DRYDEN'S TRANSLATIONS FROM OVID

by

DAVID WILLIAM HOPKINS

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Dryden seems to have enter'd as far into the Genius of Ovid as any of his Translators. That Genius has more of Equality with his own than Virgil's; and, consequently, his Versions of Ovid are more perfect than those of Virgil.

John Oldmixon (1728)

Dryden's poetical power appears most of all, perhaps in his translations; ... [The Fables] ... as they are the works of Dryden's which the most fasten themselves with interest upon a mind open to poetry and free from pre-conceived literary opinion, so do they seem to us to be, after all, those which a versed critic must distinguish as stamped, beyond the others, with the skilled ease, the flow as of original composition, the sustained spirit and force, and fervour - in short, by the mastery, and by the keen zest of writing.

John Wilson (1845)

Ovid, I keep repeating from one decade to another, is one of the most interesting of all enigmas - if you grant that he was an enigma at all.

Ezra Pound (1938)

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PREFACE

The main purpose of this thesis is to offer a preliminary critical exploration of the verse translations which John Dryden made from the Roman poet, Publius Ovidius Naso. These translations run to over 7000 lines of verse, most of which was written in the last decade of the poet's life, but apart from one short article there has been, as far as I know, no study specifically devoted to them. Indeed, the sum total of modern critical commentary of any sort on Dryden's Ovid could be collected in a very few pages.

The main focus of my thesis, as will become clear, is on Dryden rather than on Ovid. But I have also attempted to go some way towards defining the kinds of appeal which Ovid seems to have had for Dryden, and the distinctive qualities in Ovid's verse which the finished translations reveal him to have enjoyed. I have also tried to account for at least some of the factors in Dryden's own development which might have particularly attracted him to the Ovidian mode.

The writer on translation can approach his task in various ways. One way (perhaps the traditional one) is for the commentator first to establish an independent sense of what the original is like - by reading the original texts for himself, plus the scholarly commentators on those texts - and then to use this independently-derived sense as a means whereby to judge the merits and fidelity (or otherwise) of the translation. For reasons set out at greater length in Chapter One, I do not think that this method is an entirely satisfactory one. First, it often tends to imply that the commentator feels himself to have a superior command of the words, tones and implications of the original than had the translator. Second, it often tends to preclude the possibility that a great translation might, potentially, reveal more to us about its original than the body of

scholarly commentary on that original. In rendering a particularly problematic text, that is, a translator might have made sense of qualities and features of that text which had consistently puzzled those who have attempted to comment on it discursively.

But once one has rejected some aspects of what I have called the traditional approach to the study of translation, then one is faced with considerable problems of one's own. If, for example, in judging the qualities of a translation, one relies over-much on a faith that the translator can reveal hitherto unrecognised beauties in the original, then one runs the risk of presupposing that wherever the translator is excellent then the original must also be excellent, and, moreover, in a similar way. The argument, that is, can easily become circular: qualities which are 'revealed' by the translator are automatically imputed to the original, and the translation is thereby judged to be a faithful one. But a translator, of course, may be using his original (consciously or unconsciously) as a springboard for what is substantially an act of independent creation. A translation, that is, can have qualities which, however excellent themselves, are quite unlike those of its original.

I have tried (no doubt, not always with equal success) to avoid the pitfalls of both the methods outlined above by steering a middle course. I have tried to be open to qualities in Ovid (both positive and negative) which Dryden's versions might reveal to us, while constantly applying, as 'controls', the prose remarks of Dryden himself, the comments of his contemporaries, the renderings of other translators, and the commentaries of modern Ovid and Dryden scholars, when discussing his renderings. I have also made, on several occasions, a direct critical appeal to the Latin text of Ovid itself. My hope is that via this rather eclectic method I can

perhaps overcome at least some of the paradoxes and problems which face anyone attempting to discuss verse translation.

In the paragraphs which follow, I give a brief account of the overall argument of the thesis.

Dryden's translations, from the Classical poets and Chaucer, were once thought to be the crowning achievement of a poetical oeuvre that was itself generally admired and loved as something more pleasurably diverse and profound than it usually seems to modern readers and commentators. Dryden's versions from Ovid span the full length of his career as a translator (from 1680 to 1700) and thus provide a unique opportunity to observe the development and maturing of his translating art, and his constantly-evolving relationship with a single ancient author.

Dryden had read Ovid from boyhood and, like some Roman critics and many of his own predecessors and contemporaries, both passionately admired him and also expressed strong reservations about his constant use of verbal wit (sometimes in situations in which wit seems quite out of place) and his prolixity. Dryden's first versions from Ovid, three contributions to a composite translation of the Heroides published as Ovid's Epistles in 1680, do little to convince a sceptical reader of the high claims he was making for Ovid as a portrayer of female passion, since their wit often seems cold and callous (or merely tedious wordplay) and they manifest a declamatory stiffness which is reminiscent of some of the female speeches in Dryden's less successful plays.

But in the early 1680's Dryden was both extending his thought about the art of translation (particularly through his friendship with the Earl of Roscommon and his business partnership with the publisher Jacob Tonson) and was also reflecting critically on some aspects of his own earlier

career, particularly his capitulation, in some of his works, to what he now thought to be the debased tastes of a court audience. This period of comprehensive self-examination bore fruit most obviously in the two religious poems, Religio Laici and The Hind and the Panther, but its effects can also be seen, more indirectly, but no less importantly, in the series of fine translations which he included in the miscellany Sylvae (1685), a volume in which his further pondering on the art of translation also showed to great advantage. In the translations included in this volume Dryden reveals himself as a philosophical poet with large speculative interests.

When Dryden extended his translating activities (now his major source of income) after the collapse of his public career in 1688, he returned to Ovid, translating, in the early 1690's, two of the Amores, the first book of the Art of Love and several episodes from Ovid's greatest poem, the Metamorphoses. There is evidence that the latter were intended as contributions to a complete English translation of the poem by several hands (a project not realised until after Dryden's death). These translations reveal that Dryden was now able to see a greater diversity of interest in the Roman poet, and particularly in his distinctive mode of wit, than he had been capable of in 1680. Ovid's amatory poems were used not, as perhaps might have been expected, as an excuse for exercises in salacious rakishness à la Dorset and Sedley, but as a means to writing witty poems which examine in a searching and various way the vagaries of lovers' behaviour. The episodes from the Metamorphoses show Dryden's growing interest in Ovid's 'fancy' - a mode of consciously artificial verse whose playful wit is, nevertheless, not merely redundant wordplay but a way of creating unusual perspectives on reality. They also reveal

Dryden's interest in the figures of the Classical gods as a means of embodying important, and sometimes subversive, insights into human sexuality.

These various interests are developed and extended in Dryden's last volume, Fables Ancient and Modern (1700). Some of the Ovidian versions in this volume (they are all taken from the Metamorphoses) seem to reflect the difficulties of the Ovidian manner with which Dryden was still wrestling in his prose criticism, and can only be regarded as partial successes as English poems. But in the best of these translations Dryden amply justifies the enthusiasm with which they were greeted by earlier critics. In particular, he has treated with a tact and tenderness of which Restoration poets have seldom been thought capable the predicament of Myrrha, a girl consumed with incestuous passion for her own father; he has portrayed with loving detail and warm humour the domestic life of the devoted old couple Baucis and Philemon; he has captured, in the story of Ceyx and Alcyone, the strange blend (perhaps the special preserve of Ovid) of wit and pathos, tenderness and humour, distance and sympathy and of serenity in the face of disaster which is nevertheless not merely callous indifference; and in Of the Pythagorean Philosophy he has rendered a passage from Ovid's fifteenth book with an assurance and dignity which reveals it as a profound meditation on metamophosis and immortality which also has implications for Dryden himself, the refashioner and re-incarnation of the wisdom of the past.

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My specific debts to previous scholarship, published and unpublished, are recorded in the footnotes and bibliography to the thesis itself. I wish to acknowledge here the help of a more general kind which I have received in the course of my work.

Mr. H.A.Mason first stimulated my interest, when I was an undergraduate, in the relations between Classical and English literature. His work has continued to be a major source of ideas, and he provided me with some most helpful guidance in the early stages of my research. The late Professor J.C.Maxwell gave me the opportunity to publish some of my factual 'finds' and applied his exacting editorial eye to my work. I have greatly benefitted from many informal conversations about Dryden and related matters with Dr. Tom Mason, Mr. Richard Bates, and my colleague, Mr. Charles Tomlinson. I am also generally indebted to Dr. Mason's thesis, Dryden's Chaucer, particularly in Chapters 1 (i), 3 (v) and 7. Professor Arthur Humphreys and Professor Philip Collins have both given me helpful advice and encouragement of various kinds.

I am particularly indebted to Dr.Lois Potter, my research supervisor, for the shrewdness, kindness and patience with which she has helped me in the preparation of the thesis.

A Note on Texts, Quotations and Abbreviations

In the absence, at the time of writing, of a complete, uniform, modern critical edition of Dryden's writings, I have decided to quote Dryden's poems and (where possible) his critical Prefaces and Dedications from James Kinsley's Oxford English Texts edition (4 vols., Oxford, 1958), the letters from C.E.Ward's edition (1942; rpt. New York, 1965) and other Dryden works from the second edition of Sir Walter Scott's The Works of John Dryden (18 vols., Edinburgh, 1821). These three editions are regularly abbreviated as, respectively, Kinsley, Ward, Letters, and Scott. To avoid excessive fussiness of annotation, I simply supply line-references where there is no possibility of confusion over the poem or preface from which the quotation in question is taken. References are given, where possible, after quotations.

Ovid is regularly quoted from the second edition of Borchard Cnipping's Variorum (3 vols., Amsterdam, 1683), one of the editions used by Dryden. I had originally intended to include an appendix providing for the reader of English literature (to whom the thesis is primarily addressed) plain prose translations of the many Latin quotations appearing in the text, but this came to seem an unnecessary luxury since, unlike those of some of the other Classical authors he translated, the texts of Ovid used by Dryden differ so little from modern texts that the English reader using a Loeb edition in conjunction with the passages quoted will seldom be seriously misled. Again, I give merely line-references where no possibility of confusion would ensue.

Sandy's Ovid is quoted (unless otherwise stated) from the folio edition of 1632, Dr.Johnson from the 'New Edition' of Arthur Murphy's Works of Samuel Johnson (12 vols., London, 1824, abbreviated as Murphy), and Montaigne's Essays from the translation of Charles Cotton (3 vols.,

London, 1685-1711). References in this last case are to Book and number of the Essay rather than to volume and page.

The following abbreviations are also regularly employed in text and footnotes :

Aen.	Virgil, Aeneid
Am.	Ovid, Amores
A.A.	Ovid, Ars Amatoria
California	The Works of John Dryden, ed. E.N.Hooker, H.T.Swedenberg Jr., et al. (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1956-), to be completed in 20 vols.
Cnipping	P. Ovidius Naso, Opera, ed. B.Cnipping (2nd.ed., 3 vols., Amsterdam, 1683)
Crispinus	P. Ovidius Naso, Opera, ed. D.Crispinus (4 vols., Lyons, 1689)
F.Q.	Spenser, Faerie Queene
Her.	Ovid, Heroides
Met.	Ovid, Metamorphoses
Noyes	The Poetical Works of Dryden, ed. G.R.Noyes (1909, rev., Cambridge, Mass., 1950)
P.L.	Milton, Paradise Lost
Ward, Life	C.E.Ward, The Life of John Dryden, (Chapel Hill, 1961)

Standard abbreviations are used for the titles of periodicals.

CHAPTER ONE :

'DRYDEN THE TRANSLATOR'

Chapter One : 'Dryden the Translator'

(i) 'Journalist in verse' or 'poet of comprehensive speculation'? Some modern and earlier opinions of the character and quality of Dryden's work.

(ii) 'Beyond "translation-theory"' : Dryden's principles and practice as a translator.

(iii) Is verse-translation possible?

(i) 'Journalist in verse' or 'poet of comprehensive speculation'? Some modern and earlier opinions of the character and quality of Dryden's work

> I should say then that there is a kind of orthodoxy about the relative greatness and importance of our poets, though there are very few reputations which remain completely constant from one generation to another. No poetic reputation ever remains exactly in the same place: it is a stock market in constant fluctuation. There are the very great names which only fluctuate, so to speak, within a narrow range of points: whether Milton is up to 104 today, and down to 97½ to-morrow, does not matter. There are other reputations like that of Donne, or Tennyson, which vary much more widely, so that one has to judge their value by an average taken over a long time; ... There are certainly some poets, whom so many generations of people of intelligence, sensibility and wide reading have liked, that (if we like any poetry) it is worth our while to try to find out why these people have liked them, and whether we cannot enjoy them too.
>
> T.S.Eliot, 'What is Minor Poetry?'

It is notoriously difficult, for obvious reasons, to characterise with any accuracy the standing of a particular writer in the eyes of the general reading public at any time, but one would seem to be on fairly safe ground if one observed that, among non-specialist readers of poetry, Dryden is perhaps currently (with the possible exception of Spenser) the least read and least admired of all those who have at any time been considered worthy to be ranked among our few greatest poets.

It is true, of course, that a large amount of academic research has been devoted to Dryden, as to most other English writers, during this century, and this research has done much to establish important details of the author's biography, sources, and literary relations, and to collect information about the intellectual contexts of his work. But it is also true, I believe, that the terms in which the overall character and quality of Dryden's work are commonly described, and the kinds of claims which are

made for him as an artist, have in fact changed very little from those which were current in the earlier years of this century. There exists, that is, a 'common coin' of Dryden criticism which has remained substantially intact since the account of his work set out in Mark Van Doren's study of 1920 was given endorsement first by T.S.Eliot and then by F.R.Leavis, the two critics whose work has perhaps been more influential than that of any other writers on this side of the Atlantic in establishing the map of English literary history for the last three generations of readers and students.

The account of Dryden's distinctive talents which is offered by what I have called this 'common coin' of Dryden criticism can perhaps be summed up, rather baldly (but not, I think, too unfairly) as follows :

1. The quality of Dryden's verse approximates to the qualities of good prose. It is 'the poetry of statement', with a clarity and ratiocinative cleverness, and an incisive satirical wit, but it lacks the subtlety and suggestiveness that is such an essential quality of the verse of those English poets whom we most admire.
2. His best work is to be found in the satires and controversial poems of the 1680's, particularly Absalom and Achitophel. These were the poems which offered his talents their most appropriate outlet, and his other works are at their most interesting at those moments where they most closely resemble them. His mind was only fully activated by the actual events and personalities of his day, or by contemporary cross-currents of ideas. His notions of Civilisation were formed not (as those, for example, of Ben Jonson had been) by communing with

the best minds of all ages, and conceiving of Civilisation as a lofty ideal to which we can only aspire, but by his experience of the world in which he actually lived and wrote.

3. Dryden is at his weakest in the portrayal of human passion, particularly love, and in his lack of appreciation of the beauties of inanimate nature. Here his touch is at its coarsest, and is an unfortunate symptom of the coarse phase of our culture with which he was associated.

Such an account of Dryden's talents, or something very similar to it, is offered by Van Doren's book , and confirmed by the essays of T.S.Eliot and F.R.Leavis, and, with some notable exceptions, it is still an account which, it seems, can command substantial assent today.[1] This can be seen, for instance, in these remarks from the introduction to a selection from Dryden's verse made in 1973 by the late W.H.Auden, a poet whose talents have sometimes been compared to those of Dryden himself. Auden's remarks are, on his own admission, little more than a summary of those to be found in Van Doren's book, written over fifty years before:

1. The various essays and reviews by Eliot and Leavis containing commentary on Dryden are listed in my Bibliography. Leavis' essays over the years have shown, I think, an increasing lack of sympathy for Dryden.
There have been some very recent signs of a revival of interest in the translations, as being of central importance in Dryden's work. Specialist studies of this aspect of Dryden will be mentioned in the course of the following chapters. But see also the following remarks by general critics : Charles Tomlinson, 'The Poet as Translator', T.L.S., April 22, 1977, pp.474-5, J.Arthos, ed., Selected Poetry of John Dryden (New York, 1970), p.xvi; Earl Miner, The Restoration Mode from Milton to Dryden (Princeton, 1974), p.556; J.B.Broadbent, ed., Signet Classic Poets of the Seventeenth Century (New York and London, 1974), I, 10,345.

> Dryden...has no imaginative insight into violent personal emotions, such as sexual love. ... he shows no concern for non-human nature in the Wordsworthian sense... he lacks what I would call Fantasy... His lines have no undertones, as Pope's often have: they mean exactly what, on first reading, they seem to say. He is the ideal poet to read when one is weary, as I often am, of Poetry with a capital P, ... [Dryden's] imagination was excited by actual occasions, almost any occasion, and Dryden is, without any doubt, the greatest Occasional Poet in English.[1]

A similar damning of Dryden with faint praise can be found in the words of an anonymous reviewer in The Times Literary Supplement commenting on a recent study of the poet :

> Dryden is easier to admire than to like. His versatility is remarkable, his energy impressive, but his sensibility, by comparison with that of his seventeenth-century forebears seems coarsened and his neoclassical principles limiting.[2]

1. W.H.Auden, ed., A Choice of Dryden's Verse (London, 1973), pp.8-9.
2. T.L.S., 12th April, 1974, p. 394.

As has recently been pointed out, what one might call the 'Van Doren/Eliot view' of Dryden, far from being the comprehensive revaluation that it claimed and seemed to be at the time, now looks, with the advantage of hindsight, all-too-much like a confirmation, rather than a rejection, of the view of Dryden held by his Victorian and Edwardian detractors.[1] This view, of course, had been formulated most famously, and perhaps most influentially, by Matthew Arnold in his essay 'The Study of Poetry' when he wrote that the poetry of Dryden and Pope was 'the poetry of the builders of an age of prose and reason', and that while Dryden was undoubtedly a man of 'such energetic and genial power' and 'in a certain sense' a 'master of the art of versification' he was, nevertheless, with Pope, a classic of our prose rather than of our poetry.[2] Eliot, like Auden after him, explicitly rejected Arnold's judgement, several times insisted that Dryden was 'much more than a satirist' and claimed that his poems contain 'qualities not confined to satire and wit, and present in the work of other poets to whom these persons [i.e. lovers of nineteenth century verse] feel that they understand', yet the terms in which he presents his conclusions, while they intend to carry an altogether different valuation, seem in fact very close to Arnold's :

1. On this subject, see D.J.Latt and S.H.Monk, John Dryden : A Survey and Bibliography of Critical Studies, 1895-1974 (Minneapolis, 1976), p.9.
2. Originally the introduction to T.H.Ward's English Poets (4 vols., London, 1880), and reprinted in Essays in Criticism : Second Series (London, 1888).

> Dryden, with all his intellect, had a commonplace mind. His powers were, we believe, wider, but no greater than Milton's; he was confined by boundaries as impassable, though less strait. ... Dryden's words, ...are precise, they state immensely, but their suggestiveness is often nothing. ... Dryden lacked what his master Jonson possessed, a large and unique view of life; he lacked insight, he lacked profundity.[1]

'Eliot', remarks a recent commentator, Professor D.J.Latt,

> ... finally agrees [with Van Doren] that Dryden's is a poetry of statement, which though it satisfies by the "completeness of the statement" is deficient in suggestiveness. Dryden should be read, Eliot says, as his work "is one of the tests of a catholic appreciation of poetry".[2]

'There is', Professor Latt concludes, dryly and pertinently, 'something of a bitter pill rationale in Eliot's revitalisation of interest in Dryden'.

Similarly, F.R.Leavis followed Van Doren in describing Dryden's poetry as 'the poetry of statement' and in expressing the view that Dryden is the great 'representative poet' of an age which failed to make 'any essential distinction between a poetic use of language and the prose use'.[3] Dryden, moreover, Leavis argued, lacked 'spiritual antennae' for the 'ideal community' to which Ben Jonson as a poet aspired, and had the confidence of 'the brilliant writer who knows he has the world with him, who feels himself to be the voice of the new triumphant spirit of civilisation'.[4] Of particular significance for the present context is the way in which Leavis concludes his account of the manner whereby, in <u>All for Love</u>, Dryden had replaced the 'concreteness' and 'evoked and re-enacted life' of Shakespeare's blank verse in <u>Antony and Cleopatra</u>

1. 'John Dryden', <u>Selected Essays</u> (London, 1932), pp.307, 305, 314-316.
2. Latt and Monk, <u>John Dryden</u>, p.9.
3. <u>English Literature in Our Time and the University</u> (London, 1969), p.99.
4. <u>Revaluation</u> (1936; rpt. Harmondsworth, 1964), p.34.

with 'a uniform elocutionary decorum' in which 'the prose-idea has come first and the work of the image is to present it poetically'. Dryden here appears, Leavis argues, as 'a highly skilled craftsman, working at his job from the outside', and he concludes with the reflection that, in comparison with Milton, Dryden is a 'safer' case with which to convince a reader of the justness of Eliot's theory of a 'dissociation of sensibility' in late seventeenth-century poetic language, since

> ... you will not surprise or displease anyone who matters if you say that All for Love is a better play than Antony and Cleopatra, no one is touchy about Dryden.[1]

As Eliot himself remarked in the paragraph quoted at the head of this chapter, it is always salutary and instructive (if we wish to avoid complacency, and to be sure that we are not merely the inert recipients of the conventional wisdom of our own day) to compare the present state of a poet's reputation with the ways in which that poet was read and enjoyed in the past. It may well be, of course, that the effect of doing this in any particular instance will serve to confirm us in our present view, and to convince us that the poet in question was unjustly over- or under- valued (whichever the case may be) by his earlier readers, and that the passage of time has simply created conditions for arriving at a juster verdict. It seems unlikely, for example, that Quarles, or Sylvester, or even James Thompson will ever regain the esteem in which they were once held by very many readers. Conversely, we are unlikely to feel that the comparative oblivion in which the works of both Donne and Marvell rested for many years is liable to affect the substantially

1. English Literature in Our Time ... , p.92.

higher regard which we have for those two writers. It is also surely possible, however, that surveying the critical reception which an author's work met with in the past might alert us to qualities and possibilities in his work which recent shifts in taste or readers' preoccupations have caused to be obscured. We might, that is, by attending to the admiring comments of a writer's earlier critics, be enabled to recapture some of their enthusiasm, and perhaps also to see certain limitations in our own view of that author.

To turn from twentieth-century Dryden criticism to the remarks of Dryden's eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century admirers is to be confronted with quite a different conception of the poet's talents and qualities, and of the kinds of pleasure that his work offers. Perhaps the most striking difference that exists between what can be called (in a convenient, but not altogether accurate, shorthand) the 'eighteenth-century Dryden' and the 'modern Dryden' lies in the selection from Dryden's _oeuvre_ which was then, and is now, considered to represent him at his best and most characteristic. It is nowadays quite common for critics to refer confidently to _Absalom and Achitophel_ as 'Dryden's greatest poem' without feeling the need to argue or justify that valuation, and the overwhelming majority of scholarly books and articles and student selections from his work concentrate on the political and religious verse of the 1680's. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, Dryden's best and most characteristic works were thought, by nearly all his admirers, to be the Ode _Alexander's Feast_ and the late translations, particularly those included in his last volume, _Fables Ancient and Modern_.

