹⁸⁷ Upon hearing Almenzor boast that he is

.... as free as nature first made man,
Ere the base law of servitude began,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.,

Boabdelin, the emperor, summarizes the reasoning by which Hobbes arrived at the decision that an absolute central authority is necessary to individual self-preservation:

Since, then, no power above your own you know,
Mankind should use you like a common foe;
You should be hunted like a beast of prey:
By your own law I take your life away.¹⁸⁸

The lodging of power in the ruler to prevent men from hunting each other like beasts of prey, does not, however, give to the ruler the right to indulge in such an occupation himself. Hobbes imposes but few limitations upon the monarch, but his fundamental law of nature compels him to admit that the king cannot justly command a subject to take his own life nor expect passive submission from him when it is jeopardized.¹⁸⁹ Bertran, in The Spanish Friar, explains that the law of self-preservation may be used to excuse the attack upon a subject by a king, or, conversely the rebellion of a subject against his ruler.¹⁹⁰ Self-protection is the only

186. I, I, 388, vol. VIII.

187. I, I, 387, id.

188. The Conquest of Granada, I, I, 43, vol. IV.

defensible purpose of rebellion, however, in the state described by Hobbes; and revolt against a ruler for any other reason is injustice on the part of subjects:

And therefore, they that are subject to a monarch, cannot without his leave cast off monarchy -- for they are bound, every man to every man, to own, and be reputed author of all, that he that already is their sovereign, shall do, and judge fit to be done Besides, if he that attempteth to depose his sovereign, be killed, or punished by him for such attempt, he is author of his own punishment -- and because it is injustice for a man to do anything, for which he may be punished by his own authority, he is also upon that title, unjust.¹⁹¹

When Boabdalin, reasserting the necessity for unlimited control, says:

But kings, who rule with limited command,
Have players' sceptors put into their hand,
Pow'r has no balance, one side still weighs down,
And either hoists the commonwealth or crown....¹⁹²

Abenemar agrees:

While people tug for freedom, kings for pow'r,
Both sink beneath some foreign conqueror;
When subjects find, too late they were unjust,
And want that pow'r of kings they durst not trust.¹⁹³

The subjects, in accordance with Hobbesian principle, are unjust because they have violated the contract upon which all political and social organization rests: the voluntary yielding of authority to a central governor in return for security.

189. Hobbes, op. cit., p. 204, vol. V.

190. IV, II, 485, vol. VI.

191. Hobbes, p. 160, vol. V.

192. The Conquest of Granada, I, II, 130, vol. IV.

193. Ibid., pp. 130, 131.

Perhaps the clearest reflection of Hobbe's State of Nature and the clearest statement of the need for a central power appears in the conversation between Ulysses and Agamemnon in Troilus and Cressida:

For when the general is most like the hive,
To whom the foragers should all repair,
What honey can our empty combs expect?
Or when supremacy of kings is shaken,
What can succeed? How could communities,
Or peaceful traffic from divided shores,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
But by degree, stand on thin
Then everything resolves to brutal force,
And headlong force is led by hoodwinked will,
For wild ambition, like a ravenous wolf,
Spurred on by will, and seconded by power,
Must make an universe prey of all,
And last devour itself.¹⁹⁴

Both kings and more truly heroic characters in the plays often express the belief that monarchs, because of their arbitrary power, can do no wrong. Hobbes asserts that "...they that have sovereign power may commit iniquity; but not injustice, or injury in the proper signification".¹⁹⁵ Dryden's personages expand this to declare that those who have sovereign power can commit neither private sin nor public injustice.

Who can do all things, can do nothing ill.
Ill is rebellion 'gainst some higher power.
The world may sin, but not its emperor.
My empress then shall die, my princess live;
If this be sin, I do myself forgive.¹⁹⁶

194. I. I. 290, 291.

195. Hobbes, op. cit., p. 163. Hobbes bases this theory upon the social contract whereby all that the ruler does originates in the people themselves. Dryden, however, reverts to Hobbes' statement elsewhere to the effect that God cannot do ill because he is omnipotent; So can earthly rulers do no wrong merely by virtue of possessing

Maximin exclaims; and Morat affirms that "Monarchs, unquestioned, move in higher spheres."¹⁹⁷ These two speakers are incorrigibly ignoble; but when Aureng-Zebe proudly boasts

I own no wrongs; some grievance I confess,
But kings, like gods, at their own time redress.¹⁹⁸

and Abdalmelech says that "The majesty of kings we should not blame",¹⁹⁹ the same sentiments are being voiced by heroic persons. Guyomar, one of Dryden's few wholly admirable characters, likewise holds a Nietzschean view of kingly behaviour:

But kings by free consent their kingdoms take,
Strict as those sacred ties which nuptials make;
And whate'er faults in princes time reveal,
None can be judge where can be no appeal.²⁰⁰

He utters these words in reply to Alibech's assertion that when kings are stubborn or unwise, it is the duty of private subjects to rebel; but as soon as Guyomar has pointed out what he believes to be the fallacy in her argument, she recognizes ^{that} he is right and she wrong.

Not only must rulers be unquestioned by subjects, but also no law can be made against them -- even by themselves, for it is against reason and the law of nature, Hobbes says, for a man to do anything which is not for his own interests. And Almanzor agrees that "No king against himself a law can make."²⁰¹

There are scattered throughout the heroic plays

195. (cont'd) unlimited power.

196. Tyrannic Love, V, I, p. 456.

197. Aureng-Zebe, IV, I, 268, vol. V.

198. II, I, 220, vol. V.

199. The Conquest of Granada, III, I, 60, vol. IV.

many incidental references to the superiorities and sacred qualities of kings; and not always are these superiorities merely corollary to possession of power. Dryden veers away from Hobbes' theory of the contract, with its ultimate sanction in God and natural law, toward James' theory of Divine Right. This theory Dryden asseverates in a postscript to the History of the League:

That government, generally considered, is of divine authority, will admit of no dispute; for whoever will seriously consider, that no man has naturally a right over his own life, so as to murder himself, will find, by consequence that he has no right to take away another's life; and that no part betwixt man and man, or of corporations and individuals, or of sovereigns and subjects, can entitle them to this right so that no offender can lawfully, and without sin, be punished, unless that power be derived from God. It is He who has commissioned magistrates, and authorised them to prevent future crimes, by punishing offenders, and to redress the injured by distributive justice; subjects therefore are accountable to superiors, and the superior to him alone. For, the sovereign being once invested with lawful authority, the subject has irrevocably given up his power, and the dependence of a monarch is alone on God.²⁰²

Torrismond mentions the "power that guards the sacred lives of kings";²⁰³ Raymond alludes to the murdered Sancho as "Heaven's image double-stamped, as man and king";²⁰⁴ Dorax similarly speaks of the monarch as Heaven's image;²⁰⁵ and

200. IV, II, 377.

201. Ibid., p. 43.

202. Vol. XVII, p. 152.

203. The Spanish Friar, III, III, 470, vol. VI.

204. Ibid., V, II, 510.

205. Don Sebastian, III, I, 387, vol. VII.

Montezuma states:

But heaven has need of no such viceroy here,
Itself bestows the crowns that monarchs wear.²⁰⁶

If Dryden diverges from Hobbes regarding divine right, he closely echoes him in his often-expressed attitude toward the position of the subject in the commonwealth. In the Leviathan, the philosopher makes it clear that freedom of the subject is wholly incompatible with the existence of harmonious social and political order,²⁰⁷ and describes men in the mass, who have repudiated authority, as being brutish in the extreme. Heroic characters in the plays not infrequently inveigh against the common herd and insist upon the necessity of their absolute obedience to authority. Cortez, who himself is attempting to dispossess Montezuma, is at one with his enemy in decriing popular criticism of kingship:

Monarchs may err; but should each private breast
Judge their ill acts, they would dispute their best.²⁰⁸

Of the people, Zulema, in The Conquest of Granada, says:

Those kings, who to their wild demands consent,
Tosch others the same way to discontent.
Freedom in subjects is not nor can be;
But still, to please 'em, we must call 'em free.
Propriety, which they an idol make,
Or law, or law's interpreters, can shake.

Merritt Hughes suggests that "Dryden's use of the term 'law's interpreters' seems to reflect the extreme view of Hobbes that

206. The Indian Emperor, I, II, 338, vol. II.

207. See Chapter XXI.

208. The Indian Emperor, II, II, 346, vol. II.

law emanates solely from the sovereign's arbitrary will." 209
 Almanzor and the Queen in Secret Love, both supposedly exemplary characters, voice the same opinion of the common people in relation to their ruler.

Hence, you unthinking crowd! -- exclaims Almanzor.
 Empire, thoue poor and despicable thing,
 When such as these make or unmake a king. 210

And the Queen scorns to consider the desires of her subjects who are concerned about her prospect of marriage:

My peoples' fears! who made them statesmen?
 They much mistake their business, if they think
 It is to govern.
 The right of subjects, and of sovereigns,
 Are things distinct in nature; -- Theirs is to
 Enjoy propriety, not empire. 211

The heroine of The Spanish Friar brings to mind the emphasis of Hobbes on the bestial character of man's ungoverned nature, when she describes the people as

That hot-mouthed beast, that bears against the curb,
 Hard to be broken even by lawful kings..... 212

In the twenty-first chapter of the Laviathan, the philosopher points out the fallacies in popular interpretations of liberty and states that very often the masses of men do not comprehend the only possible meaning of the word. One of the statesmen

209. Merritt Hughes, "Dryden as Statist", Philological Quarterly, 1927, p. 348, cf. also Hobbes, Chapter 26.

210. The Conquest of Granada, I, I, 46, vol. IV.

211. I, III, 434, vol. II.

212. III, III, 466, cf. also Dorax in Don Sebastian, p. 432.
 And Troilus:

The public is the lees of vulgar slaves;
 Slaves, with the mind of slaves; so born, so bred.
 Yet such as these, united in a herd,
 Are called, the public! Millions of such ciphers
 Make up the public sum. An eagle's life
 Is with a world of crows. Are princes made

in The Spanish Friar regrets that the majority of men are so unintelligently devoted to the shibboleth of "liberty" that they will fight for any cause of which it is the slogan.²¹³ Their responsiveness to such appeals, which pander to the desire for self-expression, is justification for the assertion of Ulysses, in Troilus and Cressida:

Then, since from home-bred factions ruin springs,
Let subjects learn obedience to their kings.²¹⁴

Occasionally Dryden makes comic or sophistical reference (in the vein of Hobbes) to problems of political theory. The sailors in The Tempest, once they are accustomed to the island, decide to set up a commonwealth among themselves; and the dramatist presents a parody on the methods of democratic procedure when a centralizing force is lacking. The men quarrel, half-humorously, over the problem of which shall be the viceroy and which the men subjects. All aspire to the highest position, and there is no convenient way of determining who shall be successful.²¹⁵

The Curate in The Duke of Guise employs the Hobbist principle of power to his own ends:

Rebellion is an insurrection against the government;
but they that have the power are actually the govern-
ment; therefore, if the people have the power, the
rebellion is in the king.²¹⁶

Here obviously, since the play represents the righteous failure

212 (cont'd) For such as these; who, were one soul extracted
From all their beings, could not raise a man.
p. 342, vol. VI.

213. IV, II, 489, vol. VI.

214. V, II, 390.

215. II, II, 131, 132, vol. III.

216. I, I, 25, vol. VII.

of the plotters, of whom the Curate is one, Dryden is contraverting this perversion of Hobbes. Again, in Albion and Albanus, Zeal says:

And when 'tis for the nation's peace,
A king is but a king on trial.²¹⁷

But Zeal, together with Democracy, is portrayed as having an infernal origin and as being a vicious influence upon society; and consequently what she says must be taken to be exactly contrary to the author's point of view; These two plays, The Duke of Guise and Albion and Albanus were occasional pieces, inspired by crises in the political situation in England. Shortly after the passage of the Exclusion Bill of 1680, an association was formed for the defense of the Protestant religion and of the king's person. Such a league immediately suggested the similar body organized in France during the reign of Henry II, and the attempted plot of the Duke of Guise to supplant him. Dryden, in 1683, was asked to collaborate with Nathaniel Lee in the writing of a tragedy entitled The Duke of Guise; and he contributed the opening scene, the whole of the fourth act, and the first part of the fifth. Albion and Albanus, an opera, centers about the same period of time, and recounts the events of Charles II's reign, celebrating particularly the return from exile of the Duke of York and paying homage to Charles himself. Both plays

²¹⁷. II, II, 262, vol. VII.

are distinctly royalist in purpose and tone; but neither, aside from the passages quoted, is especially suggestive of Hobbiat political philosophy.

In accord with the general disapproval of a division of power, the characters in the plays express disillusioned and cynical attitudes toward statesmen and political assemblies of one kind or another. It is probable that Dryden's views were at least partly the result of his having witnessed the storm and drang of the period during and after the Interregnum: the unceasing cabals, the religious instability, the lack of consistent and constructive direction on the part of the nation's politicians. But occasionally they definitely echo the writings of Hobbes. In the Leviathan, the philosopher, pointing out the advantages of monarchy, comments upon the too-frequent perfidy of assemblies, the tendency of ministers to pander to favorites, and the likelihood of statesmen's flattering each other and serving each other's covetousness and ambition.²¹⁸ A minor character in Aureng-Zebe voices much the same doubt regarding statecraft:

The ministers of state, who gave us law,
In corners, with selected friends, withdraw;
There, in deaf murmurs, solemnly are wise,
Whisp'ring, like winds, are hurricanes arise.
The most corrupt are most obsequious grown,
And those they scorned, officiously they own.²¹⁹

Statesmen are looked upon by heroes and kings alike as being

218. pp. 174-175.

219. I, I, 205, vol. V.

essentially hypocritical, unintelligent, and given to indulgence in meaningless formalities.²²⁰

It cannot be said with the same assurance that Dryden was, politically, a Hobbiist as that, philosophically, he was a determinist. Although the sentiments in the plays are predominantly royalist, distinctly anti-Hobbiist ideas are occasionally expressed by characters, as when Alphonso asks:

What have the people done, the sheep of princes,
That they should perish for the shepherd's fault?
They bring their yearly wool, to clothe their owners,
And yet, when bare themselves, are called for
slaughter.²²¹

or, again, when Bertran states that "The just applause of God-like senates is the stamp of virtue";²²² or, still again, when it is said, in Aureng-Zebe, that "nature's laws are by the state's destroyed".²²³ But, nevertheless, the passages cited relevant to the origin of kingship in force and the instinct for self-preservation; to the importance of power as the essential aspect of government; to the necessity for the absolute obedience of the people; to the conviction that omnipotence determines justice and injustice; to the Machiavellian tendencies of statesmen -- all combine to indicate that Dryden was familiar with the writings of one of the foremost political theorists of his time, and that he at least found nothing basically incompatible

220. of. Don Sebastian, p. 350, Cleomenes, p. 296, Aureng-Zebe, p. 256.

221. Love Triumphant, IV, I, 446, vol. VIII.

222. The Spanish Friar, I, I, 423, vol. VI.

223. I, I, 204, vol. V.

between the opinions of Hobbes and his own views. The ultimate source for his beliefs no doubt lay in his own experience and observations; but the language with which they are expressed often unmistakably echoes his contemporary, Hobbes.

CHAPTER THREE

DRYDEN AND THE FRENCH SKEPTICS

DRYDEN AND THE FRENCH SKEPTICS

Study of Dryden's political views, as they find utterance in the plays, points to the second body of thought which contributed much to the poet's ideas and which often-times produces conclusions regarding statecraft, religion, and human nature identical with, or akin to, those of Hobbes. In some cases where the English philosopher and the French skeptics tend to converge, it is possible to ally the dramatist more definitely with one than with the other; but in some instances, it must simply be admitted that either may have influenced Dryden, and that probably, since he knew both, they reinforced each other in his thinking.

