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CHARLES CHURCHILL'S SATIRE.

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Charles Churchill's Satire

by

Frank

Thomas Lockwood

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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CONTENTS

CHRONOLOGY 1

INTRODUCTION 3

I. THE SATIRIST AND THE SCENE 8

II. PERSONIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION 59

III. IRONY AND INVECTIVE 98

IV. CONCLUSION 141

LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED 152
CHRONOLOGY

February, 1731/2
Churchill born in Westminster.

May, 1741
Enters Westminster School.

July, 1748
Enters St. John's, Cambridge.

c. 1750
Marrys Martha Scott.

September, 1754
Ordained deacon in Church of England.

1754-56
Resides at Somerset.

December, 1756
Ordained priest.

1756-58
Curate to his father at Rainham.

September, 1758
Becomes curate and lecturer of St. John's on death of father.

c. 1760
Moves from Rainham to London.

March, 1761
*The Rosciad* published.

May, 1761
*The Apology* published.

November, 1761
*Night* published.

c. 1761-62
Separates from his wife. Meets John Wilkes.

March, 1762

October, 1762

January, 1763
Resigns lectureship of St. John's.
*The Prophecy of Famine* published.

April, 1763
*The North Briton*, No. 45, published;
Wilkes arrested.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June, 1763</td>
<td>An Epistle to William Hogarth published.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September, 1763</td>
<td>Blopes with Elizabeth Carr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December, 1763</td>
<td>The Author published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January, 1764</td>
<td>The Duellist published. Wilkes, already in France, is expelled from the House of Commons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February, 1764</td>
<td>Gotham, Book I, published.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March, 1764</td>
<td>Gotham, Book II, published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 1764</td>
<td>The Candidate published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 1764</td>
<td>The Farewell published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August, 1764</td>
<td>Gotham, Book III, published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 1764</td>
<td>The Times published.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October, 1764</td>
<td>Travels to meet Wilkes in Boulogne. Independence published.</td>
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<tr>
<td>November, 1764</td>
<td>Dies in Boulogne.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February, 1765</td>
<td>Dedication to the Sermons published.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April, 1765</td>
<td>The Journey published.</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Samuel Johnson called Churchill a "blockhead" and predicted—in a hopeful way—that he would "sink into oblivion."¹ Now Churchill did not like Johnson either, and certainly would not have gone out of his way to oblige him, but in the matter of sinking into oblivion he could hardly help himself. He sank fast too, his reputation fading soon after his death. "We all remember," wrote Joseph Warton in 1782, "when even a Churchill was more in vogue than a Gray."² And by 1816 Byron could write a poem on "the glory and the nothing" of a name like Charles Churchill. Since then Churchill has continued to escape attention, despite recent surges of interest in eighteenth century satire.

Churchill is a little like Collins or Cowper in that he belongs neither to Augustan nor to Romantic literature. But even Collins and Cowper have the trifling dignity of a non-name like "Preromantic," while Churchill is usually described as a late survival or fossilized remnant of Augustan satire.³ There is evidence for this is his somewhat self-conscious emulation of Dryden, his mastery of the heroic couplet, his grandiose homage to the might and right of Satire. "His art looks backward to a rhetorical school," as George Sherburn puts it.⁴
But these are the superficial features of Churchill's poetry. They lend weight to a common but also superficial theory by which Churchill's satire is explained as a debauched version of Augustan satire. Thus he is thought of as mouthing without conviction the ideals that Dryden and Pope had professed sincerely.

To an extent that is true, but even so, the decay-theory of satire is somewhat unsatisfying if only because it is negative: it tells us what Churchill does not do. Certainly the tradition of Augustan satire changes with Churchill; and if the main point is to find out what these changes are, then they must be treated in their own right rather than as miscellaneous examples of Churchill's failure to write like Dryden or Pope.

Many of Churchill's favorite ideas are radically unlike those of the Augustan satirists. Where Pope balances wit against judgment, Churchill considerably demotes judgment in his emphasis on the overriding importance of "fire" or genius in poetry. He despises the very concept of an aristocracy. In most of the judgments he makes as a satirist, the common denominator is an aggressive, almost religious belief in personal freedom and independence.

Generally he ignores or even reverses the conservative Augustan attitudes toward art and life. "Enthusiasm" to Swift was a bad word, but for Churchill the word "inspiration" represents the most meaningful explanation of how great poetry is produced. His close friendship with John Wilkes is a good measure of the drastic difference between Churchill's political beliefs and those of Dryden. Or the
members of the Scriblerus Club. Although the conservative habit of mind is normally considered a fundamental condition of satire, Churchill's thinking is the essence of what T.S. Eliot called Whiggery. Johnson, according to Mrs. Thrale, is supposed to have excluded him from his edition of the English poets as one of the "writers dangerous to religion or morality."

Despite the dramatic differences between his ideals and those of the Augustans, Churchill is nevertheless strongly influenced by their satire. Although he professes a distaste for Pope, it is clear that technically at least he owes him a great debt. Churchill does not "invent" a new style or language for verse satire. Rhetorically, his work can be characterized as an attempt to accommodate the formal conventions of Augustan satire to his own set of values—in a way, to make Pope say what Churchill means. Under such pressure the role of these conventions within the satire changes; most often their role is magnified or exaggerated in some way.

The following chapters offer a description and explanation of the way in which Churchill uses some of the more significant of these conventions: the persona and apologia, the rhetorical convention of personification, and the satiric modes of irony and invective. Because these conventions are more or less continuous in the tradition of Augustan satire, up to and including Churchill, they provide a reliable basis for comparing him to his predecessors. But more important than that, they are an index to positive as well as negative changes in the tradition.
NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION


5. For instance, "Satire is usually conservative politically and literarily because it answers the needs of those who are against change, but it is inadequate for those who want something different." W.O.S. Sutherland, Jr., The Art of the Satirist (Univ. of Texas Press, 1965), p. 21.


CHAPTER I

THE SATIRIST AND THE SCENE

Satire is "impersonal" in the sense that the satirist usually talks about his environment rather than about himself. As an invisible speaker or third person narrator, he tries to direct our attention away from himself and toward the error and immorality of the world (or "scene") around him. His work is "outer-directed," and his subject is quidquid agunt homines:

What Humane Kind desires, and what they shun,
Rage, Passions, Pleasures, Impotence of Will,
Shall this Satyrical Collection fill.\(^1\)

Sometimes, however, the satirist does deliberately call attention to himself, particularly in the conventional self-defense or apologia. Although some type of apologia can be found in the work of most satirists, the convention is loosely defined at best. There is considerable variation in content, for instance, as one satirist may center his argument on an idea which another satirist would ignore altogether. Nor is the format or length of the apologia necessarily constant. But all apologias are alike in that they
give the satirist a special opportunity to take up the subject of himself and to speak out positively on behalf of his own work and values.

Churchill is notable for the extent to which he talks about himself, and indeed there is a sense in which the whole of his satire might be called a prolonged apologia. For that reason some comment on the use and significance of this convention in earlier satire will provide the background for an analysis of the role of the satirist in Churchill's work—his personality, his means of justifying himself, and his relationship to the scene of the satire.

i. Defender and Defense in the Apologia: The Shrinking Moral Base of Augustan Satire

The popularity of satire, its acceptability as a legitimate activity, varies considerably with time. Traditionally the satirist is under great pressure to justify himself. Like every writer, he risks being criticized for writing badly; but unlike the sonneteer or epic poet, he runs the extra risk of being censured for choosing an inherently "bad" genre.

In his apologia the satirist attempts to answer certain objections to satire. Hence the content of the apologia depends to a large extent on the nature of these objections, which may range from specific criticism of the idiosyncrasies of his satire in particular to fundamental doubts about the morality of any kind of satire. Often he is called upon to prove the social usefulness of satire, or to dissociate himself from the character of a misanthrope, or to
defend his choice of the "middle" or "low" style of writing.

Naturally every satirist is not confronted with exactly the same argument against satire. In response to changes in this argument over a period of time, there are likely to be significant shifts of emphasis in the satiric apologia. The Roman satirists, for example, are preoccupied with the question of whether an author serves his own best interests by writing satire, whereas in the English Augustan satirists the central question more often is whether he serves the public interest.

It is important to distinguish between two major elements of the apologia: one is the persona which the satirist creates, including whatever statements he makes about himself, and the other is the argument he devises to defend his satire. Both of these are closely related, since the type of defense must obviously be appropriate to the personality of the defender. The satirist who presents himself as a naturally taciturn man, to take a common case, will explain that he was goaded out of silence by the monstrous growth of vice in his time. Thus his persona helps to substantiate his thesis: we have surely fallen on evil days if someone like him cannot refrain from speaking out.

This distinction between the persona and the argument of an apologia reflects two related but distinct questions which the satirist must always be prepared to answer: Why do you write satire, and What use is your satire to the world? He provides answers to both of these questions first by creating a persona that illustrates his personal character and motivation, and then by arguing that the
effect of his satire on the audience is socially valuable. The
extent to which he concentrates on one or the other question—private
motivation of the satire or public response to it—would seem to
depend for the most part on which one is at the focus of current
theory and criticism of satire.

In this connection it is worth noting that in the transition
from Restoration to early eighteenth century satire there is an
increasing emphasis on the character of the satirist; in the apolo-
gia and in discussions of satire generally, it becomes essential to
analyze and defend satire in terms of its motivation as well as its
effect or "use." The result, as explained, below, is a revised con-
ception of the nature of satire which by its implications threatens
the presumptive, traditional moral basis of the genre.

In the Prologue to the Satires upon the Jesuits (1681), Oldham
is principally concerned with the (public) effect of his satire. He
is willing to present himself as a quite uncharitable, even malicious
satirist in order to drive home his main point, which is that he
means to destroy the Jesuits. His argument is Juvenalian, based on
the formula that calls for strong medicine to cure a bad disease.
Declaring "an endless war" (1. 32) on the enemy, he says that "with
utmost spite and vengeance" he will "persecute and plague their
cursed race" (11. 49-50). Their sins

urge on my rank envenom'd spleen,
And with keen satire edge my stabbing pen,
That its each homestead thrust their blood may draw,
Each drop of ink like aqua fortis gnaw.
Red hot with vengeance thus, I'll brand disgrace
So deep no time shall e'er the marks deface;
Till my severe and exemplary doom
Spread wider than their guilt—till it become
More dreaded than the bar, and frighten worse
Than damming popes' anathemas and curse. (ll. 57-66)⁴

Oldham's Prologue is not a defense of satire itself but instead a defense of the ferocity of his satire. His threatening and aggressive persona represents something of an extreme in Augustan satire, because the satirist normally tries to avoid the idea of revenge. Satire, that is, must be defended on the ground that it is a means to some purely public end; conversely, it must not appear to be the means of relieving a merely private passion.

The argument that satire is publicly beneficial is stressed in a more typical—though poetically wretched—example from Restoration literature, Sir Carr Scroope's In defense of Satyr (1680):

... though some it may offend,
Nothing helps more than Satyr, to amend
Ill Manners, or is truer Virtues Friend.
Princes, may Laws ordain, Priests gravely Preach,
But Poets, most successfully will teach.
For as a passing Bell, frights from his Meat,
The greedy Sick man, that too much wou'd Eat;
So when a Vice, ridiculous is made,
Our Neighbors shame, keeps us from growing Bad.⁵

By asserting its power to reform, Scroope is voicing what is perhaps the most familiar justification of satire.

"All truth is valuable," says Johnson a century later, "and satirical criticism may be considered as useful when it rectifies error and improves judgement: he that refines the publick taste is a publick benefactor."⁶ Underlying this statement is the
long-traditional idea that there is a determinable relation between art and morality, that literature has an effect—good or bad—on people's behavior. Within the context of such a theory literary values readily translate into social and moral values; and the word "good" means much the same thing whether it is being applied to literary works or human actions.7

Satire is a good test for this theory because its content in effect is immoral. Instead of "just representations of general nature," the satirist gives us an amalgam of vice and folly. But of course content is never actually isolated from the satirist's disapproval of it. Alan D. McKillop, writing of the theoretical Augustan ideal of "generality and clarity," points out that "the irregular, the particular, the casual, and the confused were censured. The ground for this censure was an exacting aesthetic ideal, but it was likely to be stated in moral terms. The things excluded were nevertheless interesting, and hence the popularity of satire, which could treat of these things in order to disapprove them."8 The reader also had to disapprove if the satire was to be justified completely.

Samuel Butler says that "a Satyr is a kinde of Knight Errant that goe's upon Adventures, to relieve the Distressed Damsel Virtue, and Redeeme Honour out of Inchanted Castles, and opprest Truth, and Reason out of the captivity of Gyants or Magitians."9 Here the allegorical treatment throws the moral power of satire into vivid relief; Butler in fact plays down the destructiveness traditionally associated with satire in order to emphasize its positive
capacity to "relieve" or "redeem." Undoubtedly the knight over-throws the enchanted castles and slays the giants and magicians, but Butler leaves that to implication. The important thing is that society has need of such a knight.

For Dryden in the Discourse concerning Satire (1693), "'Tis an action of virtue to make examples of vicious men. They may and ought to be upbraided with their crimes and follies; both for their own amendment, if they are not yet incorrigible, and for the terror of others, to hinder them from falling into those enormities which they see are so severely punished in the persons of others." Although Dryden's approach to the question is less fanciful than Butler's, the idea of public benefit is equally dominant. Dryden more willingly deals with the negative character of satire, talking about it as a kind of unpleasant public punishment. Perhaps a little self-consciously, he often likes to remind us of the way satire can serve to frighten men out of any folly or vice they may be contemplating. In the Preface to Absalom and Achitophel, for example, he threatens that "they who can criticize so weakly, as to imagine I have done my worst, may be convinced, at their own cost, that I can write severely with more ease than I can gently."

During the first forty years of the eighteenth century, either because or in spite of the flowering of satiric writing at that time, a somewhat suspicious attitude toward satire develops. Often it is the motivation of the satirist that is in question, and as mentioned above, this tends to throw the satirist's character or persona into
prominence. This trend of criticism begins for the most part with Steele's Tatler No. 242 (October 26, 1710), in which the quality of "good nature" is set forth as essential to the satirist. Steele distinguishes true satire from false largely on the basis of whether the satirist's motivation is impersonal or personal, public spirited or privately malicious. What qualifies good natured men for satire is their sensitivity to bad and good regardless of the particular personal context: "These men can behold vice and folly, when they injure persons to whom they are wholly unacquainted, with the same severity as others resent the ills they do to themselves." Such impartiality is "necessary to make what a man says bear any weight with those he speaks to." On the other hand, "when the sentence [of reproof] appears to arise from personal hatred or passion, it is not then made the cause of mankind but a misunderstanding between two persons ... no man thoroughly nettled can say a thing general enough, to pass off with the air of an opinion declared, and not a passion gratified."

The concept of the good natured satirist recurs in the Spectator and informs much of the commentary on satire throughout the century. Its more specific corollaries include several of the best known and most often repeated principles for the evaluation of satire. One is that the satirist should attack not people themselves but instead the folly and vice in people: a false humorist's ridicule, according to Addison, is "always Personal, and aimed at the Vicious Man, or the Writer; not at the Vice, or at the Writing." Another common injunction, again from Addison, is that "a Satyr should expose
nothing but what is corrigible, and make a due Discrimination between those who are, and those who are not, the proper Objects of it."\(^{13}\) Some critics of satire, taking this principle further, would limit the possible objects of ridicule to the sort of human foibles which inspire amusement rather than indignation.

Although these ideas are not original with Steele and Addison, as Stuart Tave points out, the manner in which they are emphasized creates a "compelling necessity of explaining exhaustively one's own good nature."\(^{14}\) It no longer suffices for the satirist to defend himself by citing the public value of his work; he must also prove that he is properly motivated and qualified. Under such a view, Oldham's Prologue is virtually self-condemning, since he is motivated by the evil in others, not the good in himself. He could hardly be said to fulfill the requirements of a writer in the *Universal Spectator* No. 540 (February 10, 1739), who says that a satirist "should give us Testimonials of his own Prudence, before he commences Censor of the Absurdities of others; and, at the same time that he declares War with Vice, he should make it appear he is in league with Virtue."\(^{15}\)

The prerogatives of the early eighteenth century satirist, then, are considerably qualified and restricted; his range is cut down by the persistent distinction between true and false satire; and generally speaking he writes in the face of a strong trend of criticism which is fundamentally hostile to his art.\(^{16}\) One point made again and again in such criticism is that satire is a weapon not to be entrusted to every writer. Consider the emphasis that John Hill,
writing in *The Inspector* (1753), puts on this aspect of satire:

I am no enemy to raillery, when free from the stains of rancour; and think much may be said in favour of satire when it does not degenerate into scurrility. These are weapons, however, by no means to be trusted in the hands of either the weak or the malevolent: it is natural for the one to mistake their object; and as easy for the other to pervert them to the worst purposes. The friend to mankind, when he finds himself possessed of them, will employ them in the extirpating foibles which disgrace characters otherwise amiable, or which render those troublesome who might be useful to society...  

In such hands, a clearness of discernment, and keenness of representation, will prove of use to the world...  

Here once more everything depends on the character of the satirist, for it is impossible to assume that he is automatically qualified to judge.

The Tory satirists are naturally conscious of this rather uncongenial atmosphere of (largely Whig-oriented) criticism. Certainly Swift has the key idea of motivation in mind when he writes on the subject of satire in *The Intelligencer* No. 3 (1728):

There are two Ends that Men propose in writing Satyr; one of them less noble than the other, as regarding nothing further than the private Satisfaction, and Pleasure of the Writer; but without any View towards Personal Malice: The other is a publick Spirit, prompting Men of Genius and Virtue, to mend the World as far as they are able.

Likewise in the *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift* (1731) he addresses himself specifically to some of the current tests for distinguishing true satire from false:
'Perhaps I may allow, the Dean
'Had too much Satyr in his Vein;
'And seem'd determin'd not to starve it,
'Because no Age could more deserve it.
'Yet, Malice never was his Aim;
'He lash'd the Vice, but spar'd the Name.
'No individual could resent,
'Where Thousands equally were meant:
'His Satyr points at no Defect,
'But what all Mortals may correct . . . (11. 455-64)

As a satiric apologia this poem is notable for the extent to which Swift's persona is developed and particularized. In 11. 307-484 he has "One quite indiff'rent" draw his "Character impartial" (11. 305-06), and from this he emerges as a generous man of few pretensions and no flattery, uninterested in power or wealth, dismayed by the spread of corruption, and "cheerful to his dying Day" (1. 477).

The personality and character of the satirist is likewise a major concern in Pope's apologias. The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot (1735) introduces the satirist with dramatic and colloquial immediacy, hounded wherever he goes by hopeful scribblers. In the miscellaneous reflections on himself that follow, Pope illustrates his candor and forbearance in dealing with his harshest critics:

This dreaded Sat'rist Dennis will confess
Foe to his Pride, but Friend to his Distress . . .
(11. 370-71)

His talent for writing is a kind of curse (11. 125-34), and throughout the poem Pope returns over and over to his opening motif of the satirist as a weary and beleaguered victim of circumstances. For the sake of Truth and Virtue only he stood off the assaults of "the
dull, the proud, the wicked, and the mad" (l. 347), and he was

Not Fortune's Worshipper, nor Fashion's Fool,
Not Lucre's Madman, nor Ambition's Tool,
Not proud, nor servile, be one Poet's praise
That, if he pleas'd, he pleas'd by manly ways;
That Flatt'ry, ev'n to Kings, he held a shame,
And thought a Lye in Verse or Prose the same:
That not in Fancy's Maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to Truth, and moraliz'd his song . . .
(1l. 334-41)

Pope like Swift is well aware of the need to show that his
correction of satire is an acceptable one. Thus in the Advertisement to Satire i, Book II, of the Imitations of Horace (1733), he declares that "to a true Satyrist nothing is so odious as a Libeller."

In this version of Horace's apologia the device of the dialogue puts us into seemingly direct touch with the satirist. As in the Epistle to Arbuthnot, the main interest of the discussion is not the satirist's work but instead his state of mind. When the Friend advises Pope not to write (l. 11), the reply is

Not write? but then I think,
And for my Soul I cannot sleep a wink.
I nod in Company, I wake at Night,
Fools rush into my Head, and so I write. (1l. 11-14)

And his character is completely free of any malice, as lines 133-40 show.

The shift of critical attention toward the satirist and away from his art and his audience has the effect of isolating him. The question of motivation puts the defense of satire on an individual basis, and what seems to emerge is a realization that the values and
standards to which the satirist subscribes may not after all represent the collective public ethos. The confident absolutism of the Tory satirist is met with a certain relativism on the part of his good-natured critic. "The reaction against satire," says Tave, "... was a rejection of the basic satirical assumptions of clear and fixed standards, cosmic, social, and moral, against which the aberrations of man are measured with a just severity." 19 The popularity at this time of an idea like "Candour," the habit of trying to see the best in everything, indicates one aspect of this tendency. 20 The growth of sentimentalism adds to the pressure on the satirist to prove himself as an individual: a reliance on individual rather than social standards, according to Andrew Wilkinson, 21 tends to make satire an unpopular genre, and in the eighteenth century "the beliefs of the sentimentalists in the goodness of human emotion, and in the moral sense of the individual, are the fundamental cause of the decline of Satire" (p. 228). If, as Shaftesbury had said, "sense of right and wrong is "as natural to us as natural affection itself," 22 then logically speaking what is the use of satire?

Pope and Swift also ask what is the use of satire, but not because they think that everyone is his own priest. What they fear is that it may be too late to turn back this rolling tide of vice and folly. 23 "In short," as Theobald puts it in The Censor, "we are hem'd in, and besie'd with Villany." 24 Pope's persona in the Epilogue to the Satires (1738) illustrates dramatically how he is "hem'd in." 25 In Dialogue I he bitterly mocks the current objections to satire, bidding "Adieu" to "Distinction, Satire, Warmth, and
Truth" (l. 64), and concluding with an appalling vision of the triumph of Vice over everything and everyone but him:

All, all look up, with reverential Awe,
On Crimes that escape, or triumph o'er the Law:
While Truth, Worth, Wisdom daily they decry--
'Nothing is Sacred now but Villany.'