A general conception of how Dryden's work was formerly received can be built up from the writings of many of his earlier admirers, starting with the volumes of elegies which appeared on his death in 1700.[1] It has for some time been recognised that, while early nineteenth-century readers had often felt various kinds of reservations about the poetry of Dryden and Pope, the open condemnation of the two poets' work visible in Arnold's essay was in fact a late-Victorian phenomenon, rather than something to be associated with the advent of Romanticism.[2] And recent work has also shown, for example, that Dryden's versions of Chaucer (which are nowadays often thought of as conclusive proof of the limitations of his sensibility, and of the degree to which his vision was restricted by neoclassical blinkers) were read and admired long after the work of such scholars as Morell and Tyrwhitt had made it possible for the original text of the Canterbury Tales to be read in much the form in which it is read today.[3] It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, to find this warm and vigorous commendation being written as late as 1845 by John Wilson,

1. As well as the two collections of elegies, Luctus Britannici : or the Tears of the British Muses; for the Death of John Dryden, Esq., and The Nine Muses. Or, Poems written by Nine Severall Ladies upon the Death of the Late Famous John Dryden, Esq., there were three individual poems published in 1700 : The Patentee (anonymous), Charles Brome's To the Memory of Mr. Dryden, and Alexander Oldys' An Ode, by way of Elegy.
2. On this subject, see U.Amarasinghe, Dryden and Pope in the Early Nineteenth Century : A Study of Changing Literary Taste, 1800-1830 (Cambridge, 1962) and H.G.Wright, 'Some sidelights on the Reputation and Influence of Dryden's Fables', R.E.S., 21 (1945), 23-27.
3. See T.A.Mason, Dryden's Chaucer (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1978). In Chapter 2 of this thesis, 'The Early Reputation of Dryden's Chaucer Poems', Dr.Mason has conducted an exhaustive study of the later reputation of the Fables, to which I am indebted in these pages.

a critic who had done perhaps more than any other single reviewer to champion the poetry of Wordsworth, and who thus was in the van of that movement in taste which (according to such commentators as Mark Pattison) had ousted the Augustans almost overnight.[1]

> Dryden's poetical power appears most of all, perhaps, in his translations; and his translation of the most vulgar renown is that which unites his name to that of the great Roman epopeist; but it is not his greatest achievement. The tales modernised and paraphrased from Chaucer, and those filled up into poetical telling from Boccaccio, as they are the works of Dryden's which the most fasten themselves with interest upon a mind open to poetry and free from preconceived literary opinion, so do they seem to us to be, after all, those which a versed critic must distinguish as stamped, beyond the others, with the skilled ease, the flow as of original composition, the sustained spirit, and force and fervour - in short, by the mastery, and by the keen zest of writing. They are the works of his more than matured mind - of his waning life; and they show a rare instance of a talent so steadfastly and perseveringly self-improved, as that, in life's seventh decennium, the growth of Art overweighed the detriment of Time. But, in good truth, no detriment of time is here perceptible; youthful fire and accomplished skill have the air of being met in these remarkable pieces.

The combination of precision and gusto in Wilson's remarks, and in many other such remarks in the set of articles from which they come, show that they are deeply felt. Yet at the same time they could almost be described as an epitome of the eighteenth-century conception of Dryden.

1. Wilson's remarks come from a series of articles entitled North's Specimens of the British Critics which first appeared in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine in eight instalments during 1845 (Vol.57, pp.133-158, 369-400, 503-528, 617-646, 771-793, Vol.58, pp.114-128, 229-256, 366-388). They were collected in book form in Philadelphia in 1846.

The volumes of elegies on Dryden's death, for example, are full of expressions of the idea that Dryden's latest work miraculously combined 'youthful fire and accomplished skill' :

> His inexhausted Force knew no decay,
> In spite of Years his Muse grew young and gay
> And vig'rous, like the Patriarch of old,
> His last born Joseph cast in finest Mold:
> This Son of Sixty Nine surpassing fair;
> With any elder Offspring may compare;[1]

Congreve, introducing his new collected edition of Dryden's plays in 1717, wrote that

> [Dryden's] Parts did not decline with his Years: But... he was an improving Writer to his last, even to near seventy Years of Age; improving in Fire and Imagination, as well as in Judgement: Witness his Ode on St. Cecilia's Day, and his Fables, his latest performances.[2]

And Sir Samuel Garth, in the same year, remarked that

> ...as his earlier Works wanted no Maturity, so his latter wanted no Force, or Spirit.[3]

Some years earlier, Pope had written to Wycherley that

> ... those Scribblers who attack'd him in his latter times, were only like Gnats in a Summer's evening, which are never very troublesome but in the finest and most glorious Season: (for his fire, like the Sun's, shin'd clearest towards its setting)[4]

Similarly, Joseph Warton was convinced that 'The older he grew, the better Dryden wrote',[5] and felt that

1. Charles Brome, To the Memory of Mr. Dryden. A Poem (London, 1700),p.9.
2. William Congreve, The Mourning Bride, etc., ed. B.Dobrée (Oxford, 1928), pp. 482-3.
3. Ovid's Metamorphoses, in Fifteen Books. Translated by the Most Eminent Hands (London, 1717), p.xx.
4. Alexander Pope, Correspondence, ed. G.Sherburn (5 vols., Oxford, 1956), I, 2. cf. Luctus Britannici, p. 18 :
   > Thus when the Sun dart's up its Western Rays,
   > Tho not so warm, it cast's a brighter blaze:
5. The Works of Alexander Pope, with Notes and Illustrations by Joseph Warton D.D. and Others (9 vols., London, 1797), IV, 226.

> It is to his fables, though wrote in his old age,
> that Dryden will owe his immortality, ... the
> warmth and melody of these pieces, has never
> been excelled in our language, ...[1]

In a poem published in 1706, Jabez Hughes had expressed the view that Dryden's talents were visible in his last works with more fullness and clarity than ever before :

> As years advance, the abated soul, in most,
> Sinks to low ebb, in second childhood lost;
> And spoiling age, dishonouring our kind,
> Robs all the treasures of the wasted mind;
> With hovering clouds obscures the muffled sight,
> And dim suffusion of enduring night:
> But the rich fervour of his rising rage,
> Prevailed o'er all the infirmities of age;
> And, unimpaired by injuries of time,
> Enjoyed the bloom of a perpetual prime.
> His fire not less, he more correctly writ,
> With ripened judgement, and digested wit;
> When the luxuriant ardour of his youth,
> Succeeding years had tamed to better growth,
> And seemed to break the body's crust away,
> To give the expanded mind more room to play;
> Which, in its evening, opened on the sight,
> Surprising beams of full meridian light;
> As thrifty of its splendour it had been
> And all its lustre had reserved till then.[2]

Sir Walter Scott, similarly, felt that the Fables displayed 'all the humorous expression of his satirical poetry without its personality' and John Aikin wrote that, in the Fables, Dryden's genius 'sports at ease, free from the shackles of a political or polemical task'.[3]

1. Joseph Warton, Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope (4th edn., 2 vols., London, 1782), II, 12.
2. Jabez Hughes, 'Verses Occasion'd by Reading Mr. Dryden's Fables', Scott, XVIII, 227-233.
3. Scott, I, 499. See also Fables from Boccaccio and Chaucer by John Dryden. A New Edition, with... A Prefatory Essay by J.Aikin, M.D. (London, 1806), p.iii. In Volume 2 of his Life of Scott (7 vols., Edinburgh, 1837-8), J.G.Lockhart also spoke of 'Dryden's prostitution of his genius to the petty bitternesses of political warfare' (p. 164).

Dryden's earlier admirers also saw him as a humanist, a distiller and transmitter to British readers of the wisdom of past ages and foreign cultures. 'It is uncertain', wrote Garth (paraphrasing 'that Compliment which was made to Monsieur d'Ablancourt, a celebrated French Translator'), 'who have the greatest Obligations to Him, the Dead or the Living', and Charles Brome thought that Dryden had 'naturalised' the best poets of the ancient world for English readers :

> No Art, no Hand but his could e'er bring home,
> The noblest choicest Flow'rs of Greece and Rome;
> Transplant them with sublimest Art and Toil,
> And make them flourish in a British soil.
> Whatever Ore he cast into his Mold
> He did the dark Philosophy unfold,
> And by a touch converted all to Gold.[1]

This sentiment is repeated again and again in the elegies on Dryden's death, in poems by Congreve and Addison, and in these lines by Lord Lansdowne :

> As Britain in rich soil, abounding wide,
> Furnish'd for use, for luxury, and pride,
> Yet spreads her wanton sails on every shore
> For foreign wealth, insatiate still of more,
> To her own wool the silks of Asia joins,
> And to her plenteous harvests, Indian mines:
> So Dryden, not contented with the fame
> Of his own works, though an immortal name,
> To lands remote, sends forth his learned Muse,
> The noblest seeds of foreign wit to choose;
> Feasting our sense so many various ways,
> Say, is't thy bounty, or thy thirst of praise?
> That by comparing others, all might see,
> Who most excell'd, are yet excell'd by thee.[2]

1. Ovid's Metamorphoses (1717), p.xx; Charles Brome, To the Memory of Mr. Dryden, p.8.
2. See William Congreve, 'To Mr. Dryden, on his Translation of Persius', Joseph Addison, 'To Mr. Dryden' (both 1693). The two poems are conveniently reprinted in J. & H. Kinsley, eds., Dryden : the Critical Heritage (London, 1971), pp.205-6, 213-4. See also George Granville, Lord Lansdowne, 'To My Friend, Mr.John Dryden, On his Several Excellent Translations of the Ancient Poets', The Works of the English Poets, ed. A.Chalmers (21 vols., London, 1810), XI,33.

Where modern critics, as we have seen, often dismiss Dryden's depiction of human passion altogether as frigid and forced, his earlier admirers claimed that in certain circumstances he could be a master of the subject. Dr. Johnson, for instance, commented that while Dryden could not depict 'the Love of the Golden Age', that is 'Love, as it subsists in itself, with no tendency but to the person loved, and wishing only for correspondent kindness; such love as shuts out all other interest', he <u>could</u> conceive of love

> ... in its turbulent effervescence with some other desires; when it was inflamed by rivalry, or obstructed by difficulties: when it invigorated ambition, or exasperated revenge.
>
> (Murphy, IX, 434)

Scott confirmed Johnson's findings, also coming to very different conclusions from Auden about Dryden's response to the natural world :

> ... if Dryden fails in expressing the milder and more tender passions, not only did the stronger feelings of the heart, in all its dark or violent workings, but the face of natural objects, and their operation upon the human mind, pass promptly in review at his command. External pictures and their corresponding influence on the spectator, are equally ready at his summons; and though his poetry, from the nature of his subjects, is in general rather ethic and didactic, than narrative, yet no sooner does he adopt the latter style in composition, than his figures and his landscapes are presented to the mind with the same vivacity as the flow of his reasoning, or the acute metaphysical discrimination of his characters.
>
> (I, 482-3)

The 'Harmony' which Dryden (as nearly all his early admirers proclaim) had achieved in his verse was not thought to be merely a matter of his having achieved a decorous stateliness, or having brought his verse to a craftsmanlike perfection, but rather a means of achieving what we might call an 'inevitable rightness' of expression, a 'naturalness' that

appears almost art-less :

> In monumental everlasting Verse,
> Epitomiz'd he grasp'd the Universe.
> No Pow'r but his could tune a British Lyre
> To sweeter Notes than any Tuscan Quire,
> Teutonick Words to animate and raise,
> Strong shining Musical as Attic Lays;
> Rude Matter indispos'd he form'd Polite,
> His Muse seemd rather to create than write.[1]

Wilson, in 1845, was still substantially able to concur:

> Dryden sometimes estranges his language from vulgar use by a Latinism; (he, himself, insists upon this, as a deliberate act of enriching our poor and barbarous tongue;) and in his highest writings, even where he has good matter that will sustain itself at due poetical height, here and there he has touches of an ornamental, imitative, and false poetical diction. But that is not his own style - not the style which he uses where he is fully himself. This is pure English, simple, masculine; turned into poetry by a true life of expression, and by the inhering melody of the numbers.[2]

Nor was Dryden's 'harmony' thought incompatible with a daring sprightliness. Writing of Alexander's Feast, the poem of Dryden's which had always been found his most 'harmonious', Henry Hallam remarked :

> Every one places this Ode among the first of its class, and many allow it no rival. In what does this superiority consist?... It must be the rapid transitions, the mastery of language, the springiness of the whole manner, which hurries us away, and leaves us so little room for minute criticism, that no one has ever qualified his admiration of this noble poem.[3]

Johnson had written of the same poem (when comparing it with Pope's St. Cecilia Ode) :

> ... the passions excited by Dryden are the pleasures and pains of real life, the scene of Pope is laid in imaginary existence; Pope is

1. Charles Brome, To the Memory of Mr. Dryden, p.6.
2. North's Specimens of the British Critics, (Philadelphia, 1846), p.141.
3. Quoted in Sir Walter Scott, Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol.1 (Edinburgh, 1834), p.348.

> read with calm acquiescence, Dryden with turbulent delight; Pope hangs upon the ear, and Dryden finds the passes of the mind.
>
> (Murphy, XI, 175)

Comparing Dryden with Pope (in which comparison he was clearly inspired by Johnson's famous precedent) Wilson remarked on 'the free composition of Dryden that streams on and on, full of vigour and splendour, of reason and wit, as if verse were a mother tongue to him, or some special gift of the universal Mother', and concludes :

> Dryden is all power - and he knows it. ... In his own verse, not another approaches him for energy brought from familiar uses of expression. Witness the hazardous but inimitable -
>
> 'To file and polish God Almighty's fool,'
>
> and a hundred others. ... Dryden alone moves unfettered in the fettering couplet - alone of those who have submitted to the fetters. For those who write distichs, running them into one another, hand over heels, till you do not know where to look after the rhyme - these do not wear their fetters, and with an all-mastering grace dance to the chime, but they break them and caper about, the fragments clanking dismally and strangely about their heels. Turn from the clumsy clowns to glorious John :- sinewy, flexible, well-knit, agile, stately stepping, gracefully-bending, stern, stalworth - or sitting his horse 'erect and fair', in careering and carrying his steel-headed lance of true stuff, level and steady to its aim, and impetuous as a thunderbolt.[1]

Though Johnson claimed (unlike almost all the other commentators of his age) to have no special affection for the Fables, he explicitly includes Dryden's translations in his overall assessment of the poet's

1. North's Specimens, pp. 310-11.

talents.[1] Unlike Van Doren, for whom 'journalist in verse' was a suitable description of Dryden, or Eliot, who thought Dryden's mind was 'commonplace' and who thought that the poet 'lacked...a large and unique view of life', Johnson judged that 'the notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation', that he knew more even than Pope 'of man in his general nature' and that he also surpassed even Pope in

> ...genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgement is cold and knowledge inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies and animates.
>
> (Murphy, XI, 170)

And Scott judged that Dryden 'was destined'

> ...to teach posterity the powerful and varied poetical harmony of which their language was capable; ... and to leave to English literature a name, second only to those of Milton and of Shakespeare.
>
> (I, 533)

There exists, then, a vast discrepancy between the assessment of the nature and stature of Dryden made by many critics during the century and a half after his death and that which obtains in most quarters today, both in terms of the areas of his work, and the poetic qualities in that

1. The excessive coolness about Fables displayed by Johnson, in the light of his general admiration for Dryden's translating achievement, can perhaps partly be explained by his combative attitude to the literary tastes being advocated by the Wartons, and particularly their revival of all things medieval (Johnson's coolness is particularly directed at the versions of Chaucer and Boccaccio). Joseph Warton was particularly critical of Johnson's remarks in the second volume of his Essay on... Pope (1782), and makes his criticisms stronger and more explicit in the notes to his edition of Pope, published, significantly, after Johnson's death, in 1797. On the 1782 Essay as, in some respects, part of a critical exchange between the two men, see James Allison, 'Joseph Warton's reply to Dr. Johnson's Lives', J.E.G.P., 51 (1952), 186-191.

work which were then, and are now, most warmly praised. For a long time after his death, well beyond the end of that phase in English culture commonly known as 'Augustan' or 'Neoclassical', it was felt that far larger claims could be made for his work - and particularly for the translations - than would nowadays be generally thought plausible.

Dryden was thought of by these readers not primarily or exclusively as a political or occasional poet or as a dramatist (though both his plays and his satires had their admirers) but as a great humanist poet who had been able to absorb, distill and transmit in his verse much of the wisdom contained in the literature of the past to future generations. His later work was thought to combine, in a way that seemed almost miraculous, the zest and spirit of youth with the maturity and wisdom of old age. His verse, far from being, on the one hand, 'lapidary' or decorously stately or, on the other, merely containing the virtues of good vigorous argumentative prose, was thought to have a 'harmony' which was inextricable from the justness of the truths which it conveyed. His poetic language was thought to be daring, sparkling and inimitable. His wit was considered to be not just that of the razor-sharp satirist, but to be compatible with a genial and large-souled good humour. If his <u>forte</u> was not in portraying <u>tender</u> passion, none (it was thought) could rival him at depicting passion in adversity. He had a profound knowledge of the human heart, and was not just a superficial observer of local manners. His literary criticism, moreover, was read as the working-notes of a practitioner - his comments on some authors were felt to have been given weight and authority by the way he had imbibed or absorbed those authors in his own work. If his verse lacked the judicious discrimination and

pointed perfection of Pope's, it transcended it in its 'energy' and 'fire' and 'turbulent delight'.

It is not the concern of this study to undertake any detailed investigation of the stages whereby Dryden's later work passed from being considered the crown of his achievement into the state of relative oblivion in which it remains today. My main hypothesis is, rather, that it might be possible, by attending closely to one particular aspect of that later work, and by seeking to understand in a little more detail what 'translation' entailed for Dryden, first more generally, and then in the particular case of his translations from Ovid, to recapture (in the spirit of the quotation from T.S.Eliot with which we began) at least some of the pleasure that those earlier critics found in Dryden's translations; to regain some of the sympathy that they had for his whole translating enterprise; to see that his notion of translation might be thought to rest on a subtle and interesting conception of the possible relations between the poetry written in another culture and another language to that of the present; to see that there need not be anything inherently suspicious or implausible in suggesting that a poet might perhaps best realise his talents in the medium of verse translation; and to see, above all, that 'journalist in verse' is perhaps a very inadequate way of characterising Dryden's distinctive poetic talents, and that his mind was, perhaps, not quite so 'commonplace' as Eliot took it to be.

(ii) 'Beyond "translation-theory"' : Dryden's principles and practice as a translator

Looking back on the history of English translation from the vantage-point of 1759, Dr. Johnson concluded (in Idler 69) that, of the writers of the seventeenth century, Dryden's influence on later poets had been of crucial importance, in encouraging them to avoid both the 'absurd labour of construing rhyme' which he associated with May, Sandys, Holyday and Feltham, and the 'licentiousness' and 'paraphrastic liberties' to be found in the writings of the Restoration wits. In the remarks on Ovid's Epistles in the Life of Dryden, Johnson reinforced his earlier judgement, and, in the general remarks which conclude the main body of the Life, he included among Dryden's most enduring achievements the fact that he 'shewed us the true bounds of a translator's liberty'.[1] In his Life of Dryden, Scott substantially follows Johnson's account of this achievement.[2]

Recent scholarship has documented the extent to which Johnson's and Scott's accounts are, in one sense, an over-simplification of the actual diversity of thinking and writing on translation, both in England and France, which immediately preceded Dryden.[3] His rejection, for example, in the 1680 Preface to Ovid's Epistles, of 'metaphrase, or

1. Murphy, VII, 276-7; IX, 353, 444.
2. See especially Scott, I, 509-520.
3. See especially F.R.Amos, Early Theories of Translation (New York, 1920), Chapter I of M.Bernard, Dryden's Aeneid : The Theory and the Poem (Unpublished PhD Diss., University of Cambridge, 1969) and T.R.Steiner, 'Precursors to Dryden : English and French Theories of Translation in the Seventeenth Century', Comparative Literature Studies, 7 (1970), 50-81. A somewhat shortened version of this article forms Chapter I of the same author's English Translation Theory, 1650-1800, Approaches to Translation Studies, No.2, (Assen, Amsterdam, 1975). Bernard and Steiner cite precedents in DuBellay and D'Ablancourt, as well as in Ben Jonson, Chapman, and the Waller/Denham group for anti-literalist views similar to Dryden's.

turning an author word by word, and line by line, from one language into another', we can now see, had had more precedents and was less original than they allowed for. But while their statements are, in one sense, inaccurate, they provide revealing testimony as to the decisive effect for the good which both writers clearly felt Dryden's actual body of achievement as a translator had had on subsequent thinking and practice. It was by his 'distinguished success' rather than merely by what he said about translation, wrote Scott, that Dryden had 'showed that the object of the translator should be to transfuse the spirit not to copy servilely the very words of his original' ; he had not only 'manfully claim[ed]' but also 'vindicate[d]' 'the freedom of a just translation'.[1]

There is a fundamental problem and danger in attempting to use any of Dryden's prose writings to discover all that the art of translation entailed for him. For, while his first major pronouncement on the subject (the 1680 Preface to Ovid's Epistles) lays out with methodical precision rules and principles for the translator, and defines precise categories of translation, contains, that is, something which could be described as a 'theory of translation', both his actual practice (even, to an extent, in that very volume) and his later prose comments show him constantly breaking his own rules in the light of experience. He frequently translates on a local level in a way that goes across all three of his postulated categories of 'metaphrase', 'paraphrase' and 'imitation'.

After quoting part of the 1680 Preface in one of his articles on Dryden, John Wilson commented aptly that

1. Scott, I, 509-10; Alexander Tytler in his Essay on the Principles of Translation, Everyman's Library (1791; rpt, London, n.d.), pp.44-45, confirms that subsequent writers looked for inspiration more to Dryden's example than to his theoretical pronouncements, important as these were.