Montaigne, philosophic essayist of the Renaissance, basing his principles upon those of Sextus Empiricus, believed, as did his intellectual forbears, the Pyrrhonists, in the maintenance of the political and religious status quo. By processes of negative reasoning, he - and they - attained the conviction that the epistemological problem can be solved only in terms of zero: man can know nothing, can say nothing

with certainty about the fundamental nature of human life, its purposes, its motives, or its institutions. But men, he recognized, must live in some degree of security and social harmony; consequently, it is advisable, in order to avoid the complete intellectual and moral anarchy that would result from a nihilism based upon sound skeptical thought, for human beings passively to accept things as they are. Why, after all, should a man change an opinion or a way of life when his reason is totally incapable either of proving to him that his present views are erroneous and hurtful, or of illuminating for him a sure path to improvement? Montaigne asserts that he dislikes "innovation in any disguise whatsoever",¹ and repeatedly he warns of the dangers of change; of government in particular he writes:

It is much to be doubted whether the manifold advantage of changing an established law, be it ever so bad, outweigh the evil involved in the removing of it, inasmuch as a government is a structure of various parts so closely joined together, that it is impossible to shake one part without the whole body feeling the concussion.²

And he says further:

Nothing presses so hard upon a state as innovation; mere change gives scope to injustice and tyranny.³

Dryden's deeply-rooted distrust of the unreasoned zeal of the masses, which has been noted and shown to spring from a conservative loyalty to absolutist principles, may be related

1. Essays of Montaigne, op. cit., p. 116, vol. 1.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 422, vol. II.

to the skeptics' defense of things as they exist. There is, the poet believes, a virtue in adhering to what is old and tried, and a danger in failing to do so:

The silly crowd, by factions teachers brought,
To think that faith untrue, their youth was taught,
Run on in new opinions, blindly bold,
Neglect, contempt, and then assault the old.
The infectious madness seizes ev'ry part,
And from the head distils upon the heart.
And first they think their prince's faith not true;
And then proceed to offer him a new,
Which, if refused, all duty from them cast,
To their new faith they make new kings at last.⁴

While such a passage, and similar ones, inveighing against zeal and change, is, in tone, like passages in Montaigne, there is, in the plays, no direct evidence that Dryden's political statism rests upon a foundation of doubt, although the presence of other skeptical elements in his thought tends to add weight to that supposition. The reflection of Hobbism are much clearer and less debatable. The pendulum swings in the direction of the skeptics, however, when the influences upon Dryden's religious thought are estimated.

It is not always possible fully to disentangle the threads of seventeenth-century ideas which comprises the patchwork of Dryden's religious concepts, for not infrequently an attitude expressed by one of his characters may be traced either to the materialism of Hobbes or to the skepticism of Montaigne. What his beliefs were up to the writing of Religio Laici in 1682 has been a not less fertile

4. Tyrannio Love, II, III, 402, vol. III.

subject for controversy than his reasons for becoming a Catholic in 1685, or the general question of his essential religious sincerity. A. W. Verrall,⁵ Josef Wild,⁶ and others, have called him a Deist; George Saintsbury⁷ wholly fails to find any evidence of Deism; while Sir Walter Scott⁸ and Professor Louis Bredvold⁹ detect a continuous development, from the first writings to the last, of a Fideism which depends upon complete abnegation of reason, reliance upon faith, and adherence to the established forms of religion. There can be no question that in 1682 the poet, with his introduction to the faith of a layman:

Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wand'ring travelers
Is Reason to the soul; and, as on high
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us there; so Reason's glimmering ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.¹⁰

was established in the tradition of Montaigne, who alleges that human powers are in no way capable of apprehending Truth:

Reason ever goes astray in all matters, but especially when she meddles with divine things ... For, although we have given her certain and infallible principles, although we illumine her steps with the sacred lamp of Truth which it has pleased God to communicate to us, we daily see, nevertheless, how, if she stray ever so little from the ordinary path, if she turn aside and

5. Lectures on Dryden, p. 150.

6. Dryden und die römische Kirche, Leipzig, 1928, p. 13 ff.

7. Dryden, in English Men of Letters Series, New York, 1881.

8. Op. cit., pp. 262-63.

9. The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden.

10. Bredvold, Best of Dryden, p. 198.

wander out of the way marked and trodden by the Church, she immediately loses her way, becomes embarrassed and entangled, whirling around and floating, aimless and unchecked, in that vast, turbulent, and undulating sea of human opinions.¹¹

Similarly, Pascal, receiving impetus from Montaigne but diverging into Augustinian mysticism, affirms that faith is above reason and nature; and similarly Sir Thomas Browne, in England, definitely assigns religion to the keeping of faith: "There are not impossibilities enough in Religion for an active faith."¹² Dryden's Religio Laici, the title of which is borrowed from Herbert of Cherbury's exposition of Deism, opposes natural religion which assumes that the bare essentials of Christianity can be arrived at by the reason, and that they are few in number.¹³ The truths comprehended by the Deists, he reminds them, are not the products of their own minds:

Reveal'd Religion first inform'd thy sight,
And Reason saw not, till Faith sprung the light.
Hence all thy natural worship takes the source;
'Tis Revelation what thou thinks't Discourse.
Else, how com'st thou to see these truths so clear,
Which so obscure to heathens did appear?
Not Plato these, nor Aristotle found.....¹⁴

In the Preface, moreover, he writes: ".... our Modern

11. Montaigne, op. cit., p. 518, vol. I.

12. Religio Medici in The Harvard Classics, vol. III, N. Y., 1909, p. 272.

13. The principles of religion as set down by Lord Herbert were five in number, as follows: 1. That there is one Supreme God; 2. That he is to be worshipped; 3. That piety and virtue are the principal part of his worship; 4. That we must repent of our sins; and if we do, God will pardon them; 5. That there are rewards for good men, and punishments for bad men, in a future state. John Leland, D.D., A View of the Principal Deistical

Philosophers, nay and some of our Philosophising Divines have too much exalted the faculties of our Souls, when they have maintained that by their force, mankind has been able to find out that there is one Supream Agent or Intellectual Being which we call God."¹⁵

An examination of the plays written between 1668 and 1682 leads to the conclusion that, although there is a strain of rationalism, and more than one ^{suggestion} of Hobbism in them, the religious philosophy voiced by the characters is predominantly Pyrrhonist, and that the evidence to be culled from specific passages points much more clearly to Montaigne than to Lord Herbert and his successors.

A passage often cited to show Dryden's deistic beliefs is the dialogue, in Tyrannic Love, between St. Catherine, the Christian martyr, and Apollonius, the Pagan priest, in which, by explaining the rational advantages of Christianity, the saint converts her opponent. When the emperor, Maximin, agreeing that belief is necessary, doubts man's ability to discern anything specific of the way to Heaven, St. Catherine asseverates the two guides by which such knowledge may be obtained: 1.) the light of natural reason and; 2.) faith in the unseen; and she affirms that Christianity is more acceptable to reason than his paganism, because, since it is

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13. (cont'd) Writers that have appeared in England in the Last and Present Century, with observations upon them and Some account of the answers that have been published against them. In Several Letters to a Friend, 1754, p.3.
14. Bredvold, Best of Dryden, p. 200.
15. Preface, p. 191.

monotheistic, it evades the antinomy of "many infinities". Apollonius rests his defense upon an ethical basis and discounts the need for supernaturalism or a system of rewards:

And what more noble can your doctrine preach,
 Than virtue, which philosophy does teach?
 To keep the passions in severest awe,
 To live with reason, nature's greatest law;
 To follow virtue, as its own reward;
 And good and ill, as things without regard.¹⁶

The saint then explains the superiority of the Christian over other religions to be that it recognizes the frailty of human nature and provides adequate motivation for the virtues exalted by the pagans, by offering the reward of Heaven to those who practice them and the pain of Hell to those who do not:

Yet few could follow those strict rules they gave,
 For human life will human frailties have;
 And love of virtue is but barren praise,
 Airy as fame; nor strong enough to raise
 The actions of the soul above the sense.
 Virtue grows cold without a recompense.
 We virtuous acts as duty do regard.
 Yet are permitted to expect reward.¹⁷

She admits that there is nothing unique about the virtues themselves, but only in the means of their enforcement. She concludes by showing that Christianity makes virtue more "inner", stressing the intention as well as the act. Apollonius is at once convinced purely on the basis of reason and perception of the practical advantage of the new faith. As Bredvold notes, he has heard nothing of divine

16. II, III, 404, vol. III.

17. Ibid.; cf. Tillotson, vol. IV, p. 247: he says that assurance of "a glorious and eternal reward" is the peculiar discovery of Christianity.

revelation or of the teachings of Christ. These passages, without question, lack the prevailing tone of anti-rationalism more often characteristic of Dryden's religious philosophy; but there is nothing in them, either, to identify them beyond doubt with Deism. The two-fold force of Reason and Faith is a part of the Anglican tradition as expounded by Hooker; and the emphasis upon the utilitarian purpose of reward and punishment, while it does appear likewise in Herbert's tenets of Deism, also figures importantly in liberal-minded theologians generally, like Hooker and Tillotson, who, in keeping with the trend of Renaissance thought, endeavored to link Christianity more closely and more reasonably to human nature than it had been in the Middle Ages. The absence of allusion to Christ or to revelation may not be significant of Deism, in view of the curtailment of such allusions on the stage of the period. The dialogue, as a whole, shows much of the spirit of Hobbes, who makes religion subservient to the needs of the self, and of Montaigne, who, keenly aware of human frailty, asserts that men do not willingly lend their service to any devotion that does not secure for them their private ends.¹⁸ An echo of Hobbes' "tales publicly allowed", moreover, appears in the recognition of the pagan that "pleasing fable" comprises a large element in any religion. Montaigne likewise remarks

18. Essays, I, p. 434.

that "It is likely that miracles, visions, enchantments, and the like extraordinary phenomena derive their credit chiefly from the power of the imagination, acting principally on the more impressionable minds of the common people".¹⁹ There are other passages, in addition to the dialogue of the saint and the pagan, which hint at Deism without being sufficiently developed to prove any definite connection with it. Almanzor, in The Conquest of Granada, suggests deistic rationalism when he says:

By reason, man a godhead may discern,
But how he would be worshipped cannot learn.²⁰

And in Tyrannic Love, Dryden employs reason to deduce the existence of God by an argument also used by Descartes: St. Catherine declares that the order in the Universe bespeaks the immediate oversight of a superior being:

But such an order in each chance we see,
Chained to its cause, as that to its decree,
That none can think a workmanship so rare
Was built, or kept, without a workman's care.²¹

A passage quoted by Bredvold and pointed to as a sympathetic treatment of Deism is the long debate between the Christian Priest, in The Indian Emperor, and the pagan Montezuma. When the Christian implores the ruler to change his faith, he avers that he sees no reason for changing without more certain

19. Op. cit., p. 93, vol. I.

20. IV. III. 190, vol. IV.

21. III. I. 410, vol. III.

guarantee of Christianity's being the true Light than he has yet had. The true religion, he says, must claim the belief of all men;²² and, until such a one appears, the wise procedure is to hold only to such essentials of faith as trust in God and pursuit of virtue. The Christian priest concurs in the belief that nature "teaches whom we should adore"; but declares that it must be supplemented by divine revelation. Montezuma, however, reiterates that Nature, of which all men are a part, rather than the "heavenly beams" which shine only upon a chosen few, must be the guide. The priest turns to concrete example, pointing out that Christians gladly become martyrs for their cause; but the Emperor has the advantage of being at the very moment in a position to prove his steadfastness:

You do no more than I for ours do now.
To prove religion true --
If either wit or suffering would suffice,
All faiths afford the constant and the wise.²³

As a final appeal, the Churchman exhorts him to refer himself to the unerring head of the Catholic polity; but Montezuma exclaims:

Man, and not err! what reason can you give?
The light of nature should I thus betray,
'Twere to wink hard, that I might see the day.²⁴

22. of. the French libertin, Gabriel de Foigny. In his La Terre Australe, the Utopian man asks: "Mais comment croire...quo le Haëb God a plutot parlé aux uns qu'aux autres? Et d'ou peut provenir cette acception de personnes, qu'il préfère plutot des uns que les autres pour les favoriser de ses lumières?" He points out the injustice and unreason of special and limited revelation. Lachevre, op. cit., p. 113, vol. X.

23. V. II, 398, vol. II.

24. Ibid.

Just as Adam remains unconvinced of free will and has the last word after the departure of the angels, so the Indian emperor stoutly adheres to his principles. He closely approaches Deism, but at the same time he voices characteristically skeptical ideas. He is by no means dogmatic about his own theology, for he is not convinced that any religion has yet proved wholly satisfactory:

.....all religions with each other fight,
While only one can lead us in the right.
But till that one hath some more certain mark,
Poor human-kind must wander in the dark;
And suffer pain eternally below,
For that, which here we cannot come to know.²⁵

Nor does he trust implicitly in the rational powers of man to pronounce, without error, upon such questions. He is admittedly following a middle way between the few principles of which reason seems to assure him and the possibility that at some future time, he may have "more certain mark" of religious truth; he is exactly in the Pyrrhonists' position of adhering to what is established so long as complete certitude is lacking.

The so-called deistical passages in the play are few in number; and when they do occur, they may be traced just as convincingly -- as in the case of the Indian emperor -- to other sources of influence. St. Catherine, for example, in saying that "Faith's necessary rules are plain and few".

25. Ibid., p. 397.

echoes not only the Deist but Hobbes as well, for the latter narrows the requisites of religion to "faith in Christ" and "obedience to law".²⁶ There is, it may be concluded, no sound evidence in the plays that Dryden, before 1682, was a Deist.

Both early and late plays, on the other hand, suggest the influence of Pyrrhonism upon Dryden in the deprecation by central characters of human reason. Montaigne's Apology for Raimond Sebond, written ostensibly to defend Sebond's book on natural theology, but in reality an assault upon Christian doctrine, is founded upon contempt of man's vain pretension to knowledge, especially to religious certainty, which, like every other intellectual conviction, must rest upon faith: "... if this little portion of reason we possess," he says, "has been allotted by heaven, how can reason make us the equal of heaven? How can it heaven subject its essence and condition to our knowledge?"²⁷ And again: "... what can be more fruitless than to try to divine God by our analogies and conjectures, to measure him and the world according to our capacity and our laws."²⁸ Similarly, Oedipus, in Dryden's play of the same name, asks:

If that the glow-worm light of human reason
Might dare to offer at immortal knowledge,
And cope with gods, why all this storm of nature?²⁹

26. Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 585.

27. Montaigne, op. cit., pp. 442, 443, vol. I.

28. Ibid., pp. 509-510.

29. II, I, 160, vol. VI; cf. Religio Laici, "And Reason saw not, till Faith sprung the light". Best of Dryden, p. 200.

And when Eurydice asks whether there are no friendly gods,
the seer, Tiresias, reproves her for futile questioning:

The gods are just;
But how can finite measure infinite?
Reason! alas, it does not know itself!
Yet man, vain man, would with this short-lived
plummet,
Fathom the vast abyss of heavenly justice.³⁰

In almost identical language, St. Catherine censures her
persecutors for writing "glosses" on heaven's will:

Thus with short plummets heaven deep will we sound,
That vast abyss where human wit is drowned!
In our small skiff, we must not launch too far;
We here but coasters, not discoverers are.³¹

Almanzor, too, affirms that the will of heaven must ever be
a dark riddle; and the Queen, in Secret Love, protests that
it is bold to search for, or to find, too much concerning
Heaven's intent.

With reason undermined, there remain only the
alternatives of reliance upon unquestioning faith or re-
course to complete atheism; and Dryden, like Montaigne
and Pascal, writes, "as we have no certainty whether man
was made by a benevolent Deity, or a wicked demon, whether
he is from eternity, or the offspring of chance, it must
remain doubtful whether these principles are given to us,
true or false, or like our origin, uncertain."³² St.