Yet may this Verse (if such a Verse remain)
Show there was one who held it in disdain. (ll. 167-72)

Similarly, in Dialogue II Pope pictures himself as drawing "the last Pen for Freedom" (l. 248),

When Truth stands trembling on the edge of Law:
Here, Last of Britons! let your Names be read;
Are none, none living? let me praise the Dead,
And for that Cause which made your Fathers shine,
Fall, by the Votes of their degenerate Line! (ll. 249-53)

In a note on the last line of the poem, Pope says that its author is entering "a sort of Protest against that insuperable corruption and depravity of manners, which he had been so unhappy as to live to see. Could he have hoped to have amended any, he had continued those attacks; but bad men were grown so shameless and so powerful, that Ridicule was become as unsafe as it was ineffectual."

A conservative such as Dryden, Swift, or Pope would say that the satirist is a friend to mankind only to the extent that his ideals conform to the accepted ideals of mankind. These accepted ideals nearly always take the form of an inherited body of traditional moral standards—such as Christianity; they constitute the principles to which almost everyone is willing at least to pay lip service. The satirist consequently is never his own authority.
Certainly satire is related to this moral code, but only as a function of it. In a sense, it is the way the code has of saying "no" to certain elusive fools and knaves. If the offender is a dunce who is threatening to corrupt taste, for instance, then regular laws are no help and satire must provide the only means of restraining him or punishing him. Thus in The Dunciad Variorum, Martinus Scriblerus observes that "our author . . . did conceive it an endeavour well worth an honest satyrist, to dissuade the dull and punish the malicious, the only way that was left. In that public-spirited view he laid the plan of this Poem, as the greatest service he was capable (without much hurt or being slain) to render his dear country."

The fact that the moral system on which a satire is based lies "outside" the work itself partly at least explains the conspicuous absence of positively expressed norms in much of Augustan satire. Swift's Captain Mendez, to take a controversial example, is not in himself a device of enough influence or extension throughout Gulliver's Travels to function as the standard by which everything else is gauged; but he is an expression of certain normative values whose source lies outside the book, just as the professors at Lagado are expressions or exempla of aberration from those values.

Morality is public, not private, and if public morality empowers the satirist to act as its agent to begin with, then the satirist must naturally be responsible to public morality in the end. But as the body of accepted, traditional public morality becomes less general in its influence—and in the early eighteenth century Swift
and Pope certainly contend that it has—satire becomes more general in its attack. For example, when many agreed-upon standards are spread broadly throughout the public life, when they are "into everything," the deviations and abnormalities which the satirist ridicules tend to be numerous, various, and specific. On the other hand, when these standards are less than completely pervasive, failing to penetrate every layer or segment of society, the possible objects of satire will be as general as the non-standard behavior itself is. The satirist whose moral base is a shrinking, steadily less influential code of conduct and thought finds himself before long at war with the whole world. A tone of weary resignation (as in Pope) or hopeless pessimism (as in Swift) sets in. It is a long way from the specific and limited satiric aims of the Poems on Affairs of State to Swift, working up "Materials Towards a Treatis proving the falsity of that Definition animal rationale," or to Pope, who has universal darkness bury all.

The Augustan satirists, writes Paul Fussell, "far from being 'representative' of the general tendencies of their time, constitute actually an intensely anachronistic and reactionary response to the eighteenth century. Their rhetorical careers conduct a more or less constant warfare with the 'official' assumptions of their age, assumptions held by most of their contemporaries." The more powerful the "official" assumptions, the more desperately the satirist makes war, until at last, at some inevitable moment to come, he discovers bitterly that he, not the world, is the source of the values he is battling to conserve. By Churchill's time the public,
collective morality has turned into a merely private memory.

ii. The Self-Dependent Satirist

Churchill like Pope presents himself as a solitary figure of righteous opposition, the only moral voice left in a world whose traditional values are about to be lost forever. Churchill's "egotism" as a satirist is in many ways a logical extension of the tendencies we have seen developing in the Augustan apologia. Now, however, the nature of the satirist's moral underpinnings can no longer be so easily taken for granted. Hence it becomes important for the satirist to make his position known, even to create his position.

Churchill's canon might be divided into poems which profess to be about himself and poems which profess to be about something else but which are nevertheless about himself anyway. The Apology, his second major poem, is one of the former kind, while The Rosciad is one of the latter. They make up an interesting pair for several reasons.

The subject of The Rosciad may be acting, but the purpose of the poem, according to Churchill, is to show how the author can play the part of a critic "with honest Freedom," which consists of defying "all mean and partial views." Churchill means to seem a little cavalier in the attitude he implies toward critics, who after all, as Swift says, can set up in their trade "at as little Expence as a Taylor."28 There is no trick to playing that part.
And not only will I play their part, Churchill continues, but I will outstrip the usual performers by the simple substitution of honesty for prejudice. With that he enters The Rosciad in evidence. In developing a role to play, Churchill also frames the poem—the dramatic criticism itself—within the device of his pose of the honest critic. The most significant element in this is not the idea of being a critic but of being honest. Churchill makes it plain that criticism is only one of any number of enterprises that honesty would transform utterly. Once he is "free," Churchill can play any part, do anything better than his "partial" rivals.

The motif of Churchill's freedom, his unencumbered judgment and unclouded eyesight, runs through all his poetry. Regardless of the subject at hand, his treatment of it always rings true because it is, so to speak, automatically honest. This is the least common denominator of all his poses. Freedom from prejudice without begets sincerity within: his Muse "praises, as she censures, from the Heart."

Lloyd's fantastic speech in The Rosciad (11. 199-226) is an exemplum of the true critic's method.

"Genius is of no country, her pure ray
"Spreads all abroad, as gen'r'al as the day..."
(11. 207-08)

"Bards, to be bards must be inspired," Churchill declares in an early poem, the Epistle to R.L.L. (1. 20):

Then borne on wings of fire, he quits
The servile track of critick wits;
Rejects the doctrines of the schools,
And soars beyond the reach of rules;
Leaving those laws to be obeyed
By fools, which first by fools were made. (11. 29-34)

Criticism of "bards," therefore, must itself be "borne on wings of
fire" before it is proper criticism. Lurking behind Churchill's
criticism of critics is the weary controversy over the Ancients and
the Moderns, in which Churchill defends native English genius
against the "envy" or "prejudices" that mislead the "critick herds"
(Epistle to R.L.L., 11. 43-45). The important thing, again, is to
judge as freely as Sophocles and Shakespeare wrote. "Reverence
thyself," was Young's counsel in the Conjectures on Original
Composition (1759). "That is, let not great examples or authorities
browbeat thy reason into too great a diffidence of thyself; thyself
so reverence as to prefer the native growth of thy own mind to the
richest import from abroad; such borrowed riches make us poor."29
And Churchill more than agreed.

The Apology is the logical result of The Rosciad. Clearly The
Rosciad was an inconvenient vehicle for many of Churchill's pronounce-
ments on critics; but The Apology, addressed as it is "to the
Critical Reviewers," is closer to formal polemic and so has room
for them all. Churchill here is still the impartial critic,
"unknowing and unknown," and he strives deliberately to preserve the
persona he has created in The Rosciad. Since the publication of
that poem, the Critical Review had found its author (or authors, as
the reviewer supposed) wanting in quite a few ways. In The Apology,
then, the impartial critic is now the injured critic too. The
reviewers, "Giants, big with pride" (1. 1), do a double injustice
first by establishing their reputation "by right divine" (l. 8) instead of by merit, and then by misapplying the power of this reputation in an unholy crusade "to crush a bard just bursting from the shell" (l. 14). Before long Churchill translates his quarrel with the critics into the grander opposition of freedom and slavery. He is an

    UNHAPPY Genius! plac'd, by partial Fate,
    With a free spirit in a slavish state;
    Where the reluctant Muse, oppress'd by kings,
    Or droops in silence, or in fetters sings. (ll. 71-74)

The critics are slavish in fully as many ways as Churchill is free:

    Conscious of guilt, and fearful of the light,
    They lurk enshrouded in the veil of night . . . (ll. 57-58)

They are tyrants with absolute authority of a sort (ll. 83-101), but cannot maintain it openly:

    Wrapp'd in mysterious secrecy they rise,
    And, as they are unknown, are safe and wise. (ll. 110-11)

Churchill makes much of the anonymity of the reviewer of The Rosciad, associating it with one of his favorite--and most hated--personifications, Prudence (l. 114). He pictures the reviewers as weak-willed individuals who conceal their cowardice in the collective dishonesty of a furtive cabal:

    By int'rest join'd, th' expert confed'retes stand,
    And play the game into each other's hand.
    The vile abuse, in turn, by all deny'd,
    Is bandy'd up and down from side to side;
    It flies--hey!--presto! like a jugler's ball,
    'Till it belongs to nobody at all. (ll. 118-23)
Churchill, on the contrary, stands alone with no shield but Virtue. It is interesting, for example, that he extended this pose so far as to make quite an issue of putting his name prominently on the title page of the second edition of *The Rosciad* as a theatrical sort of challenge to anyone who might want to accuse him of hiding in the shadows.

The Critical Reviewers, he concludes, are no match for him, whose "free-born Muse with liberal spirit sings" (l. 271). "Genius" may "stoop to them who've none at all" (l. 273), but

Ne'er will I flatter, cringe, or bend the knee To those who, Slaves to ALL, are Slaves to ME. (ll. 274-75)

The novel reversal by which Churchill becomes the real master of the fake tyrants builds until at the end of the poem Reason, "the Lord-Chief-Justice in the Court of Man," descends *ex machina* to justify Churchill metaphysically. In the heat of the moment he lets the Lord Chief Justice unaccountably change sex:

To HER I bow, whose sacred power I feel; To HER decision make my last appeal; Condemned by HER, applauding worlds in vain Should tempt me to resume the Pen again; By HER absolv'd, my course I'll still pursue: If REASON'S for me, GOD is for me too. (ll. 416-21)

In *The Rosciad* and *The Apology*, Churchill implies his detachment from the common herd more than he actually expresses it; the particular feature of his persona which he wants most to highlight is his honest impartiality. So unthinkingly honest was my attempt to write about actors, he says in a passage of some hypocrisy, that
I may have been "more bold than wise" in never imagining that "such tempests would ensue" (The Apology, 11. 61-66). By the time he came to write Night, however, Churchill seems to have taken some of the advice given him by the reviewer of The Apology who told him to "attach himself to some work which may promote the cause of Learning, rather than give way to squabbles and literary heats . . ." (Monthly Review, XXIV [1761], 342). This reviewer may have been Robert Lloyd, to whom Churchill addressed Night. The poem itself does not exactly advance human learning, but the squabbling is gone. In its place we find the brooding, rather too self-conscious thoughts of a "man apart" about the rest of the world and, most of all, about himself. The world with which Churchill has been quarreling finds its way into the poem, but only as the example of what to avoid, what to flee. The daylight marketplace in which the majority of men conduct their affairs is opposed to the night-world where, in "Oblivion's grateful cup," Churchill can drown

The galling sneer, the supercilious frown,  
The strange reserve, the proud affected state  
Of upstart knaves grown rich and fools grown great.  

(11. 85-88)

Probably too much has been made of what seems to be Churchill's abandoned advocacy of debauchery in this poem, which never assumes the philosophical character that his portrait of himself as a night-creature does. His choice of night is his way of dissociating himself from the common herd whose vice and folly he cannot bear:
LET slaves to business, bodies without soul,
Important blanks in Nature's mighty roll,
Solemnize nonsense in the day's broad glare,
We NIGHT prefer, which heals or hides our care. (11. 7-10)

Again Reason backs him up, for

No hour she blindly to the rest prefers,
All are alike, if they're alike employ'd,
And all are good if virtuously enjoy'd. (11. 54-56)

Throughout the poem personified Night has a paradoxical power of illuminating the reality which the daylight obscures. There is no way of saying for sure whether Churchill chooses Night because of this power, or Night has this power because Churchill chooses it. The "shade" of Night is "honest," it is "that impartial hour" when "pomp is buried and false colors fade" (11. 154-56). But the daylight hours are a "false medium" (1. 139) through which we see a host of dancing appearances; and during the day "pomp, wealth, and titles judgment lead astray" (1. 140).

We might look for the satirist to illustrate this paradox by making ironic comparisons between the day and night versions of the same scene: appearance versus reality, the lord in his coach versus the lord in his underwear. Churchill does something else instead, and it bears pointedly on the nature and development of his persona. Churchill comes to life, so to speak, at night; time for reflection in the wee hours brings everything into proper proportion. Slaves to vice try to sleep at night and cannot:

Whilst vice beneath imagin'd horrors mourns,
And conscience plants the villain's couch with thorns,
Impatient of restraint, the active mind,
No more by servile prejudice confin'd,
Leaps from her seat, as wak'ned from a trance,
And darts through Nature at a single glance.
Then we our friends, our foes, ourselves, survey,
And see by NIGHT what fools we are by DAY. (ll. 115-22)

But Night itself is not the cause of all this; instead, it is only the
appropriate element in which the real cause operates to capacity.
And the real cause, predictably, is Churchill's own independence.
His "active mind," beset by fools and nonsense during the day,
finds night a congenial medium for his unfettered thinking. Prudence
seeks daylight, Independence seeks the night. "Calm, independent,
let me steal through life" (l. 188). Churchill promises to be his
own physician (l. 64) and closes with a restatement of his uncom-
promising independence--the price of which, as "Sir Pliant" tells
him (ll. 345-52), is solitude. He may be matched alone against the
world, but there is only strength, not virtue, in numbers:

CAN numbers then change Nature's stated laws?
Can numbers make the worse the better cause?
Vice must be vice, virtue be virtue still,
Tho' thousands rail at good and practise ill. (ll. 359-62)

And he tells Lloyd,

Rather stand up assur'd with conscious pride
Alone, than err with millions on thy side. (ll. 381-82)

The contemptus mundi in Night gives way in the later poetry
to an increased willingness to dirty his hands with the world by
battling them on specific matters. Having rather noisily estab-
lished his pose of the independent spirit (hence impartial judge),
Churchill turns to examine critically the affairs of state, in the broad sense of the term. In The Ghost, to take one example, he drags in as many such affairs as inspired the Monthly Review to call the poem "a kind of Tristram Shandy in verse" (XXVII [1762], 316). Churchill treats a mass of London city topics, social, ecclesiastical, political, and literary—almost everything, in fact, except the Cock Lane Ghost who is the "subject" of the poem. The distance between scene and satirist is greater in The Ghost than in most of Churchill's poetry. The bewildering shifts from one subject to another, the lightly ironic method of introducing them, the occasional ridiculous invocations or mock-Miltonic passages, all work to distract us from the speaker's voice. Much of the time the reader is occupied with puzzling out what is taking place, so that Churchill the puppeteer does not always seem to be in firm control. In the only passage of sustained coherence, the treatment of Fancy (IV, 289-680), Churchill's presentation of himself is appropriately fanciful and much less earnest than we ordinarily expect of him. Immediately before this passage he has been having some fun with the coxcombs and "grave Fops" who distrust what they feel until Reason sanctions it—they will not

      deign to laugh or cry
      Unless they know some reason why . . . (IV, 29-30)

The "upright Justicer" Reason forces us to "learn to think, and cease to feel" (IV, 160). Churchill may have called seriously upon Reason to bear him out in The Rosciad, The Apology, and Night,
but in *The Ghost* Reason by itself is a dangerous prescription, and
so he invokes Fancy. This of course accords well with the design--
or lack of it--of the whole poem, whose various episodes are "felt"
by the speaker rather than strictly examined--hence the prevailing
tone of gentle irony instead of incorruptible judgment. Churchill
paints himself as independent as ever, but the emphasis now is on
the freedom which his independence provides him, not the authority
it confers. He is "free" to digress, for example, or to write
about whatever he feels. Pleasure cannot wait on Judgment without
turning cold (IV, 259-66). "Opinions should be free as air" (IV, 251),
he warns. Fancy is the agent controlling his personality and
outlook:

> Some few in knowledge find relief,
> I place my comfort in belief,
> Some for Reality may call,
> FANCY to me is All in All.
> Imagination, thro' the trick
> Of Doctors, often makes us sick,
> And why, let any Sophist tell,
> May it not likewise make us well?
> This I am sure, what'ever our view,
> Whatever shadows we pursue,
> For our pursuits, be what they will,
> Are little more than shadows still,
> Too swift they fly, too swift and strong,
> For man to catch, or hold them long.
> But Joys which in the FANCY live,
> Each moment to each man may give.
> True to himself, and true to ease,
> He softens Fate's severe decrees,
> And (can a Mortal wish for more?)
> Creates, and makes himself new o'er,
> Mocks boasted vain Reality,
> And Is, what'ever he wants to Be. (IV, 289-310)

Here Churchill has extended the concept of independence philosophically;
with Fancy as a guide we can actually make over the world imaginatively. The line separating the real from the ideal begins to grow fuzzy. But the power of the imagination is not always spent wisely, of course. Sometimes we are made happy at the expense of deceiving ourselves; sometimes the deception is ridiculous, as when the disgusting "Whiffle" (IV, 485-565) is "misled by Fancy's magic spell" (IV, 562) to imagine that the world does not take him for a vain fool. Yet that is all the more reason to admire the sheer power of this "Mistress of each art to please" (IV, 569):

O bow, bow All at FANCY'S throne,
Whose Pow'r could make so vile an Elf,
With patience bear that thing, himself. (IV, 566-68)

Churchill's attitude toward Fancy is interestingly mixed. On the one hand he shows how it is the source of a great deal of non-sense; yet he hesitates to fix the blame for this anywhere. He himself, indeed, falls victim to it (IV, 311-46); but the result is good, as Fancy teaches him to shun "dull Regularity" in favor of pleasure. Now we see Churchill the mad adventurer in life, who (with Fancy's help) will

live as merry as I can,
Regardless as the fashions go,
Whether there's Reason for't, or no;
Be my employment here on earth
To give a lib'ral scope to mirth,
Life's barren vale with flow'rs t'adorn,
And pluck a rose from every thorn. (IV, 268-74)

The Ghost itself is an example of Churchill's submission to Fancy: over and over he more than willingly admits how chaotic and irrational
is this poetic adventure, in which he is like

...some unwary Traveller,
Whom varied scenes of wood and lawn,
With treacherous delight, have drawn
Deluded from his purpos'd way... (II, 108-11)

The careless role Churchill plays in The Ghost may seem to be a far cry from the persona of the impartial critic, but in fact the concept of personal independence holds both of them together. Total independence as Churchill defines it makes a necessity out of honesty in all things. True critical judgment thus is a matter of disentangling the mind from externally imposed rules and praising or censuring "from the heart"; likewise with the heart, which when honest is free to follow the whim of feeling rather than the (unfeeling) dictates of reason. A man is not really independent if he allows his head to govern his heart, because nine times out of ten his head is whirling with irrelevancies like Prudence and Interest. Feelings, however, do not lie. If we let them guide us we can cut across the slow-moving "long trains of consequences" (The Ghost, IV, 25) that reason dispatches and strike at the truth directly.

Much of the Epistle to William Hogarth is taken up with Churchill's defense of himself against Candour's accusation that he is malicious. In a long exchange with Candour, Churchill presents himself as the raging satirist who is scarcely able to restrain "the furious ardour" (l. 58) of his indignation long enough to talk about anything else. If I had ever, he says, "turn'd misfortunes into crimes" (l. 132) or satirized someone out of jealousy, or not
saturized someone out of a wish to flatter him--

Had I thus sinn'd, my stubborn soul should bend
At CANDOUR's voice, and take, as from a friend,
The deep rebuke; Myself should be the first
To hate myself, and stamp my Muse accurs'd. (11. 153-56)

But of course he has never done any of those things, and does not
deserve any blame for his bitter treatment of "the gross and rank
complexion of the times" (l. 180). This is a conventional defense--
difficile est saturam non scribere--and Churchill works it into his
attack on Hogarth in such a way as to leave no doubt that the
responsibility for his rage lies with Hogarth and "the times," not
with Charles Churchill. 30

In order to dramatize the fact that his satire is merely a
function of its object, Churchill is careful to round out this
picture of himself by showing that he is as eager to catalogue virtues
as he is to cry up vices:

Justice with equal course bids Satire flow,
And loves the Virtue of her greatest foe. (11. 539-40)

No slave to prejudice, Churchill by his independent honesty is
equipped to respond to merit tucked away in the unlikeliest places;
by the same token, the particular hiding place of vice, however lofty,
is a matter of indifference to him. The same sort of pose--that of
the satirist who concerns himself not with men but only with the
vice or virtue in men--is illustrated by these lines from The
Apology:
BUT if the Muse, too cruel in her mirth,  
With harsh reflexions wound the man of worth;  
If wantonly she deviate from her plan,  
And quits the Actor to expose the Man;  
Asham'd, she marks that passage with a blot,  
And hates the line where Candour was forgot. (ll. 330-35)

The Conference, The Author, and Independence all are "about" Churchill and present him in several capacities or "offices." In each one, though, the common distinguishing element is independence. The Conference has Churchill for the most part in the role of the political satirist who respects no party but Virtue, no interest but the good of his country, and no patron but Truth. This poem renders an after-dinner dialogue between Churchill and a nobleman who has long since capitulated to the way of the world. Churchill's host puts great stock in Prudence, which of course gives Churchill the opportunity of expanding infinitely on his own opposite principle of free conduct and expression. The aristocrat's questions are pains-takingly calculated to develop the proper picture of Churchill, who answers them to his credit. The one notable exception is this Mandevillian objection: the lord asks Churchill to

Explore the dark recesses of the mind,  
In the Soul's honest volume read mankind,  
And own, in wise and simple, great and small,  
The same grand leading Principle in All.  
Whate'er we talk of wisdom to the wise,  
Of goodness to the good, of public ties  
Which to our country link, of private bands  
Which claim most dear attention at our hands,  
For Parent and for Child, for Wife and Friend,  
Our first great Mover, and our last great End,  
Is One, and, by whatever name we call  
The ruling Tyrant, SELF is All in All. (ll. 167-78)
Then are you not, like me, a slave to self-interest, or can Nature somehow have "distinguish'd thee from all her sons beside" (1. 184)? Churchill quite obviously evades the question entirely, offering only the odd reply,

Ah! what, my Lord, hath private life to do
With things of public Nature? (11. 213-14)

This is the one time in the poem when the lord seems to have the upper hand, and it is conspicuous in an otherwise "rigged" conversation. Speculation is idle, but it may be that Churchill, in working out the lord's argument, carried it momentarily beyond the question of Prudence into a much deeper problem. This problem has a way of embarrassing the satirist because it questions his ancient claim that he serves the public interest. At any rate, it is very interesting that Churchill does not squash the whole idea on philosophical grounds, as Dr. Johnson undoubtedly would have done, but instead lets it pass unchallenged.