> The positions laid down are not, in all their extent, tenable; and Dryden himself, in other places, advocates principles of Translation altogether different from these, and violates them in his practice by a thousand beauties as well as faults.[1]

Commentators have often remarked on the diverse, 'occasional', and even 'hand to mouth' nature of much of Dryden's criticism, and these epithets apply no less to his remarks about translation than to other aspects of those writings. Even Johnson, whose designation of Dryden as 'the father of English criticism' is one of the most famous single remarks ever made about the poet, was also careful to put on record that

> From his prose, ..., Dryden derives only his accidental and secondary praise;
>
> (Murphy, IX, 394)

and that his criticism is

> the criticism of a poet; not a dull collection of theorems, nor a rude detection of faults, which perhaps the censor was not able to have committed; but a gay and vigorous dissertation, where delight is mingled with instruction, and where the author proves his right of judgement, by his power of performance.
>
> (Murphy, IX, 388)

Dryden's criticism was felt by these critics to make fullest sense in the light of his own creative achievement. And it has recently been demonstrated that the last sentence in this paragraph of Johnson's is indeed a very accurate description of the way in which eighteenth-century readers made use of Dryden's comments on Chaucer in the Preface to Fables: the translations from Chaucer in that volume were thought to qualify, illustrate, exemplify and give extra weight, point and resonance to the general suggestions about Chaucer which Dryden had made in the Preface.[2]

1. North's Specimens, p.129. Joseph Warton, in his edition of Pope (I,179) also remarks on Dryden's general tendency in his prose to 'so frequently contradict himself, and advance opinions diametrically opposite to each other'.

2. See T.A.Mason, Dryden's Chaucer, Chapter II, passim.

Something similar, I shall be arguing, is true of his various comments about Ovid.

Wilson's and Johnson's comments alert us, I think, to the important fact that none of Dryden's many remarks about translation in his critical prose can quite be regarded as an entirely complete or reliable guide to his practice.[1] Rather than a fully worked-out 'theory of translation', they should perhaps be considered as a set of working assumptions about the nature of translation which became modified as the poet's experiences and discoveries in the act of translation revealed more of their implications to him. Their full significance thus only becomes fully apparent when they are read in conjunction with the versions to which they refer.

On his own admission, it was to Sir John Denham's celebrated Preface to The Destruction of Troy and to his poem on Fanshawe's Pastor Fido that Dryden owed much of his initial conviction that to attempt to 'translate verbally', to keep close to the literal meaning of his original while trying at the same time to write passable English verse, was well-nigh impossible. In that Preface, Denham had written ,

> I conceive it a vulgar error in translating Poets, to affect being Fidus Interpres; let that care be with them who deal in matters of Fact, or matters of Faith; but whosoever aims at it in Poetry, as he attempts what is not required, so shall he never perform that he

1. These remarks occur in the Preface to Ovid's Epistles (1680), the poem, To the Earl of Roscommon (1684), the Preface to Sylvae (1685), The Character of Polybius (1693), the Discourse Concerning Satire, prefixed to the Juvenal (1693), the Life of Lucian (written 1696), the Dedication to the Aeneis (1697) and the Preface to Fables (1700).

> attempts; for it is not his busines alone to translate Language into Language, but Poesie into Poesie; & Poesie is of so subtile a spirit, that in pouring out of one Language into another, it will all evaporate; and if a new spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a Caput mortuum, there being certain Graces and Happinesses peculiar to every Language, which gives life and energy to the words: and whosoever offers at Verbal Translation, shall have the misfortune of that young Traveller, who lost his own language abroad, and brought home no other instead of it; for the grace of the Latine will be lost by being turned into English words; And the grace of the English by being turned into the Latine Phrase.[1]

In the 1680 Preface, Dryden elegantly paraphrases and develops Denham's arguments against 'metaphrase', but is very cautious about Denham's further claim that, in translating from another language, a 'new spirit' must be 'added in the transfusion'. Dryden points out that this claim is actually more far-reaching than Denham's actual translating practice, and fears that it might lead to that 'libertine way of rendring Authours' in which the translator (if he still deserves the name) does not attempt

> ...to Translate [the author's] words, or to be Confin'd to his Sense, but only to set him as a Pattern, and to write, as he supposes, that Author would have done, had he liv'd in our Age, and in our Country.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 184)

This Preface, however epoch-making it seemed to later commentators in retrospect, is, in fact, a relatively conservative and cautious pronounce-

1. Sir John Denham, Poetical Works, ed. T.H.Banks, Jnr. (New Haven, 1928), pp.159-160. That Dryden still had Denham's passage in his mind in the late 1690's is shown by an echo of one phrase in the Parallel Betwixt Painting and Poetry :

> ...when the spirits are drawn off, there is nothing but a caput mortuum.
>
> (Scott, XVII,331)

ment written at a time when, as Dryden points out near the end of the piece, translation was felt to be a fairly thankless task; and in claiming that

> ¶ No man is capable of Translating Poetry, who besides a Genius to that Art, is not a Master both of his Authours Language, and of his own: ...
>
> (Kinsley, I, 185)

Dryden seems at this stage to be doing little more than stating the (admittedly important) truth that the translator must have the required technical competence as an English versifier to convey what he takes to be the qualities of his original. And he must convey these qualities even to a fault.

By 1685, Dryden was making altogether bolder claims for the translator's rights. He had concluded (almost hopefully?) at the end of the Ovid's Epistles Preface, that

> ...if after what I have urg'd, it be thought by better Judges that the praise of a Translation Consists in adding new Beauties to the piece, thereby to recompence the loss which it sustains by change of Language, I shall be willing to be taught better, and to recant.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 186)

But by the Sylvae Preface of 1685, written after having composed the translations contained in that volume, he was expressing himself in much less modest terms :

> ...I have both added and omitted, and even sometimes very boldly made such expositions of my Authors, as no Dutch Commentator will forgive me. Perhaps, in such particular passages, I have thought that I discover'd some beauty yet undiscover'd by these Pedants, which none but a Poet cou'd have found.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 390)

And he continues by justifying, in the present circumstances, something which

sounds very like that 'libertine way of rendring Authours' which he had condemned only five years previously :

> ... where I have taken away some of their Expressions, and cut them shorter, it may possibly be on this consideration, that what was beautiful in the Greek or Latin, wou'd not appear so shining in the English: And where I have enlarg'd them, I desire the false Criticks wou'd not always think that those thoughts are wholly mine, but that either they are secretly in the Poet, or may be fairly deduc'd from him: or at least, if both those considerations should fail, that my own is of a piece with his, and that if he were living, and an Englishman, they are such, as he wou'd probably have written.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 390-1)

Dryden's justification for these new claims are, first, his conviction that the 'Dutch commentators' (whom he was to refer to several years later, in the Dedication to Examen Poeticum, as 'in the general, heavy, gross-witted Fellows; fit only to gloss on their own dull Poets'), while they might have an enviable command of the Latin and Greek languages, might be disqualified by their pedantry from perceiving and conveying the 'Spirit which animates the whole' of the particular poem on which they are commentating. The translating poet, Dryden suggests, brings to his task, in addition to a knowledge of Greek and Latin, a lively experience of his own culture. He has worn off 'the rust which he contracted, while he was laying in a stock of Learning'. Where, in 1680, Dryden had realised that 'No man is capable of Translating Poetry, who besides a Genius to that Art, is not a Master both of his Authours Language, and of his own', he has now noticeably strengthened and extended the claim :

> Thus it appears necessary that a Man shou'd be a nice Critick in his Mother Tongue, before he attempts to Translate a foreign Language. Neither is it sufficient that he be able to Judge of Words and Stile; but he must be a Master of them too: He must perfectly understand his Authors Tongue, and absolutely command his own: So that to be a thorow Translator, he must be a thorow Poet.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 391-392)

His claim now is that his additions to and expansions of the text, and his regrounding of each original in a thoroughly contemporary idiom, are not a 'libertine way' in which the poet arbitrarily takes it upon himself 'to add and diminish what [he] please[s]', and which is consequently 'almost the creation of another hand'.[1] They are rather, he suggests, the means (however paradoxical it might seem) to a deeper fidelity, to the only way, in fact, in which the 'Spirit which animates the whole' in the original can be made directly available to a native English reader of poetry.

Twelve years later, in the Dedication to his Aeneis, Dryden was to claim of the 'omissions' and 'additions' in that translation :

> ... the omissions I hope, are but of Circumstances, and such as wou'd have no grace in English; and the Additions, I also hope, are easily deduc'd from Virgil's Sense. They will seem (at least I have the Vanity to think so,) not stuck into him, but growing out of him.
>
> (Kinsley, III, 1054)

And throughout the later prefaces, he repeatedly stresses his need and right (whatever may be the objections from others, and his own reservations in doing so) to render each author in the contemporary idom; the advantages, in terms of conveying the experience and pleasure of the original, always outweigh his inhibitions :

> We make our Authour at least appear in Poetique Dress. We have actually made him more Sounding, and more Elegant, than he was before in English: And have endeavour'd to make him speak that kind of English, which he wou'd have spoken had he liv'd in England, and had Written to this Age. If sometimes any of us (and 'tis but seldome) make him express the Customs and Manners of our Native Country, rather than of Rome; 'tis,

1. Kinsley, I, 184.

> either when there was some kind of Analogy betwixt their Customes and ours; or when, to make him more easy to Vulgar Understandings, we gave him those Manners which are familiar to us. But I defend not this Innovation, 'tis enough if I can excuse it. For to speak sincerely, the Manners of Nations and Ages, are not to be confounded: We shou'd either make them English, or leave them Roman. If this can neither be defended, nor excus'd, let it be pardon'd, at least, because it is acknowledg'd; and so much the more easily, as being a fault which is never committed without some Pleasure to the Reader.
>
> (Kinsley, II, 669-670)

The later prefaces also show Dryden claiming to have discovered a particular kinship or spiritual affinity between himself and each of his chosen originals. In his Essay of Translated Verse, the Earl of Roscommon had offered this advice to the prospective translator :

> Then seek a Poet who your way do's bend,
> And chuse an Author as you chuse a Friend.
> United by this Sympathetick Bond
> You grow Familiar, Intimate and Fond;
> Your thoughts, your Words, your Stiles, your Souls agree,
> No Longer his Interpreter, but He.[1]

In the Preface to Sylvae Dryden had spoken of his having chosen to translate (actually under the influence of Roscommon's Essay) 'some parts of [Lucretius and Horace] which had most affected [him] in the reading'.[2] In the Dedication to Examen Poeticum he went further, claiming that his success in translating Ovid was perhaps due to the fact that the Latin poet was 'more according to his Genius' than any poet he had yet translated, and, both in a private letter to the Earl of Halifax written in 1699 and in the Preface to his last volume, the Fables, he makes a similar claim about Homer.[3] About his kinship with Chaucer, and the

1. Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon, An Essay on Translated Verse (2nd ed., London, 1685), p.7
2. Kinsley, I, 390.
3. Kinsley, II, 795; Ward, Letters, p.121; Kinsley, IV, 1448.

liberty which, he felt, it allowed him while translating, he went yet further still :

> I have presum'd farther in some Places, and added somewhat of my own where I thought my Author was deficient, and had not given his Thoughts their true Lustre, ...And to this I was the more embolden'd, because (if I may be permitted to say it of my self) I found I had a Soul congenial to his, and that I had been conversant in the same Studies.
>
> (Kinsley, IV, 1457)

Dryden, then, has moved, in the course of his comments on the subject between 1680 and 1700, from speaking initially of the translator's need for a competent grasp on the language and individuating style of his originals, to claiming a special love for the poems he has himself translated, then a special affinity with their authors, and finally what amounts to the spiritual identity or fusion of the kind desiderated by Roscommon.[1] Earlier in the Preface to Fables, he had recollected (almost as an 'aside') while describing the 'lineal descents' of English poets, Spenser's description of Chaucer's influence in his own work as a kind of metempsychosis :

> Milton was the Poetical Son of Spencer, and Mr. Waller of Fairfax; for we have our Lineal Descents and Clans, as well as other Families: Spencer more than once insinuates, that the Soul of Chaucer was transfus'd into his Body; and that he was begotten by him Two hundred years after his Decease.
>
> (Kinsley, IV, 1445)

Later in the eighteenth century, Alexander Tytler, a belle-lettrist

1. In the Discourse Concerning Satire (Kinsley, II, 633) Dryden had written that Ennius 'himself believ'd, according to the Pithagorean Opinion, that the Soul of Homer was transfus'd into him'. As T.R. Steiner points out in his English Translation Theory, Chapman and D'Ablancourt had both used the metaphor of metempsychosis for the process of translation. Sir John Denham, in his poem 'On Mr. Abraham Cowley's Death, and Burial Amongst the Ancient Poets' had also used it.

commentator on translation, and a self-proclaimed admirer of Dryden, wrote :

> How...shall a translator accomplish the difficult union of ease with fidelity? To use a bold expression, he must adopt the very soul of his author, which must speak through his own organs.[1]

Though the metaphor of metempsychosis had occasionally been used by earlier writers on translation, we might, I think, reasonably speculate that Tytler had been given the confidence to use his 'bold expression' by the extra resonance and conviction which Dryden had given to these particular metaphors at the end of his life. It is a subject to which we shall return in the last chapter.

Dryden's harsh words about the Dutch pedants and his increasing feeling of the need for 'sympathy, perhaps even identification' between the translator and his original as the only factor which would really ensure an adequate rendering, should not, however, lead us to suppose that he worked on the versions in a casual or unscholarly way.[2] Another piece of advice which Roscommon had given the prospective translator had been this :

> Take pains the genuine Meaning to explore,
> There Sweat, there Strain, tug the laborious Oar:
> Search ev'ry Comment, that your Care can find,
> Some here, some there, may hit the Poets Mind;[3]

Modern scholarship has done much to reveal just how exhaustively and minutely Dryden 'researched' each one of his translations, collecting (or consulting) and making use of not only the available scholarly editions

1. Tytler, Essay on Translation, p.114.
2. See T.R.Steiner, English Translation Theory, p.57.
3. Roscommon, Essay on Translated Verse, p.12.

of each author or poem that he was currently working on, but also earlier (sometimes quite obscure, and sometimes even as-yet-unpublished) English versions of his originals, as well as continental burlesques, allegorizations, and even engravings.[1] As well as rendering its 'spirit', he saw

1. On this subject, see J.McG. Bottkol, 'Dryden's Latin Scholarship', MP, 40 (1943), 241-254; H.M.Hooker, 'Dryden's Georgics and English Predecessors' HLQ, 9 (1945-6), 273-310; L.Proudfoot, Dryden's 'Aeneid' and its Seventeenth Century Predecessors (Manchester, 1960); Antoine Culioli, Dryden, Traducteur et Adaptateur de Chaucer et de Boccacce (Unpublished Thèse, Sorbonne, 1960); N.Austin, 'Translation as Baptism : Dryden's Lucretius', Arion, 7 (1968), 576-602; M.E.Boddy, 'The Manuscripts and Printed Editions of the Translation of Virgil made by Richard Maitland, Fourth Earl of Lauderdale, and the Connection with Dryden', NQ, 12 (1965), 144-150; S.Gerevini, Dryden e Teocrito (Milan, 1966); Arvid Løsnes, 'Dryden's Aeneis and the Delphin Virgil', The Hidden Sense and Other Essays, Norwegian Studies in English, 9 (Oslo, 1963), pp.113-157; H.A.Mason, 'Dryden's Dream of Happiness', Cambridge Quarterly, 8 (1978), 11-55; R.Selden, 'Juvenal and Restoration Modes of Translation', MLR, 68 (1973), 481-493; M.Bernard, Dryden's Aeneid; T.A.Mason, Dryden's Chaucer; R.E.Sowerby, Dryden and Homer (Unpublished PhD Diss., University of Cambridge, 1975); J.A. Van der Welle, Dryden and Holland (Groningen, 1962); John Chalker, The English Georgic (London, 1969). Additional individual borrowings are noted by Dryden's editors, particularly Noyes, Kinsley and California. I have been able to add a little to our knowledge of the materials used by Dryden when working on the Ovid versions in the following articles : 'An Echo of La Fontaine in Dryden's Baucis and Philemon', NQ., 20 (1973), 178-9; 'Two Hitherto Unrecorded Sources for Dryden's Ovid Translations', NQ., 21 (1974), 419-21; 'Dryden's Cave of Sleep and Garth's Dispensary', NQ., 23 (1976), 243-6; 'Dryden's Baucis and Philemon', CL., 28 (1976), 135-143; 'Dryden and the Two Editions of Sandys' Ovid', NQ., 23 (1976), 552-554; 'Dryden's Use of Thomas Heywood's Troia Britanica', NQ., 24 (1977), 218-219; 'Dryden's Borrowings from a Poem by his Son Charles', NQ., 25 (1978), 31-2.

it his duty (as has often been observed) to explicate and elucidate his original at a local level for readers for whom the references or implications of the text might seem obscure, and it is at these moments that we can quite often see (particularly in the case of more difficult authors) precisely what 'aids' he made use of. In the cases of Chaucer, for example, he frequently had to clarify a text which (in the form in which he read it) itself only made imperfect sense, and in the case of certain classical authors he often had to resolve disputed textual readings, mostly with the help of commentators, but occasionally (as he points out himself) from his own resources.[1] Congreve, no mean Classical scholar himself, complimented Dryden on having clarified the obscurities of the satirist Persius virtually for the first time.

In this respect, however, though he was probably more thorough and certainly made more creative use of this material than most of his contemporaries and successors (always excepting Pope), his working method was quite similar to that of the minor translators of his day. We find, for example, that the almost unknown translator Stephen Harvey, who rendered Ovid's story of Byblis for The Annual Miscellany of 1694, had carefully scanned his English predecessors for rhymes and phrases which he could make more telling and felicitous in their new context, and had drawn not only on Sandys' version, but on the separate renderings of the episode by Oldham (1681) and Dennis (1692), in much the same way

1. The problem of the Chaucer texts was noted by John Wilson as early as 1845; the subject is treated fully by T.A.Mason, Dryden's Chaucer, Chapter 4. See also the Dedication to the Aeneis (Kinsley, III, 1050) :

> ...I have forsaken Ruaeus, (whom generally I follow) in many places, and made Expositions of my own in some, quite contrary to him.

as Dryden employed when composing his versions.

But Dryden's translating 'method' involved more than a discerning distillation of what was most useful to him in countless translator- and scholar- predecessors. As he reveals in the Preface to Fables (with a relaxed nonchalance characteristic of that piece), his mind had come in his later years to move fluidly from one original to another, seeing them in various complementary and contrasting lights, and recognising and relishing their kinships and differences. In the manner that T.S.Eliot was to describe in a famous paragraph in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', Dryden was now continually modifying his past experiences of literature in the light of new reading, and new reflection on that reading.

In addition to making these connections between his various originals, the very act of translating seems to have increasingly confronted him with a series of resemblances and connections between the original on which he was working at that moment and other, quite different, works of literature which he admired. We shall see many examples of this in the chapters which follow. These allusions (if they can quite be called that) to other areas of Dryden's reading and to features of his own contemporary world show that translation was for him not a separate, watertight, activity but one which drew, however indirectly, on a wide range of the beliefs, convictions and insights which he had developed from a lifetime's experience and reading. It was, that is, an organic part of his creative life.

(iii) Is Verse Translation Possible?

Later commentators, however, have sometimes been sceptical about the kinds of claim which Dryden, and his contemporaries and immediate successors, made for his achievements as a translator. It will consequently be necessary to pause for a moment at this point to examine the nature and causes of this scepticism, and to enquire in which ways, if any, it is justified. Such an examination will also, of necessity, involve some brief consideration, in more general terms, of the possibility of verse translation, and the problems which that activity entails at any time.

The objections to Dryden's translations can, I think, be classified under three broad heads. First, there are those commentators who have judged that, whatever the merits of the translations as English poems (and here opinions differ quite widely), they cannot properly be considered 'translations' at all because of the extent to which Dryden has imposed his own sensibility, and that of his age, on his originals, re-written them, as it were, in his own image and that of his contemporaries, even incorporating anachronistic allusions to his own life and times. The Victorian writer Charles Stuart Calverley, for example, wrote, in an essay on Virgil's Aeneid :

> Dryden was a great poet, but not a translator at all. His 'Virgil' is in no sense Virgil, but Dryden simply.[1]

1. C.S.Calverley, Complete Works (London, 1905), p.507. William Frost, in his Dryden and the Art of Translation (New Haven, 1955), p.59, quotes R.C.Trevelyan's even harsher judgement of Dryden's translations from Lucretius: ... 'intolerable travesties, devoid of almost everything that gives the original poems their greatness and individual charm'. A.E.Housman's famous dismissal of Dryden's Chaucer versions in his 1933 Leslie Stephen lecture 'The Name and Nature of Poetry', can be found in his Selected Prose, ed.J.Carter (Cambridge, 1961), pp.179-182.

In 1923, Professor Allardyce Nicoll was making a substantially similar point in his little book for beginners on Dryden and his Poetry:

> We have... to accept these translations as they are, with all their shortcomings. We have to read them as we read Pope's "Iliad", not as an attempt to render faithfully the spirit of the original, but as an endeavour to present the original in such a form that it should appeal to a particular age.[1]

In the Clark Lectures which he gave at Cambridge in 1950, Professor David Nichol Smith made a claim which, like Professor Nicoll's, is almost diametrically opposed to that which, as we have seen, Dryden frequently made in his own prefaces :

> Dryden's Virgil is not Virgilian, if only because he has infused his own spirit into it... But [a spirited translation] is not what the classical scholar expects; and the classical scholar who commends Dryden's Virgil, or Pope's Homer is not easily found.[2]

And a recent reviewer of a book on 'The Neo-Classical Epic' has similarly described Pope and Dryden as 'trying to fit Homer and Virgil into a neo-classical mould' and 'distort[ing]... the style of Virgil and Homer to conform to neo-classical rules about diction' thus producing versions which are 'inaccurate as translations'.[3]

Whereas the early elegists, as we have seen, had claimed that Dryden had 'transplanted' the Classics in 'monumental, everlasting Verse' and Dryden himself (for all his use of the Dutch commentators) had claimed a superior insight to theirs into the poetic life of his originals, and

1. Allardyce Nicoll, Dryden and his Poetry (London, 1923), pp.103-4.
2. D.Nichol Smith, John Dryden (Cambridge, 1950), p.70.
3. T.J.Winnifrith in N.Q., 21 (1974), 280.

whereas Pope had confessed himself to be 'one who values the Authority of one true Poet above that of twenty Critics or Commentators', the four later critics all assume that it is the Classical scholars who can establish for us definitively the quality and characteristics of each original, and that we can then use that account to judge the success (or otherwise) of any translator's efforts.[1] In his lectures On Translating Homer, Matthew Arnold made this assumption quite explicit :

> [The translator of Homer] is to try to satisfy scholars, because scholars alone have the means of really judging him. A scholar may be a pedant, it is true, and then his judgement will be worthless; but a scholar may also have poetical feeling, and then can judge him truly; whereas all the poetical feeling in the world will not enable a man who is not a scholar to judge him truly. For the translator is to reproduce Homer, and the scholar alone has the means of knowing that Homer who is to be reproduced.[2]

The second main line of objection to Dryden's translations, or rather to verse translation generally, is neatly epitomised in the following (anonymous) contribution to The Gentleman's Magazine for November 1770 :

> They who have the misfortune to know the ancient writers only by their translations are astonished at the rapture with which scholars repeat and talk of them; but the wonder of these gentlemen would cease, or be much lessened, if they would reflect a little on the nature of fine writing. Let them take one of their most admired passages in an

1. Pope, Correspondence, ed. Sherburn, I, 44. Pope continues
> But tho' I speak thus of Commentators, I will continue to read carefully all I can procure, to make up, that way, for my own want of a Critical understanding in the original Beauties of Homer.