30. III, I, 183-184.

31. IV, I, 439.

32. Thoughts, p. 182.

Evremond, a second disciple of Montaigne, who, unlike Pascal, developed more in line with the "libertine" implications of his master's philosophy, expresses a like disparagement of man's presumption, without the emphasis upon faith:

L'esprit, intempérant dans le désir de savoir, se porte à ce qui est au dessus de la nature, et cherche ce qu'il y a de plus secret, en son auteur, moins pour l'adorer, que par une vaine curiosité de tout connaître. À vice est bientôt suivi d'un autre: la curiosité fait maître la présomption; et, aussi hardis à définir, qu'indiscrets à rechercher, nous, établissons une science, comme assuré, de choses qu'il nous est impossible même de concevoir.³³

When a comic character in Marriage à la Mode declares that "Love and religion have but one thing to trust to; that's a good sound faith", she is in agreement on the second point with serious personages in the other plays. St. Catherine chides Maximin because he and his priests make religion purely intellectual when it should rely upon a faith firmly implanted in the heart,³⁴ and Porphyrius calls faith "a force from which there's no defense". In this connection, he also states what Montaigne implies,³⁵ that all of the many and varied beliefs have equal claim -- or lack of it -- to finality; and, in addition, he suggests the ninth trope of Sextus Empiricus:

All faiths are to their own believers just; for none believe because they will, but must.³⁶

St. Evremond suggests the same attitude when he writes:

33. St. Evremond, Works, p. 134, vol. I.

34. IV, I, 439, vol. III.

35. p. 570 ff. vol. I.

36. IV, 431, vol. III.

A qui nous appelons aujourd'hui les
 RELIGIONS. N'EST, À LE BIEN PRENDRE, QUE
 DIFFÉRENCES DANS LA RELIGION ET NON PAS RELIGION
 DIFFÉRENTE.³⁷

Montezuma's words, already quoted,³⁸ are, of course, also
 indicative of a doubt as to whether one religion more than
 another has pronounced the final dictum on Truth.

The "skeptics", agreed that Faith is the cornerstone
 of religion, were prone, through exercise of the reason, to
 make pragmatic compromise with ideas which, though not
 demonstrably true, could contribute to the ease or happiness
 of life. Dorax, in Don Sebastian, who has not much belief
 in life after death, justifies faith in immortality on a
 Pyrrhonic or pragmatic basis. When his friend, having
 drawn the fatal lot, is about to die, Dorax realizes that
 his faith, however dubiously founded, will sustain him:

Religion bears him out; a thing taught young,
 An age ill practised, yet his prop in death....
 Now if there be hereafter,
 He's blest; if not, well cheated, and dies
 pleased....³⁹

Pascal, showing the utilitarian advantages of faith, uses
 the same kind of reasoning:

.... not to wager that God is, is to wager
 that he is not. Which side then do you take?...
 Your reason is not more annoyed in choosing one
 than the other, since you cannot but choose....

37. Op. cit., p. 127.

38. ibid., p. 11.

39. I. I, 333-334, vol. VII.

But your happiness? Let us balance the gain and the loss; upon taking the risk that God is, if you win, you win everythin; if you lose, you lose nothing. Believe then if you can.⁴⁰

Mustapha, on the other hand, who is helper to the priest in Don Sebastian, gambles only in certainties:

If I get paradise when my time comes, I can't help myself; but I'll venture nothing beforehand, upon a blind bargain.⁴¹

Immortality is a concept commonly found in the plays, lines relevant to death being numerous; and the treatment of death and immortality suggests both Hobbes and the French skeptics; the latter probably to a more marked degree. The hint of Hobbism, though somewhat tenuous, is scarcely to be gainsaid. The eternal life is always pictured in detailed physical terms, many of which descriptions are purely conventional literary expressions that do not indicate a seriously entertained idea; heaven is adorned with crystal walls and battlemented towers; souls retain sensory powers of enjoyment; and activities differ but little from those on earth. But occasionally a grosser illusion enters in which can only point to either a lamentable lapse of artistic taste or endowment with a materialistic bias that precludes any real understanding of the spiritual implications of immortality. The lovers in Tyrannic Love have no confidence that God will

40. Thoughts, p. 200.

41. I, I, 331, vol. VII.

provide for their happiness in heaven, nor do they conceive of the soul in other than physical terms, despite their verbal recognition that it has no bodily form after death:

"If I die first," Berenice promises, "I will
Stop short of heaven, and wait you in a cloud,
For fear we lose each other in the crowd."⁴²

And Porphyrius likewise is mistrustful of a future state:

'Tis want of knowledge, not of love, I fear;
Lest we mistake when bodies are not there.
O, as a mark, that I could wear a scroll,
With this inscription, - Berenice's soul.⁴³

When she consoles him with the thought that they may enjoy each other in the life to come, he protests that those who prove niggardly here, may prove no more generous in heaven; therefore they had best take advantage of present opportunity. The chief function of immortality in the serious plays generally is to offer the enjoyment of love impossible of fulfilment in this life. The concept of immortality is sometimes employed comically, with a marked lack of reverence and good taste. Hippolito, the pseudo-naïve youth in The Tempest, concluding that he should like to die, because he cannot enjoy several women, says:

This is a base poor world, I'll go to the other.
I've heard men have abundance of them there.⁴⁴

And in An Evening's Love, the English visitors to Spain look with approval upon the sensual paradise of the prophet Mohammed. Spirituality is as definitely lacking in the

42. V. 460. vol. III.

43. Ibid.

44. IV. II, 185. vol. III.

picture of immortal life as one would expect it to be in a disciple of Hobbist materialism, or in a complete skeptic regarding extra-bodily activities.

If the specific features of immortality suggest the materialism of a Hobbes, the prevailing attitude toward the reality of it calls to mind the World-View of the Pyrrhonists. It would be inaccurate to say that the characters are always doubtful of a future state, for not infrequently they make brief but unequivocal affirmations of certainty about it, as when the proselytized Apollonius exclaims: "A life eternal I by death obtain";⁴⁵ or when Eurydice assures Adrastus that death shall not divide them. More often, although they declare a belief in immortality, it is not strong enough to eradicate fear of death,⁴⁶ and occasionally they admit an honest doubt about the after-life. Dryden's women are especially unheroic in the face of death; and in the preface to Aureng-Zebe, he explains that he has made them so in order to make them seem real.

Cyderia, Julia, Felicia, Hourmahal, Indamora, Berenice -- all, in fact who speculate upon it, except St. Catherine, are given to Hamlet-like musings upon its terrors, and all agree with Cyderia -- and like Hobbes --

45. II, 405; cf. Alphonso: "Death will forever take you from my eyes." II, I, 401.

46. cf. Montaigne, vol. I, Chapter 20.

that death is "that which naturally we shun".⁴⁷ They are not convinced, however, that there definitely is not a future life; they are merely in a state of skepticism or agnosticism as to its probability. Indemora traces her fear to uncertainty about the nature of death:

Distrust, and darkness of a future state,
Make poor mankind so fearful of their fate.
Death, in itself, is nothing; but we fear,
To be we know not what, we know not where.⁴⁸

Her death imminent, she confesses:

.... feeble nature now, I find
Shrinks back in danger, and forsakes my mind.
I wish to die, yet dare not death endure
Oh, had I courage but to meet my fate,
That short dark passage to a future state,
That melancholy riddle of a breath.⁴⁹

St. Catherine, though she woos immortality herself, recognizes that weak man does not commonly share her optimism:

Here we stand shivering on the bank and cry,
When we should plunge into eternity.
One moment ends our pain;
And yet the shock of death we dare not stand
'Tis but because the living death ne'er knew,
They fear to prove it as a thing that's new.⁵⁰

Using the same figure of the river, Berenice admits that her fear has almost routed her faith:

As some faint pilgrim, standing on the shore,
First view the torrent he would venture o'er;
And then his inn upon the farther ground,
Loth to wade through, and lother to go 'round; ...

47. The Indian Emperor, vol. II, IV, IV, 386.

48. Aureng-Zebe, IV, I, 257, vol. V.

49. Ibid., V, I, 285.

50. Tyrannic Love, V, I, 452.

So I at once
Both heavenly faith and human fear obey,
And feel before me in an unknown way.⁵¹

Ariel, describing his revival of the wounded Hippolito,
pictures the reluctance of the youth's soul to venture beyond
the body:

.... for the soul
Stood almost at life's door, all base and naked,
Shivering like boys upon a river's bank,
And loath to tempt the cold air...⁵²

Leonora, heroine of The Spanish Friar, generalizes fear of
death and what follows to all men:

Sure there is none but fears a future state;
And, when the most obdurate swear they do not,
Their trembling hearts belie their boasting tongues.⁵³

The comic characters, with behaviour illustrative of the im-
portance of the motive to self-preservation as stressed by
Hobbes or St. Evremond, are often impelled away from
libertinism by fear of death. Antonio, in Don Sebastian,
admits:

Fear of death has gone farther with me in
two minutes than my conscience would have gone
in two months. I find myself in a very dejected
condition, all over me; poor sin lies dormant;
Concupiscence is retired to his winter quarters.⁵⁴

The numerous passages on death do not necessarily imply a
disbelief in immortality, but only a sufficient lack of
certainty to render the prospect of dying unendurable;

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51. IV, 437, vol. III.
52. V, I, 210, vol. III.
53. III, III, 253, vol. VI.
54. III, II, 398, vol. VII.

For men with honor dissolution meet;
The minutes even of painful life are sweet.⁵⁵

Other characters, however, openly question the probability of the life eternal. Almeyda, heroine of Don Sebastian, when she is appalled by her reverses of fortune, asks:

But is there Heaven? For I begin to doubt.⁵⁶

and little Cleonidas, dying of starvation in an Egyptian prison, interrogates his father:

But are you sure
Our souls shall be immortal?

When Cleomenes wishes to know the reason for his question, he replies:

Because I find, that, now my body starves,
My soul decays. I think not as I did;
My head goes round; and now you swim before me.
Methinks my soul is like a flame unfed
With oil, that dances up and down the lamp,
But must expire ere long.⁵⁷

Although the father elsewhere evinces piety, he passes by without a word this excellent opportunity for combining parental reassurance with religious instruction. Jeremy Collier had no doubt that Dryden disbelieved in immortality.

In his Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage, he quotes Dryden and comments upon him:

Our minds (says he) are perpetually wrought on
By the Temperament of our Bodies, which makes me
suspect they are nearer allied than either our

55. The Rival Ladies, IV, I, 190.

56. III, I, 383, vol. VII.

57. V, II, 341-2, vol. VIII.

Philosophers, or School-Divines will allow them to be! The meaning is, he suspects our Souls are nothing but organized Matter; Or, in plain English, our Souls are nothing but our Bodies; and then when the Body dies, you may guess what becomes of them! Thus the authorities of Religion are weaken'd, and the Prospect of the other World almost shut up.⁵⁸

There are a few passages in the plays which unequivocally interpret death to be merely a cessation of being. Hippolito tells Dorinda that it is

.... to dream a kind of breathless sleep.
When once the soul's gone out.⁵⁹

And Cortez calms the perturbation of Cydaria by pointing out the chief virtue of dying:

For in the grave no passions fill the breast,
'Tis all we gain by death, to be at rest.⁶⁰

The allusions to death and immortality, on the whole, suggest that Dryden maintained the suspension of judgment which was a principle of the followers of Sextus Empiricus: in the plays he does not irretrievably commit himself on these problems, and no attitude beyond one of uncertainty can definitely be assigned to him. In portraying characters whom death terrifies and who cannot fortify themselves against it, he seems, however, rather to ally himself with Hobbes than with Montaigne, for in Chapter 20 of the Essays, Montaigne assumes a position similar to that of the Stoics

58. A Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage, London: Samuel Burt and Thomas Tyre, 1738, pp. 44-45.

59. V. I. 211, The Tempest, vol. III.

60. The Indian Emperor, II. IV. 354, vol. II.

or of the Epicurean Lucretius, arguing that fear of death, which frightens only because of its trappings, may be allayed by recognition that to be rid of life is no evil.⁶¹ Dryden's personages are often of the opinion that life is an evil to be escaped; but self-preservation is an instinct so deeply rooted within them that they cannot undertake the discipline recommended by Montaigne. The influence of the French skeptics and of Hobbes may well have come together in a focal point upon the problem of religious doubt. The prevailing attitude is agnostic rather than atheistical;⁶² and the poet himself indignantly disavows atheism in his preface to Tyrannic Love. But it is inconceivable that one of a naturally skeptical temperament⁶³ and one undoubtedly familiar with the philosophy of skepticism should not have found food for his uncertainty in the materialism of the Sage of Malmesbury; and that materialism, it has been noted, occasionally lifts its head among the doubters who comprise Dryden's characters. There is, moreover, something of the same paradox in his mingling of assured statements regarding heavenly justice and the promise of immortality with lengthily expressed doubts about both, that there is in Hobbes' erection of a conventional religious system upon a foundation which logically allows of no such structure. And this paradox,

61. There are one or two passages in the plays suggestive of of this idea. cf. Cleomenes:

Just such is death,
 With a black veil, covering a beauteous face.
 Keered afar off
 By erring nature; a mistaken phantom;
 A harmless, lambent fire. She kisses cold;
 But kind, and soft, and sweet, as my Cleora.

it will be apparent, is not far removed from the Pyrrhonists' compromise between profound philosophic doubt and pragmatic acceptance.

The conclusion which must be drawn from the disparate allusions to immortality and death is that, although they contain strains of Hobbism and although acquaintance with materialistic philosophy may have augmented his doubts, the essential position of Dryden is, like that of the Pyrrhonists, one of suspended judgment, bordering, perhaps, more closely upon disbelief than upon solid conviction. One curious departure of Dryden's thought from traditional Christianity pertains to suicide and allies him again to the Hobbist psychology of the Self. In Amboyna, after Ysabinda has been violated, she, one of the few female characters who has no fear of dying, debates with her lover her right to take her own life. She asks why, if man has freedom of will, God should have made suicide a sin when death may, in some instances, be a greater good than life. He answers her in the vein of Hobbes:

Can death, which is our greatest enemy, be good?
Death is the dissolution of our nature;
And nature therefore does abhor it most,
Whose greatest law is -- to preserve our beings.

Ysabinda grants that self-preservation is a "general law".

61. (cont'd). Ah, could we know
What joys she brings, at least what rest from
grief. -
How should we press into her friendly arms,
And be pleased not to be, or to be happy.

IV. I, p. 335.

62. In Preface to Sylvae, Dryden says of Lucretius:

but she avers that, as kings can be above the law, so man can, without offending Heaven, "dispense with what concerns himself alone".⁶⁴

The unwillingness of the skeptics to take a dogmatic stand on ultimate religious truth is a part of their general policy of pursuing the middle way in a life, moderate, conservative, and free from intellectual error. It is not surprising, therefore, to find them looking askance at zeal of any kind. Of religious zeal, Montaigne says that, guided by human passion, "it turns to hatred and envy and brings forth, instead of wheat and grapes, tares and nettles";⁶⁵ and Hobbes similarly attributes faction and dispute to over-zealous defense of a belief. Montezuma urbanely repulses the proselytizing zeal of the Christian missionary and advocates a calm reservation of final judgment. In Albion and Albanus, Zealots, or feigned Zeal, shares the position of villain with Democracy; both together conspire to murder the noble Albion, who represents King Charles. Misdirected Zeal is portrayed as the bitter foe of good government, and she herself admits her connection with hell. Of herself and Democracy she says:

Our mother bore us at a birth;
Her name was Zeal before she fell;
Fill saintship taught her to rebel;
But losing fame
And changing name,
She's now the Good Old Cause in hell.⁶⁶

62. (cont'd). "...he differs from our Hobbes, who could not but be convinced, or at least doubt of some eternal truths which he has opposed." Bredvold, Best of Dryden, p. 492.