The Author is a review of the state of letters and learning in which Churchill wonders how England as he knows it could also be the land of Spenser and Shakespeare. His emphasis is almost exclusively on the freedom-versus-slavery theme. Modern writers, for example, are the slaves of everything but Truth; once upon a time poets "grac'd the Science they profess'd" and

firmly stood
The bad to punish, and reward the good . . . (11. 239-40)

But
Ah! What are Poets now? as slavish those
Who deal in Verse, as those who deal in Prose.
Is there an Author, search the Kingdom round,
In whom true worth, and real Spirit's found?
The Slaves of Booksellers, or (doom'd by Fate
to baser chains) vile pensioners of State... 
(11. 245-50)

As usual it is Churchill against the world, this time the world of
authors who have sold their freedom to one interest or another in
exchange for a little preferment or worldly show.

The certain result of this kind of literary prostitution becomes
clear in Independence. Churchill there shows that the ignoble
behavior of one scribbler, when multiplied throughout Grubstreet,
debasés the very office of poetry. On a history-as-decay prin-
ciple the Bard nowadays is "inferior to that thing we call a Lord"
(1. 26). Basing his argument on the familiar opposition between
earned and inherited reputation, Churchill conducts an assize to
determine which one, bard or lord,

lightly kicks the beam,
And which by sinking We the Victor deem. (11. 103-04)

The "meagre, flimsy" lord (1. 117) puts in his claim, followed by
"a Bear" (1. 151) who turns out to be the Bruiser himself. Churchill
describes his own appearance quite unflatteringly (11. 180-86),
but Reason, caring nothing for appearances, "look'd thro' his soul,
and quite forgot his face" (1. 188). The bear naturally "prepon-
derates."

Churchill goes on to outline the multitude of "dependencies"
into which the Bard is likely to stumble unaware, particularly the
trap of patronage. Following a grandly extended invocation of Independence, Churchill pictures himself as about to be silenced by "Administration":

This melting mass of flesh She may controul
With iron ribs, She cannot chain my Soul.
No--to the last resolv'd her worst to bear,
I'm still at large, and Independent there. (11. 531-34)

Although Churchill does assume a variety of poses, it is not always easy to separate them. They seem to flow into each other because they are for the most part only variations on one underlying persona--that of the independent man. Whatever his particular subject, Churchill nearly always tells us that his view is free-minded. As a dramatic critic he praises and blames independently of any consideration except merit; as a man his independence sets him apart from other men; as a political analyst his freedom from party interest enables him to declare just what is wrong with English liberty; as a poet his indifference to decorum, together with his freedom from government pensions and private patronage, make him a true bard who writes as his own genius prompts him, however ragged or digressive the result--and he prides himself on "the generous roughness of a nervous line" (The Apology, l. 355); as a moralist his independence accounts for his fearlessness in speaking out regardless of how "big" the crime; and as a satirist he is free to explore whatever regions deserve looking into.

Independence, like some tonic, clears his vision, opens his mind, and guarantees his reliability in all situations demanding any kind of judgment. Churchill is always, in effect, the incorruptible judge.
Occasionally Churchill presents himself ironically, but in every case his persona signifies some obviously dependent position, some "cautious" or "interested" view. The Candidate is the chief example of this technique. This is a bitter attack on the Earl of Sandwich, the poem being disguised as the production of flattery. Churchill describes himself as abandoning satire and invoking "Panegyric"; having chosen the "narrow" and "unfrequented" ways of praise (ll. 203-04), he begins to look about for a suitable object and finds Sandwich. In attaching himself to this man he admits he fought before on the wrong side; but now,

Chang'd, I at once (can any man do less)  
Without a single blush, that change confess,  
Confess it with a manly kind of Pride,  
And quit the losing for the winning side ... (ll. 265-68)

This of course is exactly what the nobleman in The Conference had told him to do before it was too late. As Churchill expresses his "conversion" in The Candidate, however, the "winning side" (i.e., of knaves and fools) is growing bigger and bigger every day, and their great numerical strength is the measure of the appalling proportion of the world which they represent. In accordance with that idea, which is developed more thoroughly in The Farewell, Churchill has grown weary of his single-handed struggle against these ever-fresh troops.

The self-dependence which Churchill insists on tends to lead the satirist into an impossible dilemma. Surrounded on all sides
by vicious men, "slaves" to every sort of partial interest, the solitary warrior begins to have doubts about what he is doing. He is long accustomed, for instance, either to stand apart from the rest of the world or else to reject it flatly. But for whose benefit is he sheltering the tiny sparks of Truth, Reason, Virtue, and Liberty? He may be standing off all the world, but he is definitely not communicating with it, much less reforming it. The satirist's aggressive pose of independence causes his satire to return upon itself rather than to spread abroad. Churchill, except for one or two perfunctory asides, scarcely ever speaks of correcting or improving mankind. His appeal is always to one of the disembodied personifications for whose sake he says he writes. One of the most troubling aspects of these mysterious "forces" like Truth and Virtue is the difficulty of locating them. Obviously their source is not mankind in general, for mankind is "a rude and ruffian race,/A band of spoilers" (The Duellist, II, 501-02), who are themselves searching for Truth and Virtue in order to destroy them. The unadorned, unspecified fashion in which Churchill typically presents the "good" abstractions directly reflects his inability to locate them; conversely, he often describes the "bad" abstractions (such as Prudence or Discretion) with the sort of vivid and definite imagery that characterizes Collins's method of personification. These "forces," of course, are located in the world.

The point of all this with respect to Churchill's persona is that Truth, Reason, Justice, and Liberty spring from the satirist's own mind--nowhere else. He has literally made them up without
admitting it. As a satirist Churchill is not a servant of public morality, but rather a servant of his own morality. The exaggerated pose of independence is in some ways a euphemistic reflection of the absolute authority of the self in Churchill's work. There is something of Wordsworth's "egocentric predicament" in Churchill, who—as a traditional satirist judging vice and folly by standards not of his own making—must pretend that there are "powers" abroad which justify his satire morally. But "morals and criticism," as David Hume had so disturbingly maintained, "are not so properly objects of the understanding as of taste and sentiment."31

One of the distinguishing marks of Churchill's poetry, then, is what we might call his insistence on himself. The satirist is his own norm. This explains some stylistic peculiarities of his satire—some of which will be treated in the following chapters—such as the way the author tends to appear repeatedly in his own work. His compulsive digressing, the seeming insignificance or obscurity of most of his chosen subjects, can partly at least be attributed to this insistence on himself.

Logically extended, the tendency culminates in Churchill's magnificently fitting persona in Gotham. His coronation of himself symbolizes exactly the absolute authority of the self in all matters. With fine appropriateness Churchill becomes (imaginatively) king (of nowhere). It is all a production of Fancy and typifies the power of Fancy to transform anything. The King of Gotham, like Churchill the satirist, legislates to a nation of people who do not exist, but he legislates wisely nevertheless.
The moral basis of satire has shifted drastically in Churchill's work. The old relationship of satirist to society is upset as the servant of public morality now legislates it. Churchill, unlike the Restoration and Augustan satirists, does not "depend" on society in any sense. There is a real question, in fact, whether "independence" has not destroyed the possibility of any relationship at all between satirist and society.

iii. The Fading Scene

In the transition from late seventeenth to early eighteenth century satire the role of the speaker is enlarged. All of Dryden's major satires—Absalom and Achitophel, The Medal, MacFlecknoe—are in the third person. Likewise in most of the Poems on Affairs of State the speaker does not call attention to himself, even though he is usually doing all the speaking; and while the typical Restoration lampoon is merely abusive, having little "objective" visual or dramatic appeal, it is the abuse and not the abuser (who may well be anonymous) that is important.

In Pope's formal satire, on the other hand, the speaker—very definitely has an identity and dominates the scene. Point of view is first person, and the speaker sometimes introduces himself in a dialogue—often, as in the Epistle to Arbuthnot, for the purpose of discussing himself. Even in the Epistles, however, speaker does not totally absorb scene. Pope's technique of "moralizing" a physical description with understated disapproval, using language that appeals half to the eye and half to the mind, is typical: thus in the
gardens at Timon's Villa,

The suff'ring eye inverted Nature sees,
Trees cut to Statues, Statues thick as trees,
With here a Fountain, never to be play'd,
And there a Summer-house, that knows no shade ...  
(Epistle to Burlington, 11. 119-22)

Pope more than other Augustan satirists added depth to the role of the speaker. Swift, to take another case, seems to have been most at ease writing "impersonal" verse satire, either in the third person or even in the ironic character of someone address- ing him. Nor does Pope always choose the first person for satire: consider that the "I" who controls the scene in his Epistles is not present at all in The Rape of the Lock or The Dunciad. There is no such inconsistency in Churchill, however, as he extends and augments the role of the speaker almost infinitely.

Most of Churchill's critics comment on the aggressive quality of his poetry: he is The Bruiser, or "he has much in common with the cheap politician who must always be denouncing something or somebody." The tone of his ridicule does not so much suggest "th' gen'rous roughness of a nervous line" as it does the shrill clamor of a live voice. We are apt to have a mental picture of Churchill as a ranter of verses. These are only impressions, it is true, but they are strong enough to be worth following up.

If, as suggested in the last section, the satirist becomes his own basis of morality, then we can expect his style and choice
of rhetorical devices to reflect or even to help establish the
change. Churchill's system of poses, for example, has the effect
of attributing to him the versatility of a man able to play several
roles (critic, moralist, poet, patriot) and the consistent integrity
of a man who plays all of them honestly. This is a man to be trusted
with any artistic, moral, or political decision--the sort of man,
in fact, who would make a good king. But there is one difficulty
in becoming king by putting on the crown, like Caesar, with your
own hands, and that is to persuade the rest of the world to agree
to the choice. Dissent is likely, for "an author," as Johnson
points out, "places himself uncalled before the tribunal of criti-
cism, and solicits fame at the hazard of disgrace."35 Churchill's
solution is to sidestep the difficulty entirely by writing the
dissenting voices out of his poetry.

Something of this tendency appears as early as The Apology,
in which Churchill's presentation of himself plays a much more
important part than in The Rosciad, where it is not yet so essen-
tial to his argument. Having placed The Rosciad before the tribunal
of the Critical Reviewers, that is, he is disgraced and responds by
enlarging his persona in The Apology--by raising his voice, as it
were. And within the rather special domain of the poem, he
triumphs completely over a lackluster opposition. Churchill relies
increasingly on this formula until it works itself out in the
almost too-appropriate twist by which he becomes King of Gotham.
In that poem the opposition is not merely silent but has ceased to
exist; imaginary but loyal supporters take their place:
Rejoice, Ye happy GOTHAMITES, rejoice;  
Lift up your voice on high, a mighty voice,  
The voice of Gladness, and on ev'ry tongue,  
In strains of gratitude, be praises hung,  
The praises of so great and good a King;  
Shall CHURCHILL reign, and shall not GOTHAM sing?  
(Gotham, I, 111-16)

Even in Gotham, though, the reader never witnesses the  
rejoicing scene directly, but instead only hears of it from the  
ever-present poet. In Book I everything is to come, as the  
rejoicing that Churchill describes is all in the future tense.  
The reader, as a matter of fact, hardly ever actually "witnesses"  
a scene in one of the poems without at least some sense of the  
speaker's intervening voice. The satiric scene never achieves  
the autonomy—the illusion of running on its own momentum—  
required for it to be self-condemning. A scene in one of Churchill's  
poems is always heavily indebted to the speaker for its existence;  
to put it another way, we are constantly aware of a go-between or  
manipulator screening us from what we "see."

Whenever this interference becomes especially obvious (which is often), the result is that we fail to "see" anything at  
all. We simply "hear" the speaker. This is a real shift in the  
satirist's technique of delivery, not a reader's impression, and  
it can be substantiated by determining how the speaker's inter-  
ference may become obvious. Imagine a kind of scale representing  
the different degrees to which the speaker of a satire might  
editorialize his material. At one end would be the perfectly neu-  
tral reporter, while at the other would be the enraged friend of  
virtue who can express himself only in the purest invective.
When the speaker, in rendering a scene, injects an opinion about it, the opinion acts as a reminder that the scene is being described by someone. The more opinionated the speaker, the more obtrusive he will be until finally he blocks our vision altogether. The image of the scene passes freely through the transparent medium of the neutral reporter (although the scene may be contrived to begin with); but at the other extreme only a distorted version comes through, in which the language of description is so freighted with evaluative suggestion that the scene loses its pictorial illusion.

In Churchill's poetry the immediate effect is declamatory, not visual. Imagery is scarce, and its eye-catching appeal is strictly subordinate to the dominating sound of the speaker's voice. Even so, the setting of many of his poems would seem to offer great possibilities for a richly visual treatment. Churchill headquarters himself in London, for example, where most of the things he ridicules are at their most ridiculous: the government, the stage, the aristocracy, the reviews.

A poem like *The Rosciad* ought to lend itself well to the panoramic visual effects inherent in a procession of actors and actresses, at least so long as the scene is free to develop after its own confused fashion. But Churchill does not allow it to do that, choosing instead to emphasize his own role in evaluating the players individually. The important thing about this procession, then, is that it is a means of presenting each candidate to the tribunal, not any "scenic" end in itself. *The Ghost* probably comes closer than any of the other poems to visualizing Kernan's dis-
orderly and crowded scene, particularly in Dullman's Lord Mayor's Procession. Here Churchill's use of imagery is at an uncharacteristic peak; but it is interesting that the speaker is a little self-conscious in the way he often tells us to "look." "Behold the grand Procession go" (IV, 1500), he exclaims. Or again,

Behold him, taken up, rubb'd down,
In Elbow-Chair, and Morning-Gown;
Behold him, in his latter bloom,
Stripp'd, wash'd, and sprinkled with perfume;
Behold him bending with the weight
Of Robes, and trumpery of State . . . (IV, 1227-32)

It may be that the speaker's repeated "Behold" reflects his wish to "make us see," in Conrad's words. As if the scene as described were not quite strong enough (imaginatively) to open our eyes by itself, the speaker helps out by telling us to look. But by doing that he thrusts himself back into the scene.

Dullman's "Grand Processionade," as he calls it, turns out to be not so grand after all. Like the parade of actors in The Rosciad, it becomes simply an excuse for stringing together a number of satiric portraits. All that the victims have in common is their victimization by the speaker. Churchill does not satirize them as members of the scene, as parts of one repulsive whole. Instead he singles them out for destruction as individuals. The scenic impression dissolves when the satirist's field of vision narrows. In place of the scene, then, Churchill substitutes a version of the traditional personal portrait. This is his principal weapon, the technical form which his satire most often takes.37
Traditionally, this device is not really much of a "portrait."
The idea is to describe the victim's moral or intellectual composition with a view to showing how he falls short of the mark in any number of ways; but of course it is not possible to characterize anyone's morality without judging him too. A man's morals are either good or bad, and moral terms are automatically judgments of value—like the words "good" and "bad," for example. We might ask just what kind of "picture" Dryden gives us of Zimri in Absalom and Achitophel. He is bull-headed, weak-willed, changeable, and a spendthrift, we learn, but Dryden never mentions his appearance. In the satiric portrait, in fact, the victim's appearance is a proper subject only if it can be made to seem a reflection of his inner self. And in order to seem so, it must be caricatured or simply reworked completely. That is how the poet is able to introduce visual effects in the portrait, images of immorality or stupidity which would otherwise be out of place. Thus Pope calls on bestial imagery in order to make the reader see Sporus as a bug or toad. The less vividly and specifically the portrait is visualized, the less thoroughly it will be tied to the one who sat for it. The moral vocabulary which the satirist can draw upon is much more limited in quantity and general in nature than the fund of images he has available to paint someone's appearance in minute detail. The resulting tendency of a satiric portrait to apply to many men, not merely one, indicates its kinship to the prose "character," the portrait of a type.

While Churchill's portraits certainly belong to this tradi-
tion, they depart from it in the degree to which they are individually rather than generally applicable. In the older satiric portraits, the satirist takes a less active, less obvious role than Churchill. The professed ideals of the tradition always put a satirist like Dryden under pressure to "show cause"—to prove that the portrait gratifies some purpose beyond his own personal animus. Hence he mutes the sound of his condemning voice by some rhetorical means. One way is to select and unify the points made against the victim so that the victim himself seems to typify a selected and unified pattern of bad behavior. Prior's Epigram (1718) on a boorish guest is a good example. Here the satirist presents only a few aspects of his guest's conduct and conversation—all of which, however, work to reveal the ingratitude that defines him morally.

Frank Carves very ill, yet will palm all the Meats: He eats more than Six; and Drinks more than he Eats. Four pipes after Dinner he constantly smokes; And seasons his Whifs with impertinent Jokes. Yet sighing, he says, We must certainly break; And my cruel Unkindness compells him to speak: For of late I invite Him—but Four Times a Week. 

Another way of "depersonalizing" the subject of the portrait is Pope's method of transforming a real man (Hervey) into a symbol (Sporus) by means of the suggestive power of imagery and metaphor. In either case the reader's attention tends to be concentrated on the "growth" of the victim. But there is no such growth in the meaning of Churchill's victims, no submersion of their personal identity in representative or symbolic significance.
Consequently, the satirist's relationship to them remains all too human, being defined in fact by the way he treats them—that is, as one man abusing another.

The portrait of Warburton in *The Duellist*, ll. 667-810, is a fairly representative illustration. Here Churchill's method is exhaustive analysis and criticism; for the same reason many of his portraits besides this one are quite long, occasionally taking up an entire poem such as the *Epistle to Hogarth* or *The Candidate*. As the satirist keeps piling up detail, adding to the length, the portrait becomes more and more like a very unfriendly biography. This is particularly true if the details are unselective and do not point collectively to only one or two moral shortcomings. Ordinarily, Churchill's portraits do not have the governing inner theme that is necessary if they are to apply to more than one man. What governs them, indeed, is Churchill's own attitude of dislike, imposed of course from without. And because he dislikes the man, rather than some trait in the man, Churchill is liable to express his criticism in grapeshot fashion: one aspect of the man reminds him of another one, possibly unrelated, which leads to another, until the portrait has turned into a random catalogue of vices and follies connected serially but not deliberately arranged to exhibit some master vice or folly. In Warburton's case we find false pride, flattery, hypocrisy, love of luxury, indifference to pastoral duties, procrastination, stupidity, opinionated ignorance, presumptuousness, pedantry, tastelessness, and "one sniveling Virtue," chastity, to which
his Wife (and in these days
Wives seldom without reason praise)
Bears evidence--then calls her child,
And swears that TOM was vastly wild. (11. 781-84)

As Churchill says in limes 765-74, the man is unlike other men
because he is without a single redeeming quality, perfectly vicious.
This conclusion effectively eliminates the possibility, already
slim, that Warburton might "stand for" anything. In rejecting him
utterly, Churchill makes him utterly unreal, an example of no kind
of man at all.

Dryden's theory of making examples of public nuisances, 39 in
fact, no longer operates in the satiric portrait as Churchill prac-
tices it. The victims like Warburton are not presented as nuisances
to the public, but as nuisances to Churchill. He writes against
them in order to banish them from his kingdom, so to speak, and it
does not especially matter if the reader cannot see them as examples,
so long as he can hear Churchill pronounce sentence on them.
Practically speaking, there is no imagery in the lines on Warburton
except for an imaginary "scene" or two that puts Warburton in an
impossible situation in order to make a point about his character;
the Bishop, for example,

was so proud, that should he meet
The Twelve Apostles in the street
He'd turn his nose up at them all,
And shove his Saviour from the wall ... (11. 671-74)

Or

he would cringe, and creep, be civil,
And hold a stirrup for the Devil,
If in a journey to his mind,
He'd let him mount, and ride behind ... (ll. 677-80)

Churchill's technique of abusing his enemies on as many counts as possible has the effect eventually of reducing them to nothing. They become merely the sum of their faults and quite naturally therefore lose their coherence as real people. The only consistent point of reference is the voice of the speaker, which after all endures when those it denounces do not.

"Without entering into Criticisms of Chronology about the Hour of his Death; I shall only prove, that Mr. Partrige is not alive. And my first Argument is thus: Above a Thousand Gentlemen having bought his Almanacks for this Year, meerey to find what he said against me, at every Line they read, they would lift up their Eyes, and cry out, betwixt Rage and Laughter, They were sure no Man alive ever writ such damned Stuff as this."40 Just so does Churchill pronounce Warburton dead, by convincing us that no man alive ever did such damned things as these. Before long we find that Churchill, Turkish style, has done in everybody between himself and the throne. By the time he arrives at Gotham the scene is not satiric any more. Once it was crowded with antagonists against whose will the only weapons were a strong pair of lungs and a poem in which they could be excercised without an interruption. Now, on the contrary, the scene is cleared and the only instruments of praise and affirmation are the same pair of lungs and a new poem in which they can again be excercised without an interruption.
NOTES TO CHAPTER I


Heav'n's, just plague design'd,
To visit for the Sins of lewd Mankind. (p. 129)

5. Thorpe, p. 45.


7. Consider, as one example out of many, Jonson's reference in the Preface to Volpone to "the impossibility of any man's being the good poet without first being a good man."


22. Inquiry concerning Virtue, I, iii, 1.


30. For a similar statement see The Times, 11. 659-80.

31. An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Section XII, Part iii, in The Philosophical Works of David Hume (Boston, 1854), IV, 187.

32. For an analysis of the relationship between satirist and scene, see Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse (Yale Univ. Press, 1959), pp. 7-16.

33. See "Apollo to the Dean" or "A Panegyrick on the Dean."

34. McKillop, p. 353.

36. The reporter's neutrality is probably ironic, of course, but so far as the way he speaks is concerned that does not matter; he does not seem to have an opinion. And the type of speaker who praises what he sees would belong at the end opposite the reporter because he, like the directly abusive speaker, commits himself completely to an opinion.