2. Matthew Arnold, 'On Translating Homer : Lecture II', Essays (Oxford, 1914), p.264.

> English author, and endeavour to put it into other words of their own. They will then see that the charm is incommunicable in any words but those in which it was conceived. Change them for synonymous ones, and we shall wonder what is become of the enchantment, or how it was possible they could ever give us that exquisite delight. A translation of a fine poem, never makes a fine poem; ...[1]

Here we have an eighteenth-century objection to translation which rests on the principle (familiar to us from its celebrated later fomulations by Coleridge, A.C.Bradley and, in our own day, D.W.Harding) that content and expression in a poem are indivisible, that the particular wording of a poem 'is' the poem's meaning, and thus a poem is unparaphrasable and irreplaceable.[2] This conception of poetry seems, at first sight, quite incompatible with, say, Denham's metaphor of speech being 'the apparel of our thoughts' (which Dryden took up in his 1680 Preface, calling speech 'the Image and Ornament of...thought', and the words of his original 'the more outward Ornaments').[3] Denham's and Dryden's description in their prose of the relation of expression to thought in a poem (and the consequent possibility of that poem's being translated) might seem at first sight all- too- consonant with Dryden's practice in All for Love as it is described by Dr. Leavis :

1. Gentleman's Magazine, 40 (1770), 510-511.
2. See S.T.Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. J.Shawcross (2 vols., Oxford, 1907), I, 15; A.C.Bradley, Oxford Lectures on Poetry (1909; rpt. London, 1926) pp.15-27, 172-3; D.W.Harding, 'Aspects of the Poetry of Isaac Rosenberg', Experience into Words (1963; rpt. Harmondsworth, 1974), p.99.
3. Kinsley, I, 185. Compare Dryden's description of the poetical process in the Dedicatory Letter to Annus Mirabilis (Kinsley, I, 46-7).

> It is not poetry, in the sense that it is not the product of a realising imagination working from within a deeply and minutely felt theme. Dryden is a highly skilled craftsman, working at his job from the outside.[1]

The leading charges of this second objection to Dryden's translations, then, are, one, that a poem is a unique structure of words which cannot be rendered in any other, two, it is only-too-characteristic of 'neo-classical' literary theory and practice - in which 'form' and 'content' are seen, mistakenly, as separable entities - to fail to recognise that fact.

The third main line of objection to holding a high estimation of Dryden's translations could be put in the form of a question: Though seventeenth-century writers on the subject (Dryden not least among them) constantly speak of the necessity to produce a version which must be (beyond almost every other consideration) a finished English poem in its own right with the independent capacity to please and move its readers, how is this likely or even possible when the translator is so tightly tied to the apron-strings of another poem, not of his own making? How could such a poem be a full expression of the translator's own artistic personality as well as a faithful rendering of its original?

Dryden himself felt the force of this argument, as he reveals in the Dedication to his Aeneis (the only one of his verse translations which he ever writes about as if it had been drudgery):

> ...Slaves we are; and labour on another Man's Plantation; we dress the Vine-yard, but the Wine is the Owners: If the Soil be sometimes Barren, then we are sure of being scourg'd: If it be fruitful, and our Care succeeds, we are not thank'd; for the proud Reader will only say, the poor drudge

1. The Living Principle, p.151.

> has done his duty. But this is nothing to what follows; for being oblig'd to make his Sense intelligible, we are forc'd to untune our own Verses, that we may give meaning to the Reader. He who Invents is Master of his Thoughts and Words: He can turn and vary them as he pleases, 'till he renders them harmonious. But the wretched Translator has no such priviledge: For being ty'd to the Thoughts, he must make what Musick he can in the Expression. And for this reason it cannot always be so sweet as that of the Original.
>
> (Kinsley, III, 1058)

The objections to Dryden's translating enterprise, then, can be summarised as follows: Dryden's versions, judged by scholars with direct access to their originals, can be seen to be narrowly of their time, modish updatings rather than the faithful renderings which the poet and his admirers claimed they were. Their whole conception rests on fallacies about the nature of poetic language which Dryden shared with other 'neoclassical' writers, fallacies about the separability of form and content in a poem which one might expect from an age which failed to make any adequate distinctions between the language of verse and that of prose. Their ambition, to make a finished and self-validating English poem from an original in another language was thus doomed to failure from the start.

It remains, now, to investigate whether these objections do in fact constitute the overwhelming case against both the principles and practice of Dryden's translations which they might at first sight seem to do. In attempting such an investigation, I shall suggest, first, that Dryden's notion of 'the Spirit which animates the whole' (the element which, he thought, the translator should try to capture in his version above all others) is not, in fact, merely a 'neoclassical' concept, is not, in fact, so incompatible with our own habitual ways of discussing and

thinking of poetry as it might at first seem. Secondly, I shall suggest that modern criticism has reminded us of some important conditions which are involved in the reading of poetry, and which affect the way in which any literature of the past can be said to live in the present. These insights, I think, make Dryden's principles and practice as a translator appear to rest on a somewhat sounder basis than that with which they have sometimes been credited.

Though Denham and Dryden sometimes talk in their prose about the relationship between 'form' and 'thought' in poetry in a way that might be taken to imply that they were two separable elements, and that poetry is simply a matter of 'clothing a thought in language', their notion of a poem having a 'spirit' which is, in some sense, more than merely the sum product of its local verbal effects is, I think, in fact one which is silently evoked or implied by almost everyone who talks about poetry. We readily accept, for example, the validity of a critic's attempts to formulate in phrases of his own what he takes to be the qualities of a particular poem, a poet's whole <u>oeuvre</u>, or even the personality of the poet as manifested in and through his work. If such formulations are made with discernment and precision (as they are, perhaps pre-eminently, in many of the pages of Johnson's literary criticism) we accept their validity and usefulness, and don't doubt for one moment that they are the ultimate result of a specific response to 'the words on the page'. We can even accept as broadly valid (as Johnson himself reminds us in the <u>Preface to Shakespeare</u>) a critical description of a text which we know is, on the local level, corrupt or even incomplete. A critic, that is, need not even have been in a position to respond to every single verbal nuance

in order to give a reading which is, in its broad essentials, acceptable. We don't instantly demand that every generalisation a critic makes about a poem is immediately substantiated with a piece of local analysis, since we accept the generalisation for what it is: an attempt to give an account of the overall 'feel' of a poem, or even of a whole poetic oeuvre. In doing so we are, I believe, silently recognising the existence of a phenomenon like that which Dryden describes as 'the Spirit which animates the whole'.

The modern poet, Ted Hughes, has indeed expressed such a notion in terms strikingly similar to Dryden's (but without the unfortunate metaphors of 'dress' and 'ornament').

> A poem can be called an assembly of living parts moved by a single spirit. The living parts are the words, the images, the rhythms. The spirit is the life which inhabits them when they all work together.[1]

Though the criticism of T.S.Eliot and F.R.Leavis has been cited earlier in this chapter as having been instrumental in encouraging some of the modern reservations about, even hostility to, his writing, it is their work which, ironically, can provide us, I believe, with the means of questioning further some of the grounds on which Dryden's detractors have attacked the translations.

Dr. Leavis has reminded us, in several places in his criticism, of some of the inevitable factors involved in the process of reading a poem.

> You cannot point to the poem; it is 'there' only in the re-creative response of individual minds to the black marks on the page. But - a necessary faith - it is something in which minds can meet...
>
> We can have [a] poem only by an inner kind of possession: it is 'there' for analysis only

1. Ted Hughes, Poetry in the Making (London, 1967), p.17.

> in so far as we are responding appropriately to the words on the page... Analysis is not a dissection of something that is already and passively there. What we call analysis is, of course, a constructive and creative process.[1]

Leavis' remarks place a crucially important onus on the reader, as well as the author, in any 'right reading' of a poem. The poem is seen, in Leavis' account, as something which can never have an entirely 'objective' existence, which can only be fully said to exist in the recreating imagination of each reader. Its ability to communicate itself fully depends almost as much on our capacity to respond as on the author's capacity to write.

Leavis has also written about the relationship of the reader in the present to the literature of the past :

> It is only from the present, out of the present, in the present, that you can approach the literature of the past. To put it another way, it is only in the present that the past lives.[2]

Leavis' thought is here, on his own admission, close to T.S.Eliot's famous description of 'the historical sense' in his essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent':

> The historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. The historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as the temporal and of the timeless and the

1. Nor Shall My Sword (London, 1972), p.62; Education and the University (1943; rpt. London, 1965) p.70.
2. English Literature in Our Time, p.68.

> temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.[1]

Such sentiments as these have sometimes been thought of as licensing an anachronistic or unscholarly reading of the literature of the past, giving us a mandate to concentrate merely on those features in the literature of the past which happen to coincide, or appear to coincide, with our own preoccupations in the present, and consequently making us overlook the very different intellectual climate or historical context from which that literature emanates. Yet the main emphasis in Eliot's passage seems actually to rest on the observation that no 'historical approach' to literature is fully or truly 'historical' unless the reader recognises that he is himself involved in the historical process as much as the work he is reading. Reading the literature of the past, on this account, cannot be thought of as an assimilation of a known and fixed object (the original text in its original context), but becomes something more fluid and complex. The very possibility of entering a work of the past imaginatively is seen as, inevitably, a matter of mobilising, building on, and giving full scope to those elements in one's experience of life, here and now, which are somehow engaged by that work. But these may, of course, be elements which in any other circumstances might have lain dormant or gone entirely unrecognised.

Writing about Chaucer's pilgrims in the Preface to Fables, Dryden alluded to the problem of how the literature of the past might be thought

1. T.S.Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', Selected Essays (London, 1932), pp.14-15.

to live in the present in terms which are, in some ways, strikingly similar to Eliot's, resting on a similar conviction of the fundamental continuity of human experience:

> We have our Fore-fathers and Great Grand-dames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's Days; their general Characters are still remaining in Mankind, and even in England, though they are call'd by other Names than those of Moncks and Fryars, and Chanons, and Lady Abbesses, and Nuns: For Mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of Nature, though every thing is alter'd.
>
> (Kinsley, IV, 1455)

'Every thing is alter'd' : the care with which Dryden, when translating, consulted the commentators and his predecessors should serve to remind us, I think, of the degree to which he thought it necessary, in attempting to bring out the 'general Nature', the permanent human interest, in each of his originals, to inform himself as scrupulously as possible about the meaning of those originals in their own language and setting.[1] Just as Eliot, in insisting on the need to know the 'presence' of the past, had, at the same time insisted on our knowing its 'pastness', so Dryden's phrases point to the fact that the active life of the literature of the past is, as it were, actually neither in the past nor in the present, but in a kind of hinterland between past and present; reading the literature of the past can thus be seen as the performance of countless small acts

1. See 'Heads of an Answer' (Scott, XV, 394):

> ...though nature... is the same in all places, and reason too the same, yet the climate, the age, the disposition of the people, to whom a poet writes, may be so different, that what pleased the Greeks would not satisfy an English audience.

of negotiation between the world in which we live, and the world in which the work we are reading was produced. These acts of negotiation must, of necessity, Eliot and Dryden both suggest, be slightly different for every reader and every age.

Commentators sometimes speak of Dryden looking for the 'underlying' human nature in his originals, or probing 'beneath' the surface differences between the Roman world and our own. These metaphors seem to me to be unsatisfactory, in that they imply that the differences between us and men of the past are merely a matter of superficial surface dressings which can be removed to reveal General Human Nature intact beneath. Dryden's view, like Eliot's, seems rather to be that a common strain of humanity with our own can be found <u>in</u> the customs and habits of mind of the men of the past rather than <u>beneath</u> them: 'Mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of Nature, though every thing is alter'd'.

From Eliot's and Leavis' general reflections on the present whereabouts of the literature of the past, it is possible, I think, to draw some conclusions which might be of use in combatting some of the objections to Dryden's principles and practice of translation. <u>Any</u> reading, these critics suggest, of the literature of the past is a matter of imaginative re-creation. The classics of the past are not available for study as laboratory specimens might be. Their character and nature are not, and never have been, entirely fixed and known quantities. The sensibility and critical judgement of the reader are, therefore, factors of equally crucial importance in establishing the meaning and nature of these classics as any information the reader might possess about them or the circumstances in which they were written. It is theoretically possible, as Arnold

pointed out, that a scholar may possess both greater information about the classics, and a finer critical sensibility, and thus be able to judge the translations of Dryden and Pope from a position approaching authority, but he will only be in a position to do this if he is a better reader of the classics, as well as a better scholar, than those poets.

Looked at in these contexts, the anachronistic, even personal, references incorporated in Dryden's translations, and their contemporary idiom, can perhaps be seen not so much as an attempt to 'update' the originals, or to impose upon them a series of irrelevent modern pre-occupations or canons of artistic procedure, but as a way of creating what one twentieth-century commentator has called the 'mediate terms' necessary to bring out for a contemporary reader what Dryden took to be not just their modish appeal but their permanent life and implications. As Professor J.P.Sullivan has put it,

> The original poet's world can never recur, and cannot therefore be fully alive for us; the translator proceeds by analogy, substituting for remote situations and sentiments some contemporary equivalents to make the whole alive. Attitude and tone are contemporary.[1]

And if this has been done successfully, then the finished product of such an attempt (the translation itself) would only 'date' in so far, and to the same extent, as any literature of the past ever 'dates'. In Professor Sullivan's words, again,

> If translations of poetry, they are not merely verse translations which may be produced by an exercise of will to enjoy some modicum of esteem before they are superseded by the next attempts, they become permanent parts of the

1.J.P.Sullivan, Ezra Pound and Sextus Propertius (London, 1965), p.21; For 'mediate terms', see H.A. Mason, 'Creative Translation : Ezra Pound's Women of Trachis', Cambridge Quarterly, 4, (1969), 246.

> literary heritage like the best work in different field of their contemporaries.[1]

As well as stressing the extent to which any reading of a poem of the past is an act of imaginative recreation in the present, modern criticism has also stressed the extent to which, if such a recreation is to be fully adequate, it must be the result of the poem's having struck a particular chord, however indirectly, in one's own personal experience. It is indeed difficult to believe that a great poem could be the end-product of an act of translation, unless the translator was motivated as he wrote by a similar inner pressure and urgency to that which, one imagines, brings any poem into being. The act of translation, that is, must have in some way, however indirect, what we might call a 'life-need' for the translator. Eliot once observed, appositely, that

> ...the work of translation is to make something foreign, or something remote in time, live with our own life, and no translator can endow his victim with more abundant life than he possesses himself...[2]

On another occasion, he wrote that

> ...good translation... is not merely translation, for the translator is giving the original through himself, and finding himself through the original.[3]

To sum up. The passages quoted from Eliot and Leavis on the preceding pages allow us, I think, to conceive of a set of circumstances in which verse translation could occur, and in which the usual objections

1. Sullivan, Ezra Pound and Sextus Propertius, p.19.
2. 'Baudelaire in Our Time', For Lancelot Andrewes (1928; rpt. London, 1970), p.73.
3. 'Introduction' to Selected Poems of Ezra Pound (London, 1928), p.13.

to the activity might not seem insurmountable. For this to be possible, however, various circumstances would have to coincide. First, the translator would have to have responded with an unusual comprehensiveness to his original, felt the 'spirit' of his author's character and personality as manifested in every detail of his text with a particular force and fulness. He would have had, that is, to have first been an 'ideal critic' of his original. As William Cowper expressed it, he would have needed to have, 'drenched, and steeped, and soaked himself in the effusions of his genius, till he has imbibed their colour to the bone.'[1] Second, the translator would have to have been fired by some correspondence between his own deepest interests and those of his original, to perform an act which would amount to a new creation of his own, an act which enabled him to find a mode of expression in his own idiom and that of his readers which would convey, by a completely different poetic means (since 'verbal translation' is, for reasons we have already seen, impossible) the same poetic end, and which would be, at the same time, an expression of his own poetic identity. As Shelley realised, 'the plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower'.

It hardly needs saying that the achievement of such an identity between translator and original could never be absolute, would necessarily involve some complex adjustments, both of the original and of the translator, and in any case, might not be sustained to the same degree even throughout a whole poem. And the very aspiration towards such an ideal also, of course, presents the commentator on the finished version with unique problems of interpretation. I hope I have already done enough to indicate

1. William Cowper, Correspondence, ed. T.Wright (4 vols., London, 1904), IV, 483-5.

the difficulties facing a commentator who attempts to judge the adequacy of any of Dryden's versions simply by weighing them against his own, independently-derived, impression of the original, or that of scholars who have commented on that original. Also, though I have spoken of a necessary correspondence between the original and a translator's 'deepest needs', it could be no easier for a commentator on translation to determine what those 'deepest needs' were than it is when speculating on the obscure complex of thought and feeling which brings any work of art into being. The problems are multiplied in the present case - that of Dryden's versions of Ovid - by the peculiarly puzzling and problematic nature of the original.

My approach to Dryden's Ovidian translations in the chapters that follow will therefore be something more modest than a comprehensive attempt to assess Dryden's success as a translator of Ovid. I shall be concerned, first and foremost, to offer some remarks about and to make some claims for these translations as English poems, to explore the poetic qualities which the act of translating Ovid summoned up in Dryden at various stages in his career, and to enquire whether these qualities reveal Dryden's talents to have been more diverse and attractive than is suggested by much modern commentary on his work.[1] Strictly subordinated to these three main lines of enquiry will be a fourth, to investigate whether, with the help of Dryden's versions, we can come to see qualities and interests in Ovid's originals which we might otherwise have missed,

1. Thus conceding, in one sense, Earl Miner's point that 'the comparison of Dryden's [Fables] with their originals' is a 'donnish pleasure', 'the long way round to the less scholarly reader's conviction of unusual stylistic capacity' (Writers and their Background : John Dryden, ed. Earl Miner [London, 1972] p.264). It is hoped, however, that by taking this 'long way round' we might be occasionally enabled to develop a securer sense of the particular excellences of Dryden's finished versions.

qualities which are perhaps rare in much of the verse we are more accustomed to.

Throughout, Dryden's working method and the particular set of 'mediate terms' which he adopts in his version will be examined for clues they offer as to the nature of his intentions and interests in a particular poem, and his conception of the whole. Where the finished versions show clear signs of preoccupations which we know, from other sources, were preoccupations of Dryden's own, the Latin text and the renderings of other translators will be invoked as 'controls', to determine whether Dryden is simply imposing his own concerns on Ovid, or, rather, using the terms of his own age and his own experience to bring out what he took to be the true significance of the original. In Chapter Three some account is given of certain factors in Dryden's private life and literary career which may have led him to be particularly well disposed towards Ovid's Metamorphoses in the last decade of his life.

CHAPTER TWO :

FIRST STEPS : TO 'OVID'S EPISTLES' (1680)

Chapter Two : First Steps - To 'Ovid's Epistles' (1680)

(i) 'Nature in disorder' or 'superfluity of wit'?
Ovid in Dryden's criticism to 1679.

(ii) 'Ovid's Epistles' (1680) : The Preface and the Poems

(i) 'Nature in disorder' or 'superfluity of wit'? : Ovid in Dryden's criticism to 1679

We do not know exactly when Dryden first read Ovid, but we can be fairly sure that at least some of that poet's works were among the very first reading in Classical authors which he did, whether in his early teens at home in Northamptonshire or in the lower forms of Westminster, the school which he entered around 1646.[1] Though the Westminster syllabus for the junior forms of Dryden's time is not extant, it is possible to reconstruct with some accuracy, from accounts of the teaching of the school's headmaster, Dr. Richard Busby, and from information about the curriculum in similar educational establishments of the time, the nature of Dryden's introduction to his author.[2]

1. Dryden may have received some preliminary education at a grammar school in the Aldwinckle area, and it seems almost certain that his father and (until his death in 1636) grandfather would have given him elementary instruction at home. See Ward, Life, pp.8-9. According to Colet's Statutes of St.Paul's School, written in 1518, but substantially unchanged in Milton's day, candidates had to be competent at the rudiments of Latin before being admitted to the school. See D.L.Clark, John Milton at St.Paul's School (New York, 1948), p.43.

2. A great deal of detail is known about the syllabi, textbooks and teaching employed in the seventeenth-century grammar schools. See particularly T.W.Baldwin, Shakespeare's Small Latine and Less Greeke (2 vols., Urbana, 1944); Foster Watson, The English Grammar Schools to 1660 : their Curriculum and Practice (Cambridge, 1908); D.L.Clark, Milton at St.Paul's; D.P.Harding, 'Chapter Two : Ovid at St.Paul's,' Milton and the Renaissance Ovid, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, Vol. 30 No.4, (Urbana, 1946). On Westminster in particular, see G.F. Russell Barker, Memoir of Richard Busby, D.D. (London, 1895) and J. Sargeaunt, Annals of Westminster School (London, 1898). Barker (pp. 77ff.) gives a detailed account of the life of a Westminster schoolboy in the 6th and 7th forms in the second decade of the seventeenth century, from that preserved in the State Papers in the Public Record Office (Domestic Papers : Charles I, Vol. 181, No.37).