63. cf. Preface to Religio Laici, Bredvold, Best of Dryden, p. 190.

64. IV, III, 65, vol. VI.

Dryden means to point out that a pious zeal may very easily be converted into a vicious misapplication of enthusiasm through ambition or through undue acquisition of power and prestige on the part of its possessor. Albanus characterizes Zeal as follows:

Then Zeal and Commonwealth infect
My land again,
The fumes of madness, that possess
The peoples' giddy brain,
Once more disturb the nation's rest,
And dye rebellion in a deeper stain.⁶⁷

Mustapha, the far from admirable priests'-side in The Indian Emperor, shares the views of the irresposchable Albanus, though he places a higher estimate on man's ability to rid himself of the temptation to zeal:

.... mankind is grown wiser at this time of day
than to cut one another's throats about religion.⁶⁸

And Maximin exclaims concerning his victims, amorous of death and martyrdom:

How to their own destruction they are blind!
Zeal is the pious madness of the mind.⁶⁹

Although Montaigne and Hobbes are at one with Dryden in distrust of Zeal, it is not necessary to suppose that he was especially influenced by them, for the same attitude was held by liberal English theologians, like Hooker and Archbishop

65. Essays.

66. II. I. 258, vol. VII.

67. II. II. 263.

68. IV. III. 430, vol. VII.

69. I. I. 391, vol. III.

Tillotson. The letter, for example, writes:

.... even when zeal is a virtue, it is a nice and dangerous one; for the wisest men are apt to mingle their own passions and interests with their zeal for God and religion.⁷⁰

The plays of Dryden suggest, at least, most of the fundamental problems of religion, presenting either a definite uncertainty or alternating certainty and skepticism in close juxtaposition. The allusions to the goodness of heaven are numerous; yet in not a few reflective lines do the characters question the justice of God. It has already been noted that both Adam and Eve hold Him responsible for their misfortune; and, like that of Job, the faith of Cleonidas wavers as he sees good men suffer. Cleomenes hesitates to say "hard things of Heaven" when he is starving, but Cleonidas asks:

But what if heaven
Will do hard things, must not hard things be said?⁷¹

Montaigne recognizes the problem of evil suffered by good men, but asserts that, God's ways being impenetrable, it must be assumed that there is just reason for it. Hobbes also recognizes the problem, but solves it rather speciously, from the ethical point of view, by saying that God's omnipotence destroys all question of right and wrong in relation to his acts. Dryden's questioning of divine providence, however, is not demonstrably related to either Hobbes or Montaigne.

70. Tillotson, op. cit., p. 513, vol. IV.

71. V, II, 341, vol. VIII.

Whatever doubt may remain concerning the state of the poet's religious beliefs generally at the time he was writing plays, there can be none regarding his opinions of the clergy, and particularly of the Catholic priesthood. Satire on the foibles of churchmen is older than the fabliaux, and it is not lacking in other Restoration drama; but in frequency and virulence of censure, there is nothing in contemporary English plays which is analogous. The source of Dryden's distrust and contempt is again probably not single. Josef Wild traces his feeling to the formative influences of childhood:

Um diesen eingewurzelten Haß recht zu erklären, dürfen wir annehmen, daß er auf jugendbleibnisse zurückgeht. Wir hörten oben, wie sich seine Verwandten unter Cromwell als Verfolger der Geistlichkeit hervortaten, und Christie nimmt an, daß Drydens Vater als Friedensrichter in Northamptonshire auch Enteignungskommissar (Committee-man) gewesen sei, der Geistliche aus ihren Ämtern vertrieb und Güter von Geschädigten einzog. Er dürfte sich deshalb den Haß vieler zugezogen haben und auch unser Dichter muß darunter leiden, denn "öfters wurde ihm vorgeworfen."⁷²

These experiences, added to his later observation of priestly cabals and Romish plots, menscine, time and again, the stability of government, unquestionably formed the groundwork of his opinions; but in entertaining them, he was following once more the two chief trends of thought to which he was intellectually akin, Hobbism and skepticism. Hobbes not only

72. Wild, op. cit., p. 19

subordinates the churchmen to the statesmen, but attacks as well the specific evils of the clergy:

.... who does not see, to whose profit redound the fees of private masses, and vales of purgatory; with other signs of private interest, enough to mortify the most lively faith, if as I said, the civil magistrate, and custom did not more sustain it, than any opinion they have of the sanctity, wisdom, or probity of their teachers? So that I may attribute all the changes of religion in the world, to one and the same cause; and that is, unplesing priests; and those not only amongst Catholics, but even in that church that hath presumed most of reformation.⁷³

St. Evremond, too, writes of priestly selfishness and covetousness:

Je doute un peu de la persussion des ces prêcheurs, qui, nous offrant le royaume des cieux, en public, sollicitent, en particulier, un petit bénéfice, avec le dernier empressement.⁷⁴

In one of his "conversations", he again shows interest to be the motive force in clerical quarrels. When one of the speakers asks a priest whether disagreement about Grace was the cause of ill-feeling between Jansenist and Jesuit, he scouts the idea, explaining it on grounds of jealous ambition:

Les jansenistes nous ont trouvé en possession du gouvernement, et ils ont voulu nous en tirer..... Ce n'est pas que les uns et les autres n'aient dessein de sauver les hommes, mais chacun veut se donner du credit en les sauvant; et, à vous parler franchement, l'intérêt du directeur va presque toujours devant le salut de celui qui est sous la direction.⁷⁵

73. Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 109.

74. Op. cit., pp. 159-60.

75. Op. cit., p. 50.

The group of "libertino" poets and dramatists in France, who developed what loosely may be called the Epicureanism of Montaigne's philosophy, were similarly antipathetic toward churchmen. They were violently attacked by the clergy for their views (by the Jesuits particularly); and they, in turn, retaliated with satire on, and forthright criticism of, their persecutors. Théophile de Viau and other less prominent poets of his coterie were imprisoned for heretical allusion to the church and its acolytes; and in their poems and letters, the personal characters of the priests are blackened and their intellectual bigotry exposed. As an instance, in Cyrano de Bergerac's Les États de la Lune, the priests, along with almost every other aspect of contemporary civilization, are satirized for the narrowness of their scruples of conscience.⁷⁶ Théophile writes of his enemies:

Si le Ciel m'avoit fait un de ces gros prélats
De tous les fils du Ciel on me croiroit l'Athos.
Si j'étois Cardinal et fusse une bête,
Mon chapeau couvriroit les défauts de ma tête....⁷⁷

In one of his Lettres Satiriques, Cyrano expresses the common notion of "clergy-covetousness":

.... le plus grand signe de reprobation auquel
un malheureux puisse être sujet en cette vie,
c'est de ne pas donner de bonnes dîmes à son
Cure. Regardez Caïn: qu'est-ce qui le fit damner?
Ce ne fut pas pour avoir tué son frère, ce fut
bien pour autre chose. A fut, mes chers, Par-
nassiens, pour avoir escorniffé les gerbes des
Dîmes qu'il devoit à Dieu....⁷⁸

⁷⁶. Lachèvre, vol. VIII, p. 60.

⁷⁷. Lachèvre, vol. III, p. 112/

⁷⁸. Lachèvre, vol. VIII, pt. 2, p. 299.

Some of the bolder libertines, like Claude de Chauvigny, attributed to the priesthood every sort of indecency and grossness and depravity, sodomy being one of the favorite charges. The libertine group, through its connection with Montaigne and Cassendi and through the notoriety attached to its debauchery and to its feud with the Jesuits, was widely known; and it may be assumed, though he makes no mention of it,⁷⁹ that Dryden, in the light of his extensive acquaintance with French literature, at least knew for what it stood.

The plays of Dryden are filled with assaults upon the personal character of the priesthood, as well as upon its undue prominence in secular affairs. He portrays a whole series of clergymen who, totally unaware of the spiritual function of their office, continually prostitute the people and the church to a desire for power and gain. Self-seeking churchmen play an important part in the serious plays as well as in the comedies; and heroic personages evince a frank contempt for them. Dorax calls to account the Mufti, scheming priest of Muley-Moloch:

I tell thee Mufti, if the world were wise,
They would not wag one finger in your quarrels.
Your heaven you promise, but our earth you covet...⁸⁰

Troilus, after Cressida has appeared false to him, realizes that he has made a mistake in loving the child of Calchas:

79. Dryden uses the word libertine in the preface to An Evening's Love.

80. II, I, 352, vol. VII.

to possess several women at the same time as a "kind of clergy-covetousness".⁸⁵

/Lorenzo, in The Spanish Friar, charges the priests with Machiavellianism:

This is the old Church trick, the clergy is over at the bottom of the plot, but they are wise enough to slip their own necks out of the collar, and leave the laity to be fairly hanged for it.⁸⁶

The exact opposite, however, is true respecting clergy and laity in Dryden's plays: Jeremy Collier has commented truly that the poet usually "gives the laity the pleasure of an ill action, and the clergy the punishment".⁸⁷

The dramatist does not stop with accusations of covetousness and deceit, but makes charges of personal debauchery as well. Antonio, reproaching the Mufti's daughter for lateness in keeping an assignation, says that her father has not properly instructed her in the "sweetest point of his religion";⁸⁸ the father himself admits that he loves his wine, but finds it good policy to preach fasting to the vulgar; and the Spanish friar is addicted to food, drink, and women. When it is observed, in The Wild Gallant, that persons are always afraid of the devil, Loveby exclaims:

Oh, the devil's the spirit, and the person's the flesh;⁸⁹ and betwixt these two there must be a war;

85. Limberham, II, I, 40, vol. VI.

86. III, II, 256, vol. VI.

87. Short View, p.

88. III, II, 391, vol. VII.

89. cf. Cyrano de Bergerac: "...je croirois que Sainet-Jean prophetisoit de vous, quand il écrivit que la parole s'étoit faite chair." p. 186, vol VIII, pt. 2.

yet, to do them both right, I think in my conscience they quarrel only like lawyers for their fees, and meet good friends in private, to laugh at their clients.⁹⁰

Emphasis upon the sensuality of the priesthood is reminiscent of the French libertines, who point out in the Jesuits the fleshly vices of which they themselves had been accused.⁹¹

Another source of annoyance to Dryden, in which he is more akin to Hobbes than to the skeptics, was the prominence of the church in political activities. Montezuma, upon being told that the Pope has given his kingdom to Spain, disclaims the secular prerogatives of the church:

Ill does he represent the powers above,
Who nourishes debate, not preaches love;
Besides, what greater folly can be shown?
He gives another what is not his own....
Empires in heaven he with more ease may give,
And you, perhaps, would with less thanks receive:
But heaven has need of no such viceroys here,
Itself bestows the crowns that monarchs wear.⁹²

Montezuma not only voices Hobbes' general views on the secular-minded clergy, but he also echoes a specific passage from the Leviathan, having to do with the exact situation which calls forth the Indian Emperor's words:

The right of the heathen kings cannot be thought taken from them by their conversion to the faith of Christ; who never ordained that kings, for believing in him, should be deposed, that is, subjected to any but himself, or, which is all one, be deprived of

90. V, II, 114-115.

91. Théophile is bitter against the Doctors who, preaching chastity, hide beneath thin robes, "the souls of Sodomites", vol. III, p. 83.

92. I, II, 328, vol. II.

the power necessary for the conservation of peace amongst their subjects, and for their defense against foreign enemies.⁹³

The most complete and scathing indictment of the worldly interests of churchmen occurs in Don Sebastian, in one of the longest single speeches to appear in any of the plays.

Dorax asks:

Why, then these foreign thoughts of state employment,
Abhorrent to your function and your breeding?
Poor droning truants of unpractised cells,
Bred in the fellowship of bearded boys,
What wonder is it if you know not men?
Yet there you live demure, with downcast eyes,
And humble as your discipline requires;
But, when let loose from thence to live at large,
Your little tincture of devotion dies:
Then luxury succeeds, and, set agog
With a new scene of yet untasted joys,
You fall with greedy hunger to the feast.
Of all your college virtues, nothing now
But your original ignorance remains;
Bleated with pride, ambition, avarice,
You swell to counsel kings, and govern kingdoms.....
Content you with monopolizing heaven;
And let this little hanging ball alone;
For, give you but a foot of conscience there,
And you, like Archimedes, toss the globe.
We know your thoughts of us that laymen are,
Lag souls, and rubbish of remaining clay,
Which heaven, grown weary of more perfect work,
Set upright with a little puff of breath,
And bid us pass for men.⁹⁴

By reason of their ascetic training, churchmen have not the statesman's subtlety in dissembling, and make "silly, woful, awkward politicians", whose "interest is not finely drawn, and hid..."⁹⁵ Care of souls should be quite enough to occupy their

93. Hobbes, p. 538.

94. II, I, 358-353.

95. Don Sebastian, II, I, 351, vol. VII.

whole time. Dorax repeats a Hobbist precept to the emperor, who, he feels, has trusted his priest too far:

Sir, let me bluntly say, you went too far,
To trust the preaching power on state affairs
To, or any heavenly demagogues:
'Tis a limb lopped from your prerogative,
And so much of heaven's image blotted from you.⁹⁶

More than once it is implied that the clergy deliberately falsify and make use of feigned miracles and prophecies. Troilus, learning of Cassandra's vision of Hector's death, exclaims:

By heaven, 'twas never well, since saucy priests
Grew to be masters of the listening herd,
And into mitres cleft the royal crown;
Then, as the earth were scanty for their power,
They drew the pomp of heaven to wait on them.
Shall I go publish, Hector does not fight,
Because a madman dreamt he talked with Jove?⁹⁷

To be sure, Dryden's animus against the clergy might well have been wholly personal in origin; on the other hand, it is certainly in the tradition of, and probably was influenced by, Hobbism and the French libertinage movement.

Of Dryden's views on religion generally, as they are expressed or implied in his plays, it may be said that they provide unquestionable evidence of the fideism which Bredvold believes to be the unifying thread of his religious thoughts, for repeatedly the characters affirm the inadequacy of reason and the necessity of faith. But there is not a

96. III, I, 386-387, vol. VII.

97. V, I, 375, vol. VI.

conclusive proof that during the dramatic period, Dryden was a consistent or a complete fideist, for along with the passages on faith are others which merely suggest Pyrrhonian doubt without the consequent turning to the security of pragmatic belief, and still others which hint at a materialism, bordering upon atheism, that is reminiscent of Hobbes.

Hatred and suspicion of priestcraft is but one of the attitudes common to both Dryden and the continental free-thinkers: Epicureanism, as the popular conception of it became their philosophy, is the prevailing thought in the English dramatist's comedies. That philosophy, moreover, was implicit, if not systematically expressed, in the court-life of Dryden's time, a life closely related to the manners and ideas of the French. Alexandre Beljame gives a trenchant summary of the spirit prevalent among the upper classes of society.

.... l'unique but de cette cour, c'est le plaisir. Notre sphère d'action dans cette vie, dit Rochester, est le bonheur? Et il ajoute olegamment: 'Quiconque régarde au dola est un ano? Le Puritanisme faisoit de l'existence humaine une vallée de larmes, un chemin semé de luites et d'épreuues par lesquelles on achite la vie éternelle. Ses successeurs se contentent de la vie présente. Mais pour jouir comme il faut ---, pour faire gaiement le chemin de la vie, il faut n'être embarrassé par rien; on supprime donc tous les impédiments: Dou venons - nous? Ou allons-nous? Qu'importe! nous sommes, et c'est assez. La vertu, la pudeur, - mensonges! La pitie' l'honneur, le courage, - préjugés de petites gens!'⁹⁸

This spirit, naturally, finds expression in the works of writers

98. Le Public et les Hommes De Lettres in Angleterre au 18^e Siècle. Paris, 1881, p. 8.

other than Dryden -- (Aphra Bohn, Edward Howard, Lord Rochester, Shadwell, Wycherley, and others -- but Dryden was chronologically the first⁹⁹ dramatist of any importance in the Restoration; and whether the others can be said to have, in any way, patterned after him or not, it is not amiss to point out a possible -- and even a probable -- connection between the libertinism in his plays and in English and the libertinism in the poetry and lives of his French neighbors.