CHAPTER II

PERSONIFICATION AND ABSTRACTION

Churchill's satire is dense with topical allusions, particularly in poems like The Rosciad and The Ghost, and for that reason it would be natural to expect his style or diction to be excessively specific. But actually his choice of words reflects a strong tendency to generalize, the best evidence of which is his habitual use of the personified abstraction.

The problem of explaining how a satirist might come to depend on this figure of speech has never really been explored. Most modern studies, by concentrating on the mid-century ode, seek to determine the purely poetic value of the personified abstraction. But in addition to its "inherent values," personification has a significant rhetorical function. While any figure of speech attracts a certain amount of attention to itself, it is also a means to an end beyond itself, a way of saying something. The purely functional possibilities of personification are never very well developed in a lyrical form such as the ode, because the abstraction that is personified tends to become the subject of the poem. In satiric or didactic verse, on the other hand, the satire or moral depends much more
on the rhetorical "act" of personifying something than on the nature of the something which is personified.

The distinction between the instrumental and poetic values of personification is important because it has major implications for a view of later eighteenth century poetry in general. Because the personified abstraction seems to be so exclusively the property of a rather small number of poets writing in a limited period of time, it is tempting—but wrong—to lump them all together in one convenient interpretation. The trouble is that we have only one name for a poetic figure that takes two completely different forms. This chapter is an effort to regularize the distinctions between these two forms and to show how Churchill makes use of both of them.

There are two ways of broadening the context in which to analyze these two types of personification. One is to treat them as representatives of two separate literary traditions, and the other is to relate them to different theories of language and meaning—particularly the meaning of abstractions. Now this last may seem to be a questionable sort of enterprise, since it means introducing metaphysical problems such as the relationship between words and reality; but problems like that are much closer to the surface in Churchill than in any of his Augustan predecessors, and therefore some comment on theory ought to be helpful in determining his position on them.

i. The Meaning of Abstractions: Augustan and Romantic Theories

"The first distemper of learning," according to Bacon, is "when men study words and not matter . . . for words are but the images
of matter; and except they have life of reason and invention, to fall in love with them is all one as to fall in love with a picture."¹ Rhetoric interferes with our apprehension of the "matter," which is the true object of our knowledge. To Bacon the important thing about words is their usefulness. Certainly they should not simply lie on the page, "palpable and mute," but instead should lead us toward reality, toward some-thing rather than no-thing.

With that in mind, Hobbes like Bacon advocates a style whose chief distinction is its clarity—or what the seventeenth century called "perspicuity." The more directly a writer's words convey his "matter" to the reader, the better Hobbes thinks his style. Thus he praises Thucydides for his power of delivering up historical matter as though the reader were actually present and there were no words intervening at all.² The desirability of this is obvious, since our understanding improves in proportion to our apprehension of reality. And on the negative side, Hobbes condemns "the ambitious obscurity of expressing more then is perfectly conceived, or perfect conception in fewer words then it requires." These expressions are "no better then Riddles," he says, "dark and troublesome" to reader and writer alike.³

Bacon and Hobbes serve to show how English philosophy had accepted the nominalistic idea that words can signify either real things or unreal but useful concepts. Any word, moreover, regardless of what it stands for, is an arbitrary convention or functional sign. For that reason it is always to be considered as having a different kind of reality from that of the thing it signifies.
It is not possible for one word—"tree," for instance—to be more "real" than another—like "justice"—because all words directly stand for ideas. Some ideas of course might have real objects (tree), while others might not (justice), but that does not affect the nature of the word itself in any case.

This theory of language had its most powerful expression by far in Locke, who of all philosophers came closest to "owning" the eighteenth-century English mind. "I may at least say," he writes in his analysis of the abuses of words, "that we should have a great many fewer disputes in the world, if words were taken for what they are, the signs of our ideas only; and not for things themselves."4 Again and again Locke emphasizes that words "stand for nothing but the ideas in the mind of him that uses them, how imperfectly soever or carelessly those ideas are collected from the things which they are supposed to represent" (III, ii, 2). They do not "stand also for the reality of things" (III, ii, 5). Locke's philosophical concerns tend to take social and practical forms, and so it is not surprising to find that his treatment of language is guided by the prior assumption that words are best when they are most useful. By Locke's time, in fact, English philosophy has taken the paradoxical position that the most meaningful question we can ask about language is not a philosophical one: that is, we should not chiefly ask of a word, What is it? but instead, What is it for? Words are instruments by means of which we arrive at something more important than words, and language taken as a whole is of more value socially than in any other way.
Locke has a strong hold on the thinking of the great literary conservatives of the eighteenth century. Johnson, for example, is always careful to keep straight the relationship between thing, idea, and word. In the Preface to the Dictionary, he says he is "not yet so lost in lexicography, as to forget that words are the daughters of earth, and that things are the sons of heaven. Language is only the instrument of science, and words are but the signs of ideas."\(^5\) For someone like Johnson, there is even a sense in which words are not abstract or concrete at all, but only symbolic. What determines the nature of the word is not the nature of the idea it names, but instead the fact that it is a word and not something else. The connection between words and what words stand for is much more complicated and indirect than our impressions about the "visual" or "concrete" qualities of poetic language would lead us to believe. When we read "tree," we do not exactly see "tree"—we think of "tree."

In the Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful,\(^6\) Burke rejects the belief that words raise images in the mind. "Indeed it is impossible," he says, "in the rapidity and quick succession of words in conversation, to have ideas both of the sound of the word, and of the thing represented" (V, iv). Later, in an aside on the possibility that the names of colors create the colors in the mind, he writes that "I know very well that the mind possesses a faculty of raising such images at pleasure; but then an act of the will is necessary to this; and in ordinary conversation or reading it is very rarely that any image at all is excited in the mind." And finally, "it is not
only of those ideas which are commonly called abstract, and of which no image at all can be formed, but even of particular real beings, that we converse without having any idea of them excited in the imagination; as will certainly appear on a diligent examination of our own minds" (V, v).

The tone of Burke's whole discussion of words is defensive, even polemical at times, as if he expects the majority of readers to scoff at his conclusions. The dictum *ut picture poesie* had a great influence on the esthetic theory of Burke's time, and it is this habit of mind more than anything else that he is attacking. Words are words, not so many pictures or things transferred lamely to another medium. Swift like Burke attacks the same theory in a different way, by extending it ridiculously in the philosophers of Lagado who propose "that since Words are only Names for Things, it would be more convenient for all Men to carry about them such Things as were necessary to express the particular Business they are to discourse on."7 The false premise in this reasoning, of course, is that words are not "only names for things." Burke says we could not possibly carry on our conversations if images of the things named by the words we used kept coming into our minds; just as with Swift's Projectors, bent double under their packs, the things would get in the way of the conversation.

The transition from an Augustan to a romantic literature parallels roughly the shift from the Lockean theory of language to a Platonic or realistic theory. For Locke and the Augustan writers who spread his influence, the ideal of language is communi-
cation. Words should be as unobtrusive as possible; ideally, they are transparent. We have ideas whose objects are concrete or abstract, but one word is no more "concrete" or "abstract" than another.

The nature of language under a Platonic or romantic view is quite different. Whereas Locke would say that language is a relation, or a vehicle of relation, between two or more minds, the Platonic theorist is likely to think of language as the way one mind expresses itself. Words in that case become interesting in themselves. If the ideal of language is communication, then generalization will be the most successful mode of language. All men have some idea of "tree," while only a few have any idea of "hackberry." If I wanted to communicate an idea of the latter to a great many people, I would begin with "tree" instead of "hackberry." But if I wanted to express my idea of that tree, I would probably begin with whatever aspect of it had the most meaning for me. In other words, I would first consider my relationship to the tree rather than my relationship to my audience.

Locke's theory of language is of course the dominant view during the first half of the eighteenth century, and would therefore have been the likeliest to influence a writer like Churchill. The newer, more nearly romantic "theory" is relatively unsystematic and actually more noticeable in the practice of certain poets than in formal theory. One measure of the way Locke's thinking is modified is the rising emphasis on imagery or "description" in poetry, accompanied by less interest in abstract words such as a
poet uses to "paint Actions to the understanding." This tendency ultimately results in an attack on the abstraction, so to speak—an attempt by poets such as Collins and Gray to visualize what cannot be visualized by personifying it.

The visual power of language is possibly its most important aspect for a romantic theorist. In a sense the reader should ideally become a spectator, actually beholding what the words represent. Such an ideal naturally upsets the Lockean relationship in which mental ideas separate words from things. When Addison, for example, speaks of "the pleasures of the imagination," he means such pleasures "as arise from visible objects, either when we have them actually in our view or when we call up their ideas into our minds by painting, statues, descriptions . . ." A description is well written when it presents a scene to us verbally with only the slightest sense of the intervening ideas. The visible objects of a description are interesting because of their effect on us; and we will have a certain attitude toward them, especially if they are "great, uncommon, or beautiful." Works of art are faithful to nature at the same time they heighten natural beauties: "Words, when well chosen, have so great a force in them that a description often gives us more lively ideas than the sight of things themselves. The reader finds a scene drawn in stronger colors and painted more to the life in his imagination by the help of words than by an actual survey of the scene which they describe." Addison's habit of associating the highest imaginative activity with the sense of sight is also characteristic of a good many
later critics. Description, that is, is the essence of poetry. This is the basis of Joseph Warton's statement that "the use, the force, and the excellence of language, certainly consists in raising clear, complete, and circumstantial images, and in turning readers into spectators." Accordingly, the most "poetical" way to treat an abstraction is to objectify it vividly. In the case of the mid-century odes, this typically involves an extensive allegorical description of the abstraction, in which the poet achieves a strong visual impression by multiplying pictorial details. The implication is that the abstraction exists independently of the poet's mind, and that he is a kind of mediator between it and his audience. Moreover, the degree to which the poet is able to specify the appearance of the personified abstraction suggests a special vision: he alone has access to the "original," which he then renders poetically into the terms of ordinary human apprehension.

The tendency to make abstractions concrete contrasts sharply with the practice of a poet like Johnson, who is evidently content to name the abstraction without particularizing it. By the time Johnson wrote the famous "tulip streak" passage in Rasselas, in fact, generalization had begun to give way to symbolization as the normative mode of poetic language. While a general idea subsumes many particulars, a symbol is itself a particular which has been made to represent a general idea. There is an interesting philosophical authority for this shift toward romanticism in Berkeley. In the Introduction to The Principles of Human Knowledge he rejects Locke's belief that the mind is capable of framing abstract ideas,
such as of color, extension, or motion, apart from things. Berkeley says that "an idea, which considered in it self is particular, becomes general, by being made to represent or stand for all other particular ideas of the same sort."13 "We think in examples," as a writer on Berkeley puts it.14

ii. The Personified Abstraction: Augustan and Romantic Traditions

Often one personified abstraction can best be distinguished from another by the degree to which it is specified or described as a "thing" in itself. And the more specifically it is described, the more the poet tends to "think in examples." At one extreme there is Collins, who renders his abstractions in the detailed visual manner of portrait painting—the abstraction is the subject of the portrait, so to speak. At the other extreme stands Pope, whose abstractions are usually not visualized and for whom personification is a means of showing what the abstraction does, rather than what it is.

These are two ideal cases, of course, but they do represent two basically separate traditions in English poetry. One of them is associated with Locke's theory of language and dominated by satiric literature; the poet of this inclination personifies an abstraction for the sake of something else, so that the abstraction is not important except as it comes to bear on his particular subject. In his poem Friendship and Single Life Against Love and Marriage (1668), for example, Denham personifies several abstractions in order to illustrate what marriage does to friendship:
But when the unlucky knot we tye,
Care, Avarice, Fear, and Jealousie
Make Friendship languish till it dye. 15

Denham introduces these abstractions not for their inherent
interest but strictly to advance his argument.

In the other, more nearly "romantic" tradition, the abstraction itself (or the poet's attitude toward it) is the main focus. An example is this personification of Silence in Pre-Existence, a Miltonic imitation out of Dodsley's Collection (1748):

Here Silence sits, whose visionary shape
In folds of wreathy mantling sinks obscure,
And in dark fumes reclines his drowsy head . . . 16

The tradition will be reflected to some extent in the kind of abstraction the poet chooses to personify. The satirist, generally speaking, personifies what might be called the "grand" abstractions--positive, normative ideas such as Reason, Truth, Sense, Nature, and Justice. In their personified force they are his allies in the war against their opposites. But the poet (especially the mid-century writer of odes) who follows Spenser and Milton wants to depict the more interesting qualities of "lesser" abstractions like Evening or Solitude. For one thing, the appearance of these abstractions is less rigidly conventionalized than it is in the case of Justice, for example; therefore the poet is free to create a sensible appearance, rather than having to imitate a prescribed one.

Churchill's greatest debt as a satirist is to the tradition of the "functional" or "unvisualized" abstraction: like Pope he draws on a relatively limited fund of ("grand") abstractions which he is
always ready to use as many times as they will prop an argument. But in a less obvious way he also comes under the influence of the other tradition, and in order to show how, it might be good to describe some of the features of both traditions.

Much of this work has already been done, particularly in two important articles by Bertrand H. Bronson and E.R. Wasserman, and in Chester F. Chapin's *Personification in Eighteenth-Century English Poetry* (New York, 1955). Chapin distinguishes the two types of personification as allegorical and metaphorical: "The metaphorical type is especially suited to the purposes of the neoclassic 'poetry of statement,' while the allegorical type is especially favored by those mid-century poets who derive much of their inspiration from the minor poems of Milton" (p. 3).

It is possible to treat the characteristic features of both types of personification in terms of the presentation of the abstraction (i.e., visual or non-visual), its function, and its relationship to the poet. The personified abstractions in Skelton's *Bawge of Court*, for instance, are interesting in that they are fairly well visualized, yet less significant in themselves than as "proof" of Skelton's satiric contention that the court is corrupt. Their appearance, in other words, does not finally distract from their function. Skelton's abstractions, and Spenser's even more, raise the question of the relationship between a merely personified abstraction and an allegorical figure. In an allegorical figure, sensuous appearance threatens to swallow up abstract meaning. Sometimes in Spenser, for example, it becomes impossible to think of
the allegorical reference of an especially involved action or scene because we see the participants in such distractingly rich detail; visual presentation, in short, interferes with moral function. A personified abstraction tends to become a real person in allegory, as more and more of the abstract significance is specified in human terms. It is largely a matter of degree, of the thoroughness of the personification in translating conceptual attributes into sensible appearance. As for satire, this transformation normally stops well short of the point at which personification endangers abstract significance.

Dryden, to take an example a little closer to Churchill, personifies abstractions occasionally, but not regularly by any means and never without a fixed, limited purpose. In order to explain Achitophel's defiance of the King, Dryden observes that

wild Ambition loves to slide, not stand,
And Fortune's ice prefers to Virtue's land.
(Absalom and Achitophel, ll. 198-99)

The personification serves to deepen Dryden's characterization of Achitophel--crazed with ambition--and its very brevity indicates it is not good for much else. Similarly, Pope in the Epilogue to the Satires (Dialogue II) introduces two personified abstractions for the sake of showing how a third--Truth--keeps the satirist safe from their assaults:

Let Envy howl while Heav'n's whole Chorus sings,
And bark at Honour not confer'd by Kings;
Let Flatt'ry sickening see the Incense rise,
Sweet to the World, and grateful to the Skies:
Truth guards the Poet, sanctifies the line,
And makes Immortal, Verse as mean as mine. (ll. 242-47)
Logically, if an abstraction is familiar to most people, as Ambition, Fortune, and Virtue are, and if the poet is using it in its generally accepted sense, it should not be necessary to describe it in very great detail. In that way it is, like any other noun, simply the name of something and is to be brought into a poem only as economy or clarity requires it. Thus it happens that certain poets of the century personify abstractions in order to say much in few words. The effect can be startling, as in Johnson's "Prologue" for the opening of the Drury Lane Theater (1747):

Then crush'd by Rules, and weaken'd as refin'd,
For years the Pow'r of Tragedy declin'd;
From Bard, to Bard, the frigid Caution crept,
Till Declamation roar'd, while Passion slept.
Yet still did Virtue deign the Stage to tread.
Philosophy remain'd, though Nature fled.
But forc'd at length her antient Reign to quit,
She saw great Faustus lay the Ghost of Wit:
Exulting Folly hail'd the joyful Day,
And Pantomime, and Song, confirm'd her Sway. (ll. 29-37)

Here the abstractions are personified simply by placing them in the syntactic positions which we normally expect to be occupied by people's names or personal pronouns. Johnson "humanizes" them--not by visualizing them in human form, but instead by speaking of them as if they were engaged in human actions. We have no image of Declamation itself as it roars while Passion sleeps, although we might imagine something like a bad actor shouting his lines with little real feeling. The point is that Johnson gives us no means of picturing the abstraction in the way Spenser does. In Johnson's poem, in fact, it is not the abstract meaning but the personification that verges on disappearing.
Johnson uses the personification as a ready way of generalizing his argument. Words like "declamation" and "folly" do not stand for anything but rather comprise all the particular instances of declamation and folly. This "allness" in Johnson's personifications is what F.R. Leavis has in mind when he says that "they represent not absence of pressure, but concentration; it is as if Johnson were bringing to bear on his verse an irresistible weight of experience--of representative human experience ..." 19

All the different senses in which Pope uses the word "wit" in the Essay on Criticism constitute another example of the rhetorical value of the abstraction. That word, like Johnson's personifications, is definitely a means to an end. Pope wants to exhaust wit, and in doing so makes one general word take on an almost endless variety of meanings. These meanings are simply particular examples of wit which, taken collectively, are a catalogue of the abstract idea of wit. Just the same technique is put to work satirically in Pope's use of the idea signified by Dulness; and the Dunciad also "collects" examples of Dulness in as many shapes and guises as Pope can possibly crowd in.

Johnson does the same sort of thing in The Vanity of Human Wishes, as "Observation, with extensive view" (I. 1) produces men who, like Wolsey, Harley, Charles XII, and Xerxes, illustrate variously the idea of the title of the poem. Although this is not actually an example of a personified abstraction, it does show how Johnson likes to explore the meaning of an abstract idea. This exploration never takes the form of a personification, as it does in
many of the contemporary odes to abstractions. For Johnson the abstraction has no real existence except as an idea, and ideas naturally are not visible objects. That is why his way of personifying abstractions does not admit of visualization, but instead is simply a stylistic device, especially well suited to aphoristic statement.

Pope and Johnson, expressing particulars in terms of an abstraction, generalize them. We call this a rhetorical technique because it results in an intellectual emphasis. Some pictorial description may be involved in expressing the particulars to begin with; but these particulars, as particulars, are soon forced from our attention by the introduction of an abstract idea that relates them all, changing them into exempla. They forfeit their individuality, as it were, when they become parts in a whole.

It would be fair to say that most of the mid-century poets, unlike Pope and Johnson, particularize the general rather than generalize the particular. In the "Ode Written in the Beginning of the Year 1746," Collins turns Honor into "a pilgrim gray." His Evening is likewise a "nymph reserved" with "dewy fingers" and "breathing tresses." Joseph Warton's Ode to Fancy is an even more vividly pictorial example of this kind of personification:

O Nymph, with loosely-flowing hair,
With buskined leg, and bosom bare,
Thy waist with myrtle-girdle bound
Thy brows with Indian feathers crowned,
Waving in thy snowy hand
An all-commanding magic wand . . . (11. 9-14)

The fact that Warton apostrophizes Fancy is important, because the
tendency to address the personified abstraction is a practically exclusive feature of the Spenserian-Miltonic tradition in eighteenth century poetry. The effect is to relate the abstraction to the poet and, at the same time, to reveal his attitude toward it. One of the best illustrations of this technique is Collins's *Ode to Evening*, in which we not only discover what "chaste Eve" looks like but also learn how William Collins looks at evening. We "see" Evening, all right, but always through the poet's eyes; hence our feeling that this is a very impressionistic poem.

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
    With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed--

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat,
With short shrill shriek, flits by on leathern wing;
    Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum--
    Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
    As musing slow I hail
Thy genial loved return! (ll. 5-20)

Collins is describing the scene at evening; to be sure, but details like the "leathern wing" of the bat suggest that this is not the same scene everyone would describe. Yet everyone certainly knows what is meant by the abstract word "evening." That is only to say that Collins, by particularizing evening, inevitably creates his own meaning for it and is himself the most important part of the
scene he describes. Since the personified Evening is his own creation, it is only natural that Collins should seem to have a special ability to communicate with her. Collins, according to Chapin,

would think of his personifications as, in some sort, evocations in "sensible" form of those ideas of the supreme mind which "originally gave birth to Nature." These evocations would owe their ultimate existence to the world of praeternatural reality in so far as they represented the poet's visionary insight into the realm of archetypal "ideas." Such vision could be attained only through the aid of divine inspiration . . . 20

Akenside, in The Pleasures of the Imagination, had expressed a similar type of Platonism two years before the appearance of Collins's Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegorical Subjects (1746):

From Heaven my strains begin; from Heaven descends
The flame of genius to the human breast,
And love and beauty, and poetic joy
And inspiration. Ere the radiant sun
Sprang from the east, or 'mid the vault of night
The moon suspended her serener lamp;
Ere mountains, woods, or streams adorned the globe,
Or Wisdom taught the sons of men her lore;
Then lived the Almighty One: then, deep-retired
In his unfathomed essence, viewed the forms,
The forms eternal of created things;
The radiant sun, the moon's nocturnal lamp,
The mountains, woods and streams, the rolling globe,
And Wisdom's mien celestial. From the first
Of days, on them his love divine he fixed,
His admiration: till in time complete,
What he admired and loved, his vital smile
Unfolded into being. (I, 56-73)

From this, Akenside concludes, we have "all the fair variety of things" (I, 78).
The idea of the inspired poet who leads us priestlike back to
the eternal forms of things should be contrasted with that of the
Augustan satirist whose empiricism forbids him to believe in the
reality of forms. This difference accounts largely for the dif-
ference between Collins's and Johnson's whole approach to abstraction
and personification. By personifying abstractions, Collins means to
deliver up a vision of their eternal forms, to show that abstractions
are more than mere "fictions of the mind."21 Johnson, however, con-
vinced of the radical distinction between words ("the daughters of
earth") and things ("the sons of heaven"), depends on the fact that
all men know what his abstractions mean *before* he personifies them.
And they mean what all men agree they mean, at least so long as they
remain ideas without being turned into things. Once that happens,
though, they leave the public domain and become someone's private
property--they cease to be instruments of communication.