We can be sure that, in considering Dryden's Ovid, we are dealing with translations of works which Dryden had, as it were, 'always' known. The Tristia, Heroides and Metamorphoses were among the first Latin texts to be studied in the seventeenth-century grammar school, and were regularly used as a basis for rigorous exercises in construing, parsing, rhetorical analysis, memorising, verse composition (both English and Latin), and (in the case of the Heroides) epistolary technique.[1] The Metamorphoses were regarded as a valuable source of mythological data for use in reading other authors. Even Ovid's amatory works, the Ars Amatoria, Remedia Amoris, and Amores, whose subject matter was thought to render them unsuitable for educational use as they stood, were pillaged (sometimes in a suitably modified form) for collections of 'sententiae' and distichs which could be used as models for verse composition. Moreover (if the example of Milton, a schoolboy at St.Paul's two decades before Dryden was at Westminster, is anything to go by) they

1. See D.L. Clark, Milton at St.Paul's, p.111; Baldwin, Shakespeare's Small Latine, I, 338-9. J.Carey in The Ovidian Love Elegy in England (Unpublished D.Phil. Dissertation, University of Oxford, 1961) has pointed out how grammar-school scholars would previously have encountered extracts from Ovid in Lily's Latin Grammar, Erasmus' Parabolae, and Culmannus' Sententiae Pueriles. On the use of Ovid for exercises, see Charles Hoole, A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole (London, 1660), pp.156-163. Hoole's book which records a method 'according to what is commonly practiced' was written at about the same time as Dryden was studying at Westminster, and gives a good idea of the uses to which Ovid was put in the classroom. See Baldwin, Shakespeare's Small Latine, II, 239 (quoting Erasmus) and also I, 156 and II, 242, for the use of the Heroides as models for epistolary writing and verse composition at Eton.

enjoyed an extra-curricular readership among the more enterprising pupils.[1]

Use was also made in teaching of various more recent examples of the moral and allegorical exegesis to which Ovid's work had been subjected from the early middle ages onwards.[2] Students were invited, for example,

1. See E.Jacobsen, Translation, a Traditional Craft : An Introductory Sketch with a Study of Marlowe's Elegies, Classica et Mediaevalia, Dissertationes VI (Copenhagen, 1958), p.154. Baldwin (I, 194, 111-113), Louis B.Wright, Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England (Chapel Hill 1935), p.235, and Carey (Chapter 4 passim) quote various objections to the suitability of Ovid's amatory works in the classroom. The first collection of distichs from the Ars was Wynkyn de Worde's The Flores of Ovide de Arte Amandi, printed for Caxton in 1513. E.K.Rand, 'Milton in Rustication', SP, 19 (1922), 111, concluded from a study of Milton's Latin elegiacs that, although the Amores and Ars Amatoria were not studied intact in schools, 'he must have known his Ovid virtually by heart, not merely the Metamorphoses...but all the poems of Ovid'. cf. Milton's own testimony in the Apology for Smectymnuus. It should be noted that in Vautrollier's widely-used school edition of Ovid (first printed in 1583) the Ars, Remedia and Amores were bound up with the Heroides in the same volume. The enterprising student could therefore 'read on'.

2. See L.K.Born, 'Ovid and Allegory', Speculum, 9 (1934), 362-379, Chapter 2 of D.P.Harding's book (cited above), D.C.Allen, 'Chapter VII : Undermeanings in Ovid's Metamorphoses', in Mysteriously Meant : the Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance (Baltimore, 1970), and De Witt T.Starnes and E.W.Talbert, Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries : A Study of Renaissance Dictionaries in relation to the Classical Learning of Contemporary English Writers (Chapel Hill, 1955). Starnes and Talbert demonstrate how Sandys' commentaries in the 1632 and 1640 editions of his translation of the Metamorphoses often derive from the Regius-Micyllus commentary on Ovid, and his marginal notes from Stephanus' Dictionarium Historicum, Geographicum, Poeticum, itself in many respects an expanded version of the works by Natalis Comes and Verdier included in Hoole's list of recommended reading. Arthur Golding, another of Dryden's 'sources' had used the Regius-Micyllus Ovid. See G.Steiner, 'Golding's Use of the Regius-Micyllus Commentary upon Ovid', JEGP, 49 (1950), 317-323. Stephanus' Dictionarium was widely used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and a folio edition of 1686 was in the possession of Dryden's friend, Congreve. See J.C.Hodges, The Library of William Congreve (New York, 1955), p.41. D.P.Harding (Chapter I) quotes evidence from St. Evremond, and R.F.Hardin ('Ovid in Seventeenth Century England', Comparative Literature, 24 [1972], 44-62) from Blackmore, Temple, Addison and Hughes to show that this allegorical way of reading Ovid was being severely questioned by the later seventeenth century. See also Thomas Rymer, Critical Works, ed. C.Zimansky (New Haven, 1956), p.5.

to use, both for factual information and moral interpretation, the commentaries in Sandys' translation of Ovid. The translation itself was used as a model for English verse composition. School libraries contained the mythological handbooks of Sir Francis Bacon, Alexander Ross, Verderius, and Stephanus.[1] Students also made use of, and were asked to compile for themselves, 'thematic' anthologies on the model of Mirandula's Flores Poetarum, in which passages from various Latin poets on the same subject were collected together, and which served both, again, as a model for composition, and a repository of themes for epistolary and rhetorical exercises.[2]

Translation of Latin verse into English was particularly stressed by Busby at Westminster. Looking back on his schooldays in 1693 (when he was 62), Dryden remembered how he had rendered Persius' Third Satire as a 'Thursday Night exercise', and remarked that 'it, and many other' of his 'Exercises of this nature, in English Verse, are still in the Hands of my Learned Master, the Reverend Doctor Busby'.[3] Dryden seems, in common with many of his contemporaries, to have revered Busby's teaching, and one detects, for example, a particular deference and modesty in the tone of the letter which he wrote in 1682 to his old headmaster about his eldest son Charles (Dryden was then 51 and at the height of his fame).[4]

1. See Hoole, New Discovery, pp.161-163.
2. See Foster Watson, The English Grammar Schools, pp.7-8.
3. Kinsley, II, 758.
4. Barker, Memoir of Richard Busby, pp.26-28, quotes the testimony of Steele and Atterbury. Among Busby's other pupils were Wren, Locke, Lord Chancellor Jeffreys, Charles Montague, Earl of Halifax, and Prior. Henry Felton, in his Dissertation on Reading the Classics (London, 1713), pp.56--57, notes that Busby forbade the use of notes in his teaching, but comments that 'Under such a Master they could do no Good, there was no Need of the Best'. For Dryden's letters to Busby, see Ward, Letters, pp.17,150.

One need be in no doubt that Dryden left Westminster in 1650 with a thorough grounding in the rudiments of Classical language, history, mythology and literature, in which the study of Ovid had played no small part, a grounding which was consolidated in his studies at Trinity College, Cambridge.

There has been, as far as I know, no systematic investigation of the influence of Dryden's reading of Ovid on his earlier poetry and on his plays, and though this subject lies outside the strict scope of the present study, it is worth noting in passing that he drew on Ovidian epigraphs for two of the plays, and that his editors have detected Ovidian echoes on a local level at several places in those plays and their prefaces, and in certain of his earlier poems.[1] In No. 110 of The Guardian, for example, Addison remarked on how detailed a knowledge of the Metamorphoses was shown by Muley Moloch and Almeyda, the Emperor and Queen of Barbary in Don Sebastian. Dryden's use of Ovidian 'turns' in the plays is far less

1. See the epigraphs to The Indian Emperor (1667) and The State of Innocence (1677). For Ovid in the plays, see Montague Summers' notes in his edition of Dryden's Dramatic Works (6 vols., London, 1931-2), on Rival Ladies III,i. (II, 161), Tyrannic Love III.i. (III, 380), The State of Innocence II.ii (V, 132), Aureng-Zebe I (V,194), III (V,234), V (V,261), All for Love I (V,323), IV (V,380), V (398). See also California, VIII,272, X, 405, 416, I,33. For Dryden's use of Ovid in Annus Mirabilis, see below.
In addition to the echoes noted by editors, I have found a large number of passages in the plays which seem to be generally indebted to Ovidian language or situations. Ovid seems, for example, to be a principal source for that imagery which, as Professor D.W.Jefferson has noted ('Aspects of Dryden's Imagery', Dryden's Mind and Art, ed. B.King [Edinburgh, 1969], pp.24-42), encourages 'a comic conception of the human species, of the processes appertaining to its creation and generation, and of the relation between soul and body', and also that imagery which invests inanimate matter with a life of its own. Dryden also draws (see Scott, III, 200-1) on Ovid's description of Aeolus and the winds and (Scott, IV, 198-9) on Ovid's depiction of the drowning of Ceyx, and at several points Dryden's language suggests that he is remembering the Ovidian account of creation (see, for example, Scott, II, 233, 298,V,135, VI,131, VII,335,111, VIII,172,254,271).

rare than he himself implies in the Discourse on Satire, and his casual quotations from, and references to, Ovid at various points in the prose are further indication of a general familiarity with the poet's work.[1] It even seems possible that Dryden remembered in 1668 (perhaps from his reading of that translator during his schooldays) at least one famous moment in the Metamorphoses as it had been rendered by George Sandys.[2] Among his early works, Dryden's reading of Ovid shows perhaps most clearly in Annus Mirabilis, which contains several possible echoes of Ovidian expressions, as well as one explicit and acknowledged allusion to, and what amounts virtually to a short passage of translation from, the first book of the Metamorphoses.[3]

1. For example, in the Essay of Dramatic Poesy (Scott,XV,319), Preface to Tyrannic Love (Scott, III,354), Life of Plutarch (Scott,XVIII,70), Preface to Sylvae (Kinsley, I,399), Dedication to Amphitryon (Scott, VIII,9), Dedication to Eleonora (Scott, XI,121), Discourse on Satire (Kinsley, II,608, 627, 656), Arguments and Notes to Juvenal (Kinsley, II, 718), Parallel of Painting and Poetry (Scott, XVII, 293, 301-2), Life of Lucian (Scott, XVIII, 76), Dedication to the Aeneis (Kinsley, III, 1046). These are simply the passing references.

2. See my 'Dryden and Sandys' Ovid : A Note', NQ, 21 (1974), 104. The version which Dryden supplies of Met. i.292 in the Essay of Dramatic Poesy (Scott, XV, 366) is in fact that of Sandys, imperfectly remembered.

3. See California, I, 271, 273, 283, 287, 288, 301. Annus Mirabilis, 521-528 is directly indebted to Met.i.533-539 (See California, I, 295) and Dryden introduces his description of the Great Fire with an acknowledged Ovidian allusion (See California, I, 257, 306). John Warton also saw an allusion in Annus Mirabilis, 351-2 to Fasti, ii.831-2. See The Poetical Works of John Dryden, ... with Notes by the Rev.Joseph Warton; the Rev. John Warton D.D. and Others (4 vols., 1811; rpt. 1 vol., London, 1883), p.27.

In a broader sense, since Ovid was, as many later commentators realised, one of the major sources for much of the 'witty' 'playful' or 'fanciful' poetry of the Renaissance and seventeenth century, as well as for many poetic conventions for the portrayal of lovers' behaviour, his indirect influence on Dryden, via such intermediaries as Marlowe, Spenser or Cowley in English, or Ariosto and Tasso in Italian was no doubt substantial, but in a way that could not easily be indicated by conventional source-study.[1] As the printers of the Amsterdam Metamorphoses of 1732 remarked, Ovid's works

> ... have been one of the chief Sources from which the most celebrated Poets, Painters, and Wits since his Time, have formed their Genius, enriched their Fancy, and derived their Excellence.[2]

It would be difficult to imagine that the description of the Great Fire of London in Annus Mirabilis, for example, could have been written in quite the playful way in which Dryden chose to write it had the Metamorphoses never existed.

Dryden's first recorded comments on Ovid are in fact found in the Letter to Sir Robert Howard which was prefixed to that poem on its publication in 1667. Dryden continued to write about Ovid in his prose at fairly frequent intervals until his death in 1700. A close scrutiny of Dryden's various remarks reveals that hardly any of them are what one could call strictly original observations. Dryden's view of Ovid as it appears in his various prefaces and critical essays is to a very large extent a selection, reformulation and development in his own terms of

1. On Ovid's influence on the language of love see particularly Georges May, D'Ovide à Racine (Paris and New Haven, 1949).
2. Ovid's Metamorphoses in Latin and English, Translated by the Most Eminent Hands. With Historical Explications of the Fables, written by the Abbot Banier, ... (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1732), I, Sig.**r.

what might be termed the body of humanist commonplace about that poet.

And if one inspects that body of humanist commonplace itself - as it is conveniently collected, for example, by Adrien Baillet in his Judgemens des Savans (1685), Thomas Pope Blount in his De Re Poetica (1694), Peter Burmann in the Appendix Ovidiana contained in the fourth volume of his variorum edition of Ovid (Amsterdam, 1727), or, in our own time, by Wilfried Stroh - it becomes apparent that much of the literary critical (as opposed to allegorical/moral or merely exegetical) commentary on Ovid available to Dryden amounted to little more than a development of a small number of leading ideas about the poet to be found in three of his very earliest critics - the two Senecas and Quintilian.[1]

In his Controversiae, the elder Seneca had compared Ovid to an orator of his own day, Montanus, who, he thought, was like the poet in being carried away with his own capacity for formulating 'sententiae', and in never having learnt one of the most important rules of writing or speaking - when to stop:

1. Adrien Baillet, Jugemens des Savans sur les Principaux Ouvrages des Auteurs (1685; rev. ed. by M.de Monnoye, 4 vols., Paris, 1722), IV, 134-144; Sir Thomas Pope Bount, De Re Poetica : Or Remarks upon Poetry. With Characters and Censures of the Most Considerable Poets, Whether Ancient or Modern. Extracted out of the Best and Choicest Criticks (London, 1694); P.Burmann, ed., P.Ovidii Nasonis Opera (4 vols., Amsterdam, 1727), IV, 225-234; Wilfried Stroh, ed., Ovid im Urteil der Nachwelt : Eine Testimoniensammlung (Darmstadt, 1969); In his 'Notes' to his translation of 'The Story of Phaeton' published in Poetical Miscellanies : The Fifth Part... (London, 1704), Addison remarked at length on the poverty of specifically literary (as opposed to allegorical or exegetical) commentary on Ovid, in terms very similar to those in which Pope was later to write of Homer's critics in the very first of his Observations on Book One of The Iliad.

> Habet hoc Montanus vitium : sententias suas repetendo corrumpit; dum non est contentus unam rem semel bene dicere, efficit ne bene dixerit. Et propter hoc et propter alia quibus orator potest poetae similis videri solebat Scaurus Montanum inter oratores Ovidium vocare; nam et Ovidius nescit quod bene cessit relinquere.[1]

Elsewhere in the same work, Seneca observes that, during his training as an orator, Ovid had always chosen to declaim 'suasoriae' rather than 'controversiae', since he found argumentation tiresome, and when he did declaim 'controversiae', he always chose those which were 'ethicae' ('ones involving portrayal of character').[2] Seneca then tells an anecdote designed to demonstrate the extent to which Ovid recognised, yet enjoyed, the faults of his own poetry: when asked by his friends to suppress three of his own lines, he agreed, on condition that they would, in turn, agree to exempt three lines which he had nominated for preservation. The three lines selected by Ovid for preservation turned out to be the same three selected independently by his friends for deletion.[3] Seneca concludes from this anecdote that Ovid was well aware of his faults, but simply chose not to amend them. 'He used to say', reports Seneca, 'that a face is the more beautiful for some mole'.[4]

Similarly, the younger Seneca, in his Naturales Quaestiones, had commented on the way in which, in Book One of the Metamorphoses, Ovid had

1. Controversiae, 9.5.17. See The Elder Seneca, Declamations, ed. M. Winterbottom (2 vols., Cambridge Mass. and London, 1974), II, 324. See also Controversiae, 3.7. (I, 412).
2. As M.Winterbottom translates it. See Seneca, Declamations, I, 265.
3. The story is alluded to by Dryden in the Dedication to the Aeneis (Kinsley, III, 1049).
4. Aiebat interim decentiorem faciem esse in qua aliquis naevos esset. (Contr. 2.12; see Declamations, ed. Winterbottom, I, 264).

ruined his majestic description of the flood by descending, through 'tantum impetum ingenii et materiae', in the subsequent description of the wolf swimming among the lambs and the lion floating on the waves, to what he calls 'pueriles ineptiae'.[1] Quintilian had remarked that Ovid was 'lascivus quidem in herois' and 'nimium amator ingenii sui', but that some of his work was admirable, that he had succeeded remarkably in moulding the diverse material of the Metamorphoses into a coherent whole, and that his tragedy Medea (now lost) shows us the heights to which he might have risen more consistently had he chosen to discipline rather than to indulge his talents. Elsewhere Quintilian cites Medea again, this time to bring out Ovid's power in capturing forcefully a general dilemma by skilful use of a particular rhetorical figure.[2]

Baillet's opening summary, in his Jugemens des Savans, reveals the extent to which later critical commentary on Ovid can be described fairly justly as Roman commentary in Renaissance dress :

> Tous les Critiques conviennent qu'Ovide avoit l'esprit fort beau , & une facilité inconcevable pour fair des vers, mais la plupart ont reconnu en même-tems que ces avantages de la Nature lui avoient fait concevoir trop bonne opinion de lui-même, & lui avoient donné trop de confiance en ses propres forces;...[3]

And the testimonia which Baillet and the other compilers of critical opinions collect bear out this general summary. Though the critics

1. Naturales Quaestiones, III. 27. 14. Seneca's 'pueriles ineptiae' are the ultimate source, I take it, for Rapin's 'jeunesses' and Dryden's 'puerilities' (and the later coinage 'boyisms').

2. Institutio Oratoria, X.i.88. 'Lascivus', as the Oxford Latin Dictionary makes clear (meaning 5) is a word more nearly rendered by the English 'extravagant' or 'unrestrained' than our 'lascivious'; See also Inst. Or., X.i.88; IV.i.77; X.i.98; VIII.v.6.

3. Baillet, Jugemens des Savans, p.134.

differ on some points of detail (such as over the question of which work is the finest in the Ovidian corpus), Scaliger, Rosteau, Barthius, Briet, Vavasseur and Rapin all echo, in various forms, the Roman view that, despite his 'vivacité' and 'fécondité', Ovid lacks 'regle' and 'mésure' and that all his works contain 'des jeunesses', 'le mauvais goût', 'les faux brillans' and 'les superfluités'. Rapin and Borrichius echo Quintilian's praise for the skill with which Ovid has connected the various tales in the Metamorphoses. Daniel Heinsius, one of the most enthusiastic champions of Ovid among the Renaissance commentators, was particularly impressed with the observation, implicit in the elder Seneca but openly expressed in Quintilian's comments on the Medea, that Ovid's forte was in the portrayal of human passion. He commented on this, both in his treatise De Tragoediae Constitutione (1611) and in the prefatory matter to his edition of Ovid (1629). Baillet notes especially his admiration, in the latter work, for the Heroides :

> ...Daniel Heinsius dit que l'imitation des passions & l'expression des inclinations & des mouvemens du coeur y paroît d'une telle maniére, qu'on voit bien que c'est-là le grand talent d'Ovide...[1]

That Dryden had in his earlier years assimilated the broad drift of what we might call the body of Roman/humanist commonplace about Ovid without attending over-scrupulously to its details is revealed by the way in which Crites, one of the speakers in the Essay of Dramatic Poesy, conflates (without apparently realising it) the two Senecas' strictures on Ovid's prolixity, and also by the way in which the Preface to An Evening's Love (1671), when using Ovid as a parallel for the 'superfluity

1. Baillet, Jugemens des Savans, p.143.

and waste of wit' to be found in Fletcher and Shakespeare, he quotes a remark from Quintilian which, though expressing sentiments similar to those which the Roman critic voiced about Ovid, was in fact originally made about Cicero.[1]

In his first published remarks on Ovid, in the Annus Mirabilis Dedicatory Letter, Dryden expresses a view of the poet's talents which is close to the enthusiasm of Daniel Heinsius. He praises Ovid's 'invention' and fertile 'fancy', the 'ingenium' praised by Ovid's earliest critics and by so many of the humanists, without commenting at the same time (as many of them had done) on how the exercise of that faculty had led him into prolixity, excess, and triviality. For Dryden in 1667, Ovid is the dramatic poet par excellence, abler even than Virgil at creating the illusion in his verse of a protagonist in the grip of overwhelming passions:

> Ovid images more often the movements and affections of the mind, either combating between two contrary passions, or extremely discompos'd by one: his words therefore are the least part of his care, for he pictures Nature in disorder, with which the study and choice of words is inconsistent. This is the proper wit of Dialogue or Discourse, and, consequently, of the Drama, where all that is said is to be suppos'd the effect of sudden thought; which, though it excludes not the quickness of wit in repartees, yet admits not a too curious election of words, too frequent allusions, or use of Tropes, or, in fine, any thing that showes remoteness of thought, or labour in the Writer.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 47)

1. See G.Watson, ed., John Dryden : Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays (2 vols., London, 1962), I, 80. For Quintilian's remark, see Inst. Or., VI.iii.13.

Ovid, at this date, also met for Dryden at least some of the requirements which he felt were needed in writing such a 'heroic or historical' poem as he felt he had himself just completed in Annus Mirabilis. In particular, Ovid met Dryden's demand that the author of such a poem should set 'before your eyes the absent object, as perfectly and more delightfully then nature':

> Though [Virgil] describes his Dido well and naturally, in the violence of her passions, yet he must yield in that to the Myrrha, the Biblis, the Althaea, of Ovid; for, as great an admirer of him as I am, I must acknowledge, that, if I see not more of their Souls then I see of Dido's, at least I have a greater concernment for them: and that convinces me that Ovid has touch'd those tender strokes more delicately then Virgil could.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 47)

And since, in concentrating on the portrayal of passion, Ovid's 'words... are the least part of his care', his style lacks those features which would be inimical to 'the proper wit of an Heroick or Historical Poem', such as 'the jerk or sting of an Epigram', 'the seeming contradiction of a poor Antithesis' and 'the gingle of a more poor Paranomasia'.[1]

In the Essay of Dramatic Poesy, drafted before the publication of Annus Mirabilis, but published six months after it in August 1667, Dryden repeated (through the mouth of Eugenius) his praise of Ovid's dramatic gifts in terms strikingly similar to those of the earlier Dedication. He even used two of the same examples from the Metamorphoses as touchstones of Ovid's skill at 'stir[ring] up... concernment' for his heroines.[2] But in the same Essay, Crites, the supporter (it should be noted) of the drama

1. Kinsley, I, 46.
2. On the date of the Essay, see Watson, ed., Of Dramatic Poesy, I, 10. For Eugenius' speech, see Scott, XV, 321.

of the Ancients, is made to voice, as part of his objections against the use of rhymed verse in plays, some of the classical objections to Ovid: how can rhyme, Crites argues, be thought to exercise a disciplining function on the imagination of modern poets when the different, but equally rigorous, rules of Latin verse were of no use in preventing Ovid from 'saying too much on every subject'.[1] These objections, as we have seen, were re-iterated by Dryden in propria persona three years later, in the Preface to An Evening's Love.