A smart contempt for religion, especially in its institutionalized form, is but one aspect of the libertines' rebellion against ideas or practices which might serve to curtail personal liberty, a liberty synonymous in their philosophy with self-indulgence and pursuit of pleasure. They affirmed that, although God and ultimate truth might be realistic, the only certain force in human life was the immediate demand of Nature's voices, and at the same time constituting the basis of pleasure, the free-thinkers became frank sensualists, totally indifferent to standards of morality or the needs of the social group:

Ogueilleux et égoïstes, ils n'entendent subir aucune contrainte et jouir pleinement et sans entraves de tous les plaisirs permis et défendus. L'Univers se resume à leur horizon. D'obligations envers leur pays et envers leurs semblables, ils n'en veulent pas connaître; ils ont tous les droits et pas de devoirs..... Après eux, le déluge.¹⁰⁰

99. Six of Dryden's comedies were written before 1670.

100. Lachèvre, p. vii, vol. I.

Theophile de Visu sums up the naturalism of his creed thus:

J'approuve qu'un chacun suive en tout la nature;
 Son empire est plaisant et sa loi n'est pas dure....
 Je pense que chacun auroit assez d'esprit
 Suivant le libre train que nature proscriit....
 Ne t'oppose jamais aux droits de la nature.¹⁰¹

We must, his group says, refuse nothing to our bodies or to our senses of "what they desire from us in the exercise of their powerful natural faculties". With Dryden, they would exclaim: "To quarrel with the natural desires of mankind, assaulted by powerful temptations; I am enraged at that."¹⁰² Carne diem is the categorical imperative; and even the more serious thinker, St. Evremont, avers that it is necessary to enjoy present pleasures without caring about those to come, and states that nature drives all men to seek their own enjoyments.¹⁰³ The philosophy of the libertines touches that of Hobbes at several points, and is, in fact, grounded upon the same materialism. "Le tempérament du corps," they assert, "force les mouvements de l'âme"; and, like Hobbes, they release man from moral responsibility by declaring that "all things are conducted and governed by destiny which is irrevocable, infallible, immutable, necessary, eternal, and inevitable to all men".¹⁰⁴ But fatalism does not, for them, produce stability, any more than it does for the English philosopher; for they believe that there is no fixity of

101. Ibid., p. 323, vol. I, Pt. 2.

102. An Evening's Love, IV, III, 340, vol. II.

103. op. cit., tome I, p. 33.

104. Lechèvre, op. cit., vol. II, p. 369.

opinion or feeling in humankind, no permanent values, no enduring pleasures. And, furthermore, -- this time unlike Hobbes -- they do not regret that it is so: change and variety add piquancy to their experiences. St. Evremond discourses somewhat more soberly upon the fleeting nature of friendship and love, and warns against too much reflection upon the ills of life, the pain of which can be assuaged only by active pleasure. Molière, who, though he was not among the extreme free-thinkers, was associated with them, reflects their naturalism to a considerable extent;¹⁰⁵ and portrays at least one character who typifies the libertine. The pleasure-Odyssey, the passion for freedom, the acceptance of impermanency as a good -- all find expression in his hero, Don Juan:

Quoi! tu veux qu'on se lie à demeurer au premier objet qui nous prend, qu'on renonce au monde pour lui, et qu'on n'ait plus d'yeux pour personne? La belle chose de vouloir se piquer d'un faux honneur d'être fidèle, de s'ensevelir pour toujours dans une passion, et d'être mort des à jeunesse à toutes les autres beautés qui nous peuvent frapper les yeux! Non, non, la constance n'est bonne que pour les ridicules; toutes les belles ont droit de nous charmer, et l'avantage d'être remotes la première, ne doit point dérober aux autres les justes prétentions qu'elles ont toutes sur nos cœurs..... Quoi qu'il en soit, je ne puis refuser mon cœur à tout ce que je vois d'aimables..... L'inclinations naissantes, après tout, ont des charmes inexplicables et tout le plaisir de l'amour est dans le changement.¹⁰⁶

Montaigne himself, by no means a libertine in thought or conduct, had given the impetus to such opinions by statements

105. *Ibid.*, vol. I, 151-152.

106. *Oeuvres Complètes de Molière*, Paris, 1893. vol. V, pp. 11, 12, 13.

regarding the importance of pleasure. "We must," he writes, "cling tooth and nail to the pleasures of life, which our years tear, one after another, from our hands ----."107 He discounts the possibility of complete suppression of the emotions. "Our souls cannot reach to Stoic or Epicurean frenzies of endurance," he says, "without having a touch of unbalance."108 Moreover, he lays special emphasis upon sexual pleasures as being "the only true pleasures of the bodily life".109

In serious as well as comic plays, Dryden often reflects libertine principles and opinions. "Let tomorrow starve, or provide for himself, as tonight has done," cries Wildblood, "tomorrow is a cheat in love, and I will not trust it."110; and his lady-love, Jacintha, holds the same views:

None but fools confine their pleasure.
What usurer ever thought his coffers held too much?111

Antonio, minor character in Don Sebastian, admits that, though pleasure has been the aim of his existence, he has tried to keep his emotions free from any serious involvement:

Pleasure has been the business of my life;
And every change of fortune easy to me,
Because I still was easy to myself.
The loss of her I loved would touch me nearest;
Yet, if I found her, I might love too much,
And that's uneasy pleasure.112

107. Essays, vol. I, p. 244.

108. Ibid., p. 336.

109. Ibid., p. 332.

110. An Evening's Love, IV, I, 320, vol. II.

111. II, I, 273, vol. II

112. V, I, 444, vol. VII.

The personages in the heroic plays occasionally express either an intention to live "in unreprieved pleasure free" or regret that they have not so lived. After a lifetime of successful conquest, the father of Aureng-Zebe concludes:

Had we but lasting youth, and time to spare,
Some might be thrown away on fame and war,
But youth, the perishing good, runs on too fast,
And unenjoyed, will spend itself to waste:
Few know the use of life before 'tis past.
Had I once more thy vigor to command,
I would not let it die upon my hand.
No hour of pleasure should pass empty by:
Youth should watch joys, and shoot 'em as they fly.¹¹³

Emperor Maximin likewise hopes to dedicate the last years of life to making the most of each day:

Old as I am, in pleasures I will try
To waste an empire yet before I die:
Since life is fugitive, and will not stay,
I'll make it fly more pleasantly away.¹¹⁴

Nourmehal is doubtless the most unrestrained devotee of "popular" Epicureanism, the frankest sensualist in any of the plays. Trying to persuade her step-son to accept her love, she expatiates upon the delights of physical indulgence. "Where Nature sums up all her joys in one";¹¹⁵ each day, she believes, should be regarded as a "mistress unenjoyed before", and, one supposes, to be encountered in strictly analogous fashion. All of the comic characters, as well as some of those seriously portrayed, proceed on the assumption that

113. III, I, 243, vol. V.

114. IV, 443, vol. III.

115. Aureng-Zebe, IV, I, 261.

We are not sure tomorrow will be ours:
 Wars have, like love, their favorable hours.
 Let us use all; for if we lose one day,
 That white one in the crowd, may slip away. 116

Almanzor, pattern of the heroic virtues, employs this argument in attempting to weaken Almahyde's pure resolves: he adjures her:

Live but tonight, and trust tomorrow's mind:
 Ere that can come, there's a whole life behind.
 Nothink, already crowned with joys I lie,
 Speechless and breathless, in an ecstasy. 117

Although there are a few passages in which characters, like Aureng-Zebe or Cortez, recognize the peace-producing effect of the renunciatory philosophy of Stoicism, the persons who utter them never thereupon become Stoics; but the Epicurean sentiments, on the contrary, are an abstract of the concrete experience of those who voice them. Whenever Dryden refers by name to Stoicism, he criticizes it adversely. It is contemptuously alluded to in one place as "the self-denying oint"; and Woodall, devil-may-care opportunist in Limberham, thumbing his nose at the moral preschment of his servant, exclaims:

Away, old Epictetus, about your business, and
 leave your musty morals. 118

Philocles, in Secret Love, given the opportunity to marry the Queen if he will renounce the woman he loves, rationalizes his impulse to foster his ambition:

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116. Tyrannic Love, I, 287, vol. III.
 117. The Conquest of Granada, IV, III, 193, vol. IV.
 118. IV, I, 79, vol. VI.

Greatness lies ready in some shape to tempt me.
 The royal furniture in every room
 Now tell me, Stoic!
 If all these with a wish might be made thine,
 Would'st thou not truck thy ragged virtue for 'em?
 If glory was a bait, that angels swallowed,
 How then should souls allied to sense resist it?¹¹⁹

And, finally, in the Dedication to Don Sebastien, Dryden, in his own person, summarizes his estimate of stoical philosophy:

For stiffness of opinion is the effect of pride,
 and not of philosophy; it is a miserable presumption
 of that knowledge which human nature is too narrow
 to contain; and the ruggedness of a stoic is only
 a silly affectation of being a god, -- to wind
 himself up by pulleys to an insensibility of suffering,
 and, at the same time, to give the lie to his own
 experience, by saying he suffers not what he knows
 he feels.¹²⁰

This commentary closely echoes Montaigne's suspicion of stoical indifference. The French philosopher, in his essay Of Cruelty, suggests that Stoicism is too negative to be wholly noble, and is of the opinion that the members of the sect, like Cato, who apparently died with unbelievable contempt of suffering, really took a sensuous delight in their own conduct.¹²¹ Elsewhere he writes in the exact vein of Dryden:

Moreover, I have always regarded as affectation
 that precept that so sternly and precisely tells
 us to put on a good face, a disdainful and in-
 different mien, when suffering pain.¹²²

St. Evremond, too, is aware of the weaknesses of the system.

Of Stoicism as a philosophy for the average man, he says:

119. V. I. 493-4, vol. II.

120. Dedication, vol. VII, p. 303-303, cf. also "To My Honor'd
 Friend Sir Robert Howard, on His Excellent Poems", p. 12.
 "... your art hides art, as Stoics feign
 Then least to fool, when most they suffer pain."

121. Vol. I, p. 412 ff.

122. Vol. II, p. 211.

Ce pardonne à nos religieux la triste singularité de ne manger que des herbes, dans la vie qu'ils ont d'acquérir par là une éternelle félicité; mais, qu'un philosophe qui ne connoit d'autres biens que ceux de ce monde; que le docteur de la volupté se fasse un ordinaire de pain et d'eau, pour arriver au souverain bonheur de la vie, c'est ce que mon peu d'intelligence ne comprend point.¹²³

The libertinism in Dryden's heroic plays is limited for the most part to characters obviously designed to appear wicked, although the rapid shifts of affection, on the part of heroes, from one woman to another, hints at the libertines' disregard of distinctions of worth. The principal characters in the comedies, however, are frank libertines, who go about voicing a facile Epicureanism; his comic plots love-intrigues purposed to show that variety is the spice of life and that the sexual act, indiscriminately performed, is the most important of human experiences. One of the protagonists, upon being asked whether he is married or engaged, replies: "To nothing but my pleasures, I";¹²⁴ and so might all say, for none has a thought aside from the pleasures of the body. The comedy of Dryden is markedly different in tone from that typical of the Restoration -- from the plays of Wycherley, Congreve, and Vanbrugh. In the work of these latter men, the reader is aware of an artificial world, a world in which the game of love is played by conventional rules; in which sparkling repartee and clever planning are para-

123. Oeuvres Mêlées, vol. I, p. 174.

124. This is equally true of the women in the comedies.

mount; in which, though passion and sex are wittily, and sometimes even grossly, discussed, the characters themselves seem passionless. John Palmer, alluding particularly to Wycherley's The Country Wife, summarizes the impressions which Restoration comedy makes:

When, for instance, he Mr. Horner is accused of indecent gallantry, those of us who are seised of his imaginative kingdom already know that gallantry cannot here be indecent. It is a first law of the cloud-cuckoo-land of The Country Wife that the art of sex has no more suggestion of the indecently amorous than tumbling upstairs or losing one's hat in a gale. Wycherley has already created an atmosphere where passion is unable to breathe. Mr. Horner goes after his friend's wife precisely as boys go after their neighbor's apples.....

Vanburgh and Farquhar accepted as the figures of their comedy characters which had no relation to their own imaginative vision of life, or their attitude towards society. They did not obey a simple artistic impulse to express something clearly and vividly felt. They accepted a formula whose significance was outworn, writing entertainingly within its bounds, and slurring where it was possible inconsistencies of which they were only half aware.¹²⁵

Dryden's comedies, to be sure, fit into the formula as they rail against marriage, as they present the interplay of wit between amorous couples,¹²⁶ and as they employ the "proviso scene", in which the couples make stipulations regarding personal freedom in the married life to follow. They portray not an artificial world, however, but a gross, naturalistic world; they primarily emphasize, not the graceful and ingenious

125. The Comedy of Manners, London, 1913. pp. 294-295.

126. Dryden's Loveby and Constance [The Wild Gallant] were, incidentally, the first of the famous pairs of lovers in Restoration comedy.

means to an end, but the end itself, namely, the gratification of physical desire; they consistently exploit obscenity at the expense of wit, and, to vary the application of a criticism by Saintsbury, they contrive to produce a single meaning where more subtle dramatists, by innuendo, would convey a double.¹²⁷ His characters unquestionably deserve the title of "libertine", whereas those of Congreve or Vanbrugh have not enough reality or enough animality about them to be given that opprobrious name.

Any attempt to analyze the characters of the comedies in terms of ideas must take into account the admission in Defense of An Essay that his comedies represent a deliberate pandering to the taste of his age:

For I confess my chief endeavors are to delight the age in which I live. If the humour of this be for low comedy, small accidents, and raillery, I will force my genius to obey it, though with more reputation I could write in verse.¹²⁸

There is nothing in Dryden's life¹²⁹ or in his non-dramatic work to suggest that he had any tendencies toward, or sympathies with, libertinism; he merely reflects an important trend of his time. In the seventeenth century, the principles of the libertins comprised a current of thought by which, according to Marcel Braunschwig, "le naturalisme de la

127. Allardyce Nicoll says: "The heroes of *Etherege* and of Congreve, too, are more dilettante than Dryden's are; there is a certain intensity about the wild madcap flirtations of Dryden's *Loveboys* and *Fainalls* that is more emotional and more real, in the ordinary sense of that word, than the cynical intellectualism of the characters, let us say, of *Etherege*." A History of

Renaissance se relie à l'athéisme des Encyclopédistes".¹³⁰
 And whether Dryden went to the libertine poets themselves or not, he undoubtedly was mirroring an ethical system which had its base in the extension of Montaigne's skeptical naturalism and in the popular revival of Epicureanism consequent to Gassendi's restatement of the Greek philosophy, and which found its most definitely formulated expression in the free-thinkers and "livers" of the Visu school.

Freedom to indulge in sensual enjoyment; impatience of any restraint like that of marriage or of parental authority; conviction of the superior importance of the physical to the religious or philosophic concerns of life; belief in the virtue, as well as the necessity, of inconstancy; experimentation with uncommon types of sexual experience; copious and obscene allusion to the physical details of love -- all of these are recurrent themes in the comedies of Dryden, and all are hall-marks of French libertinage. Woodell, Wildblood, Celadon, Lorenzo, Palamide, Antonio, Pandarus -- each is wedded to unrestrained pleasure; each is certain that man is incorrigibly fickle; each is cynical about marriage; with Théophile, they say:

127. (cont'd) Restoration Drama, 1660-1700. Cambridge: at the University Press, 1928, p. 214.