The two attitudes represented by Collins and Johnson are, as
indicated above, mixed in Churchill. Like Johnson, he can write
an epigrammatic line using a personified abstraction to achieve the
necessary compression:

Who often, but without success, have pray'd
For apt ALLITERATION'S artful aid . . .
(The Prophecy of Famine, 11. 85-86)

And like Collins, he habitually apostrophizes abstractions (though
with a quite different effect), as for example in the passage
beginning "Thou, NATURE, art my goddess . . ." (The Prophecy of
Famine, 1. 93). The contradiction is real enough, and one aim of
the remainder of this chapter is to resolve it.

iii. Personification in Churchill: Augustan Form and Romantic Meaning

The most obvious statement to make about Churchill's use of the personified abstraction is that he uses it a great deal indeed. It is not unusual to find half a dozen of them on a page, where they are often crowded together in the space of one or two sentences. The natural question now is how desirable that is, and the answer will depend on how much the device contributes to Churchill's satire. Meanwhile his treatment of the personified abstraction should be analyzed along the lines mentioned above: the kind of abstraction personified, its function, and its relationship to the speaker (or the speaker's to it). Once the pattern in each case is identified and illustrated, Churchill's place in the theory and practice we have been discussing ought to be clearer.

The Types of Abstraction

For descriptive purposes an abstraction might be called either positive, negative, or neutral: that is, in the context of the poet's treatment of the abstraction, it will have good, bad, or indifferent connotations. When Milton says "Hence loathed Melancholy," to take a simple case, we know that in L'Allegro at least Melancholy is "bad." Some abstractions evoke a positive or negative response because of their conventional associations—Beauty or Incest, for example. Some conventionally neutral abstractions may be given positive or negative associations by the poet, or may
simply remain neutral. A good example of this last is the personification of "observation" in the first two lines of *The Vanity of Human Wishes:*

Let Observation, with extensive view,  
Survey mankind, from China to Peru . . .

Here the personification is completely functional, a neutral abstraction serving the neutral purposes of economy. Such abstractions, in fact, nearly always take the functional-rhetorical form when personified.

No one who has read very much Churchill would expect his abstractions to take such a form very often, and they do not. Instead they are calculated to set off the strongest possible response in the reader. Churchill likes to personify abstractions that have inherently good or bad meaning to begin with; then he weighs them further with his own attitudes.

As far as Churchill is concerned, there is virtually no abstraction that cannot be personified. Most of the abstractions which we expect to find personified are the "good" ones, like Nature, Reason, Justice, and Virtue. It is in the great variety of his "bad" abstractions that Churchill asserts his originality. He is liable to call on any abstract noun to govern a transitive verb. Thus in *The Duellist* we find "Oeconomy" (II, 440), "Constroulement" (II, 511), "State-Craft" (II, 542), and "Assassination" (III, 609). Churchill also indulges in a traditional type of personification--really a species of metaphor--by putting a possessive ending on the abstract noun, as in "Learning's throne" (*The Ghost*, II, 665), "tumult's voice"
(The Prophecy of Famine, 1. 170), "Nature's plan" (Gotham, II, 61).

The "good" abstractions in Churchill's poems are much less various and much more repetitive than the "bad" ones. One reason certainly is that the righteous path is straight and narrow, and there are a thousand ways to do something wrong but only one way to do it right. That explanation, however, applies chiefly to the kind of abstraction that is "good" whether Churchill writes about it or not--the conventionally "good" abstraction, in other words. But Churchill also has a habit of singling out certain abstractions for special favor, so that the associations they have in the context of his poem are really much "better" than they conventionally suggest. Among these favorites are Nature, Liberty, and Independence.

By the same token, Churchill has particular grievances against certain "bad" abstractions, grievances he makes plain by returning again and again to their abstract sources. Hypocrisy is one of these, along with Interest, Method, Slavery, and Dullness. If these favorite abstractions, the good ones and the bad, are compared to each other, it becomes clear that they tend to pair off antithetically. Freedom is an obsessive idea, and so is Slavery; likewise Nature and Method (i.e., freedom versus regularity, genius versus the rules), and Honesty and Hypocrisy. What this means in terms of technique is that the personified abstractions are often pitted against each other dramatically. The struggle and its outcome then offer the reader a comment on the state of things. The ruling pair of abstractions is Virtue-Vice, which is the "form" or elementary pattern into which most of the other pairs finally translate. Here is an
example:

Is this the Land, where, in some Tyrant's reign,
When a weak, wicked Ministerial train,
The tools of pow'r, the slaves of int'rest, planned
Their Country's ruin, and with bribes unman'd
Those wretches, who, ordain'd in Freedom's cause,
Gave up our liberties, and sold our laws;
When Pow'r was taught by Meanness where to go,
Nor dar'd to love the Virtue of a foe;
When, like a lep'rous plague, from the foul head
To the foul heart her sores Corruption spread,
Her iron arm when stern Oppression rear'd,
And Virtue, from her broad base shaken, fear'd
The scourge of Vice; when, impotent and vain,
Poor Freedom bow'd the neck to Slav'ry's chain . . .
(The Author, II. 73-86)

Throughout the passage the personification of these abstractions
puts them into dramatic conflict with each other. Moreover, the
vicious abstractions are winning. There are only two sides in
the battle--right and wrong, virtue and vice--and an abstraction
is known by the company it keeps. Thus "Pow'r was taught by Meanness,"
and Oppression, with "her iron arm," is the "scourge of Vice."
By means of the framing idea of a general battle, Churchill can
range back and forth between the abstract (vice against virtue)
and the particular (the chain on the neck).

As in the passage above, the personified abstractions in
Churchill's poetry tend to come in bunches. This is especially
ture of the "bad" abstractions, which combine in all sorts of ways
that show their interdependence and alliances; they are all blood
kin, so to speak, members of a huge family headed by the patriarch
Vice. Pride is allied with "letter'd Ignorance" (The Ghost, II,
475-76), Order is "begotten by sir Critic on saint Prude"
(The Rosciad, 1. 302), and Credulity is

the Child of FOLLY,  
Begot on Cloyster'd MEIANGHOLY. (The Ghost, II, 553-54)

All of the forms that Vice assumes are relatively more specific  
than Vice itself; that is, Vice is a general class to which  
Hypocrisy, Ignorance, Interest, and most of Churchill's "bad"  
abstractions belong. Beginning with the proposition that England  
has grown vicious, Churchill tries to exhaust English viciousness  
by pointing out all its manifestations and charting their relationships. In that way, then, Churchill's abstractions as satiric devices  
point in two directions: toward the infinite multiplicity of concrete examples that any abstraction implies, and also toward the idea  
of vice in general. A personification such as Flattery (see The  
Ghost, IV, 1779-96) "sums up" all people who flatter others hypocritically at the same time it is itself entered in evidence as one  
more example of the sad generalization that

there's not a place  
Most consecrate to purposes of grace,  
Which VICE hath not polluted; none so high,  
But with bold pinion She hath dar'd to fly,  
And build there for her pleasure; none so low,  
But She hath crept into it, made it know,  
And feel her pow'r; in Courts, in Camps She reigns,  
O'er sober Citizens, and simple Swains,  
E'en in our temples She hath fix'd her throne,  
And 'bove God's holy altars plac'd her own.  
(The Times, 11. 109-18)

The Uses of Personification

Churchill, much more than any other contemporary satirist,
developed a program for turning the personified abstraction to the purposes of satire. That is not to say his contemporaries do not employ the device satirically, because they do. The hero of Smart's *Hilliad* (1753), for instance, is

Conducted by a glorious cavalcade;
Pert Petulance the first attracts his eye,
And drowsy Dulness slowly saunters by,
With Malice old, and Scandal ever new,
And neutral Nonsense, neither false nor true,
Infernal Falsehood next approach'd the band
With *** and the koran in her hand

... ... ...

Next spiteful Emnity, gangren'd at heart,
Presents a dagger and conceals a dart.
On th' earth crawls Flatt'ry with her bosom bare,
And Vanity sails over him in air. (ll. 80-92)

Churchill's friend Robert Lloyd "abstracts" a poem called *The Progress of Envy* (1751) from the particular occasion of William Lauder's attempt to prove Milton a plagiarist. This is an odd mixture of Spenser and topical satire. Written in Spenserian stanzas, it tells how Envy "left precipitate her Stygian throne" (stanza xii) to destroy the happiness of others; leagued with Malice and Lauder, Envy devises an assault on Milton which fails miserably. What is interesting about the piece is the attempt to use Spenser's richly visualized type of personification for satire. The intended victim Lauder is completely swallowed up in the picture of Envy's progress; or to put it another way, the pictorial qualities of the allegory obscure the meaning of the allegory. But the meaning must eventually emerge from the scene clearly if the point of the ridicule or irony is to get across.
Aside from rather isolated examples like these, however, none of the mid-century poets carry the technique of personification to the limits in satire that Churchill does. It is true that the technique in Churchill is overwhelmingly instrumental—in other words, Churchill seldom personifies abstractions simply because the abstraction is inherently interesting. If we divide the personified abstraction as Chapin does into "fictions of the mind" and "objects of sight," then Churchill's abstractions will mostly fall into the former category.

Because the dramatic potential is much greater in abstraction as an "object of sight," however, Churchill sometimes departs from his usual practice of stripping the abstraction almost bare of modifiers and instead introduces a Spenserian "train" of fully specified abstractions whose greatest appeal is to the eye. In *The Ghost* (IV, 1643-1796) there is a lengthy procession of these abstract "objects of sight." For example,

> With looks, where dread command was plac'd,  
> And Sov'reign Pow'r by Pride disgrac'd,  
> Where, loudly witnessing a mind  
> Of savage more than human kind,  
> Not chusing to be lov'd, but fear'd,  
> Mocking at right, MISTRULE appear'd,  
> With eyeballs glaring fiery red  
> Enough to strike beholders dead,  
> Gnashing his teeth, and in a flood  
> Pouring corruption forth and blood  
> From his chaf'd jaws; without remorse  
> Whipping, and spurring on his horse,  
> Whose sides, in their own blood embay'd,  
> E'en to the bone were open laid,  
> Came TYRANNY; disdaining awe,  
> And trampling over Sense and Law  
> One thing and only one He knew,  
> One object only would pursue,
Tho' less (so low doth passion bring)
Than man, he would be more than king. (IV, 1759-78)

Here the force of the personification is visual and dramatic.
Personified Tyranny is a tyrant on horseback whose cruelty and blind ambition are all too human; in order to personify tyranny, in fact, Churchill simply applies the abstract name to one of the many particular instances out of which the idea of tyranny is abstracted. This is a kind of synecdoche, in which the part (a certain example of tyranny) comes to stand for the whole (tyranny). Moreover, any personified abstraction will ordinarily take this form as soon as it is specified or particularized to any degree. If the personification is achieved "syntactically," by putting an abstraction where we normally expect to find a proper name, there is usually no specification of the abstraction; consequently it is never visualized as a figure, even though it does behave as one. Any kind of attempt to describe or visualize the abstraction invariably makes it into an example of itself.

In many cases the abstraction can be visualized as a victim of itself also. When we speak of someone "gripped by fear," we mean someone, not fear, is afraid. But in the Ode to Fear, Collins pictures Fear as a frightened man:

Ah Fear! ah frantic Fear!
I see, I see thee near!
I know thy hurried step, thy haggard eye!
Like thee I start, like thee disordered fly . . .
(II. 5-8)

Likewise in The Passions: An Ode for Music:
First Fear his hand, its skill to try,
Amid the chords bewildered laid,
And back recoiled, he knew not why,
Even at the sound himself had made. (11. 17-20)

This technique of personification comes in part at least from
Spenser, whose abstractions often victimize themselves. Probably
the most dramatic example is the figure of Despair, personified as
a man who tries over and over to kill himself, but who never suc-
cceeds (Faerie Queene, I, ix, 35-36).

Churchill too makes some use of the self-victimizing person-
ification. The Duellist begins with a train of them, like

AMBITION, who, when waking, dreams
Of mighty, but phantastic, schemes . . . (I, 7-8)

or

JEALOUSY, his quick eye half-closed,
With watchings worn, reluctant doz'd,
And, mean distrust not quite forgot,
Slumber'd as if he slumber'd not. (I, 23-26)

The Duellist is one of the very few poems in which Churchill's per-
sona is not a dominating force. This poem represents a conscious
attempt on the part of the satirist to distance himself from his
subject, to depend more on his powers of 'invention' than on his
powers of speaking. All of Book II, for example, is a historical
allegory on the decay of liberty in England. The "characters" of
the action are personified abstractions who flourish, contend with
each other, or suffer defeat as Churchill's fable demands. The
theme of the book is simply the usurpation of Liberty's temple by
Statecraft. As far as satire is concerned, this is a perfect test case for the personified abstraction. Is it possible, we should ask, to sustain a satiric purpose in this kind of poem? Remember that Lloyd's *Progress of Envy* is something of a failure satirically.

In *The Duellist* the satirist does not overtly intrude on the scene, or "fable." But on the other hand, the scene is hardly what we could call realistic. Churchill "distances" himself from the scene by objectifying his mental phenomena, his "fictions of the mind," turning them into seemingly autonomous actors in a drama. This should be contrasted with the type of satire in which the satirist—like Swift in parts of *Gulliver*—strives to ground his scene in a convincing mass of realistic physical details; in that case the necessity of writing realistically limits the satirist in his direct control over what we "see," but it also gives him the negative freedom to be ironic.

Churchill, on the contrary, controls what we "see" directly—he imposes himself on the scene completely, since what seems to be a "fable" is really a dramatization of his own opinions. His ideas, personified, act out his thought. As in *Gotham*, with its liberating device of the hypothetical situation (if I were king), Churchill relies on a controlling device in *The Duellist* which enables him to express himself in absolute freedom. This is the simple expedient of personifying his ideas—thus gaining at least some illusion of objectivity—and then bringing them into the same relationships with each other that they have in his mind—thus accomplishing the
objective of free self-expression. That is the reason we so often
find two or three personified abstractions "doing something" to each
other—banding together, fighting, changing places, being driven
away.

LIBERTY fled, her Friends withdrew,
Her Friends, a faithful, chosen few;
HONOUR in grief threw up, and SHAME,
Cloathing herself with HONOUR'S name,
Usurp'd his station; on the throne,
Which LIBERTY once call'd her own,

. . . . .

For ev'ry darker purpose fit,
Behold in triumph STATE-CRAFT sit.
(The Duellist, II, 531-42)

As far as the matter of free self-expression is concerned, the
personified abstraction is an ideal device for Churchill. It ex-
cludes external reality as thoroughly as it can possibly be exclud-
ed, giving us instead a kind of map of Churchill's mind. We
spoke of irony as a negative freedom: Churchill's self-expression
is a positive freedom, because he is able to project his true
thinking onto the "scene" by means of personification. But by
excluding external reality and the contrary opinions of others,
this device severely limits the possibility of irony. That problem
is treated in the next chapter.

Churchill and the Meaning of Abstractions

Because the personified abstraction seemingly links two
different worlds—that of external, substantive reality and that
of internal ideas—there is always a threat that it will break
apart. Ideas are one thing, after all, and people are another;
to turn ideas into people, even figuratively, will call the whole relationship between subjective and objective phenomena into question. Of course if external reality is ideal, no such thing happens. Spenser's Platonism, for instance, helps to authorize Spenser's personifications. But Locke had had quite a way with eighteenth century thought, and so the Augustan tendency to use the personified abstraction without describing it "physically" is easy enough to explain.

Churchill's attitude toward abstractions is complicated. He is something of a nominalist, especially in his treatment of ancient and honorable abstractions like reason or philosophy. Under the influence of a Platonic view, as we have seen, the personified abstraction will often be apostrophized. The great example of this is probably Milton's invocation to Light in *Paradise Lost*. An attenuated sample of the same kind of apostrophe is this from Cowley's *Hymn*.

**To Light:**

Thou tide of glory which no rest dost know,
But ever ebb and ever flow!
Thou golden shower of a true Jove,
Who does in thee descend, and heaven to earth make love!

Hail, active nature's watchful life and health,
Her joy, her ornament and wealth!
Hail to thy husband Heat, and thee!
Thou the world's beauteous bride, the lusty bridegroom he!

(Verses on Several Occasions, 1656, 11. 5-12)

This, along with Warton's *Ode to Fancy*, should be contrasted with Churchill's apostrophe to Fancy in *The Ghost*, IV, 289-658. Whereas Cowley emphasizes the great role light plays in the order of general nature, Warton is chiefly interested in visualizing Fancy. But
Churchill expresses a personal relationship to Fancy, stressing its influence on him in particular. In that respect Churchill's apostrophe might have been written by Collins. The same personal emphasis characterizes every other important apostrophe in Churchill's poetry. In The Prophecy of Famine, lines 93-110, Churchill takes Nature as his patron:

    Thou, NATURE, art my goddess--to thy law
    Myself I dedicate . . . (ll. 93-94)

And of Independence he says,

    Tho' Thou, Alas! art out of fashion grown,
    Tho' All despise Thee, I will not despise,
    Nor live one moment longer than I prize
    Thy presence, and enjoy; by angry Fate
    Bow'd down, and almost crush'd, Thou cam'st, tho' late,
    Thou cam'st upon me, like a second birth,
    And made me know what life was truly worth.  
    (Independence, ll. 510-16)

Although the form of Churchill's apostrophe suggests a Platonic attitude, the fact that an ideal like Nature or Independence is associated so exclusively with himself argues what we have already seen—that Churchill's values are more likely to come from Churchill than from heaven.

For Churchill, consequently, most (and probably all) abstractions have no real existence outside his mind. They are names. Sometimes he gives us an interesting hint to that effect, as when he personifies Candour in the Epistle to William Hogarth only in order to quarrel with her. Or this on Reason:

    Within the brain's most secret cells,
A certain Lord Chief Justice dwells
Of sov'reign pow'r, whom One and All,
With common Voice, We REASON call;
Tho', for the purposes of Satire,
A name in Truth is no great Matter . . .
(The Ghost, IV, 125-30)

Similarly, Honor is

a Word, which all the Nine
Would be much puzzled to define--
HONOUR--a Word which torture mocks
And might confound a thousand LOCKES . . .
(The Ghost, IV, 897-900)

This nominalistic trend in Churchill's thinking can partly be explained by his insistence on a theory of moral decay. The old virtues are gone, things are not what they used to be. As a matter of fact, Churchill devotes an entire poem to the O tempora! theme (The Times). His readiness to personify abstractions serves him well in developing this idea, because very often a "true" or "original" virtue will be contrasted with its latter-day descendant. Once upon a time Truth was an absolute thing, but now it is debauched and relative: Eternal Truth has become "a downright City Truth" (The Ghost, II, 198). Just the same thing happens to poor Liberty when Statecraft violates her temple in The Duellist, II.

Churchill, like some of his contemporaries, was in a quandary. Hume had shown what could happen if Locke were pushed to his logical limits. Like Hume, Churchill is not at all sure that he can know anything beyond his own feelings, and as a result, sensibility and understanding, Fancy and Reason, are treated
ambiguously. Churchill is prepared to think, for example, that men actually do become what they believe they are if only because there is no way to contradict belief. These are fresh ideas, and they give the satirist special difficulties because he has to deal with them using traditional forms.

The Ghost is a good illustration of Churchill's epistemology, if that is not too dignified a term. The satirist means to ridicule the affair of the Cock Lane Ghost by reducing it to nothing, or to a production merely of the collective popular fancy. Any knowledge he can have of the Ghost is limited to whatever evidence his senses give him; and when they give him no evidence at all, his skepticism is justified. He solemnly records the folly brought on by superstition, credulity, and curiosity, "whose rage,"

Churchill writes,

Must be indulg'd at the expence
Of Judgment, Truth, and Common Sense . . . (I, 473-74)

How can we believe, asks Churchill, that nature would suspend "her usual course" and vary "from the stated plan" (I, 446-47) in order to produce one lusus naturae like a rabbit-breeding Mary Tofts? The answer lies in the ease with which almost anything can break the tenuous hold of the senses on the understanding. Sensible evidence is never a match for the wonderful lies that Fancy creates. Churchill's long essay on this subject in The Ghost, IV, 289-658, is remarkably ambiguous. In it he pays his sincere respects to the power of Fancy, but he also satirizes the victims of Fancy.
Indeed, they are only victims in the eyes of others who see them as they are. As far as the victim himself is concerned, he

Mocks boasted vain Reality,
And Is, whate'er he wants to Be. (IV, 309-10)

As long as Churchill locates ultimate reality—whatever that is—in the individual consciousness, it makes no difference that the world takes a man led by Fancy for a fool.

In this passage on Fancy is one of Churchill's most vicious portraits, directed at just such a man, the "Whiffle" who

riots, tho' he loves not waste,
Whores without lust, drinks without taste,
Acts without sense, talks without thought,
Does every thing but what he ought . . . (IV, 538-41)

That, at any rate, is how Churchill the satirist sees him. Whiffle, however, sees himself as "more than human" (l. 565), and the mystery of it all is that the deception is somehow more "real" than the truth. That is how it is possible for Churchill to ridicule other victims of Fancy and include himself among them. Each of us is confined to his own point of view, now an observer, now the observed. Your point of view is no better than mine, even if I am Whiffle and you are the rest of the world:

By his own Sense and Feelings taught,
In speech as lib'ral as in thought,
Let ev'ry Man enjoy his whim;
What's He to Me, or I to him? (IV, 213-16)

Philosophers like to point out how thin is the line separating Locke from skepticism or even solipsism. Locke's "reasonableness,"
the very thing that made him so appealing to the Augustan mind, also prevented him from pursuing his own thought over that line. Later, when the much less reasonable Hume does cross it, the situation parallels the change in satire from Johnson to Churchill. Johnson understands that abstract ideas are only ways we have of organizing our phenomenal experience--they are "made up." But he never allows himself to think, as Churchill, does, that these ideas may just have as many meanings as there are people who use them. The certain proof of this is Johnson's refusal to "test" the universality of their meaning by allegorizing them; for even when he does personify them he simply states their names, never pausing to look at them.