Dryden's thinking about Ovid, as we know from some remarks made about twenty years later, was given a particular focus and an added impetus in the early 1670's by a new poetic interest which he had developed, or rather been encouraged to develop, around that date. In the Discourse Concerning Satire prefixed to his Juvenal of 1693, Dryden tells us that, about twenty years previously, the Scots man of letters, Sir George Mackenzie, had suggested to him that he should set himself to imitate, in a more systematic manner than he had done hitherto, the 'Elegant turns, either on the word, or on the thought' which are to be found in the verse of Waller and Denham.[2] Dryden was taken with the idea and not content with the 'turns' which he found in those two poets, he says, he set out to find those poets in which this particular stylistic

1. See Scott, XV, 366.
2. See Kinsley, II, 665.

device, so much admired by contemporary Frenchmen, was most prominently and skilfully used.[1] Looking in vain for them in Cowley and Milton, he says, he finally found them in abundance in Spenser and Tasso, and, above all, in their 'two Principle Fountains', Virgil and Ovid. Dryden is careful to point out that the term 'turn', as he is using it in this preface, should not be taken to cover all forms of studied wordplay or rhetorical artifice: it is to be sharply differentiated, for example, from those 'Points of Wit, and Quirks of Epigram' which he deplores as being 'puerilities' entirely out of place in Cowley's epic The Davideis. 'Turns', as the example of Virgil makes clear, are quite compatible in Dryden's mind at this date with the epic style.[2]

1. Kinsley, II, 666. On the vogue of 'tourné' in France, see Sir George Etherege, The Man of Mode, IV.ii. 146-148 and Dryden, Marriage à la Mode II.i (Scott, IV, 264), where it is used by the affected Melantha. That the term 'tourné' had a greater variety of overtones in French than is allowed for, say, in the discussions of J.Spingarn (Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century [3 vols., Oxford, 1908], I, xlv-xlvi) or W.P.Ker (Essays of John Dryden [2 vols., Oxford, 1900], II, 288) is shown by the second of Dominique Bouhours' Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène (Paris, 1671), pp. 93-96: 'La Langue Françoise'. 'Tour' and 'délicat' are two of the 'expressions nouvelles' expounded by Eugène to Ariste who's been out of town recently. See also R.Rapin, The Whole Critical Works (2 vols., London, 1706), II, 28. For the importation of 'tour' into England as a critical term with various possible implications, see B.Strang, 'Dryden's Innovations in Critical Vocabulary', D.U.J., 51 (1959), 114-123, and P.J.Smallwood, 'A Dryden Allusion to Rymer's Rapin', NQ., 23 (1976), 554.

2. See California, I, 326. In 1697, in the Dedication to the Aeneis (Kinsley, III, 1048), Dryden thought the epic poem 'too stately to receive those little Ornaments', and blames his own lapses into 'turns' in his translation on an Ovidian fondness for his own vices. On the subject, see also G.Williamson, The Proper Wit of Poetry (London, 1951) p.117.

But in the Discourse Dryden seems more concerned to describe the nature of the 'turn', and illustrate it with examples, than to define the circumstances in which it is acceptable as a literary device. He clearly wishes here to draw an evaluative distinction between the verbal wit of Cowley and that of Ovid, though, as we shall see, he continued to criticise Ovid's wit in terms very similar to those which he uses for Cowley's in this preface.

It was, indeed, a matter of some general disagreement and uncertainty among the critics of Dryden's day whether Ovid's wit should be condemned along with, and on similar grounds to, that of the 'conceited' poetry of Marino, Góngora, Ariosto and the English metaphysicals. Walsh, for example, in the Preface to his Letters and Poems, Amorous and Gallant of 1692 (a preface referred to by Dryden in the passage from the Discourse on Satire under discussion) thought that, whereas modern love poets like Petrarch and Cowley 'fill their Verses with thoughts that are surprising and glittering, but not tender, passionate, or natural to a Man in Love', Ovid strikes the truly natural and delicate note.[1] Leonard Welsted, writing in 1712, explicitly differentiated the 'Turns' of Cowley, the products of 'so luxuriant a Fancy, that I can compare him to nothing more properly than a too rich Soil, which breeds Flowers and Weeds promiscuously, and exerts it self with so great an Exuberance, that at length it becomes Barren thro' its Fertility', from those of Ovid which are (Welsted insists), despite what Dryden says, 'artful Strokes which play upon the Passions,

1. [William Walsh], Letters and Poems, Amorous and Gallant (London, 1692), Sig. A3r.

and awake the Mind: ... the very reverse of those frivolous and unnatural Conceits, with which the Taste of this Age has been so miserably debauch'd'.[1]

René Rapin, the influential French critic whom Dryden was reading so attentively in the 1670's, repeats, as we have already seen, some of the Roman reservations about Ovid's 'copiousness', and comments on the 'jeunesses' which mar the Metamorphoses, but his main strictures on the subject of 'pointed' writing, and 'false wit' are directed not at Ovid, but at the Italians, Tasso, Guarini and Bonarelli, who (in the words of Thomas Rymer's translation) 'always think rather to speak things wittily than naturally' and who consequently display much 'wit out of season'.[2]

Similarly, Dominique Bouhours, the French critic who was perhaps more sensitive than any other to the 'abondance vicieuse', the 'profusion de pensées fausses ou inutiles' to be found in much of the poetry of the previous hundred years, is consistently warm in his appreciation of

1. L.Welsted, The Works of Dionysius Longinus, ... with Some Remarks on the English Poets (London, 1712), pp. 170-172. For a similar view, see [Charles Gildon], The Laws of Poetry (London, 1721), p.284. Gildon accuses Dryden of 'debasing Ovid to the level of Cowley, or some worse modern composer of love songs and amorous madrigals.'

2. For Dryden's reading of Rapin, see Ward, Life, pp.108, 140. For Rapin's comments on Ovid, see René Rapin, Les Réflexions sur la Poétique, ed. E.T.Dubois (Geneva, 1970) p.91. (Réfl. II.xx); Réfl. I.xxxiv (ed. Dubois, pp.58-59); I.xl. (ed. Dubois, pp.67-70). For Rymer's Rapin on the Italians, see R.Rapin, Reflexions on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie, [trans. T.Rymer] (London, 1674), p.56.

Ovid, and in his insistance on Ovid's 'natural' qualities.[1]

Joseph Addison, however, both in his early 'Notes' to his translations from the Metamorphoses, and in No. 62 of The Spectator, classes Ovid and Cowley together as the leading ancient and modern exhibitor respectively of what he calls 'mixed wit'.[2] This he defines as a type of wit which is neither purely verbal quibbling nor the best kind of wit, that kind which is able to locate a resemblance between two apparently dissimilar objects which the reader finds at once natural and new. Just as Rapin had criticised the Italians Guarini and Bonarelli for always 'think[ing] rather to speak things wittily, than naturally', so Addison finds that 'we may every where observe in Ovid, that he employs his Invention more than his Judgment, and speaks all the Ingenious things that can be said on the Subject, rather than those which are particularly proper to the Person and Circumstances of the Speaker'.[3] But it is particularly interesting to note that in the Spectator paper which follows his castigation of 'mixed wit', a paper which contains a description of a

1. D.Bouhours, Entretiens, p.216; Pensées Ingénieuses des Anciens et des Modernes (new ed., Paris, 1734), pp.141, 148-9, 191, 358. See also D.Bouhours, The Art of Criticism (London, 1705 : a translation of La Manière de bien penser dans les Ouvrages d'esprit [Paris, 1687]). Eudoxus, an admirer of the Romans, praises Ovid on pp. 105, 134, 148, 150-151, 161-162 of this translation.

2. These both draw, as has been pointed out, on Dryden's remarks about 'turns', and on the criticism of Bouhours. See G.Williamson, The Proper Wit of Poetry, p. 121.

3. Poetical Miscellanies : the Fifth Part (London, 1704), p. 591.

fantastic dream supposedly experienced by the writer, Addison makes copious use of the very kind of animated pun which he had claimed so to deplore in the writings of Cowley and Ovid. It is a recurrent feature of much commentary on Ovid (including Dryden's) that the critic is secretly captivated with those very characteristics which he claims to deplore.

Dryden is, as I have said, more concerned in the Discourse on Satire to define what he means by the various categories of 'turns' which he has described than to be precise about where he stands in general terms on the question of the falseness or 'naturalness' of Ovid's wit. The examples of different types of 'turn' which he gives clarify the general definition of the device offered by the eighteenth-century commentator, Anthony Blackwall :

> The most charming Repetitions are those, whereby the principal Words in a Sentence, either the same in Sound, or Signification, are repeated with such Advantage and Improvement, as raises a new Thought, or gives a musical Cadence and Harmony to the Period. These in English are call'd fine Turns; and are either upon the Words only, or the Thought, or both. A dextrous Turn upon Words is pretty; the Turn upon the Thought substantial; but the Consummation and Crown of all, is, when both the Sound of the Words is grateful, and their Meaning comprehensive; when both the Reason and the Ear are entertain'd with a noble Thought vigorously express'd, and beautifully finish'd... Strong and vehement Passions will not admit Turns upon Words; nor ought they to have place in Heroic Poems, or in grave Exhortations, and solemn Discourses of Morality.[1]

The examples from Ovid which Dryden gives of the 'turn on words' indicate that the pleasure which this device offers the reader is, as Blackwall suggests, in seeing a word, pair of words, or even a whole phrase repeated with a different grammatical significance (a device to

1. Anthony Blackwall, Introduction to the Classics (London, 1718), pp.202-3. Blackwall's last sentence obviously draws on Dryden's thought, both in the Preface to Fables and the Dedication to the Aeneis.

which an inflected language like Latin obviously lends itself very readily). A 'turn on the thoughts and the words', however, occurs, as Dryden's examples make clear, when the reader experiences something more than the aesthetic pleasure of repeated words or phrases, when the rhetorical figure is also a means to a heightened insight into what is being talked about. In the example which he cites from Catullus' Complaint of Ariadne, for instance, the rhetorical repetitions bring home to us that men are reckless and irresponsible in what they promise and swear to women both before they seduce them, and after the seduction is complete - but for very different reasons! And in the example from the Orpheus story in Virgil's Georgics,

> Cum subita incautum dementia cepit Amantem;
> Ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere Manes.

the 'turn' on the two different grammatical forms of 'ignoscere' delicately reinforces the pathos of Orpheus' plight - the circumstances in which he finds himself are not those in which the human quality of 'forgiveness' is applicable or possible. The Shades know no such compassion.

If in 1667, Dryden had associated Ovid's capacity to 'concern' the reader with the predicament of his heroines with an absence of rhetorical artifice of any kind, ten years later (presumably after his conversation with Sir George Mackenzie about 'turns'), his reading of Boileau's Longin (among other things) had encouraged him to shift his ground somewhat, and to admit that, if artfully managed, 'bold figures' of certain kinds can, in fact, be an extremely effective aid in the portrayal of a hero's passion in an heroic poem:

> ... they are principally to be used in passion;
> when we speak more warmly, and with more precipitation
> than at other times... the poet must put on the passion

> he endeavours to represent: A man in such an occasion is not cool enough, either to reason rightly, or to talk calmly. Aggravations are then in their proper places; interrogations, exclamations, hyperbata, or a disordered connection of discourse, are graceful there, because they are natural.
>
> (Scott, V, 113)

Two years later, in the essay The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy prefixed to his adaptation of Troilus and Cressida, Dryden applied similar arguments to the portrayal of passion in drama. Shakespeare, he suggests in the essay, 'understood the nature of the passions' but sometimes failed to distinguish 'the blown puffy style from true sublimity'. But, Dryden hastily adds,

> It is not that I would explode the use of metaphors from passion, for Longinus thinks them necessary to raise it: but to use them at every word, to say nothing without a metaphor, a simile, an image, or description, is, I doubt, to smell a little too strongly of the buskin. ... it is neither height of thought that is discommended, nor pathetic vehemence, nor any nobleness of expression in its proper place, but it is a false measure of all these, something which is like them, and is not them;
>
> (Scott, VI, 261-2, 264)

Dryden, then, is now arguing that, both in the case of heroic poetry and in that of drama, it is not the presence or absence of rhetorical tropes, metaphors, turns, or any other stylistic feature per se which impedes the convincing portrayal of passion, but the skill with which those devices are handled by the individual poet.

In this respect, Dryden is responding to the stronger side of the critical thinking of René Rapin, the side in which that critic appears not as a rigid formalist or Rules critic, but as a sensitive analyst of the mysterious and inexplicable element in the creation of a work of literary art. Rapin had formulated in telling terms how the depiction of the 'manners', the outward signs of the workings of the inner man, could never be a matter of following a series of formulae or rules, but

must always ultimately depend on the discernment of the individual writer.[1]

For many years before 1679, Dryden had been turning over in various contexts in his critical prose the two related questions of how character could best be portrayed in drama and epic, and what was the 'proper wit' of various kinds of poetry. As has often been pointed out, the Heads of an Answer to Rymer and The Grounds of Criticism are both, to a large extent, attempts at a reply to the radical challenges on both these questions represented by the work of Rapin and his English translator, Thomas Rymer. In The Grounds of Criticism, much of Dryden's reply to Rapin and Rymer is cast in a form which follows the mechanistic critical categories established by the pedantic French critic of the epic, René le Bossu, categories which Dryden tries to use (extraordinary as it may seem) to defend the plays of Shakespeare.[2] But at one point in the essay, Dryden sets Le Bossu aside and reveals how his reading of a passage in Rapin's Reflexions had brought home to him how gravely he had erred in his own portrayal of passion, and in the propriety with which he had handled the wit in some of his own heroic plays. In order to 'move the passions', Dryden argues,

> There is yet another obstacle to be removed, which is, - pointed wit, and sentences affected out of season; there are nothing of kin to the

1. On this subject, see E.B.O.Borgerhoff, The Freedom of French Classicism (Princeton, 1950), pp.174-186, and I.D.MacKillop, The Milieu of Criticism : French and English Neo-Classicism in the Seventeenth Century (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Leicester, 1972), esp. Chapter III : 'Le Révérend Père René Rapin'.

2. See J.C.Sherwood, 'Dryden and the Rules : the Preface to Troilus and Cressida', Comparative Literature, 2 (1950), 73-83.

> violence of passion: no man is at leisure to make sentences and similes, when his soul is in an agony. I the rather name this fault, that it may serve to mind me of my former errors; neither will I spare myself, but give an example of this kind from my "Indian Emperor".
>
> (Scott, VI, 260, 261)

Rapin, we remember, had criticised both the Italian poets and Seneca on these very grounds (Rymer's translation even includes the word 'points' and the phrase 'wit out of season'). In an essay published in 1672, another French critic, St.Evremond, had charged Ovid, in strikingly similar terms, with being witty in inappropriate circumstances

> Je suis aussi peu persuadé de la violence d'une passion qui est ingénieuse à s'exprimer par la diversité des pensées. Une âme touchée sensiblement ne laisse pas à l'esprit la liberté de penser beaucoup, et moins encore de se divertir dans la variété de ses conceptions. C'est en quoi je ne puis souffrir la belle imagination d'Ovide: il est ingénieux dans la douleur; il se met en peine de fair voir de l'esprit, quand vous n'attendez que du sentiment.[1]

Dryden was now clearly making connections between his reflections on Ovid's portrayal of passion and the other thoughts which he had been constantly turning over in his mind during the 1670's about the 'wit out of season' in his own plays and the kinds of eloquence which might be thought plausible or desirable in the artistic portrayal of dramatic speech. This can perhaps be seen to best advantage in the following passage from the Preface to his first volume to contain Ovidian translations, the collaborative <u>Ovid's Epistles</u> of 1680 :

> ...<u>the Copiousness of his Wit was such, that he often writ too pointedly for his Subject, and made his persons speak more</u>

1. 'Sur les Caractères des Tragédies' (1672) in <u>Oeuvres Mêlées de Saint-Evremond</u>, ed. C.Giraud (Paris, 1865), II, 338-339.

Eloquently than the violence of their Passion would admit: so that he is frequently witty out of season: leaving the Imitation of Nature, and the cooler dictates of his Judgment, for the false applause of Fancy.

(Kinsley, I, 180)

(ii) 'Ovid's Epistles' (1680) : the Preface and the Poems

In 1679, with the publication of Troilus and Cressida, Dryden began the partnership with the young publisher Jacob Tonson which was to last, with minor interruptions, until his death.[1] Up to the previous year (1678), Tonson had largely been concerned with printing plays (usually in conjunction with other printers).[2] The precarious state both of Dryden's personal finances and of the theatre at this date must have made a collaborative volume of translations a particularly attractive proposition for both men.[3] It has been suggested that Tonson was specifically stimulated to compile a volume of translations from Ovid's Heroides by the success of Brome's composite translation of Horace which had first appeared in 1666, had been re-issued in 1671, and appeared again in 1660, the same year as Ovid's Epistles.[4] Both

1. On Dryden's relations with Tonson, see W.J.Cameron, Tonson's Miscellanies (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Reading, 1958); S.L.C.Clapp, ed., Tonson in Ten Letters by and about him (Austin, 1948); T.T.Dombras, Poetical Miscellanies, 1684-1716 (Unpublished DPhil Dissertation, University of Oxford, 1950); K.M.Lynch, Jacob Tonson, Kit-Cat Publisher (Knoxville, 1971); G.F.Papali, Jacob Tonson, Publisher : His Life and Work, 1656-1736 (Auckland, 1968); H.B.Wheatley, 'Dryden's Publishers', Transactions of the Bibliographical Society, 12 (1912), 17-38.

2. Richard Tonson published Otway's Don Carlos (1676, 1678), Titus and Berenice (1677), The Cheats of Scapin (1677), Friendship in Fashion (1678) and Rymer's Edgar (1678); the two brothers together published Aphra Behn's Sir Patient Fancy (1678) and The Feign'd Courtezans (1679); Jacob alone published Tate's Brutus of Alba (1678).

3. See Ward, Life, pp.115, 118, 178, 210, and Allardyce Nicoll, A History of English Drama, 1660-1900, Vol.1 : Restoration Drama, 1660-1700 (4th ed., Cambridge, 1967), pp.326-330. See also A.Beljame, Men of Letters and the English Public in the Eighteenth Century, 1660-1744 : Dryden, Addison, Pope (1881; transl. E.O.Lorimer, London, 1948), p.151.

4. See T.T.Dombras, Poetical Miscellanies, p.251.

he and Dryden may also have had in mind the potential appeal of the Heroides to female readers.[1]

As well as Dryden, there was a nucleus of contributors for the volume already in the Tonson circle. Four of the contributors to the collection, Otway, Tate, Rymer and Mrs.Behn had already had plays published by Jacob Tonson, his elder brother Richard, or the two in collaboration. The aristocrat Lord Mulgrave had been associated with Dryden for some years, and we know that Tonson was responsible for inviting Lord Somers to contribute (anonymously) a version of Ovid's epistle of Ariadne to Theseus, and a second rendering of Dido to Aeneas, to the volume.[2] The other contributors were mostly dramatists or minor members of the court circle.

It has been plausibly suggested that Dryden's contribution to Ovid's Epistles was not the major editorial role which he seems to have played in some of the later Tonson ventures, and did not involve that degree of personal commitment to the work being translated which is evident in some of his subsequent translating enterprises.[3] It seems

1. Wye Saltonstall had prefixed his version of Ovid's Heroicall Epistles (1636), which Dryden used, with an Epistle 'To the Vertuous Ladies and Gentlewomen of England', commenting upon Ovid's popularity among the ladies of Rome, and expressing the hope that his version will have similar success in England (Let English Gentlewomen as kind appeare,/To Ovid, as the Roman Ladies were. [Sig. A5v]). The appearance of The Nine Muses in 1700 perhaps indicates that by that date Dryden had acquired a female following, a suggestion which receives support from one of Dryden's own letters written shortly after the appearance of Fables (Ward, Letters, p.135). In the Preface to Fables, he observes that Ovid 'has almost all the Beaux, and the whole Fair Sex, his declar'd Patrons' (Kinsley, IV, 1445). For the presence of females in the reading public, and other related matters, see Beljame, Men of Letters, pp.188-192. For further evidence on the readership and popularity of Ovid's Epistles, see Chapter Three.
2. See Memoirs of the Life of Lord Somers (London, 1716), p.11.
3. See Ward, Life, p.143; California I, 324.

more likely that, at this stage, the chief impetus for the volume was commercial, and came from Tonson, and that Dryden's prestigious name was enrolled to sell the volume, chiefly by writing its substantial Preface. It is even possible that the two epistles which Dryden contributed (a third was done in collaboration with Mulgrave) had in fact been composed several years previously, since, even allowing for those qualities which were the direct result of an attempt to simulate the 'sweetness' and 'smoothness' of the Ovidian style in English, their verse differs markedly from that of the original poems which Dryden was writing around this date.[1]

Dryden's Preface falls neatly into two halves, the first concerned with Ovid and the Heroides, the second (as we have seen in Chapter One) with the principles of translation. And most of Dryden's comments on Ovid, like his earlier remarks on the subject, can be traced back to the judgements and opinions of earlier writers. His characterisation of Ovid here is, in fact, virtually a summary and synthesis (with some new elements) of all he had said about the subject hitherto.

As well as summarising some of the information about Ovid's life from Sandys' Metamorphoses and Heinsius' edition, he repeats, for example, his praise of Ovid's 'delicacy' in the 'Description of the Passions', and his capacity to put into words, in a way that strikes the reader as

1. These qualities are attributed to Ovid by many of the writers quoted by Baillet and Blount. The California editors (I, 326-329) have commented in detail on the precise technical modifications which Dryden made to his verse in an attempt to accommodate it as nearly as possible to his sense of Ovid's original.

perfectly 'natural', the 'thoughts which are the Pictures and results of those Passions' and which 'are generally such as naturally arise from those disorderly Motions of our Spirits'.[1] But, coexisting with this praise, there is also a repetition of, and concession to, the old Roman charges of Ovid's prolixity and 'wit out of season'. And Dryden's remarks on the latter are, as we have seen, expressed in terms very similar to those in which he had repented of the indulgences in his own heroic plays.

But just as Rapin had rephrased in slightly kinder terms Seneca's charges of 'pueriles ineptiae' in the Metamorphoses, when he remarked that

> [Ovide] a des jeunesses, qu'on auroit de la peine à luy pardonner, sans la vivacité de son esprit et sans je ne sçay quoy d'heureux, qu'il a dans l'imagination.[2]

so Dryden here remarks that Ovid's faults are indeed almost as attractive as the poet (apparently) found them himself:

> ... this very fault is not without it's Beauties: for the most severe Censor cannot but be pleas'd with the prodigality of his Wit, though at the same time he cou'd have wish'd, that the Master of it had been a better Manager. Every thing which he does, becomes him, and if sometimes he appear too gay, yet there is a secret gracefulness of youth, which accompanies his Writings, though the staydness and sobriety of Age be wanting.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 180-1)

1. His comments, for example, about the 'originality' of the epistolary form of the Heroides are drawn from Heinsius (See California I, 332, drawing on Noyes). The California editors do not note that Dryden's headnotes to each epistle are virtually translations of Heinsius' which were reprinted in Cnipping's Variorum of 1671, one of the editions which we know Dryden used. For precedents for Dryden's descriptive phrases, see Baillet, Jugemens, pp.135, 142; Pope Blount, De Re Poetica. p.145. Dryden's phrases occur in Kinsley, I, 180.
2. Réfl. II.xv; (ed.Dubois, p.91).