128. Bredvold, Best of Dryden, p. 465.

129. Cf. Verrall, op. cit., pp. 24-25, for consideration of Bishop Burnet's designation of Dryden as "a monster of immodesty and impurity of all sorts."

130. Notre Littérature: Étudiée dans le Texte, p. 594.

Je pense que --- la constance est un vice.
 Qu'amour haït ces esprits qui luy sont trop dévots.
 Et que la patience est la vertu des sots.....¹³¹

To them, as to the later Restoration comic "heroes", marriage is the last resort of the stupid:

A man of sense is not made for marriage; 'tis
 a game, which none but dull-plodding fellows
 can play at well; and 'tis as natural to them
 as crimp is to a Dutchman.¹³²

And even the dull-plodding fellows, like the outraged husband Gomez, allude to it as "one of the seven deadly sins" which is "but binding a man neck and heels, for all that".¹³³

Married and single men alike -- and women too -- chant the praise of freedom, freedom to indulge in the sexual act with whomever they wish. To be sure, Dryden's heroes, like Congreve's, end by marrying the women whom they desire; but there is a significant difference between the motivation in the two dramatists. Congreve's characters are playing a game: both men and women know from the beginning that marriage is to eventuate; they merely assume the pose of railing against it in order to protect themselves from each other's barbs of wit. The raillery, a rich source for trenchant dialogue, is a literary convention; and the marriage is never the period to a persistent but unsuccessful assault on the virtue of the lady. It is otherwise in Dryden: the

131. Oeuvres Complètes; p. 42, vol. II.

132. Timberham, II, I, 147.

133. The Spanish Friar, V, II, 515, vol. VI.

speeches against marriage have the ring of sincerity, and a male character seldom seeks marriage until other attempts to enjoy the women have failed. Even personages, like Bosbdelin, in the heroic plays rebel against marriage, and the emperor in Aureng-Zebe gives an appraisal of it that is consistent with the attitude displayed in the comedies:

'Tis true, of marriage bonds I'm weery grown;
Love scorns all ties but those that are his own.
Chains that are dragged, must needs uneasy prove,
For there's a god-like liberty in love.¹³⁴

No social purpose or sound personal basis for marriage is ever recognized in either comedy or heroic play; it is a child of passion;

Why should a foolish marriage vow,
Which long ago was made,
Oblige us to each other now,
When passion is decayed?
We loved, and we loved as long as we could,
'Till our love was loved out in us both;
But our marriage is dead, when the pleasure is fled;
'Twas pleasure first made it an oath.¹³⁵

The passions of the characters are always physically strong, but superficial enough, nevertheless, to admit of wide variability in object. The plot of Limberham, probably the grossest of the plays, centers about the dexterous efforts of Woodall to pursue three women at the same time-- one a discontented wife, one a kept mistress, and the third, an ostensibly virtuous girl, who, notwithstanding, is versed in

134. II, I, 229, vol. V.

135. Marriage à la Mode, I, I, 261, vol. IV.

the devious ways of intrigue. Aided by his lecherous old father, he goes from one to another, as husband or "keeper" is conveniently abroad; his only problem is which to enjoy, for they are equally acceptable in all but point of safety. If one form of prostitution is condemned by exposing the senile, gullible "keeper" Limberham, marriage is likewise made ridiculous by the stupidity of the verbose Brainsick. Dryden, moreover, introduces quite gratuitously the conversation of two procuresses, Mrs. Hackney and Mrs. Termagant, and the ingenuity of Mistress Overdone in securing a good price for her daughter's maidenhead, both passages being heightened by ribald jesting about the cozenage of male victims. In his Dedication, the dramatist states that the comedy was intended for "an honest satire against the crying sin of 'keeping'".¹³⁶ He admits, however, that the banning of the play soon after it was produced may have been because it represented too much of the vice which it meant to decri. The emphasis, totally unnecessary to the development of the plot, placed upon descriptions of natural, physical processes recalls the poems of Vian and his school. The impression left by Limberham is that the characters are obsessed by sexual desires, and that all of them could give assent to Theophiles' lines:

Le plaisir d'amour est si doux.....
 Pour moy, je veux foutre en tous lieux, ---
 Même, je veux, dedans l'Enfer.¹³⁷

136. p. 9, vol. VI.

137. Lschèvre, op. cit., vol. II, p. 402.

Woodall's thirst for sensation also marks the behaviour of Celadon, comic hero of Secret Love. Returning from abroad eager to resume amorous acquaintance with the ladies of the court, he falls in love with the witty Florimell and, despite aversion to marriage, proposes. Florimell, favorable to his suit, stipulates a year's probation in order to test his fidelity. That fidelity, as she has foreseen, proves chimerical, for the two daughters of Melissa are irresistible to him, even though he knows that only Florimell can interest him permanently. Having just been reproved by her for promiscuous tendencies, he is invited to a rendezvous with the sisters:

Very good, the Sisters send me word they will have the riddles this Afternoon, and invite me to sup there! Now cannot I forbear and I should be damn'd, though I have scap'd a scouring so lately for it. Yet I love Florimell better than both of 'em together; -- there's the Riddle on't; but only for the sweet sake of variety. Well, we must all sin, and we must all repent, and there's an end on't.¹³⁸

The hedonists in An Evening's Love, with their disrespectful allusions to the church, can, like those of Limberham, echo Viau:

Je ne recherche point de Dieux, n'y de fortune;
À qu'ils font au dessous ou pardessus la lune,
Pour le bien des mortels, tout m'est indifférent.
Excepté le plaisir.¹³⁹

138. III, 42, vol. II.

139. Lachèvre, op. cit., vol. II, p. 337.

Don Melchor, the villain, in so far as there is one, has a Don Juan temperament. Pretending to Aurelia, who considers herself as good as affianced to him, that he has gone abroad, he secretly remains at home to woo her cousin Theodosia. His deceit is discovered, and he loses both women; but he is not dismayed:

Yet I have the comfort of a cast lover;
I will think well of myself; and despise my Mistresses.¹⁴⁰

Bellamy and Wildblood, each ready with a show of passion when opportunity offers, are more frankly libertine. "I have a bank of love to supply everyone's occasions," affirms the latter, "some for her, some for another, and some for you; charge what you will upon me, I pay all at sight, and without questioning who brought the bill."¹⁴¹ For Wildblood, love may be turned on or off like a fountain, and his friend also follows the cult of sensation:

I love only that I may keep my heart warm; for a man's a fool, if love stir him not; and to bring it to pass, I first resolve whom to love, and presently after imagine I am in love: for a strong imagination is required as much in a lover as in a witch.¹⁴²

They are quite without moral sensibility, for they plan to resolve the love-tangle by having Aurelia yield secretly to Lopez, with the understanding that she will be allowed to yield, thereafter, to Don Melchor. The baseness of this

140. IV, 366, vol. II.

141. V, I, 320.

142. I, II, 270, vol. II.

device and of the presentation of the whores in Limberham also marks the affair between Christian and the lord in Dryden's most popular comedy, Sir Martin Mar-all. The girl falsely informs him that she is to become the mother of his child, not to elicit a proposal, for he is already a husband, but merely to extort from him a large gift of money. On the same moral level is Sir John's decision that it will be wiser to marry one who long since has lost her virginity than one who, having always been repressed, will use marriage as a cloak for moral derelictions. In the libertine tradition of Dryden's comic heroes is Lorenzo of The Spanish Friar. He returns from the wars hot for new adventures; and that it is not mere zest for the intrigue which impels him is shown by his confession:

Oh, I love an easy woman! there's such ado
to crack a thick-shelled mistress; we break
our teeth, and find no kernel.¹⁴³

All of the protagonists design to secure as many maiden-heads as they can without endangering their liberty; and even those set upon winning some one woman make clear that in the past their adventures have been in no wise so circumscribed and that in the future they will not be.

To the comedies already referred to would apply

143. I, II, 427, vol. VI.

Dryden's admission that he wrote only to please his age; but The Tempest, written in collaboration with Davenant, provides, perhaps, an instance of unwitting representation of libertinism. Of Davenant's plan to endue the entire plot with parallelism of structure by the addition of a youth, concealed on the island, who has never seen a woman, and of a sister to Miranda, who, like her, has never seen a man, Dryden writes approvingly:

Davenant designed the Counterpart to Shakespeare's plot, namely, that of a man who had never seen a woman; that by this means these two characters of innocence and love might the more illustrate and commend each other.¹⁴⁴

But the innocence is to be sought for in vain: it is a chimera of the poet's insensible moral imagination, for the charming personages of Shakespeare's fantasy are, throughout, immeasurably coarsened. The Elizabethan dramatist makes of the love of Ferdinand for Miranda a romantic, idyllic thing; but Hippolito's naive comment meant his newly discovered feelings are all, in a sense, doubles entendres. That is to say, they sound as if they had been intended to amuse a Restoration audience by forcefully pointing the contrast between the conduct of a man whose animal passions are strong and direct and that of so-called civilized man whose passions are equally strong but more circumspectly devious.

144. Preface, p. 106, vol. III.

Ferdinand is completely metamorphosed in the Dryden-Devenant version. Shakespeare makes him a direct, wholesome youth, as free from worldly cynicism as Miranda; Dryden changes him into a man-of-the-world, not a little skeptical about women generally. Prospero becomes a procurer who instructs his daughters in a code of love-making not essentially different from that of the whores in Limberham. A similar change in the direction of greater obscenity occurs in the portrayal of Pandarus, who is more sensual and more depraved than he is in Shakespeare. He not only arranges the meetings of Troilus and Cressida, but even confesses that, although he is her uncle, Cressida stirs his senses. As an aphrodisiac to Troilus, he recounts with lecherous detail the night of Paris in bed with Helen; but when Troilus fears that Cressida has been false, the old man cannot understand his perturbation:

What, would you make a monopoly of a woman's lips? a little consolation, or so, might be allowed, one would think, in a lover's absence.¹⁴⁵

It is of interest to note, in this connection, the attitude which characters on a relatively high moral level entertain toward woman. Throughout the comedies she is regarded as a natural-born "wencher" whose virtue is a name only, and such a conception does not fundamentally differ from that implied when Almanzor expects Almahyde to yield to him, or when

145. IV, II, 367.

Boabdalin thinks that because her emotions have been stirred by another, she will the sooner yield to him. Aureng-Zebe, never fully confident of Indamora's probity, inveighs against the sex:

Ah, sex invented first to damn mankind!
Nature took care to dress you up for sin --
Adorned, without; unfinished left, within.
Hence, by no judgment you your loves direct.¹⁴⁶

Placidius believes that women "brave assaults, but may be undermined". (III. 408); and Raymond echoes Aureng-Zebe:

O virtue, virtue! what art thou become,
That man should leave thee for that toy, a woman,
Made from the dross and refuse of a man! ¹⁴⁷

Synderaxe, who ordinarily has no lack of self-confidence, admits the intellectual inferiority of women:

I know not what my future thoughts will be:
Poor women's thoughts are all "extempore".
Wise men, indeed,
Beforehand a long chain of thoughts produce;
But ours are only for our present use.¹⁴⁸

As excessive emphasis upon sensual indulgence is characteristic of the life and work of the libertines, so also is interest in -- and in some cases practice of -- sexual perversion.¹⁴⁹ Incest had been a theme in a few late Elizabethan plays, and the occurrence of it and of sodomy in Restoration plays other than Dryden's¹⁵⁰ may indicate a

146. IV. I. 274.

147. IV. II. 494.

148. IV. II. 87.

149. Claude le Petit, Visu, and others were accused of sodomy.

150. cf. Rochester's Valentinian; Howard's The Usurper.

responsiveness of the public to such subjects. In any case, French influence doubtless played a part in leading Dryden and others to dally with the unusual aspects of love. In eight of the twenty-six plays, incest forms one of the motives, the characters most often barely escaping indulgence in it, but in three instances actually consummating such a relationship. At the conclusion of The Rival Ladies, Amideo is apprised that Gonsalvo, for whose love she has worked diligently and has narrowly escaped a duel, is a brother whom she has not seen for years. An analogous situation arises in The Spanish Friar, when Lorenzo and Elvira, after having carried on an intrigue under the nose of her husband, learn that they are brother and sister. The suggestion of incestuous love reappears in Marriage à la Mode, when, for a time, it is thought that the young lovers are both children of the dead ruler. Alphonso and Victoris, in Love Triumphant, fall in love before they know -- and before the audience knows -- that they are not brother and sister; and they stand aghast at their own feeling. Oedipus, naturally, employs the incest-theme; but there, too, much stress is put upon the imaginative sensual enjoyment even after the discovery of Oedipus' deed has been made. Only the ghost of Laius prevents a rebirth of passion as the king pleads with Jocasta, his mother:

.... steal into my arms,
Renew endearments, think them no pollutions,
But chaste as spirits' joy.¹⁵¹

In Don Sebastian there is a second instance of tragedy resulting from the actual consummation of an incestuous relationship; and, as in Oedipus, the revelation in no wise destroys the depth or ardor of the passion which Sebastian and Almeyda feel for each other. The depraved Nourmehal, in Aureng-Zebe, though married to the emperor, woos his son; and Indamora is loved by the son, his father, and the son of the father's second wife. Nourmehal attempts to defend her conduct on a natural basis:

Promiscuous love is Nature's general law.
For whosoever the first lovers were,
Brother and sister made the second pair,
And doubled by their love, their piety.¹⁵²

In The Tempest, finally, appears the only instance of an incestuous relationship deliberately indulged. The monster Sycorax, whom Dryden and Davenant give to Caliban as a sister, is described as inveigling her brother into a relationship:

Why then I'll tell you, - says Trinialo, - I
found her an hour ago under an older tree, upon a
sweet bed of thistles, singing Tory Kory, and Kentum
Scantum, with her own natural brother.

O Jow! - exclaims Stephano, - make love in her own
tribe?¹⁵³

Of a piece with the excessive individualism, which, in the comedies, leads to self-indulgence, is the disrespect for

151. V, I, 227, vol. VI.

152. IV, I, 261, vol. V.

153. IV, III, 195, vol. III.

parental and religious authority, a disrespect which is also part of the freedom-cult of the French libertines. Some six of Dryden's comedies center about attempts to deceive a father -- a device employed by Cyrano de Bergerac and used very similarly in Le Pédant Joué.¹⁵⁴ Cyrano, moreover, provides an apologia for filial disaffection in Les États de la Lune, when he explains that old people endeavor to inculcate reverence in their children lest the latter justly dispossess them of the authority which they themselves have extorted. He affirms further that children are the selfish product of lust:

Encore je voudrois bien sçavoir si vos parens songeoient à vous quand ilz vous firent? Hélas, point du tout! et toutefois vous cryez leur estre obligé d'un présent qu'ilz vous ont fait sans y penser.

Comment, parceque votre père fut se paillard qu'il ne put résister aux beaux yeux de je ne sçay quelle créature, qu'il en fit le marche pour assouvir sa passion et que de leur patrouillis vous fûstes le maçonage, vous revererez ce voluptueux comme un des sept sages de Grèce; quoy, parce que cet autre, avare, acheta les riches biens de sa femme par la façon d'un enfant, cet enfant ne luy doit parler qu'à genoux.....¹⁵⁵

In Dryden, sons rival fathers in love, attempt to extort money from them, and make slighting remarks about them; several of them, moreover, question, in reasoned passages, the pre-

154. Cyrano's one comedy, centering about attempts of son to get money under false pretenses and about rivalry in love between them. Cf. Lachèvre, op. cit., vol. VIII, Part 2.