Churchill never doubts that the abstractions he personifies are anything but "fictions of the mind," and to that extent he is in line with Locke and Johnson. Unlike Locke and Johnson, though, he treats them as fictions of his own particular mind. It is a case of a slight shift in emphasis bringing about a great shift in thinking. Language for Churchill is a vehicle of personal expression, not two-way communication. "What's He to Me, or I to him?" Locke's theory and Johnson's practice tell us that if the proper end of words is communication, the most proper words must be general words. But it is easy to forget that generalization can be put to work in the context of an expressive theory of language. That is how Churchill converts a traditional technique into the instrument of an untraditional satiric program, which is to say he "generalizes himself." We do not sense the weight of
"representative human experience" behind Churchill's generalizations, as Leavis does in the case of Johnson. "Personifications and generalizations," says Donald Davie, "are justifiable according as they are 'worked for.'"

Churchill does not work for his personifications because he is willing to have one particular incident—say the duel between Wilkes and Samuel Martin—stand for the triumph of Statecraft over Liberty. Even so, the personification in Churchill is a powerful tool of satire, if only because it forces us to go outside the work itself in order to discredit the judgments in it. Within the work, it is extremely difficult to tell the difference between private opinion and general truth.
NOTES TO CHAPTER II


3. Answer to Davenant (1650), in Spingarn, II, 63.

4. Essay Concerning Human Understanding, III, x, 15. This and other references to the Essay are from the edition of A.C. Fraser (2 vols., Oxford, 1894).


10. Spectator No. 412 (June 23, 1712), in Bond, III, 540.


21. Chapin, p. 31 ff.


24. See Grant, p. 529.
CHAPTER III

IRONY AND INVECTIVE

Anybody who reads Churchill is likely to get one very strong impression about his method—namely, that he bludgeons his enemies senseless. Hogarth gives us a kind of visible proof of that by drawing Churchill as a bear with an immense club and calling him The Bruiser. And even Churchill agrees, referring to himself as

A Subject, met with only now and then,  
Much fitter for the pencil than the pen;  
HOGARTH would draw him (Envy must allow)  
E'en to the life, was HOGARTH living now.  
(Independence, 11. 175-78)

The picture of a ragged, burly, club-toting satirist takes us back to the Elizabethan satyr, whose overall "roughness" Churchill likes to imitate. Eschewing Pope and priding himself on "th' gen'rous roughness of a nervous line," Churchill wants to bring an older definition of satire back to life. Hence his habit of personifying satire:

... in less harden'd times
Great was her force, and mighty were her rimes,
I've read of Men, beyond Man's daring brave,
Who yet have trembled at the strokes she gave,
Whose souls have felt more terrible alarms,
From her one line, than from a world in arms.
When, in her faithful and immortal page,
They saw transmitted down from age to age
Recorded Villains, and each spotted name:
Branded with marks of everlasting shame,
Succeeding Villains sought her as a friend,
And, if not really mended, feign'd to mend.
(The Candidate, ll. 155-66)

Like this one, all of Churchill's theoretical statements about satire emphasize or exaggerate its blunt power and uncompromising directness.

Churchill is famous for a vigorous if anachronistic type of invective; for that reason he naturally invites (unfavorable) comparison with Pope and Swift, who are even more famous for their ironies. It is very easy to forget that a satirist is a writer using words and not a swordsman using his rapier, a monkey ladling out hot oil, or a bear swinging a club. Besides avoiding that mistake, the aim of this chapter is to explore the relationship between irony and invective in Augustan satire generally and Churchill in particular. From this the "meaning" or deeper implications of both techniques should--ideally, at least--be easier to assess.

For practical reasons this is not the place to talk about the long list of meanings that the word "irony" has. Or at least the list will be kept very short for these purposes. The word does tend to subdivide endlessly, which is to say it is one of those suggestive terms that ought to be used but not defined. When it is used in this chapter it will generally signify a certain mode of satiric expression, a principle by which the author consistently dissembles his attitude toward his subject.
The ironic mode works by means of ironic tropes—ironia, meiosis, litotes. These define irony in the technical rhetorical sense, the sense we have in mind when we speak of "an irony" or "an understatement." In the last chapter the parallel would be the relationship between personification or prosopopoeia, a trope, and allegory, the mode in which the trope is embedded. We say "a personification" or "an irony" if we are thinking of rhetoric, and "an allegorist" or "an ironist" if we are thinking of mode.

Irony has an extra-literary dimension to its meaning in that an ironist does not have to write anything in order to be ironic. Besides being a mode of satiric writing, irony can also be a mode of behavior. In this broadest possible sense, irony is a directly personal characteristic, a feature of the man rather than the work. Northrop Frye points out how this is the conception of irony in Aristotle's Ethics, "where the eiron is the man who deprecates himself, as opposed to the alazon. Such a man makes himself invulnerable, and, though Aristotle disapproves of him, there is no question that he is a predestined artist, just as the alazon is one of his predestined victims." With the basic idea of the ironic man in mind, Frye goes on to define irony as essentially a certain sort of behavior which sometimes manifests itself as a literary strategy:

The term irony, then, indicates a technique of appearing to be less than one is, which in literature becomes most commonly a technique of saying as little and meaning as much as possible, or, in a more general way, a pattern of words that turns away from direct statement or its own obvious meaning.
The opposite of the ironic mode is invective, in which the author does all he can to express or even exaggerate his true response to the subject. Invective like irony has a rhetorical basis—as in the various metaphors by which the satirist might turn all his enemies into pigs and asses. And this mode too has psychological or "behavioral" implications: the man who writes invective is angry, hot-headed, struck through with savage indignation and helpless to restrain the spontaneous overflow of his powerful feelings.

Both these modes are well represented in Restoration and eighteenth century satire, and not by any means in random fashion. Ordinarily we think of irony as a more sophisticated phase of satire than invective. James Sutherland refers to invective and lampoon as "the primitives," for example. Oldham's Satires upon the Jesuits are more direct, hence less subtle, than Pope's Epistle to Augustus. And the same thing is generally true of most Restoration satire (e.g., the Poems on Affairs of State), when compared to the ironic satire that Pope and Swift brought to perfection.

One point to be made in what follows is that the Restoration satirists as a whole are less ironic or indirect in their ridicule than they are commonly taken to be. In order to make this point, however, it is necessary to distinguish between what the satirist actually says about the object of his ridicule and the context in which he says it. He may (unironically) say what he means in an (ironically) inappropriate context. This applies to forms like the "instructions to a painter," the parody litany, or the mock heroic, in which the relation between form and content is ironic
even though the content itself consists only of direct abuse. Likewise the parodic imitation of satiric characters, as in Rochester's Tunbridge-Wells (1675), constitutes irony as distinct from the unironic manner in which the narrator may ridicule the same characters. More will be said about this in connection with Mac Flecknoe.

What this brief survey should indicate is that Churchill's use of invective has ample precedent in the satiric tradition, and that ironic ridicule in the sense of blame by praise tends to be the exception rather than the rule. And by characterizing earlier uses of invective, finally, it will be possible to see how Churchill adds a new dimension to its use.

i. The Rise of Irony in Augustan Satire

Commonwealth and Restoration satire owes a good deal to the Renaissance concept of the satyr, whose mode of speaking is directly abusive ("sharpe") rather than ironic. There is very little indirection, for example, in the Rump Songs (1662), a collection of poems and ballads written between 1639 and 1661 against Cromwell and the Commonwealth. The O tempora theme is a favorite starting point for many of these writers: England under Cromwell is "A Mad World my Masters" (I, 47). The satiric reaction to this situation is almost always direct, taking one of two characteristic forms—either as a sentimental longing for the old, lost values or as a denunciation of the new ones. In "The Penitent Traytor" (I, 53) the author sorrowfully complains that loyalty and wisdom have become crimes. Symbolizing the new values are the Roundhead and his "Rump Rampant,"
who together invite a simple, occasionally hysterical kind of invective aimed at exaggerating their vices enormously.

Divine right, according to a well-worn formula, died on the scaffold along with Charles I. This proverb, however oversimplified or overused, does help to explain the transformed character of verse satire in the Restoration. The great object of scorn and bitterness in the Rump Songs—the deposition and execution of Charles—is also what opened up the very possibility of this kind of political satire. By the time Charles II comes to the throne, monarchical rule itself is a partisan affair, something to be defended or attacked, apologized for or satirized. Of course there were limits, as Rochester proved one day by showing Charles the wrong lampoon. On the whole, though, it is fair to say that the satirists under Cromwell had set a precedent which was institutionalized during the Restoration.

This was also, as Sutherland says (p. 38), "one of the golden periods of English invective." Its great memorial is the Poems on Affairs of State, which is a revealing catalogue of most of the satiric possibilities of the mode of invective. These poems often consist of a series of abusive observations on particular individuals and rather specific situations, each of them relatively independent of the other. The result is a sequential or "episodic" kind of satire in which multiple meaning is at a minimum. Take for example "Satire," an anonymous Juvenalian imitation of 1680:

Must I with patience ever silent sit,        
Perplex'd with fools who will believe they've wit? 
Must I find ev'ry place by coxcombs seiz'd,   
Hear their affected nonsense and seem pleas'd? 
Must I meet Heveningham where'er I go,
Arp, Arran, villain Frank, nay Poulteney too?
Shall Hewitt pertly crawl from place to place,
And scabby Villiers for a beauty pass?
Shall Howe and Brandon politicians prove,
And Sutherland presume to be in love?
Shall pimping Deincourt patient cuckold blame,
Lumley and Savage against Pope declaim?
Who can abstain from satire in this age?
What nature wants I find suppli'd by rage. (11. 1-14)

The combination of a very weak, repetitive type of structure
("and . . . and . . .") with purely derogatory epithets ("villain,
"scabby," "pimping") is characteristic of many of the Poems on Affairs
of State. To put it differently, the writer's public verbal re-
response to his subject is nearly as structureless as his private
unspoken response to it, because the mode in which he externalizes
his feelings—invective—calls for representing them as they are.
The relationship between what the satirist writes and what he thinks
is direct, with no rhetorical structure to speak of screening the
one from the other; moreover, this relationship is conventionally
direct, as we know from the satirist's custom of telling us how he
must speak or burst. Thus for Oldham, in the Prologue to the Satires
upon the Jesuits, "indignation can create a muse" (1. 29).

There are instances of ironic ridicule in Restoration satire,
but they are usually short-lived departures from the dominant mode
of invective. That is, irony may be a limited rhetorical device
(i.e., blame by praise) which the satirist occasionally uses to
relieve the directness of his attack; it is not, however, the mode
of the satiric work, the "policy" or controlling principle in terms
of which every judgment that the satirist makes must be interpreted.
One of the Poems on Affairs of State promises by its title and first
few lines to satisfy this definition of the ironic mode: this is "An Ironical Satire" (1680; Mengel, pp. 200-04), which begins with the obviously false proposition that

Not Rome in all her splendor could compare
With these great blessings happy Britons share.
Vainly they boast their kings of heav'nly race:
A god incarnate England's throne does grace.
Chaste in his pleasures, in devotion grave,
To his friends constant, to his foes he's brave;
His justice is through all the world admir'd,
His word held sacred, and his scepter fear'd. (11. 1-8)

But the author neglects to insist on the ironic premise in every one of his judgments:

Then for commanders both by sea and land,
Heav'n has bestow'd 'em with a liberal hand.
York, who thrice chang'd his ship through warlike rage,
And Mulgrave, who's the Scipio of the age.
The first long admiral, but more renown'd
For pox and Popery than public wound:
This is the man whose vice each satire feeds,
And for whom no one virtue intercedes;
Destin'd for England's plague from infant time,
Curs'd with a person fouler than his crime. (11. 25-34)

The satirist, by contradicting his own mock thesis, does for the reader what the reader of a completely "ironical satire" has to do for himself. The overt judgment that the Duke of York is the man "for whom no one virtue intercedes" cancels the ironic judgment that the Duke is a great commander.

This example, and other like it, suggest that the typical Restoration satirist did not think of irony as a general, pervasive mode of satire, but instead as a specific verbal device. This relatively technical concept of irony, as Norman Knox shows, was
inherited from Renaissance dictionaries and manuals of rhetoric, in
which of course the classical definition of irony as a trope dom-
ininated. "A convincing indication of how limited was the use of
our word [irony] in this period is that in all his critical efforts
of various kinds—essays, discourses, lives, prologues and epilogues—
Dryden uses it only once, in his Life of Lucian . . ." (Knox, pp. 27-
28). Had the ironic mode been developed to any extent in Restoration
satire, a broader, less technical definition of irony probably would
have developed along with it and ultimately replaced the inherited
meaning. But in the absence of any need to expand the inherited
meaning, it lingers on until early in the eighteenth century.

The Restoration writers do not offer much in the way of a
theory of satire, but what theory there is begins with the assumption
that the basic method of attacking someone is to call him a bad name.
Certainly this idea is justified by the actual practice of Restoration
satirists, whose favorite genre is the lampoon or "libel." But Dryden,
reacting against the witless abuse he finds in most lampooning satire,
calls for subtlety and indirection instead, as in the famous pas-
sage on "fine raillery" in the Discourse concerning Satire:

How easy is it to call rogue and villain, and that
wittily! But how hard to make a man appear a fool,
a blockhead, or a knave, without using any of those
opprobrious terms! To spare the grossness of the
names, and to do the thing yet more severely, is
to draw a full face, and to make the nose and cheeks
stand out, and yet not to employ any depth of
shadowing. This is the mystery of that noble
trade, which yet no master can teach to his appren-
tice . . . 8

To illustrate his ideal of stylistically subtle, "witty" ridicule,
Dryden offers his portrait of Zimri in *Absalom and Achitophel*. Granted that the names he calls Buckingham are not especially "opprobrious" compared to what one of the "common lampooners" might have called him; even so, the basic strategy of direct criticism--name-calling, in other words--is no different.

Dryden's idealized satiric formula, with its emphasis on wit, leads at first to a less obvious, more selective type of invective. The satyr's rough language is refined. Eventually, however, the satirist who pursues this ideal far enough will find himself writing ironically. Dryden tells the satirist to modulate his blame, and by the inevitable extension of such a program, blame begins to sound like praise. To put it loosely, he has "overmodulated" the blame.

The ironic mode of satire develops as an expansion of the rhetorical principle by which "white" may sometimes mean "black." Now this principle conditions the meaning of the ironic figures of speech in satire and the meaning of the satire itself. The ironist, unlike the author of the "Ironical Satire," makes a rule of following this principle in every word he writes. In that way an occasional manner of speaking becomes a full time habit--a characteristic not only of the work but also of the writer himself. Dryden, we might suspect, is not so thoroughgoing an ironist. *Mac Flecknoe*, for example, illustrates how the two modes of invective and irony can operate in a satire at the same time. One controls what Dryden says, the other controls the way he says it. The poem is built on an ironic premise, which is that Dulness should be treated heroically. Once it is allowed, the style of the poem becomes mock-heroic, the
hero a mock hero, and the scale of values seems to turn upside down. Actually these values are never really inverted, since the poet continues to call dunces the people who are really dunces. But as Ian Jack says, "the heroic idiom is continually asserting that the hero is a great man," even though he is always called a fool. Dryden says what he means in a manner he does not mean. In that way the style works throughout to transform what is plainly ridicule into seeming praise. The fun lies in the way this never quite comes off: the hero and his "heroic" values are raised to a height where their true names—dunce and dullness—begin to interfere with their apparent rank, and the dunce, like the Emperor and his new clothes, is suddenly left naked and shivering for all to see and nowhere to hide.

Because of its directly abusive content, Mac Flecknoe is not a purely ironic satire. The irony of the poem is formal—explicit blame cast in a conventionally laudatory form. But in a purely ironic satire, the satirist himself changes character, playing a role which in every respect falsifies his real intentions. Needless to say, this definition of the ironic persona is an idealized one, and something of an overstatement; for as Irvin Ehrenpreis points out, the mask in practice at least always has some holes in it. Nevertheless, Pope and Swift nearly satisfy this definition, as they of all satirists between Butler and Churchill come closest to writing in an absolutely ironic mode.

The question of explaining why they write that way is worth trying to answer. Swift says that he "was born to introduce" irony, that he "refin'd it first, and shew'd its Use." Swift's irony,
according to Ian Watt, is a defensive reaction against the "mob": as a member of the "elite," a "righteous minority," Swift is conscious of "a divided audience which made irony, in the sense of speaking by contraries, a possible, and almost an obligatory mode of discourse."\textsuperscript{12} The Scriblerus Club elite are descended in a manner from the true wits of the Restoration stage—only now, instead of ridiculing the false wits openly, they have gone underground. They represent the extent to which satire—despite coming from various hands—can be narrowed and focused on a few significant issues: the depravity of taste, of morals, of human nature. In the intensity of this common effort to defend against the mob, to put it in Watt's terms, the satirist loses his individuality. What he is \textit{like} is not so important as what he can \textit{do}. That is why it is always so easy to transfer the apparently negative, destructive character of his satire to his personality.

Now that we have come to the thoroughly familiar ground of Pope and Swift, there is no need to explore specific examples of what we could call the final stage in the development of an ironic mode of satire. It is enough to keep in mind that at this stage the writer tries to submerge his own personality and attitudes as completely as he can. Consider, though, that the most successful example of this—\textit{The Shortest Way with the Dissenters}—is a failure as satire because Defoe hides his true feelings well enough to keep anybody from sensing the irony.\textsuperscript{13} Poor Defoe has to be his own audience, chagrined and even desperate, but certainly not amused.

Swift having "showed the use" of irony, the accepted meaning of
that word broadens and deepens. Between 1720 and 1730, says Knox, the word "settled into literary discussion and general speech as one of the conventional terms of literary reference." (p. 24). The popular definition clearly lagged behind the practice, much as if it took the mob a little time to grasp what had been done to them. And the new meaning deepens in the sense that it now includes what David Worcester terms "irony of manner." In the Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift (1752), for instance, Orrery speaks familiarly of the way Swift likes to "smile under his usual mask of gravity." But by Orrery's time theory had virtually overtaken practice. Since the concept of the ironic mode was well known, most readers had no trouble recognizing it or grasping the intent of a wholly ironic satire; but neither did they have much occasion to. The deeply ironic type of satire that we associate with the Pope-Swift circle is not reproduced in the work of later eighteenth century satirists--Young, Richard Savage, Smart, Gray, Paul Whitehead, "Peter Pindar," Cowper. For many of these writers satire is a sideline rather than a calling, a genre to be attempted rather than an inevitable outlet of expression. Gray and Cowper are good examples. Satire in this period tends to diverge along two main lines: toward either Juvenalian anger, or Addisonian indulgence, the "grave" or the "sportive." The distinction is one of tone, not mode. Tol- erant mockery and intolerant invective are both direct modes of satire, in which the satirist comes close to expressing his real attitudes; in that sense they have to be distinguished from the "dissembling"
mode of irony.

Satire in this period also loses the semblance of a collective enterprise and "breaks up," so to speak, into an ill defined, unrelated series of individual projects. Churchill attacks pederasty in *The Times*, Garrick attacks a fellow actor in *The Fribbleriad* (1761), and Christopher Anstey makes sport of the sport of prize-fighting in *The Patriot* (1767). The increasingly fragmentary nature of satire is reflected in a growing tendency for the satirist to intrude personally in his work; in this connection the extreme case might be Cowper, who actually tells the reader just how he reacts to something he dislikes, instead of showing his dislike by active ridicule. In *The Task*, III ("The Garden"), Cowper's treatment of the "sober dreamers" of mankind, the historians and philosophers and scientists, concludes with this:

And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well,
And prove it in the infallible result
So hollow and so false--I feel my heart
Dissolve in pity, and account the learned,
If this be learning, most of all deceived. (ll. 180-84)

Churchill of course never dissolves in pity, and in fact does just the opposite; but he definitely is like Cowper in his enthusiasm for displaying his own feelings. For Churchill, "Self" is "that darling, luscious theme" (*The Candidate*, l. 117). It is also that theme which the ironic mode particularly suppresses. There is great satiric power in the ironic mask, but in terms of mid-century values the price of writing ironically seems to have gone too high. As Fielding observes in *The Jacobite's Journal* for March 26, 1748 (in which he
publicly drops the pose of a Jacobite), irony involves the impersonation of someone you detest; and "though irony is capable of furnishing the most exquisite ridicule, yet as there is no kind of humour so liable to be mistaken, it is of all others the most dangerous to the writer. An infinite number of readers have not the least taste or relish for it, I believe I may say do not understand it; and all are apt to be tired, when it is carried to any degree of length."

ii. Churchill and the Necessity of Invective

Fielding drops his pose in The Jacobite's Journal partly because he does not like pretending to be a Jacobite, but mainly because he thinks the pretense may confuse his audience. He can write ironically but decides not to. Churchill, on the other hand, sometimes decides to write ironically but has a hard time of it. His rather self-conscious attempt to recover the form and spirit of early Augustan satire may have led him to try. Churchill seems to have admired Swift, for instance; and in a more general way, he inherited a certain tradition of irony in such well established types as the mock heroic and ironic eulogy. But Churchill's irony is inconsistent: Swift would have said, as he did say of an earlier would-be ironist, that "the author . . . has not continued the irony to the end."

Churchill's reason for attempting irony, though, is a less important question than his reason for failing. By way of offering a general answer to that question, I will concentrate on three poems in which the relationship between irony and invective is especially
revealing. They are The Rosciad, The Prophecy of Famine, and the unfinished Dedication to the Sermons.

The Rosciad

Dryden says that "the word satire is of more general signification in Latin, than in French, or English. For amongst the Romans it was not only used for those discourses which decried vice, or exposed folly, but for others also, where virtue was recommended."\(^{19}\) Maynard Mack is thinking of the same thing when he says that "rhetorically considered, satire belongs to the category of laus et vituperatio, praise and blame."\(^{20}\) The conventional technique of the satirist is to hammer away at that idea all the time that he is really quite careless of it in his practice. Thus Dryden regrets that in England the word satire has lost its more "general signification" and has become synonymous merely with invective, all blame and no praise.\(^{21}\) Even when the satirist does serve up some praise, he seldom does it with the purposiveness of his blame, and more often than not uses it to fatten the evidence for his impartiality.