That Dryden was appealing particularly (if silently) to Rapin's authority when writing this Preface is indicated by his description of the Epistles as Ovid's best work, and calling them 'tenderly passionate' (Rapin had commented that Ovid is to be preferred to the other Roman elegists, Tibullus and Propertius, 'parce qu'il est plus naturel, plus touchant et plus passionné'), and, even more specifically, by his comments on the 'conduct' and 'Design' of Ovid's elegies.[1] Whereas the other poets 'amble from one Subject to another, and conclude with somewhat which is not of a piece with their beginning', Ovid, says Dryden, 'has always the Goal in his Eye, which directs him in his Race; some Beautiful design, which he first establishes, and then contrives the means, which will naturally conduct it to his end'.[2] Rapin had written, in his section on 'le dessein', that in Ovid's elegies 'on trouve presque toujours un certain tour qui en lie le dessein, et en fait un ouvrage assez juste dans le rapport de ses parties'.[3]

With an eye on some of the contributors to the volume, and some of its possible readers, Dryden also stressed in his Preface both that 'all [Ovid's] Poems bear the Character of a Court, and appear to be written as the French call it Cavalierement' and that, since 'his amorous Expressions go no further than virtue may allow', his poems 'therefore may be read, as he intended them, by Matrons without a blush'.[4]

1. The fact that Dryden only calls the Heroides Ovid's best work this once may indicate that he was glad to make temporary use of Rapin's authority (qv. Baillet, Jugemens, p.142) for purposes of sales-promotion. See Rapin, Réfl. II.28,(ed. Dubois, p.127).
2. Kinsley, I, 181.
3. Rapin, Réfl. I.xix (ed. Dubois, p.34).
4. Kinsley, I, 179, 182. Saltonstall, in his Epistle (Sig.A5v) had spoken of the Heroides as 'by Lords and Ladies written all' and Sandys had described Ovid as a 'Roman knight'. On Ovid as a 'courtly' poet, see Harwood, cited in California, I, 325, and Henry Felton, cited in my Chapter V.

It now remains to examine the translations which Dryden contributed to the 1680 volume, and to see in which ways they might be thought either to confirm and amplify, or to conflict with, his conception of Ovid as stated in his prose criticism up to that date, and in particular in the Preface to Ovid's Epistles itself.

It would not, I think, be too unjust to remark, after a preliminary perusal of the three epistles in which Dryden had a hand, that in these renderings he has done very little to justify his claims in the Preface that Ovid's 'luxuriant Fancy' in the original Latin is, for all its 'prodigality', irresistibly winning, and his renewed assertion that Ovid is unrivalled in producing 'concernment' for the heroines in their passionate predicaments. At this stage in his career, Dryden does not seem to be able to convey convincingly in his versions the quality which might compensate us for our inevitable resistance to Ovid's 'wit out of season', and provide us with the means of seeing that Ovid's verbal ingenuity might be more than decorative or self-indulgent - a means, however 'artificial' it might seem at first, to some greater perception of the workings of the female mind under stress, and thus a way of producing 'concernment' for the heroine.

It is true that, at this stage, as we have seen, Dryden is still tied to a working-rule of translation which requires the translator if not to render word-for-word and line-by-line, at least to follow such vices as he sees in his author to the letter, and not attempt to correct or improve. However, as we shall see, Dryden has carried Ovid's verbal ingenuity much further, in fact, than it is displayed in the original, adding many 'turns' which Ovid's text does not warrant, 'turns' which, moreover are, according

to his own definition, almost always 'on the words' merely, rather than the superior sort of turn which brings about some kind of mental extension, or creates a new perspective on the matter being presented.

Only one of the epistles, indeed, that of Canace to Macareus, gives any very clear indication that Dryden had divined, in the act of translating, and attempted to convey in his version, a particular and distinctive poetic interest in Ovid's way of handling his subject. The poem deals with the dilemma of Canace, whose incestuous passion for her brother, Maraceus, has been discovered, and whose father, Aeolus, the King of the Winds, has instructed her to take her own life. Truly 'delicate concernment' for a girl in such a plight would involve both a very precise observation of the paradoxes and conflicts to which her situation had subjected her, and also some sort of understanding of, and compassion for, the girl. As Rapin had rightly observed, in several passages which Dryden knew well, it is impossible to feel genuine pity for a protagonist whose conduct strikes us as merely monstrous or absurdly extravagant, and from whose predicament we are therefore entirely distanced.[1] In his Tragedies of the Last Age, Thomas Rymer had written (citing the Canace story) of the general conditions which are necessary for the portrayal of such subject as incest on the stage :

> When any design on the Stage is in agitation, the Poet must take care that he engage the affections, take along the heart, and secure the good Will of the Audience. If the design be wicked, as here the making approaches towards an incestuous enjoyment; the Audience will naturally loath and detest it, rather than favour or accompany it with their good

1. Réfl. II.xviii-xx. (ed. Dubois, pp.98-105).

> wishes. 'Tis the sad effects and consequences of an ill design which the Audience love to have represented: 'tis then that the penitence, remorse and despairs move us : 'tis then that we grieve with the sorrowful, and weep with those that weep.
>
> Therefore were the Ancients to make an incestuous love their subject; they would take it in the fall, as it rowls down headlong to desperation and misery.[1]

Evidence that, for some readers at least, Ovid had created in his original epistle the very kind of 'concernment' for Canace desiderated here by Rymer is found in some remarks by the eighteenth-century commentator, Joseph Davidson:

> The whole Scene, as here represented, is extremely affecting. Canace was conscious of her guilt, and therefore could not pretend to vindicate herself. Her chief Concern therefore was to move Compassion, and this it must be owned she has succeeded in wonderfully. By the pathetick Representation she gives here of her Distress, the Reader's Attention is drawn off from the View of her Guilt, and he feels his Compassion insensibly rise, until he is brought over, if not wholly to excuse, yet at least very much to commiserate and favour her.[2]

How different is the effect of the following lines in Dryden's version, where the original is expanded by the translator (the inverted commas indicate this fact), but where the additons are, presumably, felt to be in the spirit of the original :

> Forc'd at the last, my shameful pain I tell:
> And, oh, what follow'd we both know too well!
> 'When half denying, more than half content,
> 'Embraces warm'd me to a full consent:
> 'Then with Tumultuous Joyes my Heart did beat,
> 'And guilt that made them anxious, made them great.
> But now my swelling womb heav'd up my breast,
> And rising weight my sinking Limbs opprest.
>
> (37-44)

1. Rymer, Critical Works, ed. Zimansky, pp.48-49.
2. The Epistles of Ovid, translated into English prose,... (2nd ed., London, 1753), p.121.

Ovid merely has

> Jamque tumescebant vitiati pondera ventris,
> AEgraque furtivum membra gravabat onus.
> (37-38)

Dryden has added 'turns' not warranted by the Latin (in lines 39, 42 and 44), and deliberately focussed attention on the very moment which is delicately by-passed by Ovid - the moment of the incest itself and Canace's feelings of guilt and enjoyment at that moment. Ovid's main attention had been, as Rymer had recommended, on incest 'in the fall'. Dryden's wit is here 'out of season' indeed, and pruriently invites us to speculate on her feelings in the act. The 'turn on the thought' in

> ....half denying, more than half content,

has more than a touch of the elbow-nudging sneer <u>at</u> Canace built into it, and a similar attitude is evident in the note of gush (half-regretful, but also half-gloating?) which Dryden gives to Canace ('And, oh, what follow'd we both know too well!') and in the obstrusively see-saw effect of 'rising weight my sinking Limbs oppress'. The treatment is such that it might incline us not to dismiss as merely prudish the worries that some eighteenth-century readers had about the English <u>Heroides</u> being, for all the 'chasteness' of their language, excuses for obscenity.[1] If Dryden was not here indulging in the explicit lewdness which, as Rochester had noted in his poem <u>An Allusion to Horace</u>, he had displayed in some of his comedies, the same impulse to exhibit the masculine snigger is evident in a different guise. The passage was certainly pounced upon by Matthew Stevenson, whose parody of <u>Ovid's Epistles</u> appeared later the same year.

1. See the remarks of Oldmixon, Dennis and John Bancks, cited in California, I, 332-333.

When half denying, half contented
We met in full, and full consented;
Then what with Joy, and what with that
Of guilt, my heart went pitty-pat.[1]

The passage describing Canace's feelings at the moment of incest, though the most extreme, is not just an isolated instance of Dryden's coarse conception of the poem. He consistently adds 'turns' and antitheses which have the effect of drawing attention to themselves, rather than allowing us to stand in any more interesting relation to Canace's predicament :

One hand the Sword, and one the Pen employs, (3)[2]

My Food grew loathsom, and my strength I lost: (28)

Short were my slumbers, and my nights were long. (30)[3]

Our first crime common; this was mine alone. (48)

My throws came thicker, and my cryes increast, (55)

Pain urg'd my clamours; but fear kept me dumb. (58)[4]

Towards the beginning of the poem, Ovid's Canace describes herself (in Davidson's words) 'as wholly a Stranger to Love, and wondering at its Effects, as now knowing whence they came':[5]

Ipse quoque incalui : qualemque audire solebam,
Nescio quem sensi corde tepente Deum.
(25-26)

1. The Wits Paraphrased : Or, Paraphrase upon Paraphrase. In a Burlesque on the Several late Translations of Ovid's Epistles (London, 1680), p.12.
2. Vulgarly parodied by Stevenson (p.9) :
   One hand employs my Pen, alas!
   With t'other hand I scrath my A---
3. Again parodied (p.11) :
   My Slumbers short, my Nights were long;
4. Again parodied (p.12) :
   Pain urg'd my Cries, Fear kept me dumb.
5. The Epistles of Ovid, p.119.

The claims of Dryden's Canace not to know the sources of her passion sound more like the ingenuous dissembling of someone who knows full well what's happening:

> For I lov'd too; and knowing not my wound,
> A secret pleasure in thy Kisses found.
>
> (25-6)

And sometimes Dryden's colourings of the original merely add a tasteless extravagance not in the original, for example at ll.71-2 :

> The Babe, as if he heard what thou hast sworn,
> With hasty joy sprung forward to be born.

(for Ovid's

> ...positum est uteri crimen onusque mei.
>
> (64))

Or they contain a miscalculated attempt at pathos :

> The Babe cry'd out, as if he understood,
> And beg'd his pardon with what voice he cou'd.
>
> (101-2)

(for Ovid's

> Vagitus dedit ille miser; sensisse putares:
> Quaque suum poterat voce rogabat avum.
>
> (85-86))

Dryden has, it seems, tried in one or two places for the more complex presentation of Canace's dilemma which a 'turn on the thought' might produce :

> I knew not from my love these griefs did grow,
> Yet was, alas, the thing I did not know.
>
> (31-32)[1]

(for: Nec noram, quid amans esset: at illum eram.

(32))

1. Skilfully transforming Saltonstall's
I lov'd, and yet what love was did not know.

And his verse takes on a more attractive quality in those parts of the poem which portray Canace's father, Aeolus, King of the Winds, as a figure both absurdly like the winds he controls and fearsomely awesome.[1] But interest in the distinctively Ovidian portrayal of the gods was something which, as we shall see, he was to develop in a much more interesting and subtle way in later translations. In this version they seem like curiously isolated and extraneous touches, unrelated to the main interest which has attracted Dryden to the poem, or rather which he has identified in it.

The other two epistles are less satisfactory still, and their verse, though it is always well crafted, and avoids the excessive tumescence of some of the speeches in the heroic plays, tends all too easily towards the monotonous and the declamatory. Whereas in the epistle of Canace, it is fairly clear what has interested Dryden in the story (even if we find that interest unpleasantly prurient and knowing)[2], the precise nature of his interest in the epistles of Dido and Helen (the latter done in collaboration with the Earl of Mulgrave) seems much more difficult to determine. The translations, that is, are not sufficiently coherent in tone or purpose to allow us to be quite sure about the intended direction of their wit, or to convince us of the claims for the attractiveness of their originals which Dryden had made in the Preface.

1. q.v. especially ll.15-16, 73, 75-76, 85-87. At l.75, California notes an echo of Milton (PL., II. 1-5) which lends momentary grandeur to the figure of Aeolus.
2. An interest confirmed by Dryden's later use of the epistle (and his own version) in Act II of Love Triumphant.

One of the main interests for readers of Ovid's epistles of Helen and Dido, presumably, in ancient as well as more modern times, was in seeing the material of Homeric and Virgilian epic from a new vantage-point, the psychology and personal dilemmas of two of the leading female figures in the Trojan legend. Not least among the pleasures found in the epistle of Dido, in particular, was the fact that the writer, in the course of her letter to Aeneas, casts doubt on the propriety of many aspects of Aeneas' conduct which readers of Virgil's poem have often themselves found unsatisfactory - his piety, his loyalty to the commands of the gods, his shiftiness over whether in fact he claimed that Dido and he had been lawfully married.[1] These aspects of Ovid's retelling of the legend seem to have been found especially attractive by Chaucer and certain other medieval writers.[2]

But, looking back on his version of Ovid's Dido to Aeneas and its original in 1697, Dryden recorded the opinion that, in comparison with Virgil's, Ovid's telling of the story is inferior on every count :

> Ovid takes it up after him, even in the same Age, and makes an ancient Heroine of Virgil's new-created Dido; Dictates a Letter for her just before her death, to the ingrateful Fugitive; and very unluckily for himself, is for measuring a Sword with a Man so much superior in force to him on the same subject. I think I may be Judge of this, because I have Translated both. The Famous Author of the Art of Love has nothing of his own, he borrows all from a greater Master

1. In Suasoriae 3.7., the elder Seneca tells that Ovid used to admit openly that he had deliberately echoed lines from Virgil in his own poems, in the hope that the allusions would be easily recognised by his readers. Dryden deals at length with the problems of Virgil's characterisation of Aeneas in the central sections of the Dedication to his Aeneis. For an amusing modern sidelight on the same subject, see Ezra Pound, ABC of Reading (1934; rpt. London, 1951), p.44.
2. See E.F.Shannon, Chaucer and the Roman Poets (Cambridge, Mass., 1928), pp.196ff.

> in his own profession; and which is worse, improves nothing which he finds. Nature fails him, and being forc'd to his old shift, he has recourse to Witticism. This passes indeed with his Soft Admirers and gives him the preference to Virgil in their esteem. But let them like for themselves, and not prescribe to others, for our Author needs not their Admiration.
>
> (Kinsley, III, 1030-1031)

One could however imagine a translator responding with a real relish to certain examples of Ovid's 'Witticism' in the poem, to the way for example in which Ovid makes Dido call on Venus (1.31) (in her capacity as mother-in-law), or invites Cupid to pierce Aeneas' heart and enrol the hero in his army, or to the way in which her highly-wrought state causes her to wish Aeneas to be as 'mutabilis' as the winds (1.51 : a clear allusion to Virgil's Aeneas' celebrated 'semper mutabilis femina est'), or to the way in which she questions the whole basis of Aeneas' justification of his conduct - his divinely appointed destiny.

Dryden had remarked in his Preface on Ovid's tendency to 'Romanise' his 'Grecian Dames' and to make 'them speak sometimes as if they had been born in the City of Rome, and under the Empire of Augustus'.[1] Part of the wit of Dido Aeneae, as Davidson's commentary again suggests, was in putting into words 'what any modern Roman woman would have thought, had she been in Dido's position', and consequently to reveal something about the workings of the female mind, including its perverseness :

> Dido, after loading AEneas with Reproaches, falls to supplicating. What in Appearance can be more ridiculous? And yet 'tis certainly a Stroke of the greatest Art and Delicacy; for nothing could have serv'd more happily to describe the giddy inconstant Nature of that Sex.2

1. Kinsley, I, 182.
2. The Epistles of Ovid, pp. 71, 80.

At moments in his version, Dryden seems to have responded to some of these aspects of Ovid's poem. Some of his 'turns' seem to be genuine attempts at confronting us (albeit wittily) with Dido's dilemma :

> My self I cannot to my self restore :
> Still I complain, and still I love him more.[1]
>
> (31-32)

and again, at ll.65-6:

> False as thou art, I not thy death design:
> O rather live to be the cause of mine!

and, as if to find an equivalent for Ovid's 'Romanising' of his heroines, Dryden has incorporated several touches which exploit the English idiom of his own day :

> But neither Gods, nor Parent didst thou bear,
> (Smooth stories all, to please a Womans ear,)
>
> (81-82)

and again at ll.144-145 :

> Go perjur'd man, but leave thy Gods behind.
> Touch not those Gods by whom thou art forsworn;

And he even slips in at one point (clearly with an eye on court readers) a direct contemporary reference :

> What People is so void of common sence,
> To Vote Succession from a Native Prince?
>
> (17-18)

But these various interests are fragmentary and undeveloped. Though Dryden is going further than the 'theory of translation' which he had formulated in the Preface would strictly allow, he has not yet developed

1. But the same turn is used with very much more effect in <u>Cinyras and Myrrha</u>, l.98. (See Chapter 7)

the confidence, or found the stimulus, to discover a master-tone that will enable him to render Ovid's whole poem anew in his own idiom. Also, as in Canace to Macareus, many of the 'turns' in this translation are again of the merely verbal kind; and again, some of them lapse into coarseness :

> To shun my Love, if thou wilt seek thy Fate,
> 'Tis a dear purchase, and a costly hate.
>
> (49-50)

> To harbour Strangers, succour the distrest,
> Was kind enough; but oh too kind the rest!
>
> (93-94)

> Strong were his charms, who my weak faith misled.
>
> (114)

> And without Conqu'ring here thou art a King.
>
> (164)

> My life's too loathsome, and my love too strong.
>
> (196)

> The Sword but enters where Love made the way.
>
> (204)

> I lost that Title when my Fame I lost.
>
> (208)

And the self-imposed restraints which Dryden has placed on his versification here, as in the otherepistles, produce a general effect of declamatory monotony which makes it impossible for him to achieve the 'delicacy', the articulation of fine nuances, which he says he sees in the original.

The epistle of Helen to Paris need not occupy us long. Its faults are largely of the same kind as those to be found in the other two poems, and it has few of their compensating virtues. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that the work was largely Mulgrave's, and that Dryden's role

in it was chiefly one of revision.[1] As with the epistle of Dido, the interest which this letter (which is preceded by a companion-piece from Paris to Helen) seems to have offered many readers was in seeing a familiar story (in this case the abduction which brought about the Trojan War) treated from a different angle - Helen's perverseness in seeming to resist yet all the time wanting to comply with Paris' wishes is revealed during the course of her letter. She deceives herself, for example, about Paris' cowardice. Again, the English version makes some attempt to give Helen the cadences and idiom of a Restoration 'belle', but the touch is, again, not consistent.[2] The antitheses become (even more than in the other two epistles) monotonous and dull the edge of the wit, and there are again moments which show a coarse knowingness about the heroine.

Dryden's versions from the Heroides, then, come as a disappointment after the strong (if usually qualified) praise which Dryden had given Ovid in his criticism for his power to 'concern' the reader with the predicament of his heroines, to probe deeply into the nature of love (particularly strong passion), and to charm the reader with a kind of wit that is not purely verbal but which involves play of mind as well as of words. Even if Dryden discovered and admired these qualities in Ovid, he had not yet found a satisfactory means of conveying them in his own

1. See California, I.328. The poem was omitted by Tonson from the 1701 folio of Dryden's collected poems. In his poem 'To the Earl of Roscommon...' (Kinsley, I, 387-389), Dryden included the following lines :

> How will sweet Ovid's Ghost be pleas'd to hear
> His Fame augmented by an English Peer,
> How he embellishes his Helen's loves,
> Out does his softness, and his sense improves. (59-62)

In the margin, Dryden included, by the side of l.60, a note : 'The Earl of Mulgrave'.

2. For Helen as a 'belle' see especially ll.13-18, 146, 201-202.

English versions. And the versions, moreover display at least some of the coarseness and prurience with which other aspects of Dryden's work had been charged in the 1670's. They also contain some of the tedious declamation and over-pointed eloquence which, as some of his later critics found, had severely detracted from his capacity to 'affect the tender passions' in his own plays.[1] Dryden's contributions to Ovid's Epistles, that is, might be though to confirm, rather than in any way to qualify, the sense of Dryden's limitations as a poet of love which, as we have seen, is such a part of many modern critics' account of Dryden's artistic limitations.

It was only after a period of deep thought, both about the nature of translation and about his own implication in the court and theatrical

1. See particularly [Charles Gildon], The Laws of Poetry, pp.211-214, 234, 343-344. Gildon's remarks, along with others to similar effect by Langbaine, Lansdowne and others, were collected and approved by two eighteenth-century biographers, Robert Shiels, the compiler of the Lives of the Poets attributed to Theophilus Cibber (5 vols., London, 1753), and the author of the 'Life of Dryden' prefixed to the 2-volume Dublin edition of his Poems and Fables published in the same year (I, v-xli). Shiels' summary is perhaps worth quoting in the present context :

> The critics have remarked, that as to tragedy, he seldom touches the passions, but deals rather in pompous language, poetical flights, and descriptions; ... it is peculiar to Dryden... to make his personages, as wise, witty, elegant, and polite as himself. That he could not intimately affect the tender passions is certain, for we find no play of his, in which we are much disposed to weep; ... if a poet would affect the heart, he must not exceed nature too much, nor colour too high; distressful circumstances, short speeches, and pathetic observations never fail to move infinitely beyond the highest rant, or long declamations in tragedy: ...
>
> (III, 66-67)

milieu of which Ovid's Epistles was very much the product, that Dryden returned to Ovid, this time to the amatory poems and the Metamorphoses, with an enriched sense of the ways in which the Latin poet could stimulate him to write fine English poems. It is, therefore, to certain aspects of Dryden's development in the 1680's that we must turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM COURT WRITER TO PHILOSOPHICAL POET :

Some significant strands in Dryden's development in the 1680's

Chapter Three : From Court Writer to Philosophical Poet : Some significant strands in Dryden's development in the 1680's

(i) Introductory

(ii) A Translating Milieu : Dryden, Tonson, Roscommon and others in the early 1680's

(iii) Dryden's Disenchantment with the Theatre

(iv) 'Towards a Poetry of Retirement' : (I) The Oxford 'Epilogue' and the Dedication to 'Aureng-Zebe'

(v) 'Towards a Poetry of Retirement' : (II) *Sylvae* and its 'Preface'

(i) Introductory

If Ovid's Epistles was something of a 'false start' in Dryden's activity as a translator of Ovid, or if, rather, his contributions to that volume revealed him as having, in 1680, a fairly limited sense of the kinds of pleasure to be derived from Ovid's work, what factors in his development in the 1680's made it possible for him to return to Ovid - this time to the Metamorphoses and certain of the amatory poems - with an enlarged sense of the poetic qualities which Ovid had to offer, and the desire and capacity to translate them? I hope in this chapter to present some evidence and suggestions which might go some way towards answering that question. I put it thus tentatively since, as we shall be dealing here with areas of Dryden's mind which are not at all readily available for analysis, the argument must, of necessity, proceed (at least to some extent) by means of suggestion and speculation rather than anything which could be described as firm 'proof'.