155. Lachèvre, op. cit., p. 63, Part 1, vol. VIII.

rogatives of parenthood. Ozmyn, in The Conquest of Granada,
 avers:

Nature, that bids us parents to obey,
 Bids parents their commands by reason weigh....156

And Aureng-Zebe reminds his father, the emperor:

Sons may have rights which they can never quit.
 Yourself first made that title which I claim...157

Julia, whose dead father has provided that she shall never
 marry without the consent of her brother, ruminates upon
 the injustice of the arrangement:

If I durst question it, methinks 'tis hard!
 What right have parents over children more
 Than birds have o'er their young? Yet they impose
 No rich-plumed mistress on their feathered son;
 But leave their love, more open yet and free
 Than all the fields of air, their spacious
 birthright.158

Jacintha, heroine of An Evening's Love, threatens to kill
 her father if he will not approve her marriage; and, again,
 she says:

Nothing vexes me, but that I am not a man, to
 have one thrust at that malicious old father of
 mine before I go.159

Morayma, in Don Sebastian, shamelessly plays upon her father's
 affection for her in order to get the jewels with which to
 deceive him by eloping with Antonio; but probably the most
 debased treatment of the filial relationship occurs in

156. V. I. 102, vol. IV.

157. II. I. 234, vol. V.

158. The Rival Ladies, II. I. 174, vol. II.

159. V. I. 360, vol. II.

Limberham, where a lecherous father unwittingly provides much amusement for his son by allying himself with the boy, whom he does not recognize, in amorous adventures of dubious nature. Deception of parents is not an unusual feature of comedy; but the appearance of it in Dryden's plays is made to seem significant by the criticism on the part of serious characters of filial restrictions, and by the actual dislike evinced by the comic personages for their parent. The attitude displayed is exactly that of *Cyrano*; and it suggests the comments of Montaigne, who, however, generally recognizes the necessity of obedience to parents:

.... it is easily seen by experience that this natural affection, to which we give so much authority, has very slender roots. For a very small gain mothers everyday allow their children to be torn from their arms, in order to take charge of ours.¹⁶⁰

A father himself, he was of the opinion that children bring but small satisfaction and that the creation of the mind are a nobler progeny.¹⁶¹

In the comedies, as a part of the general rebellion against authority, already noted in the parent-child relationship, there appears a disrespect toward religion and the church, and an extensive use of what, from the orthodox viewpoint, would be irreverent employment of religious imagery and

160. Essays, p. 389, vol. I.

161. Ibid., p. 390.

allusion. Pedro, who, in The Spanish Friar, is something of a raisonneur, exclaims:

O religion and roguery, how they go together!¹⁶²
Concerning such revered parts of the faith as martyrdom and observance of Lent, the comic personages are flippanant: "Yes, yes," Mercury agrees; "the second child shall be a false prophet; he shall have wit enough to set up a new religion, and too much wit to die a martyr for it."¹⁶³ In one of his Lettres Satirique, Cyrano sharply censures fasts, affirming that they lead only to transference of fleshly desire from food to women. Cynically, he attributes interested motives to the establishment of the practice:

Vous me répondrez que Saint-Pierre fût, contraint
d'establer les jours maigres parce qu'estant
pêcheur, il n'eust par débite son poisson, si
n'eust déffendre la viande. Mais vous ne
m'empecherez pas de croire, si jamais un boucheur
devient Pape, que pour avoir débit de sa viande
il ne déffendi la poisson: ce sera pour lors
qu'il ne souffrira plus en Mars....¹⁶⁴

With a similar spirit, the servant in An Evening's Love gives
voices an estimate of fasting:

.... for, if the business had gone on till
tomorrow when Lent begins, you would have grown
so peevish (as all good Catholics are with fast-
ing) that the quarrel would never have been ended.¹⁶⁵

Several passages express skepticism about the miracles offered
by the church as evidence for belief. When a religious procession

162. I, I, 419, vol. VI.

163. V, I, 108, vol. VIII.

164. Lachèvre, p. 162, Part II, vol. VIII.

165. IV, I, 339, vol. II.

has been made to insure a military victory; Pedro says:
 "The victory was gained before the procession was made for
 it; and yet... the priests will make a miracle on't."166
 Again, Wildblood jokingly says of Bellamy's astrological
 deceits:

Another miracle or two, and a sharp sword,
 And you stand fair for a new prophet.167

It is implied, moreover, that the church itself does not take
 all of its functions seriously. A character in The Spanish
Friar concludes:

If there were no more in excommunication than
 the Church's censure, a wise man would lick his
 conscience whole with a wet finger; but, if I am
 excommunicated, I am outlawed, and there is no
 calling in my money.168

Repeatedly, throughout the comedies, the blessings of heaven
 are called down upon -- or assumed to be upon -- the most
 nefarious plans and the most degraded purposes. Christian,
 for example, in Sir Martin Mar-all, after the procuress has
 outlined a mercenary policy for ensnaring men by pretended
 pregnancy, heartily concurs in it:

Truly, madam, this is very rational; and by
 the blessings of heaven upon my poor endeavors,
 I do not doubt to play my part.169

Churches are trysting places for lovers, and it is implied
 that they are especially conducive to the beginning of

166. I. I. 420. vol. VI.

167. III. I. 294. vol. II.

168. II. III. 450. vol. VI.

169. I. I. 9. vol. III.

flirtations: "There are pious bawdy houses in the world, or conventicles would not be so much frequented."¹⁷⁰ A comedy entitled The Assignment: or Love in a Nunnery creates the impression that the sisters are all eager for amorous adventure and that the directress of the convent is not far removed from a procuress. Both the novices and their lovers look with contempt upon the vows, and the general attitude is one of irreverence and flippancy.

It is not unusual, in both lyrical and dramatic poetry, to find copious and effective use of the imagery of religion applied to the various aspects of the love-experience. But the spirit in which it is most often employed is different from that which marks it in Dryden's plays, and different from that which characterizes the verse of the French libertines. When Romeo stands, his lips two blushing pilgrims ready to pay obeisance at the shrine of Juliet, one thinks it no irreverence; by such a figure the purity and sincerity of the love are made manifest. In Dryden and the *Visu* school, however, love not only becomes a substitute for religion, but the latter becomes trivial as well. *Visu*, entering a temple, is struck by the beauty of *Phyllis*:

Ten dis qu' à mon secours tous les Dieux se réclame,
Je voy venir *Phyllis*; quand j'appercous ses yeux,
Je m'escriay tout haut: Ce sont ici mes Dieux,
Ce Temple et cet Autel appartient à ma Dame.¹⁷¹

170. Limberham, I, I, 14.

171. Lachèvre, p. 88, vol. II.

Or again:

Tout seul dedans ma chambre, ou j'ay faist ton
Eglise.
Ton image est mon Dieu, mes passions, ma foy
Si pour divertir Amour veut que je lise,
Se sont vers que luy-mesme a composé pour moy. 172

Similarly, Dryden's Troilus makes a religion of his love:

Cressid, I love thee with so strange a purity,
That the blest gods, angry with my devotion,
More bright in zeal than that I pay their altars,
Will take thee from my sight. 173

Abenemar, in like vein, apotheosizes his love:

Instruct me, visible divinity! --
Instruct me by what name to worship thee!
For to thy virtue I would altars raise,
Since thou art much above all human praise. 174

Ptolemy finds only love deserving of his worship:

To to the temple, --
Come, my fair Cassandra,
That I may have an object worth my worship. 175

And Cassandra is equally devout:

The god that I adore is in my breast;
This is the temple; this the sacrifice.
But th the powers divine we make appeal,
With great devotion, and with little zeal. 176

With a slightly different emphasis, Ximenes says of Calides
that she is one

..... who could change the worship of all climates,
And make a new religion where she comes;
Unite the differing faith of all the world. 177

Serious subordination of religion to love is less common.

172. Ibid., p. 78.

173. IV, I, 349, vol. VI.

174. The Conquest of Granada, IV, II, 93.

175. III, I, 308, vol. VIII.

176. Ibid.

177. IV, I, 438, vol. VIII.

however, than flippant assertion that religious faith should be changed or feigned if necessary to facilitate the progress of a passion. Hearing that the two beautiful ladies whom he had met are in church, Wildblood exclaims:

I thank heaven, I never found myself better inclined to godliness than at this present.¹⁷⁸

And he affirms that, though he is an heretic to the men of the country, to the women, he is a "zealous Catholic".¹⁷⁹

Woodall likewise is a religious opportunist if need be, for when Mrs. Saintly asks what his faith is, he replies:

Why, I am of your religion, be it what it will -- I'll not stand with you for a trifle; Presbyterian, Independent, Anabaptist, they are all of them too good for us, unless we had the grace to follow them.¹⁸⁰

The libertines of Dryden's comedies are not unrelated in type to the characters in the heroic plays; for the same conception of human nature underlies both, and they differ only in that the former represent one logical extreme of the qualities, predominant in the latter, of individualism and inconsistency, unbalanced by compelling moral standards or religious beliefs. A consideration of the influence upon the poet of French skepticism cannot fail to point out that many of the primary elements in human nature, as they are set down by Hobbes,

178. I. I. 265, vol. -II.

179. Ibid., p. 16.

180. Ibid.

and as they appear in Dryden's plays, comprise a part, also, of Montaigne's picture of man. Montaigne was not, in the first instance, a philosopher, and he does not offer a systematic psychology; but scattered throughout his essays are many ideas concerning the motives basic to man's conduct. It is one tenet of his Pyrrhonism that he believes nothing to be unquestionably fixed, in accordance with absolute and determinable patterns of truth; and, like Hobbes, he reiterates that one of the few constant qualities in men is their inconstancy. "I find nothing more difficult to believe," he writes, "than man's consistency, and nothing more easy than his inconsistency."¹⁸¹ This variability is a result, he agrees with Hobbes and with Dryden, of the power of natural appetite:

Our ordinary practice is to follow the inclinations of our appetite, to right, to left, up hill, down dale, as we are borne along by the wind of opportunity. We do not consider what we wish except at the moment of wishing it, and we change like that animal which takes its colour from what it is laid upon..... We do not go, we are carried along, like things floating now smoothly, now perturbedly, according as the water is angry or calm.¹⁸²

In his Preface to Don Sebastian,¹⁸³ Dryden, whose critics had found fault with the vacillations of Dorax, defends himself by bidding his public read the "wise" Montaigne's

181. Essays, p. 321, vol. I.

182. Essays, vol. I, p. 321.

183. p. 314, vol. VII.

chapter on "L'Inconstance des Actions Humaines," from which the above ^{passages} are taken. Evidently, therefore, Dryden had been deeply impressed by the French writer's account of human instability.

As the statement that people are borne along by their appetites would imply, Montaigne recognizes the importance of the passions and admits that they may not easily be controlled. Reminiscent of Dryden's hint that there may be a closer connection than is ordinarily supposed is reminiscent of his comment:

How variously our passions react upon our thoughts and reasoning faculties, and change our ideas to their very opposites! What reliance then can we place in a thing so unstable and shifting, liable by its condition to be dominated by mental disturbances, and never going but a forced and borrowed pace? If our judgment be at the mercy of sickness and violent emotions; if folly and madness are bound to influence the impression we receive of things, what reliance can we place in it?¹⁸⁴

The essays, as a whole, however, contain, along with their skepticism, an affirmation of the possibility of man's learning to control himself through inner discipline, which suggests neither the purely external social harmony of Hobbes nor the passionless psychology of Dryden's plays. There are elements of Stoicism in Montaigne to which both Dryden and Hobbes are antipathetical.

Montaigne and the philosopher of Malmesbury, however,

184. Essays, p. 13, vol. II.

have other points of agreement. Like Hobbes, the essayist acknowledges self-preservation to be the first instinct of man's nature;¹⁸⁵ and he insists upon the necessity of a man's living for himself.¹⁸⁶ In a different essay, he implies that it is, as a matter of fact, a natural tendency for people so to live. "It is evident to me," he concludes, "that we do not willingly lend to devotion any other services but those that gratify our passions. Our zeal works wonders when it seconds our propensity to hatred, cruelty, ambition, avarice, detraction, rebellion."¹⁸⁷ Even religion, then, is grounded upon self-interest. The utilitarianism of Hobbes not infrequently characterizes his thought, although it is by no means so pervasive there as in the writings of the Englishmen. "If man were wise," he says, "he would estimate each thing at its true value, according as it would be most useful and convenient to him in life."¹⁸⁸ And, finally, the attitudes of the two toward the condition of humankind in general are much the same. Corollary to the skeptical principles of Sextus Empiricus, as they were adopted by Montaigne and his successors was an intellectual humility which tended to be transmuted into a deeply pessimistic view of man's lot. Men can know nothing certainly; he wanders

185. Ibid., p. 374.

186. Ibid., p. 239.

187. Ibid., p. 434.

188. Ibid., p. 481.

in a maze of ignorance and error; mentally and morally he is frail. Unlike Hobbes, they do not limit the " nastiness " and " brutishness " of life to the " state of nature ", but regard them as permanent marks of existence, overcome, if at all, either by inner discipline or by unreasoned religious faith, and not by a mere imposition of social order from without. Montaigne, ruminating upon human presumption, writes:

Is it possible to imagine anything more ridiculous than that this miserable and puny creature, who is not so much as master of himself, exposed to shocks on all sides, should call himself Master and Emperor of the universe, of which it is not in his power to know the smallest part, much less to command it? ... The frailest and most vulnerable of all creatures is man, and at the same time the most arrogant. He sees and feels himself lodged here in the mud and filth of the world, nailed and riveted to the worst, the deadliest and most stagnant part of the universe, at the lowest story of the house and the most remote from the vault of heaven, with the animals of the worst condition of the three.....189

Pascal is not more optimistic: "What is the condition of man?" he asks. "Instability, dissatisfaction, distress."190

And still more sombrely, he writes: "A condition of pessimism:

Imagine a number of men in chains, and all condemned to die, and that while some are slaughtered daily in the sight of the others, those who yet remain see their own destiny in that of their companions, and, gazing on each other in hopeless sorrow, await their doom. This is a picture of the condition of human nature.191

189. Essays, pp. 141-143, vol. I.

190. Thoughts, p.

191. Ibid., pp. 120-121.

Dryden's plays are liberally sprinkled with passages deprecatory of man's uncertain and ignorant state. Thersites, misogynist in Troilus and Cressida, refers to the "common course of mankind, folly and ignorance";¹⁹² and there are numberless allusions throughout the plays to human frailty. Montaigne especially emphasizes the inability to content himself:

Is it not a singular testimony of imperfection to be unable to fix our contentment on any one thing, and that even in desire and imagination it is beyond our power to choose what we stand in need of.¹⁹³

Aureng-Zebe, disillusioned and unhappy, echoes this feeling:

When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;
Yet, fooled with hope, men favor the deceit,
Trust on, and think tomorrow will repay.
Tomorrow's felseer than the former day --
Lies worse, and, while it says we shall be blest
With some new joys, cuts off what we possessed.
Strange cozenage! None would live past years again,
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain!
And, from the dregs of life, think to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.
I'm tired with waiting for this chemic gold,
Which fools us young and beggars us when old.¹⁹⁴

Sosibius voices another characteristic expression of pessimism:

Man is but man; unconstant still, and various;
There's no to-morrow in him, like to-day.¹⁹⁵

Tiresias, too, holds a low opinion of mankind; but his summary

192. Essays, p. 301, vol. I.

193. TROILUS AND CRESSIDA, III, I, 324

194. IV, I, 258, vol. V.

195. III, I, 305, vol. VIII.

of human vices has, perhaps, more the ring of Hobbes than of Montaigne:

Were every man's false dealing brought to light,
His envy, malice, lying, perjuries,
His weights and measures, the other man's extortions,
With what face could you tell offended heaven,
You had not sinned?¹⁹⁶

This specific allusion to the debased motives in humankind distinctly recalls the "natural man" of the English philosopher; the more general tone of the other passages cited comes closer to Montaigne and Pascal, whose pessimism adumbrates a more sympathetic than cynical regret that the inadequacy of reason renders man helpless in the face of Cosmic problems.