This conventional protest takes a multitude of shapes. One of the most interesting is in Churchill's poem, where--and this is not conventional--it becomes difficult to distinguish the conventional side of the protest from the functional. The reason for this is that The Rosciad has a double object, one which calls for an assertion, and one which calls for a denial. Both of these, positive and negative, praise and blame, are formal or structural elements of the poem; they deceive because when they make a strong appearance it is usually in the form of the meaningless protest which we are schooled
to disregard.

The first such instance is on the title page of the poem. The motto reads,

Unknowing, and unknown, the hardy Muse
Boldly defies all mean and partial Views;
With honest Freedom plays the Critic's Part,
And praises, as she censures, from the Heart.

Churchill here asserts that his method of praising and blaming will be direct—"from the heart." Acting is only the subject of The Rosciad; the object is to play the critic's part. Churchill is setting up for a critic, deliberately contrasting his pose of clear-eyed innocence with the "partial views" of the established critic. For that reason the mock-heroic style of Mac Flecknoe or The Dunciad would be out of place. The scale of values in The Rosciad is right side up, and the stylistic machinery—when it is brought into play—is not used to confuse those values. There is no ironic frame; nor does Churchill's rhetoric seem to say the actors are something they are not. Instead it says what they are, bad or good, strictly according to the announced intention of the motto.

The machinery of The Rosciad is slight, and there is scarcely any action at all. What activity does connect the parts of the poem is pretty well comprehended by the first two lines:

ROSCIUS deceas'd, each high aspiring play'r
Push'd all his int'rest for the vacant chair.

Roscius is of course no "type" of the bad actor, as Dryden's Flecknoe is of the bad poet. Soon after the death of the historical
Roscius, in fact, his name was being applied generically to talented Roman actors. His "vacant chair," then, is a desirable goal on the "real" scale of values as well as the scale given in the poem; the two scales, that is, are identical.

The question Churchill raises is how to "form our judgment." "What can an actor give?" he asks, applying himself almost sympathetically to the problem that actors
can't, like candidate for other seat, 
Pour seas of wine, and mountains raise of meat. (l. 23-24)

The Town, Churchill says, has a way of forming judgment, but it is the wrong way: they decide "as passion, humour, int'rest, party, sways!" (l. 38). On this basis a dwarf declares one actor too tall, while to a six-footer Garrick is too short.

The first of the only two real actions of the poem comes now, when the actors agree to have the succession settled by "some one judge" (l. 58). Naturally they cannot decide on one, and the subsequent uproar gives Churchill the occasion of censuring (directly) most of the names being bandied about. Arthur Murphy asks to have the chair itself instead of the job of judge; and in a passage added in the eighth edition, Churchill paints a brutal portrait of Thady Fitzpatrick, "of the Fribble Tribe" (l. 141), who had been the hero of Garrick's Fribbleriad. The lines owe something to Pope's Sporus and even more to Garrick's poem, but the "bruising" effect is Churchill's own. It is very well done for what it is, which is one sarcastic innuendo wrought upon and repeated sufficiently to reduce the victim to a cipher--none of Dryden's cutting off the head
and leaving it in place:

Much did It talk in its own pretty phrase,
Of Genius and of Taste, of Play'r's and Plays;
Much too of writings, which Itself had wrote,
Of special merit, tho' of little note,
For fate, in a strange humour, had decreed
That what It wrote, none but Itself should read;
Much too It chatter'd of Dramatic Laws,
Misjudging Critics, and misplac'd applause,
Then, with a self-complacent jutting air,
It smil'd, It smirk'd, It wriggled to the chair;
And with an awkward briskness not his own,
Looking around, and perking on the throne,
Triumphant seem'd, when that strange savage Dame,
Known but to few, or only known by name,
Plain COMMON SENSE appear'd, by Nature there
Appointed, with plain TRUTH, to guard the Chair.
The Pageant saw, and blasted with her frown,
To Its first state of Nothing melted down. (11. 153-70)

Here the rhetoric with which Churchill denounces Fitzpatrick is
directly reductive rather than ironically heroic: Fitzpatrick
mounts the throne, but unlike the typical mock hero he is out of
place from the very beginning. And as if the poet had not done a
proper job of showing how out of place "It" is, personified Common
Sense comes to his aid to complete the annihilation. Again, the
scale of values is never in any danger of being inverted, as the
ease with which Common Sense dispatches the would-be hero proves.

With "Fribble" out of the way the poem returns to the problem
it began with: Who will judge the players? Now it is the critics'
turn, and it is they who precipitate the resolution of the question.
Churchill makes a rather pointed connection between their virility
and their capacity to judge:

Cold-blooded critics, by enervate sires
Scarce hammer'd out, when nature's feeble fires
Glimmer'd their last; whose sluggish blood, half froze,
Creeps lab'ring thro' the veins; whose heart ne'er glows
With fancy-kindled heat: --A servile race,
Who, in mere want of fault, all merit place;
Who blind obedience pay to ancient schools,
Bigots to Greece, and slaves to musty rules .

(11. 179-86)

The critics then call for Sophocles to be judge, and the crowd,
"obsequious to the sacred dictate" (1. 190), assents. But in an
amazing turn of events Churchill's friend Robert Lloyd "stem'd the
mighty critic flood" (1. 194) by delivering a speech in favor of the
native British judges Shakespeare and Jonson. Thus Lloyd

said, and conquer'd.--Sense resum'd her sway,
And disappointed pedants stalk'd away.
SHAKESPEAR and JOHNSON, with deserv'd applause,
Joint-judges were ordain'd to try the cause. (11. 227-30)

By now it should be clear that this speech of Lloyd's is a deus
ex machina, contrived to sway an audience who would never have been
swayed under normal circumstances. The deck is very obviously
stacked, but what is especially notable is that it is stacked in favor
of Churchill's party, rather than against the enemy. Churchill had
established that the crowd was "obsequious" to the critics, and
yet Lloyd merely "said, and conquer'd." With that the picture of
the crowd as an unthinking, giddy-headed beast deaf to reason and
blind to true merit is completely cancelled. For "sense resum'd her
sway," the same Sense who blasted Fitzpatrick but who also was "known
but to few, or only known by name!" (1. 166). The miraculous selec-
tion of Shakespeare and Jonson is revealing in that Churchill, in-
stead of developing his thesis negatively through irony, elects to
work positively by asserting true values in their proper places. He might have had the crowd shout Lloyd down and choose the worst possible judge, thus leaving the reader to supply the normative good by inference; but in that case the center of attention would be the crowd, the mad world itself, not the values it lacks. Churchill's aim is not to portray the madness of the crowd or the errors in their set of values, because he does not portray these with any consistency. In the typical satiric "world," power is always in the hands of the fools and the knaves. But in The Rosciad power passes very quickly into the right hands (Shakespeare and Jonson are chosen instead of the critics' "man" Sophocles), and the preparation for a fair trial is complete. The trial, then, far from representing the way of the world, is an imaginary fulfillment of the way Churchill would like the world to be—a world, as in Gotham, in which proper values (at least by Churchill's standards) always take their proper places.

Now that the "assizes" for the actors are about to begin, Churchill again flirts with the idea of the mock heroic, but ends by rejecting it as inappropriate to his purpose:

Now should I, in some sweet poetic line,
Offer up incense at APOLLO's shrine;
Invoke the muse to quit her calm abode,
And waken mem'ry with a sleeping ode.
For how should mortal man, in mortal verse,
Their titles, merits, or their names rehearse?
But give, kind Dulness, memory and rhyme,
We'll put off Genius till another time. (11. 287-94)

These actors, that is, are to be treated as they deserve; Churchill's decision to render them "in mortal verse" is perfectly in keeping
with the theme of the fair trial at the hands of a fair-minded pair of judges, the whole show being engineered by the honest critic Charles Churchill.

At this point Churchill virtually forgets the machinery of the judgment in giving over the poem to a catalogue of the merits and demerits of some two dozen contemporary actors and actresses. Here, where Churchill has done the most revising and expanding in order to embalm as many of these seasonal curiosities as he can, the poem falters. This is where Churchill's method, his attempt to distribute praise and blame honestly, has a disastrous encounter with his subject matter. The Dunciad proves (after a fashion) that topical affairs can be made manageable by the application of some rhetorical pressure. Pope makes these forgotten people and incidents something they are not historically, which is part of a created whole. Churchill's problem with his players is that in forbidding himself any controlling prejudice or irony, he also denies himself the power to "remake" his subject which such an instrument would bestow on him. He cannot subsume it all under some grand head like "Dulness" because he has committed himself publicly to the part of the honest critic. To be sure, this commitment is largely rhetorical—but the effect is the same. The actors run off from him in all directions; as soon as he is finished with one, another comes to take his place. He tosses out praise or blame as fast as he can, in large and well written quantities, but gets nowhere. Every actor is an individual case, requiring individual treatment if the promise of the motto is to be fulfilled.
As the various players troop by to have sentence pronounced, Churchill analyzes their good and bad points. Blame outweighs praise, but not by much. Sometimes an actor receives mixed notices, as for example James Quin, the actor of an older school than Garrick's; he scorns acting in the modern style, to which Churchill cautiously replies,

Far be it from the candid muse to tread
Insulting o'er the ashes of the dead.
But, just to living merit, she maintains,
And dares the test, whilst GARRICK's Genius reigns;
Ancients, in vain, endeavour to excel,
Happily prais'd, if they could act as well. (ll. 933-38)

Note once again how Churchill reminds us of the controlling idea of the "candid muse." And by way of justifying this candor, he goes on in lines 939-44 to give Quin all the praise he is due. Next comes an even more ambiguous case, that of Thomas Sheridan,

A doubtful name,
As yet unsettled in the rank of fame.
This, fondly lavish in his praises grown,
Gives him all merit; That allows him none.
Between them both, we'll steer the middle course,
Nor, loving praise, rob judgment of her force. (ll. 987-92)

The last line is not ironic. Churchill has built up to it, in a manner of speaking, since his praise of the actresses, for example, does at times appear to rob judgment of her force. In any case, we are not too surprised to learn that Churchill "loves praise"—which itself is something of a surprise. Steering the middle course, then, he gives Sheridan some advice to a young actor by way of questioning his mannerisms, none of which is the sort that cannot be corrected.
The point is that this advice is seriously given and meant to be helpful. Finally Churchill ends on the upswing: "But, spite of all defects, his glories rise" (1. 1019).

The comparison of the generation past (Quin) with the generation to come (Sheridan) ends in a neat resolution in Garrick, who like the other two is given credit and discredit where they are due. The idea here is that Churchill is "a poor dull creature, still with Nature pleas'd" (1. 1068), and not the oversubtle or partial critic that great performers like Garrick inevitably attract. Garrick enters, for instance, as

Behind him throng a train
Of snarling critics, ignorant as vain. (ll. 1027-28)

Churchill cannot overcome all their petty objections to Garrick's acting style, but when he agrees with them he is careful to imply that his judgment has a more substantial basis than theirs; he is, once more, the honest critic with no axes to grind. "I can't acquit by wholesale, nor condemn" (1. 1038).

Churchill chooses Garrick for the chair. Shakespeare delivers the "sentence" to that effect, and it is interesting that the greater part of his speech is cast in the subjunctive mood:

'If manly Sense; if Nature link'd with Art;
If thorough knowledge of the Human Heart;
If Pow'rs of acting vast and unconfined;
If fewest Faults, with greatest Beauties join'd;
If strong Expression, and strange Pow'rs, which lie
Within the magic circle of the Eye;
If feelings which few hearts, like his, can know,
And which no face so well as His can show;
Deserve the Pref'rence;--GARRICK take the Chair;
Nor quit it--'till Thou place an Equal there.' (ll. 1081-90)
Poor Garrick is hemmed in all around by the terms under which he is given the chair of Roscius. He does not "conquer" the way Lloyd so handily conquers the critics. He will be Roscius until his equal arrives. Garrick is, in one way of looking at it, the best man available for the honor. Thus the illusion of the fair trial, the inability to acquit or condemn wholesale, the "middle way," all are themes carried through to the last line of the poem. When the time to decide comes, no one's end of the scale flies up like Milton's and kicks the beam.

In that way Churchill invites comparison of his method--the fair trial--with the usual approach the critics take to their material. The Rosciad itself is an exemplum showing how a true critic's judgment should be formed and passed. "For example," Churchill says, "here is how actors ought to be evaluated." The poem is not formless by any means, and the actors do fit into the framework Churchill builds--that is, they fit into the exercise in honest criticism. This framework, however, does not grow out of the subject but instead is imposed on it, so that there is never really any meaningful reciprocation between the two. Any subject might have served as well.

This has the effect of throwing the poem out of phase with itself, leaving us with a poem either about two things or about nothing. Is it criticism of the actors or is it an example for critics to follow? Churchill is thorough enough in respect of these two things--the actors and the critics--but separately thorough. The particular pose Churchill adopts calls for him to
say exactly what he thinks. His praise (Garrick) must be as candid as his blame (Fitzpatrick). Invective is a kind of candid blame—the most candid blame, in fact, since the author as honest critic cannot permit himself to lie about his feelings. But the mixture of praise and blame makes the poem a satire by starts only. The occasional objects of Churchill's ridicule cannot be defined in terms of any one unifying theme. The unifying theme of the poem is how to be a good critic, and that of course is not a ridiculous or ironic matter. In a world gone mad, where values are inverted and villains are treated heroically, the scene attracts attention by its striking contrast with the normal world, and the speaker is distanced by the very mode of irony which is also his means of creating such a world. The situation in The Rosciad (i.e., the "story"), on the other hand, does not distract by its ridiculousness because it is not ridiculous: things happen more or less as they should, including the triumph of normative or ideal values.

The Prophecy of Famine

The pose that Churchill adopts in The Rosciad is congenial to his personality; he does not detest the character he is impersonating, because for one thing he is hardly impersonating a character at all. In The Prophecy of Famine, however, we find him occasionally writing in the guise of someone he does not like, and the result is significant.

This is Churchill's first major political poem, a dramatized warning to Englishmen that the Scots are preparing to overrun their country. It is also, as he calls it, a "Scots Pastoral,"
and begins not with politics but instead with some criticism of the
pastoral. His opening attack is a parody of the conventions of
this genre:

Clad, as your nymphs were always clad of yore,
In rustic weeds—a cook-maid now no more—
Beneath an aged oak IARDELLA lies—
Green moss, her couch; her canopy, the skies.
From aromatic shrubs the *roguish gale*
Steals young perfumes, and wafts them thro' the vale.
The youth, turn'd swain, and skill'd in rustic lays,
Fast by her side his am'rous descant plays.
Herds lowe, Flocks bleat, Pies chatter, Ravens scream,
And the full chorus dies a-down the stream. (ll. 15-24)

The first line of this passage gives away Churchill's intentions
by calling attention very obviously to the conventional nature of
pastoral: "as your nymphs were always clad of yore." It may be just
as well, therefore, that he abandons the parody almost as soon as he
begins it.

Now he goes on to show why a conventionalized form like the
pastoral ought to be ridiculed. In the first place, convention
implies tradition, which in turn implies imitation, which ultimately
means slavery. We know from other poems—especially the youthful
*Epistle to R.L.L.*—that Churchill habitually takes the side of the
Moderns; there is a world of difference, he tells us, between "an
admir ing slave" and the true son

Who when a parent's worth is known,
Can't rest until it is his own,
Nor stops, inflam'd with virtue's fire,
But dares be better than his sire.

*(Epistle to R.L.L.,* 11. 115-18)

In lines 29-110 of *The Prophecy of Famine* Churchill applies this
test to the modern pastoral and finds it wanting. Imitation takes the place of genius, and "nature's banish'd by mechanic art" (l. 36). The "mechanic" poet models his work "after some great man, whose name breeds awe" (l. 31), and as a result

Trifles are dignified, and taught to wear
The robes of Antients with a Modern air,
NONSENSE with Classic ornaments is grac'd,
And passes current with the stamp of TASTE. (ll. 43-46)

The poets who ape this formula produce ludicrous anomalies, as when "roses blush, but blush without a thorn" (l. 56). Naturally the ludicrousness of a product reflects on the manufacturer, and Churchill transfers his blame accordingly to the "bards" who are all form and no content:

... who neither sing nor say,
Grave without thought, and without feeling gay...
(11. 59-60)

Thinking of such poets brings specific examples (Mason, Lyttelton) to Churchill's mind. Once on the level of particular writers, he cannot help offering himself in evidence as a contrary type: Churchill is the one whom "no judgment tempers when rash genius fires" (l. 80), who is

... thus ev'ry way unfit
For pacing poesy, and ambling wit...
(11. 89-90)

Finally come the lines beginning "Thou, Nature, art my goddess..." (93-110), which also serve to introduce the subject of Scotland. Churchill makes the transition seem logical, since in a "northern
clime" like Scotland nature still "reigns throughout the year" and is "undistur'd by Art's rebellious plan" (ll. 108-09).

This account of the first part of the poem makes it clear that Churchill abruptly gives over the ironic persona with which he begins. At first he is a crude, virtually too crude pastoral poet. Too crude, that is, because the transformation from Charles Churchill to bad pastoral poet is incomplete. Churchill undermines the irony by surrendering several times to the impulse to remind the reader that he is only pretending, that he of course is not serious. And before long he leaves pretense behind altogether, as he publicly analyzes his objections to pastoral. Here he goes from a general indictment of imitation as one kind of slavery to increasingly specific topics: the habit of imitating Theocritus and Virgil, the current sad state of English pastoral poetry, and finally, most specific of all, the subject of himself. All this time, of course, the "real" (and unironic) Churchill has been coming into better focus—has, within only fifty lines or so, become the opposite of what he was.

Having broached the theme of Scotland, Churchill turns to the main subject of the poem. This is the potentially dangerous position of England with respect to Scotland. Once again, Churchill's treatment is at first impersonal and ironic:

To that rare soil, where virtues clust'ring grow,  
What mighty blessings doth not ENGLAND owe,  
What waggon-loads of courage, wealth and sense,  
Doth each revolving day import from thence? (ll. 111-14)

Following the ironic premise that England owes Scotland
"mighty blessings," Churchill illustrates by citing some relatively harmless Scottish "imports," such as "that old, new, Epic Pastoral, Fingal" (l. 130) and a host of "simple bards, by simple prudence taught," who

In simple manner utter simple lays,  
And take, with simple pensions, simple praise. (ll. 135-38)

England, then, is indebted to Scotland—but for blessings which England could do without. In the lines just quoted, Churchill is beginning to sound like himself again. The pressure on the meaning of the word "simple" builds by repetition. When Churchill first uses it, in "simple bards," it means unspoiled or "natural" because his earlier assertion that Scotland harbors nature "undisturb'd" forces us to expect that meaning. By continuing to draw our attention to the word, however, and applying it each time to a slightly less appropriate noun ("manner ... lays ... pensions ... praise"), Churchill forces us to revise the original meaning. Now it means "simple minded," which is how Churchill actually intends to characterize the Scottish bards.

These few lines illustrate a typical maneuver in Churchill's satire by which the reader is made to contradict an ironic thesis. Churchill's reader, unlike the reader of a work such as the Modest Proposal, never has to call upon the external assistance of his own experience, values, or sense in order to refute an ironic but internally consistent argument. The argument that Scotland has blessed England can be refuted on its own terms, without having to go outside the work, simply because Churchill offers true evidence
to "support" (really to contradict) a false thesis. Scotland has
given England blessings, such as taking a share of her wealth (11.
117-18). In that way Churchill's irony does not prevent him from
directly criticizing Scotland, much as the mock heroic form of
Mac Flecknoe never interferes with its content of invective--never
keeps Dryden from calling Shadwell the names he really means to call
him.

Following a tribute to Wilkes (11. 149-78), Churchill shifts
his emphasis from England to Scotland in an attempt to develop a
reasonable or "candid" view of that nation. Still addressing Wilkes,
he makes a strange statement:

Oft have I heard thee mourn the wretched lot
Of the poor, mean, despis'd, insulted Scot,
Who, might calm reason credit idle tales,
By rancour forg'd where prejudice prevails,
Or starves at home, or practises, thro' fear
Of starving, arts which damn all conscience here.
When Scribblers, to the charge by int'rest led,
The fierce North-Briton foaming at their head,
Pour forth invectives, deaf to candour's call,
And, injur'd by one alien, rail at all;
On Northern Pisgah when they take their stand,
To mark the weakness of that Holy Land,
With needless truths their libels to adorn,
And hang a nation up to public scorn,
Thy gen'rous soul condemns the frantic rage,
And hates the faithful, but ill-natur'd, page.
(11. 179-94)

There is no irony here. Churchill, as he has done before, is
making large concession to the (ostensible) enemy on behalf of
Candour. The opposite of being candid is being ill-natured, and
Churchill goes so far as to say the North Briton is not candid
toward Scotland. Everything Churchill says in this passage is
perfectly true: the Scot is indeed "poor, mean, despis'd, insulted," and the English political writers do "hang a nation up to public scorn." If the Scots,

by low supple arts successful grown,  
. . . sapp'd our vigour to increase their own, (11. 199-200)

then Reason rightly should mobilize every resource of the English nation, including her writers, against the unjust robbery (11. 201-04). On the other hand,

If they revere the hand by which they're fed,  
And bless the donors for their daily bread, 
Or by vast debts of higher import bound, 
Are always humble, always grateful found, 
If they, directed by PAUL's holy pen, 
Become discreetly all things to all men, 
That all men may become all things to them, 
Envy may hate, but justice can't condemn. (11. 208-14)

All true enough, but Churchill's Pauline definition of a "just Scot" has become too exacting for anyone to fulfill in practical terms; hence the possibility that the Scots are being wronged becomes an ironic possibility. On this cue Churchill jestingly proposes to right the wrong, to "raise new trophies to the Scottish name" (1. 234).