196. Oedipus. I. I, 147.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS

The first conclusion is that the present study has shown that the concept of a "good" is not a simple one. It is a complex one, and it is one that is not easily defined. The second conclusion is that the present study has shown that the concept of a "good" is not a simple one. It is a complex one, and it is one that is not easily defined. The third conclusion is that the present study has shown that the concept of a "good" is not a simple one. It is a complex one, and it is one that is not easily defined. The fourth conclusion is that the present study has shown that the concept of a "good" is not a simple one. It is a complex one, and it is one that is not easily defined. The fifth conclusion is that the present study has shown that the concept of a "good" is not a simple one. It is a complex one, and it is one that is not easily defined. The sixth conclusion is that the present study has shown that the concept of a "good" is not a simple one. It is a complex one, and it is one that is not easily defined. The seventh conclusion is that the present study has shown that the concept of a "good" is not a simple one. It is a complex one, and it is one that is not easily defined. The eighth conclusion is that the present study has shown that the concept of a "good" is not a simple one. It is a complex one, and it is one that is not easily defined. The ninth conclusion is that the present study has shown that the concept of a "good" is not a simple one. It is a complex one, and it is one that is not easily defined. The tenth conclusion is that the present study has shown that the concept of a "good" is not a simple one. It is a complex one, and it is one that is not easily defined.

CONCLUSIONS

The exact measure in which the plays of Dryden reflect the respective attitudes of Hobbes and the French skeptics is difficult to adjudge, and is perhaps indeterminate. Many ideas which, considered without reference to other possible influences, seem to point clearly to Hobbes, prove, upon extended analysis, to be equally suggestive of Montaigne. The inconsistency of human nature, the strength of the instinct for self-preservation, the distrust of zeal, the relative powers of reason and passion, the generally pessimistic view of humankind -- all are similarly treated, but with varying emphasis, in the writing of the two men; and the religious doubts freely voiced by the characters oscillate between the materialism of the English philosopher and the suspended judgment of the Pyrrhonists. Notwithstanding, satisfactorily definite conclusions may be reached concerning the dominant trends of

thought which manifest themselves in the dramatic works, and tentative decisions made regarding the intellectual history of the poet himself.

Dryden's preoccupation with the nature of causation and the problem of Free Will unquestionably owes much to the theories contributed by Hobbes to the contemporary discussions of the extent of human freedom. The reasoning of Adam, particularly, in the new version of Paradise Lost, the reflective speeches of heroic personages, the consistent inability of characters to act as their reason tells them to be advisable, and the prevalence of allusions to fate can scarcely be explained on any ground other than that the poet was a determinist. And, moreover, in 1664 when he wrote the preface to The Rival Ladies, Dryden was nearer to Hobbes than to Pyrrhonism, for he therein definitely accepts the dogma of determinism. Chronology may or may not be significant in this regard; there are fewer references to the subject in the last half-dozen plays than in the earlier ones, although they still occasionally appear, and although Fate is still a recurring motif. The last of the long, reasoned discussions of Free-Will occurs in The Spanish Friar, (1681); and in such late plays as Don Sebastian¹.

1. 1690.

and Cleomenes,² the characters are less at the mercy of the irrational part of their own natures. In Love Triumphant, the final dramatic piece, however, elements of Hobbism prevail in the treatment of character.

In addition to Hobbist determinism, Dryden clearly reflects, in his portrayals, the materialistic motives of interest and of selfishness, and occasionally suggests a philosophic monism in making the mind wholly dependent upon the body. The implication of monism in Cleonidas' doubt of the independence of soul,³ and the outright admission of such doubt in the Dedication to Aureng-Zebe may also owe something to Montaigne, for in the same dedication, the poet refers to Montaigne's assertion that "when the body is out of order, its companion is seldom at his ease".⁴ The dramatist knew Hobbes, however, and must have found in him a more emphatic and cogent statement of the ideas with which he was dallying. It is not safe, since this is true, to assume that the first encountering of monism was in Montaigne.⁵

The completely insensitive attitude of heroes and heroines toward fine moral distinctions are unquestionably the product of the same ethical conceptions which dictated the nominalistic definitions of the virtues given by the Sage

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2. 1692.
 3. In Cleomenes.
 4. V, p. 199.
 5. In any case, it would not have been politic, in view of public opinion, for him definitely to associate himself on this point with Hobbes.

of Malmesbury. The prefaces in which the poet writes about his creations, it has been noted, nullify the theory that degraded motive and ethical blindness in characters arise simply from artistic insufficiency, for in them Dryden himself reveals the same moral obtuseness.⁶ Although the predominance of passion over reason may have a French as well as an English parallel, it is probable that it, too, has its roots in materialism. Montaigne, like Hobbes, admits the commonly superior strength of the passions; but, at the same time, he provides for the disciplining of the emotions, and by no means is of the opinion that man is wholly helpless in their coils. The majority of persons do not, perhaps, exercise this discipline; but nevertheless a certain degree of Stoicism is possible, and he recommends moderation with the assurance that he is not mouthing vain exhortations.⁷ Hobbes, on the contrary, allows for no curtailment of the passional life other than that which the force of an external power can validate. The "Dryden character", cognizant of his weakness, has none of the elements of inner strength which Montaigne holds out, as, ideally, to be attained, but is, rather, more fully in accord with the complete inner determinism of the "Hobbiest Man".

6. of. Prefaces to Cleomenes and Secret Love, especially

7. of. Essays, Book I, Chap. 20.

In religious and political ideas, finally, Dryden and Hobbes are akin. The characters in the plays often veer away from mere suspended judgment, toward a materialist's view of heaven, or an atheist's view of the probability of an after-life. Politically, they are monarchists; and echoes of Hobbes come from the emphasis on force in governing, upon the dangers of relying on subsidiary councils or of divining the power in any way, upon the hazards of zeal, and on the evils of the state of nature. The conservatism of the poet is also in the tradition of the French Pyrrhonist; and in the dedication to the Aeneid, Dryden agrees with Montaigne that "an honest man ought to be contented with that form of government, and with those fundamental constitutions of it, which he received from his ancestors, and under which himself was born".⁸ Conservative hatred of change and zeal was common to both French and English philosopher, but the stress upon power and force is a definite reflection of the latter.

Evidences of Hobbism in the early non-dramatic works are sparse, but so also, before 1683, are proofs for Pyrrhonism or Deism or any of the ideas often attributed to Dryden. The central reasoning in Abssalom and Achitonhel, however, particularly the allusion to the state of nature,⁹ suggests the Leviathan; and in both the same poem and The Medal,¹⁰ the

8. ESSAYS, ed. by W. P. KER. II, p. 171.

9. Cf. ABOVE, p. 94.

10. Best of Dryden, p.

motives of self-interest are emphasized, and the conclusion reached that "pow'r is ever wise". In the light of a minute study of the plays, Professor Bredvold's summary dismissal of the influence of Hobbes as being relatively unimportant -- of no more significance, in fact, than that of Descartes -- is ill-advised.¹¹

Of Dryden's affinity with the skeptical trend of his age there is incontrovertible proof in the prefaces. Accused of trying to dictate the laws for dramatic poesy, he repudiates the charge, in Defense of An Essay, and indicates his familiarity with the history of skeptical thought;

.... I must crave leave to say, that my whole discourse was skeptical, according to that way of reason which was used by Socrates, Plato, and all the Academics of old, which Tully and the best of the Ancients followed, and which is imitated by the modest inquisitions of the Royal Society. (1668)¹²

In the Preface to An Evening's Love, written during the same year, he shows an unwillingness to form categorical judgments either in art or in philosophy: "Why," he asks, "should there be any ipse dixit in our poetry any more than in our philosophy?"¹³ Four years later (1682), he disavows the intention of imposing his religious views upon the Mother Church, with this admission:

11. I have failed to find any real evidence of Cartesianism other than the single instance of Adam's reasoning about the I in The State of Innocence, Act , Scene , and ones similar instance in Amphitryon which Dryden took over from the French source. Cartesianism may be suggested by the few so-called deistical passages.

12. Quoted from Bredvold's Best of Dryden, p. 474.

13. Works, vol. III.

Being naturally inclined to skepticism in philosophy, I have no reason to impose my opinions in a subject which is above it.¹⁴

Commenting, in the Preface to *Sylvae*, upon the tone of finality in Lucretius -- and in Hobbes --, he states that, in translating the Roman poet, he has laid by his "natural diffidence and skepticism for a while; to take up that dogmatical way of his..."¹⁵ No less assured than his doubting mind is Dryden's thorough acquaintance with the writings of Michel Montaigne, and his admiration for them. The prefaces to *Don Sebastian* and *All For Love* contain allusions to the wisdom and honesty of Montaigne; and it has been noted that the dramatist justifies his characterization of Dorax by reference to the essayist's reflection on Inconstancy. These sympathies with skepticism and its preeminent French exponent make it doubly safe to state that certain ideas in the plays bear the stamp of Montaigne and his followers in the Pyrrhonist school. The exact independent indebtedness of Dryden to French skepticism is, on the basis of the dramatic work alone, difficult to determine. Qualities of human nature, like self-interest and strength of passion, are stressed by Montaigne, but they loom larger in the writings of Hobbes. The surest link between Dryden and the continental free-

14. Bredvold, *Best of Dryden*, p. 190.

15. *Preface to *Sylvae**, *Best of Dryden*, p. 492.

thinkers appears in the religious views of the dramatic characters. Unquestionably there is, in the plays, the strain of fideism which Professor Bredvold posits as the unifying factor in the poet's thought. Wherever there is a prolonged discussion of religion, the inadequacies of reason and the compelling necessity of faith are expounded. Passages suggesting rationalism or Cartesianism are very rare; deprecation of reason is frequent, and the relativity of religious standards, perceived by a study of the practices of different countries, is recognized in several places. The prevailing tone in speeches pertaining to the after-life, its character or its reality, is one of doubt, although at times, it has been observed, the doubt verges dangerously upon disbelief. There is no mention of Pyrrho in the plays or their prefaces; and from what Dryden himself says of his doubts, there is no proof that his skepticism was of the Pyrrhonic cast;¹⁶ that it was philosophically thoroughgoing. But the fideism, taken with the known connection with Montaigne, shows definitely enough that he was in that tradition.¹⁷

There is no evidence in the plays of direct borrowing from the poetry and drama of the French school of free-thinkers headed by Theophile de Visu. But their intellectual

16. In Ch. 1 of his book, Bredvold speaks of the protean nature of skepticism in the century, and of the impossibility of narrowing it to the exact principles of Pyrrho.

17. Dryden knew the fideistic writings of Father Simon, for Religio Laici was dedicated to the English translator of

descent from Montaigne, the similarity in the themes of their work and those of Dryden's comedies, and the fact that they constitute the chief literary expression of libertinism in the period -- all justify a study of them along with a study of Dryden. It has been observed that, despite the poet's avowal that he wrote his comedies to please a public and that they in no way reflect his own ideas or tastes,¹⁸ there is a remarkable unity in the conception of human character in heroic play and comedy. The libertine of the comedies represents the logical outgrowth of the passional psychology of the heroic plays, just as the French libertins represent the logical extreme of Montaigne's naturalism.

There is, in one sense, a unity of tone throughout the plays. They show no significant concern with the more idealistic currents of thought in the seventeenth century; Platonism or Stoicism may creep in at rare intervals as literary adornment or, in the former case, as a conscious borrowing from French romance; but the prevailing spirit is worldly, skeptical, even materialistic. There is no reason to doubt that Dryden characterized himself aright when he

17.(cont'd). Simon's Histoire critique du Vieux Testament, a work skeptical in purport, which attempts to show the unreliability of Biblical text. Cf. Bredvold, p. 101.

18. Cf. Defense of an Essay.

alluded to his naturally skeptical temperament; and that temperament undoubtedly accounts for the type of ideas which he commonly reflects, as well as for the course of his own intellectual history. It has been affirmed repeatedly by defenders of the faith, especially during the conflict in the nineteenth century between religion and science, that to remain an agnostic is, practically, to lean more definitely toward the presumptions and the ethical consequences of materialism. And so Dryden does. Although at bottom the dogma of sense and motion and the curative powers of political order is as incompatible with Pyrrhonism as the dogma of metaphysics, Hobbism might naturally appeal to one of skeptical inclination, who had not plumbed the depths of doubting, as a philosophy of commonsense, cynical about human nature, distrustful of that which is not to be seen or felt or heard. To minds not hardened to a world without discernible purpose, the ethical result of being cut apart from the eternal by a physical monism and the result of denying the validity of the reason in formulating standards are the same. Either is likely to produce the Hobbist conception of man's life as nasty, brutish, and short; to foster the abandonment of all serious aim. Even in a relatively high type of character either may eventuate in the elevation of the passions; on a lower plane, either is a passport to libertinism.

Which of these ultimately exerted the greater influence upon the ideas in Dryden's plays no one can say. It is evident that, for a time at least, the dramatist was profoundly touched by the philosophy of Hobbes; and, from the recurrence of such ideas after 1683, it seems probable that what was no doubt an unconscious bias toward materialism lingered after the poet had come definitely under the sway of French skepticism. It may well be that a general discontent regarding human knowledge and institutions, attributable to both sources, accounts for the unexpected frequency in the plays, of the theme of romantic escape. The heroine of Marriage à la Mode, thwarted in love, would return to the

... woods, and plains, where first my love began,
There would I live, retired from faithless man:
I'd sit all day within some lonely shade,
Or that close arbor which your hands have made:
I'd search the groves, and every tree, to find
Where you had carved our name upon the rind...
Thus would I live ...¹⁹

Similarly, Jocasta wishes to seek out some barren island,

Where print of human feet was never seen...²⁰

and Sebastian goes to live where "...from the purling streams and savage fruits," he may "have" wholesome beverage, and un-
utters
bloody feast." Almanzor, perhaps, the most familiar of the romantic passages when he says that he is as free as Nature

19. II, I, p. 295.

20. Oedipus, IV, I, p. 210.

first made man

When wild in woods, the noble savage ran.²¹
 Skepticism and materialism, and their offspring dis-
 illusionment, may have worked hand in hand to bring Dryden,
 finally, to the Mother Church, in which was "all sorrow and
 bitterness, and all light and life -- and peace".

21. Conquest of GRANADA, I, I, 43.

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<u>The Wild Gallant</u> (acted in 1662-63)	1669
<u>The Rival Ladies</u>	1664
<u>The Indian Queen</u> (in collaboration with Robert Howard)	1664
<u>The Indian Emperor</u>	1667
<u>Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen</u>	1668
<u>Sir Martin Mar-all</u>	1668
<u>The Tempest</u> (in collaboration with Wm. Davenant)	1670
<u>Tyrannic Love</u>	1670
<u>An Evening's Love</u>	1668, 71
<u>The Conquest of Granada</u>	1672
<u>Marriage a la Mode</u>	1673
<u>The Assigination, or Love in a Nunnery</u>	1673
<u>Amboyna</u>	1673
<u>The State of Innocence</u>	1674
<u>Aureng-Zebe</u>	1676
<u>All For Love</u>	1678
<u>Mr. Limberham, or The Kind Keeper</u>	1678

* Malone's list, an enlargement of that appended by Dryden himself to King Arthur.

<u>Oedipus</u> (in collaboration with Nathaniel Lee)	1679
<u>Troilus and Cressida</u>	1679
<u>The Spanish Friar</u>	1681
<u>The Duke of Guise</u> (in collaboration with Lee)	1683
<u>Albion and Albanus</u>	1685
<u>Don Sebastian</u>	1690
<u>Amphitryon</u>	1690
<u>King Arthur</u>	1691
<u>Cleomenes</u>	1692
<u>Love Triumphant</u>	1694