At this point William Whitehead, "Folly's chief friend, Decorum's eldest son" (1. 257), breaks in to tell Churchill his theme is "too lofty for a bard so mean" (1. 261). The singer of the Scottish eclogue ironically submits, saying "Discretion beckons to an humbler scene" (1. 262). This turns out to be the rustic exchange between Jockey and Sawney which, together with the culminating prophecy of Famine, concludes the poem. So far in the poem Churchill's
persona has been constantly shifting. First he is the wretched pastoral poet, then himself (a hard critic of such poetry and a servant of his goddess Nature); next he pretends to defend Scotland by pointing out all the "blessings" that country has given England; but to this he adds a digressive tribute to Wilkes rendered in his own voice, which in fact carries over into the "candid" criticism of the way the Scots are blamed indiscriminately; and finally he returns to the original pose of pastoral poet—whose wretchedness, incidentally, is confirmed by the wretchedly non-idyllic subject he is forced to treat.

Up to now Churchill himself has been the principal "character" in the poem, just as he is in The Rosciad and for that matter in most of his poems. When he introduces Jockey and Sawney, however, he seems to withdraw from the scene and instead represent his warning to England dramatically. The poet stops speaking, commenting, analyzing, judging, and begins to transmit a "scene" to the audience without participating in it himself. The language, to use Suzanne Langer's terms, turns from "discursive" to "presentational.

Signalling this change is the sudden onrush of imagery in the (very well written) description of the cave of Famine:

All creatures, which, on nature's earliest plan,
Were form'd to loath, and to be loath'd by man,
Which ow'd their birth to nastiness and spite,
Deadly to touch, and hateful to the sight,
Creatures, which, when admitted in the ark,
Their Saviour shun'd, and rankled in the dark,
Found place within; marking her noisome road
With poison's trail, here crawl'd the bloated Toad;
There webs were spread of more than common size,
And half-starved spiders prey'd on half-starv'd flies;
In quest of food, Efts strove in vain to crawl;
Slugs, pinch'd with hunger, smear'd the slimy wall;
The cave around with hissing serpents rung;
On the damp roof unhealthy vapour hung,
And FAMINE, by her children always known,
As proud as poor, here fix'd her native throne.

(II. 319-34)

The dialogue between Jockey and Sawney (II. 343-402) parodies the opening scene of Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd, so that we know Churchill is maintaining his pose of the pastoral poet. The scene ends as Famine rises from her throne to offer the disheartened swains a promise of better times to come. Although we are "nature's bastards" (I. 425) and, like the Israelites, have wandered years in "a barren desert" (I. 449), soon

we shall seize rich plains
Where milk with honey flows, and plenty reigns.
With some few natives join'd, some pliant few,
Who worship int'rest, and our track pursue,
There shall we, tho' the wretched people grieve,
Ravage at large, nor ask the owner's leave. (II. 449-54)

In a sense this is not Famine's prophecy of a bright future so much as it is Churchill's prediction of a dismal one. The figure of Famine serves to objectify--seemingly--Churchill's reasoning about the consequences of growing Scottish influence in English politics, diplomacy, and trade. In lines 455-86, particularly, Famine is Churchill, with the only difference being that one approves of what is going to happen while the other does not.

The long speech of Famine, then, is a long speech of Churchill in that it mirrors his thinking. Occasionally, in fact, Famine loses some credibility as a dramatic character in exchange for assuming Churchill's point of view: twice, for example, Famine refers
to "traitors" in an impossible sense from the Scottish point of view (ll. 510, 517). Throughout the speech, moreover, Famine represents her plan for overthrowing the English in so brutally cynical a light that there is no mistaking whose feelings inform her words; it is a "snare" to catch the "fond" English (ll. 497-98), or an "engine of deceit" (l. 547).

Churchill has Famine spell out the plan completely, even to the extent of her calling it a dangerous threat to the English, so that nothing is left to the reader's power of inference. These readers are Englishmen, and the English, in Famine's own words, are foolishly unsuspecting "dupes" (l. 530). In this part of the poem, then, Churchill only seems to withdraw from the scene in which Famine is presented. The ironic persona of the pastoral poet is silently dropped as soon as the dialogue between Jockey and Sawney ends. Rather than impersonating someone else, as the ironist typically does, Churchill in effect has Famine impersonate him. Famine's speech itself is not ironic: she says in so many words what Churchill means. The only ironic distance between Famine and Churchill is in the discrepancy between each one's attitude toward the coming Scottish triumph—one saying "Rejoice!" and the other saying "Beware!" But as we have seen, even this distance closes at times.

If this poem seems structureless and digressive, as it does to most readers, it is because it so often reflects Churchill's real thinking instead of the ironically logical thinking of a fictive persona. The "rule" that Churchill follows more consistently than
any other is freedom of expression; the freest way of expressing your dislike of something is also the most direct. Indirect or ironic expression restrains the freedom of the poet by forcing him to imitate the thing he dislikes.

Churchill cultivates an ideal in which his first responsibility as a poet-satirist is to himself. He is always much more conscientious about registering his responses than about relating them or organizing them into a pattern. Organized responses focus attention on the object of satire instead of on the satirist. That is why the things that Churchill chooses to ridicule in his poems are so diverse: actors, poets, critics, popular superstition, Scotland, Hogarth, the Earl of Sandwich, pederasty, cosmopolitanism, systematic philosophy. The same thing applies in little to The Prophecy of Famine, which goes from pastoral parody to serious repudiation of the doctrine of imitation, to Churchill's own literary creed, to praise of a friend, to his fears about Scotland. This movement resembles more than anything else an association of ideas whose only unity is their common origin in the mind of one man.

The Dedication to the Sermons

This short, unfinished piece has drawn more than its share of attention, notably from Yvor Winters, who finds in it "a number of feelings belonging neither to irony nor to eulogy, but capable of joining with both."

Either because of or in spite of its length, the poem is Churchill's most serious attempt at sustaining an irony. For that reason it is something of an ideal test case.

Churchill had attacked William Warburton before in The Duellist,
lines 667-810. There he damns him as directly as he can: Warburton, he sums up, is "a false Saint, and true Hypocrite" (l. 810). In The Duellist Churchill writes as a political observer and the friend of Wilkes. But the occasion of writing a dedication to his sermons puts him in the much different, certainly unfamiliar role of a minister.

When Churchill opens the poem with "Health to great Gloster," he is of course saying something he does not mean. In other words, he assumes the persona of Warburton's eulogist. In most of his poems, by contrast, Churchill at least pretends to be himself. He may play various roles, such as critic of the actors (The Rosciad), critic of pastoral poetry (The Prophecy of Famine), or outraged moralist (The Times); but strictly speaking, these are not ironic poses but merely different aspects of the same man as he turns from one subject to another. In each case Churchill plays the role "straight."

The Dedication, therefore, is a departure from previous and more characteristic poems. Churchill begins by denying himself and his real feelings toward Warburton. The subject of Warburton is pretty well confined to lines 33-72, in which Churchill analyzes his "admiration" for the Bishop. The method here is to reject as reasons for his admiration all the outward appearances of Warburton's rank and attainments:

'Tis not thy Name, though that indeed is great,  
'Tis not the tinsel trumpery of state,  
'Tis not thy Title, Doctor tho' thou art,  
'Tis not thy Mitre, which hath won my heart. (11. 33-36)
By minimizing these and other conventional emblems of Warburton's right to be praised—his physical appearance, birth, ancestry—Churchill succeeds in stripping him down to the "inward Man" (l. 61), whose virtue thus becomes the answer to Churchill's question, "Why do I dedicate these sermons to you?". Naturally the effect of this is to put enormous pressure on the question of whether Warburton actually is virtuous.

Still keeping to the motif of a dedication, Churchill now begins to illustrate his "indebtedness" to Warburton as a mentor and an inspiring example. As a young man, Churchill says, I hoped to find in Warburton a guide who "might show me what is Taste, by what is not" (l. 104). But how could I think that this "virtuous" man,

the servant of his Maker sworn,
The servant of his Saviour, would be torn From their embrace, and leave that dear employ, The cure of souls, his duty and his joy, For toys like mine, and waste his precious time, On which so much depended, for a rime? (ll. 115-20)

Here the irony is becoming more obvious, since of course Warburton did "waste his precious time" on the "rimes" of Pope and Shakespeare.

The indirect ridicule which Churchill so far has managed to sustain collapses suddenly with this comment on Warburton's denunciation of Wilkes's Essay on Woman:

O Glorious Man, thy zeal I must commend, Tho' it depriv'd me of my dearest friend. The real motives of thy anger known, WILKES must the justice of that anger own; And, could thy bosom have been bar'd to view, Pityed himself, in turn had pitied you. (ll. 145-50)
The more that Churchill allows himself to refer to his own true feelings, as in calling Wilkes his "dearest friend," the more the strain on the irony grows. His commendation of Warburton's "zeal" becomes absurdly unbelievable when he adds that it "depriv'd me of my dearest friend." Praise finally turns into blame with "in turn had pitied you." Churchill is unable to resist publishing his discovery that Warburton's heart, when "bar'd to view," is indeed black.

Before the poem breaks off, Churchill issues Warburton a warning. By now the eulogist has completely disappeared, leaving in his place the Churchill who so despises the man he had so earnestly pretended to admire a moment ago. In this final passage Warburton is perched high (and precariously) atop the wheel of Fortune, and Churchill tells us that it is only "for want of smooth hypocrisy" that he must gaze up from below.

Let GLOSTER well remember, how he rose,
Nor turn his back on men who made him great;
Let Him not, gorg'd with pow'r, and drunk with state, Forget what once he was, tho' now so high;
How low, how mean, and full as poor as I. (ll. 176-80)

Here Churchill has returned to the Warburton of The Duellist—"gorg'd with pow'r, and drunk with state." The ironic dedication based on false values in Warburton ends as a serious warning which can only be justified by saying, in so many words, how false those values are.

It should be clear that irony as a mode of satire demands more from Churchill than he is willing to give. It particularly
requires him to give up the thing he wants most to express—his personality. Whenever he wants to ridicule something, then, his approach will inevitably be direct and as fully expressive of himself as possible. Even when the method does happen to be indirect, we have seen how sooner or later it must transform itself into invective in order to relieve the strain on his sense of personal freedom.

This personal element in Churchill's invective, in fact, is what distinguishes it from the lampoons and libels of much Restoration satire. The Poems on Affairs of State have a certain anonymity to them which is not at all typical of Churchill's productions. It would be very surprising, for example, to find one of the Restoration satirists giving his victim any credit where credit is due. Instead, of course, he usually ignores whatever redeeming qualities there are because the purpose of the lampoon, after all, is to make a case against someone. Churchill, on the other hand, is fond of giving some measure of praise along with the blame; usually he does this in a most self-conscious fashion. In the midst of all the invective of the Epistle to William Hogarth, for instance, he pauses long enough to offer "that Praise which Genius gives" (l. 549), the admiration due Hogarth as an artist if not as a man. This is a telling habit in Churchill, for it reveals something of his intense interest in painting a picture of himself. He is fully as concerned with communicating an idea of himself as satirist as he is with satirizing the world beyond himself.

The ironic satire that we associate so closely with Pope, Swift, and the Scriblerus Club is not designed to reveal the person-
ality of the satirist but instead to deal with the world. Irony implies two-way communication with a knowing audience, and for that reason does not lend itself to self-expression as invective does. Before two parties can communicate, they must have some third object (i.e., the world) about which to communicate; hence ironic satire is usually a means to an end that lies beyond satirist and audience alike. But invective, as Churchill proves, can be a means to a much different end; through this direct or "sincere" mode of satire, in fact, the satirist eventually may become his own principal subject.
NOTES TO CHAPTER III


3. English Satire (Cambridge, 1958), Chap. II.


5. Poems on Affairs of State, ed. Mengel, II, 205-08.


8. In Watson, II, 125-27.


15. Quoted in Knox, p. 172.


23. See Grant, p. 515.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

It seems reasonable to say that Pope and Swift lost their war to the superior numbers of the mob, and that the ultimate result in literature is what Paul Fussell calls "the collapse of satire under the soft assaults of sentimentalism, mercantilism, and egalitarianism."¹ This collapse is not instantaneous but gradual, consisting of a profound shift in the rationale of satire which, nevertheless, does not immediately call the genre itself into question. In terms of the mob-versus-the elite metaphor, the genre outlives its usefulness and necessity as a weapon of defense—even though the surviving conventions of the genre keep telling us how useful and necessary satire is.

Exhibit "A" for this change is of course Churchill, in whom "the professedly lofty principles and indignation of the satirical tradition ring hollow."² Churchill, in other words, recovers the form but not the spirit of Augustan satire. Without arguing against the truth of that I have tried to show what Churchill does do rather than what he does not do.

Churchill exemplifies the possibility of satire even though
the satirist is strongly sympathetic to many of the mob's own ideas, such as sentimentalism, mercantilism, and egalitarianism. Churchill, in fact, has no sense of the "mob." By now the "mob" is the "public," Pope or Swift might say that this word is merely the mob's name for itself, but for Churchill it definitely has good connotations. He opposes public and private in the same way that he opposes independence and interest or freedom and slavery. My interest, he says again and again, is the public interest. Any debts I have I owe to "a gen'rous PUBLIC," who

made me what I Am.
All that I have, They gave; just Mem'ry bears
The grateful stamp, and what I am is Theirs.
(The Conference, 11. 150-52)³

Thus while Churchill is no longer alive to the Augustan concept of a conservative intellectual aristocracy, he is very much alive to egalitarian, "public" ideas. The old dichotomy between true wit and false wit, or between the elite and the mob, becomes in his work a much different but equally fundamental distinction between men who are free and men who are slaves. This is a moral touchstone which provides the basis for making judgments on people, politics, art, criticism, philosophy, or virtually anything else.

The controlling idea of independence results in Churchill's insistence on his own freedom from any bias, his freedom to speak directly and "from the heart." By presenting himself as an absolutely independent satirist, a loyal member of no group except the English nation, Churchill is forced to create his own identity to a much greater extent than a satirist like Pope, whose identity is partly
established by his membership in the elite. And because Churchill argues from a created position rather than a known position, he must assert many of his values positively, without being able to depend on the reader to infer them negatively: hence the shift away from irony, which is a way the elite has of reassuring itself of the continued existence of its own identity and values.

In Churchill the satirist’s base of authority is no longer collective and traditional but instead is individual and independent. Now the satirist not only makes judgments but also must establish his authority for making them within the work, because the work is his only forum. That is why so much of Churchill’s satire is taken up with himself. It becomes as important to create his authority as it is to exercise it.

In order to do that, the satirist cannot debate his principles by rejecting alternatives, because the very introduction of these alternatives gives the reader a choice. Instead he has to project himself—his thinking, his attitudes, his very state of mind—onto the "scene" of his satire so thoroughly that his judgments seem to justify themselves. The reader can "see" the objects of Churchill’s satire only through Churchill’s eyes. How then can he disagree? Churchill effectively makes over reality in his own image, or at least in the image of his view of it. By means of the personified abstraction, for instance, he creates a kind of moral landscape designed to mirror his judgment.

Churchill immensely magnifies the role of the satirist in his own satire. The "I" of traditional formal verse satire becomes in
Churchill a voice of heroic or even monarchical proportions. The satirist's traditional office is judicial, not legislative: he is a judge who uses laws he does not make. By infusing that office with a new set of principles centering on the idea of independence, Churchill creates a satirist who is judge and legislator both, and whose main responsibility is to be true to himself. He "creates" as well as criticizes, asserts as well as denies.

Churchill's consciousness of this double function manifests itself as an effort to portray himself as the sort of satirist who is as generous with his praise as with his blame. By praising the enemy he deliberately distorts the traditional pattern of satire--from which praise is systematically excluded as beside the point--in order to make a point about himself. In many ways, for example, the *Epistle to William Hogarth* is a poem primarily about Charles Churchill the satirist;⁴ only incidentally does it touch on the subject of Hogarth. The same thing applies to the majority of his poems, in which the satire tends to reveal more about the satirist than about the object of the satire.

The purpose of Churchill's work as a whole is practically never consistent with respect to what is satirized, but nearly always so with respect to the satirist. The thematic preoccupations of Augustan satire are mostly negative, reflecting the qualities of the mob: dullness, "enthusiasm," hypocrisy, pride. Churchill's characteristic themes, on the other hand, are positive and work to define the character of the satirist: independence, freedom, honesty, patriotism, "native genius." The Augustan
satirists treat a few subjects exhaustively, such as dullness and hypocrisy; their satire verges on the "anatomy," in which the personality of the satirist is rigidly conventionalized and therefore not intrusive. But Churchill's satire might be called an anatomy of the satirist, who reveals all the sides of his personality by recording his reactions to a great number of otherwise unrelated subjects. Churchill offers a stream of satiric responses that mirror the satirist much more completely than his world.

Upon publishing The Rosciad, Churchill like Byron awoke to find himself famous. This more than any other biographical circumstance helps to explain the "egotistical" cast of Churchill's writing. For if a writer's work achieves much popularity, the public usually demands information about the writer himself. And in the case of controversial writing, such as satire, the demand may be very great: consider for example what intense curiosity develops (and persists!) when, as with Junius, the information is denied.

Churchill, however, seems to have been willing by nature to supply a public personality to go along with the widespread contemporary interest in his satires. Moreover, these complementary tendencies—one an external influence, the other internal—were undoubtedly sustained to some extent by an atmosphere, as R.S. Crane puts it, of "increased stress on the natural powers of the artist."

This is only an hypothesis, to be sure, but it does explain why "the Celebrated Charles Churchill" might be more likely to
create an elaborate persona than such a satirist as the not-so-celebrate Paul Whitehead. It is also a means of accounting for the direction of Churchill's development as a satirist: while in his earlier poems, particularly The Rosciad and The Ghost, the satirist intrudes relatively little, his later poems are increasingly preoccupied with who is satirizing rather than what is satirized. Certainly the reason can partly be attributed to the growth in Churchill's reputation. In this respect the development of Pope's satiric program is roughly analogous, in that his "personal" or apologetic poems come rather toward the end of his (also celebrated) career.

Churchill's relationship to later eighteenth century satire is difficult to assess. For one thing, the period between Churchill and Byron abounds in verse satires without at the same time abounding in relationships between them. An examination of one of the satirical miscellanies, such as The New Foundling Hospital for Wit (1769) or The School for Satire (1801), will show how various the form and subject of satire is at this time.

Churchill's direct influence on later satire is largely confined to the first twenty or thirty years after his death. Cowper, who thought highly of Churchill, modeled some of his own satires on Churchill's themes though not on his rhetorical strategy. On the whole, however, it is clear that Churchill as a satiric model is never a very significant force. In his study of this matter, Joseph M. Beatty concludes that by about 1783 "Churchill's posthumous influence upon the minor controversial writers . . . was
rapidly waning" (p. 170) and that "sustained satire in verse was
giving way to the pamphlet and to short satirical songs" (p. 171).

As for indirect relationships, on the other hand, some broad
characteristics of Churchill's satire appear also in later work.
Notable among these is a strong tendency--self-consciously strong
in Churchill himself--for the satirist to digress. This is a typical
distinction between Augustan and later eighteenth century satire,
and exemplifies a departure from the theoretical requirement of
formal satire by which the satirist is restricted to one subject.
William Mason's satires, 9 written mainly during the 1770's and early
1780's, are much like Churchill's in their lack of thematic unity.
His Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers (1772), for instance,
begins as an attack on the oriental style of gardening which
Chambers had advocated, but turns into miscellaneous political
ridicule of George III and his court.

Churchill's intense, professedly grave preoccupation with
momentous issues such as moral decay or the corruption of patriotism,
reappears to a degree in the poetry of the Anti-Jacobin, 10 most
prominently in the famous New Morality (1798). The objects of
Churchill's satire are sometimes overmatched by the Juvenalian
grandeur of his persona--in other words, his indignation has no
objective correlative--and the same thing is true of William
Gifford's satires against the Della Cruscan poets, The Baviad (1794)
and The Maeviad (1795).

Apart from such parallels as these, however, the satiric verse
written between 1765 and 1800 does not in the main reflect Churchill's
practice. Christopher Anstey's New Bath Guide (1766), for example, created an extremely popular type of genial anapestic satire on the order of Goldsmith's Retaliation (1774). Generally speaking there is an increasingly definite reaction away from general satire of vices and follies toward the indulgent mockery of particular foibles. One manifestation of this trend is the proliferation of burlesque and parody--burlesque of eighteenth century poetic genres like the Pindaric Ode, parodies of specific poems, as in the Probationary Odes (1785) by the Rolliad writers. Most of this is in the spirit of what C.W. Previté-Orton called "club-room pleasantry." And "the tendency of poetical burlesque was to concern itself more and more with the superficial and the trivial--to deal with the surfaces of ideas rather than to grapple with the ideas themselves." As for Churchill and Byron, the impression that they are closely related is much stronger than the actual evidence for such a relationship. In many ways they can certainly be compared: like Churchill, Byron had an aggressive sense of independence, was an ardent political liberal but a conscious admirer of the Augustan literary tradition, and prided himself on writing impulsively without revision.

Undoubtedly the most important sense in which Byron's satire is like Churchill's is in its subjective character. In Fuess's view, "the most conspicuous feature of Byron's satire . . . is the underlying personality of the author, too powerful and aggressive to be obscured or hidden." And a similar idea emerges from George M. Ridenour's study of the peculiar development of Byron's persona
in Don Juan. 16

Churchill and Byron both want to assert their individuality and freedom in their writing, but the crucial difference lies in the means to that end, in form and mode. While in Byron's satire the form and mode might be said to liberate his purpose, in Churchill something like the opposite happens. The one interferes with the other, and the split between his style and what he wants it to mean runs too deep to be patched over. He is capable of writing the heroic couplet as well as Dryden or Pope ever did, but unfortunately he does not also think their thoughts. He inherits and masters an idiom that is really no use to him, and the resulting strain is everywhere obvious. For that reason he will inevitably inspire a lefthanded kind of praise. "Where is the bold Churchill?" asks Garrick in a letter from Rome; "--what a noble ruin! When he is quite undone, you shall send him here, and he shall be shown among the great fragments of Roman genius. --Magnificent in ruin!" 17
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV


2. McKillop, English Literature from Dryden to Burns, p. 352.

3. Cf. this statement by Goldsmith in 1760: "At present, the few poets of England no longer depend on the great for subsistence; they have now no other patrons but the public, and the public, collectively considered, is a good and generous master" (The Citizen of the World, Letter LXXXIV, in The Works of Oliver Goldsmith, ed. J.W.M. Gibbs [London, 1908], III, 315-16).


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