Although, for convenience of exposition, I divide this material into four separate sections, my hope is that, as the argument progresses, the relevant connections will establish themselves between those sections, and that cumulatively they will suggest why Ovid - and particularly the Ovid of the Metamorphoses - might have been an especially appropriate poet to meet (however indirectly) various of Dryden's needs and interests as they were to develop during these years.

The main suggestions of this chapter are as follows. First, that Dryden was developing in the years immediately following the publication of Ovid's Epistles an intense interest in the practice of translation

and in the commercial and artistic possibilities of the medium. Two factors supported and extended this interest - his friendship and involvement with the Earl of Roscommon and a group of amateur scholars and poets debating the possibilities in translation for enriching and improving the English language, and his newly-formed business partnership with Tonson, which soon become the principal focus for Dryden's own translating activity and that of the younger writers whom both Tonson and Dryden began to enrol to join the enterprise.

My second suggestion is that, at the very period in his career when Dryden's involvement with politics and the life of the Court was to become most intense - the period of Absalom and Achitophel and The Medal- there was simultaneously (and paradoxically) a quite contrary movement of his mind in these years, one which inclined him to reject both his own earlier career as court dramatist and entertainer and also the ambition and vanity which he saw rampant in the life of the court itself, and to resent the invidious position which, he felt, a court writer of his day must, of necessity, occupy. The 1680's were clearly a period of intense religious activity for Dryden, an activity which led first to the writing of Religio Laici and then to his conversion to Catholicism and the composition of The Hind and the Panther. But these years also showed him developing other interests, no less (I shall argue) deserving the epithet 'religious', but less exclusively doctrinal in their nature. At this period Dryden became deeply drawn to certain writers, particularly Horace, Montaigne and Lucretius, who in their work, both in prose and verse, had treated the subject of 'retirement', and who each of them, as it were, provided Dryden, long before his personal disaster of 1688, with a possible

model of what might constitute the sanest attitude for a man to take up towards the failures, frustrations, vexations, anxieties and impermanences of everyday life. The presence of these writers is most clearly felt, as an inspiration and literary influence, in the poems and Preface which Dryden contributed to the miscellany Sylvae in 1685, a volume which, I believe, shows, every bit as much as the better-known religious poems of the same period, the emergence of what might be called Dryden's 'philosophical' poetry, poetry which confronts, debates, and tries to arrive at some sort of accommodation with, some of life's most intractable problems.

It was, I shall suggest, the body of thinking which went into the making of these poems, and the state of mind that is manifested in them, which was an important element which allowed Dryden to accept the personal calamity of 1688 with remarkable equanimity, and which drew him after that date more and more to a kind of poetry (notably that of the Metamorphoses) in which the pains and vicissitudes of life are shown to be endurable, because they are seen in a larger perspective than is normal, as parts of the inevitable and even glorious whole that is Nature.

(ii) 'A Translating Milieu' : Dryden, Tonson, Roscommon and others in the early 1680's

Ovid's Epistles was clearly thought to have been an immediate commercial and artistic success, and it cemented Dryden's partnership with Tonson. The commercial success of the Ovid volume can be gauged by the number of editions which it went through. It was reprinted the following year, 1681, (when Aphra Behn's 'Paraphrase on Oenone to Paris' was supplemented by another, more accurate, rendering of the same epistle by John Cooper, a Fellow of Trinity and former pupil at Westminster, Dryden's old school) and further, in Dryden's lifetime, in 1683, 1688 and 1693.[1] Its immediate popularity can be judged from an anecdote in Hamilton's Memoirs of the life of the Count de Grammont.[2] There were many more editions in the eighteenth century, so that by 1711 Richard Steele could remark casually in No. 150 of The Spectator (with the expectation that the reference would be immediately taken up) that

> It happens sometimes that such a fine man [a 'woman's man'] has read all the miscellany poems, a few of our comedies, and has the translation of Ovid's Epistles by heart.

The volume was praised in the year of its publication in A Translation of the Sixth Book of Mr. Cowley's Plantarum,[3] and burlesqued immediately

1. See H.Macdonald, John Dryden : a Bibliography of Early Editions and of Drydeniana (1939; rpt. London, 1966), pp17-18.
2. [Anthony Hamilton], Memoirs of the Life of Count de Grammont..., trans. [A.] Boyer (London, 1714), p.354. Hamilton's anecdote concerns Miss Jennings' 'Letter from a forlorn Maid in despair' written to Henry Germain, Earl of St.Albans, when Germain was about to depart on a Royal mission to Guinea. Miss Jennings' letter is in deliberate imitation of 'Ovid's Epistles, translated into English Verse, by the greatest Wits at Court'.
3. See Macdonald, Bibliography, p.17, fn.1; [M.Stevenson], The Wits Paraphrased : or, Paraphrase upon Paraphrase. In a Burlesque on the Several late Translations of Ovid'sEpistles (London, 1680); A. Radcliffe, Ovid Travestie, A Burlesque upon several of Ovid's Epistles (London, 1680); See K.M.Lynch, Jacob Tonson : Kit-Cat Publisher (Knoxville, 1971), p.18.

in a volume 'obviously trying to capitalize on its success' attributed to Matthew Stevenson, to which Tonson replied with a further burlesque by Alexander Radcliffe. In 1682, Thomas Hoy, a graduate of St. John's College Oxford, and a physician and minor man of letters who was later to write in praise of Absalom and Achitophel, began his Preface to Two Essays in a way that indicates that, for him at least, Dryden's Preface was the crown of the Ovid's Epistles volume:

> I Shall not be so vain to pretend I have arrived at those Accomplishments, which the Incomparable Mr. Dryden in his excellent Preface to the Epistles, makes the Necessary Qualifications of a Translator. Those Grand Perfections have been best bestowed only on some few, some Darlings of Nature and Art; Those Fusci only, and Visci of the Age. Were only such allowed the Prigiledg to Write, 'twould be a happy Thing indeed for the Age we live in, which soon would be refin'd beyond what either Greece or Italy could ever pretend to have been.[1]

The anonymous translator of Ovid's Elegies, or a Translation of his Choicest Epistles (1683) remarked to similar effect in his Preface :

> ...I need not give my Reader the Trouble of Discoursing it any farther, since Mr. Drydens single Suffrage will be of more Weight then all I can produce to the Confirmation of this Opinion. So that I shall Supersede the Labour of writing any more upon this particular aswel as giving my Opinion concerning Translations in general. For the same Author hath so ingeniously distinguisht the several Species's of Translation, and so judiciously allotted to every one their particular Praise and Character giving the Chief Palm to that which alone deserves it and can properly be termed Translation that I dare not presume to add any thing of my own upon that Subject.
>
> (Sigs.A3r - v)

I have already mentioned some of the circumstances which made 1680 a particularly fortuitous date for the volume to appear, and for Tonson

1. [T.Hoy,] Two Essays. The Former Ovid De Arte Amandi...the first book. The Later Hero and Leander of Musaeus... By a Well-wisher to the Mathematicks (London, 1682).

to enrol Dryden into his enterprise. And I have commented briefly on the milieu from which many of the contributors to Ovid's Epistles had been drawn. One of the younger poets to be included in the volume, Richard Duke, had graduated B.A. from Dryden's old college in 1678 (whence he had come from Dryden's old school), and was shortly, as we shall see, to be enrolled as a regular member of the group involved in the Dryden/Tonson collaborative enterprises. The rest of the contributors to Ovid's Epistles, as we have seen, had been assembled from available courtiers, wits and dramatists known personally to Tonson or Dryden.

1680 had also seen the publication, by Henry Herringman, Dryden's regular publisher before he joined Tonson, of another important landmark in the history of translation in the period, one which was of particular significance for Dryden's continued thinking about translation in the years immediately following Ovid's Epistles. This was the translation of Horace's Ars Poetica by the scholar and courtier Wentworth Dillon, Fourth Earl of Roscommon (?1633-1685). That Dillon's Horace's Art of Poetry, Made English had an immediate impact on perceptive readers can be seen from several small but interesting pieces of evidence. The first concerns the composite Brome Horace, referred to in the previous chapter. When Brome's collection was re-issued for the third time in 1680 it contained a replacement for the reprint of Ben Jonson's version of the Ars Poetica which had, on Brome's own admission, been the cornerstone of the 1666 edition.[1] This new version was by Samuel Pordage (1633-1691?), a friend

1. See his 1666 edition, Sig. A5v.

of Dryden's enemy Settle.[1] Pordage's version of the Ars Poetica shows, as has recently been demonstrated, the clear influence of Roscommon's interpretation of Horace, as well as borrowing some rhymes and phrases from the Ben Jonson version which is displaced.[2] Similarly in the version of the Ars Poetica made in 1681 by the gifted young poet John Oldham (where Oldham boldly 'transposes' Horace straight into the world of Restoration London) the presence of the Roscommon Art of Poetry, and its interpretation of Horace is equally felt.[3]

Dryden's attentive reading of Roscommon's Art of Poetry immediately on its publication is revealed by the way in which he incorporates, in the Preface to Ovid's Epistles, Roscommon's rendering of Horace's strictures on literal translation, strictures which he applies, as had Roscommon in

1. 'S.P.' in the 1680 edition. As Dombras points out (p.251), the attribution of the poem to Pordage was first made by Langbaine. See also Macdonald, Bibliography, pp.227, 229.

2. See B.Nügel, A New English Horace : Die Übersetzungen der horazischen 'Ars Poetica' in der Restaurationzeit (Frankfurt, 1971), p.195.

3. See Nügel, A New English Horace, passim, but especially pp.268-271, and the notes to H.F.Brooks' unpublished edition of The Complete Works of John Oldham (Oxford D.Phil Dissertation, 1939). It is interesting to note that, in turning from the writing of satire to translating Horace in 1680-1, Oldham may well have been following the advice of the same Sir William Soame whose version of Boileau's Art Poetique (also made, according to Tonson, in 1680) Dryden was shortly to 'improve'. In his poem To the Author of Sardanapalus (preserved in British Museum Harleian MS 7319 f.133r and reprinted in Examen Poeticum, Tonson's Third Miscellany, in 1693) Soame writes

> From the Boy's hands, take Horace into Thine
> And thy rude Satyrs, by his Rules, refine.

the short Preface to his translation, to Ben Jonson's version of Horace's Ars:

> All Translation I suppose may be reduced to these three heads.
> First, that of Metaphrase, or turning an Authour word by word, and Line by Line, from one Language into another. Thus or near this manner, was Horace his Art of Poetry translated by Ben Johnson. ...
> .....
> Concerning the first of these Methods, our Master Horace has given us this Caution,
> Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus
> Interpres -
> Nor word for word too faithfully translate.
> As the Earl of Roscommon has excellently render'd it.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 182)

Compare Roscommon's

> But with all the respect due to the name of Ben Johnson, to which no Man pays more veneration than I it cannot be deny'd that the constraint of Rhyme, and a literal Translation (to which Horace in this Book declares himself an Enemy) has made him almost want a Comment in many places.
>
> (Sig. A2r)

And, four years later, in praising Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse in a commendatory poem prefixed to its first (Tonson) edition, Dryden was careful to single out for praise Roscommon's practice as a translator as well as his precepts :

> Nor need those Rules to give Translation light;
> His own example is a flame so bright;
> That he, who but arrives to copy well,
> Unguided will advance; unknowing will excel.[1]
>
> (35--38)

More lies behind these lines, and behind the poem as a whole, I think, than would immediately strike the reader of 'To the Earl of Roscommon...,'

1. In the light of the passage quoted from the Preface to Ovid's Epistles it seems reasonable to suppose that Dryden was thinking of Horace's Art of Poetry as well as Roscommon's translations included in Miscellany Poems.

even with the help of the modern scholarly editions. For there is a substantial body of evidence to suggest that in the years immediately following the publication of Horace's Art of Poetry and Ovid's Epistles there developed a close and important relationship between Roscommon and Dryden, a relationship centring on the discussion of translation.

The first piece of evidence is to be found in one of the notes which Elijah Fenton included in his notes to the edition of Waller's poems which Tonson published in 1729, and which concerns Roscommon :

> ...In imitation of those learned and polite assemblies, with which he had been acquainted abroad; particularly one at Caen, (in which his Tutor Bochartus dy'd suddenly, whilst he was delivering an Oration.) he began to form a Society for the refining, and fixing the standard of our language; in which design his great friend Mr.Dryden was a principal assistent. A design! of which it is much easier to conceive an agreeable idea, than any rational hope ever to see it brought to perfection among us. This project, at least, was entirely defeated by the religious commotions that ensu'd on King James's accession to the throne.[1]

Fenton's account is not very clear, and presents the scholar with some problems of dating and interpretation.[2] As it stands, it might seem merely to indicate the existence of an abortive project initiated by Dryden and Roscommon in the general area of that codification and tabulation of the language along 'Royal Society' or French lines in which Dryden several times expresses an interest in his prose Prefaces.[3]

1. See Elijah Fenton, ed. The Works of Edmund Waller, In Verse and Prose (London, 1729), pp.lxxvi-lxxvii.
2. See C.Niemeyer, 'The Earl of Roscommon's Academy', MLN, 49 (1934), 432-437.
3. See the Dedication to The Rival Ladies (Scott, II, 118), and the Epistles Dedicatory to Troilus and Cressida (Scott, VI, 231-7). Dryden's involvement in a Royal Society committee 'for improving the English Language' is discussed by E.Freeman, 'A Proposal for an English Academy in 1660', MLR, 19 (1924), 291-300, and O.F.Emerson, 'John Dryden and a British Academy', Proc. Brit. Academy, 10 (1921-3), 45-58.

However, further evidence exists which enables us to be rather clearer about the exact nature of the 'Society for the refining, and fixing the standard of our language', in the form of the unpublished document on which Fenton clearly drew when compiling his note.

Although no seventeenth-or eighteenth-century biography or collection of contemporary commendatory verses on Roscommon was ever published (Tonson was clearly hoping to include a biography in his 1717 edition of Roscommon's Poems, but it never materialised), there exists, preserved among the Baker Manuscripts in the Cambridge University Library, a transcript of a Manuscript Life of Roscommon addressed to Lord Cartaret by Dr.Knightley Chetwood (1650-1720)[1]. Chetwood, a graduate of King's College Cambridge contributed to the Dryden/Tonson Plutarch (1683), (with Roscommon) to Miscellany Poems (1684) and Dryden's composite translation of St.Evremond (1692), and supplied the Life of Virgil and Preface to the Pastorals for Dryden's Virgil (1697).[2] A letter of Dryden's dating from August 1684 makes it clear that by that date Chetwood was considered on sufficiently close terms with Roscommon and his work to undertake the proof-reading of the proposed Second Edition of Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse should the Earl himself be prevented from doing so.[3] Chetwood's manuscript Life gives

1. See Tonson's note To the Reader (Sig. A2v) in the 1717 edition. The manuscript is entitled 'A Short Account of some Passages of the Life & Death of Wentworth late Earle of Roscommon, To the Right Honourable My Lord Cartaret'. Cambridge University Library, Baker MSS, Mm.1.47.
2. Chetwood's translation of the 'Hector and Andromache' episode in the Sixth Book of the Iliad (first published in Tate's Miscellany in 1685, then reprinted in 1693 in A Collection of Poems where it is dated 1677) was used by Dryden when preparing his own version of the same episode for Examen Poeticum. See R.E.Sowerby, Dryden and Homer (Unpublished Cambridge PhD Dissertation, 1975).
3. Ward, Letters, p.23.

a fuller account of the Roscommon/Dryden 'Society' than had Fenton:

> This Storm blowing over,...he set himselfe, to form a sort of Academy, in Imitation of that at Caen. It seem'd a proper time for it, for things were in perfect Tranquillity; but it was like that profound Calm in the air, wch usually go's before Earth-quakes, & fiery Eruptions, as some naturalists observe. During this happy, but short Interval, good Men began to know one another better, there was then Friendship, english good= nature flourish'd, every spark of wch ought to be preserv'd as carefully, as the Sacred Fire was by the Jews, during y^e time of y^r Captivity. Those who compos'd this little Body, were the Marquess of H:, who undertook the Translation of Tacitus, an Author perfectly suited to his tast. He carried it on a good way, & corrected a great many Mistakes in the Version of Mr Ablancourt. The Lord Maitland was another, who then began his excellent Translation of Virgil. The E: of R. wrote his Essay on translated verse, in emulation of that finish'd Poem, An Essay upon Poetry, upon w^ch: My Lord bestows justly the name of correct
>
> Happy that Author, whose correct Essay,
>
> But the next line has a little Draw= back,
>
> Repairs so well our old Horatian way.
>
> He was desir'd to alter that Line, but would not : & yet the greatest of the Greeks & Romans thought it not beneath them, to take the charge of repairing the ways, & the public Fabrics. The Earle of D...t, one of the most accomplish'd persons of the Age, came sometimes among them, as did the Lord Candish, the Ingenious coll: Finch, Sr Charles Sc...gh, Mr Dryden, whom Lord Rõs: look'd upon, as a naturall rather than a correct Poet, & therefore calls him somewhere, The luxurious Father of the fold.
>
> There were some few others of less note & Abilities : They aim'd at refining our Language, without abating the force of it, & therefore insted of making a laborious Dictionary, they purposed severally to peruse our best writers, & mark such words, as they thought vulgar, base, improper, or obsolete. A great many Innocent, & not useless Projects were form'd, wch I will not mention, because they were not executed.
>
> (pp. 39-40)

Chetwood's account makes it much clearer than Fenton's that the 'Society' (now called an 'Academy') was much more of a literary milieu than one with linguistic interests of a narrowly lexicographical kind, that it was in the production of translations that the members of the group set themselves to rival the French, and that Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse emerged

from the stimulus provided by this milieu. Most important for our present purposes, Chetwood reveals Dryden actively involved in the early 1680's (the period at which the enterprise has been clearly dated) in discussing, in a serious and congenial environment, the problems of translation and its potential force for English culture and the English language.[1]

The group seem to have possessed valuable qualifications for the enterprise. Lord Cavendish was, apparently, a fine Latin scholar to whom Roscommon himself entrusted his poems for revision.[2] Lauderdale (Maitland) was the possessor of a vast library and himself a translator (Dryden was later to make use of his manuscript translation of the Aeneid in composing his own version).[3] Dorset was, of course, Dryden's loyal patron over a large number of years. Dryden pays perhaps his warmest tribute to the Earl's literary taste and judgement in the Discourse Concerning Satire.[4]

1. The dating is Niemeyer's, in the article cited in fn.2 p.106.
2. In his funeral address on Cavendish, White Kennett remarked: 'He was a poet not by genius only, but by learning and judgement. The Lord Roscommon made him a constant reviser of his immortal lines'. See Thompson Cooper in The Gentleman's Magazine (1855), ii, New Series, No.44, pp.603-5. On Cavendish's Latin scholarship, see J.Spingarn, ed., Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century (3 vols., Oxford, 1908), II, 327.
3. On Lauderdale's library, see Evelyn's testimony, cited in I.D.MacKillop, The Milieu of Criticism, pp.77-8. Lauderdale's influence on Dryden's Aeneis is discussed by L.Proudfoot in Dryden's Aeneid and its Seventeenth Century Predecessors (Manchester , 1960) and by M.P.Boddy, 'Dryden-Lauderdale Relationships. Some Bibliographical Notes and a Suggestion', PQ, 42 (1963), 267-72, and 'The Manuscripts and Printed Editions of the Translation of Virgil Made by Richard Maitland, Fourth Earl of Lauderdale, and the Connexion with Dryden', N.Q. , 12 (1965), 144-150.
4. Some, including Johnson, have found the praise extravagantly fulsome. It is interesting to note (in the light of the argument presented in the later part of this chapter) that Dorset was probably a close friend of Tonson's, and perhaps initially recommended Nahum Tate to the publisher. See K.M.Lynch, Jacob Tonson, p.16.

Some doubts have been cast as to whether Dryden's involvement with Roscommon in the scheme was in fact as close as it would appear from Fenton's account. It has been suggested by Professor Niemeyer, for example, that Fenton's singling out of Dryden as Roscommon's 'principal assistant' was a case of Fenton's being wise after the event and associating Dryden too closely with the enterprise because of his later celebrity. Later in this section I shall be presenting what I hope is ample evidence to suggest that in the early 1680's Dryden was deliberately cultivating a 'translating milieu' for which the principal outlet became the publications of the Tonson house. I think, however, it is also possible to establish convincingly that the personal relationship of Dryden and Roscommon, and the esteem in which they held each other, was stronger than is commonly supposed.

One particular scrap of evidence has recently come to light which casts specific doubt on Professor Niemeyer's judgement "that the close co-operation of Roscommon and Dryden existed solely in the mind of Fenton".[1] Professor Niemeyer was unable to find a source in any of Roscommon's works for the italicised phrase in this sentence of Chetwood's memoir :

> Lord Ros:... look'd upon [Dryden] as a naturall rather than a correct Poet, & therefore calls him somewhere, The luxurious Father of the fold.

But the phrase in fact comes not from any work of Roscommon's but from a poem by Dryden himself, his translation of Virgil's Fourth Pastoral which had appeared first in Miscellany Poems (1684) and was later reprinted in The Works of Virgil (1697). It is there used to describe the ram who, in

1. In a piece of unpublished research by Mr. H.A.Mason, which I draw on here, in pp. 103-4, 107, 113-4, and later in remarks on Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse.

the second golden age, will appear in its natural splendour rather than shining with 'dissembled colours'. Chetwood, in recording Roscommon's comment, had clearly forgotten its original context (even though, as we have seen, he contributed to both volumes in which Dryden's Fourth Pastoral had appeared) and presumably supposed that it was Roscommon's 'original' remark. It is obvious, at any rate, that the remark with its clear allusion to the Golden Age is intended as a warm compliment to Dryden (and one very much in line with the characterisation of his 'natural' genius to be found in many of his early admirers).

If there is evidence for Roscommon's respect for Dryden's poetical talents, there is also evidence for the friendship between the two men in the early 1680's. Roscommon further confirmed his admiration for Dryden by contributing commendatory verses to the second edition of Religio Laici which Tonson published in 1683 (they were also reprinted in the second edition of Miscellany Poems (1692)). The warmth of Dryden's feelings for Roscommon can be judged not only from the tone of the complimentary verses to Roscommon's Essay but also from the translation of Horace's Odes III,i. Inscrib'd to the Earl of Roscommon, on his Intended Voyage to Ireland published in Sylvae (1685) (which we know to have been written by August 1684), which describes Roscommon as

> The best of Poets and of Friends, (8)

and requests the 'gentle Breezes' to

> ...land him safely on the shore:
> And save the better part of me,
> From perishing with him at Sea. (10-12)[1]

1. Complimentary verses for the Essay were also written by Dryden's son Charles (in Latin) and Knightley Chetwood. For the dating of the Ode, see Ward, Letters, pp.22-4.

Chetwood was perhaps right in suggesting that the 'Academy's' projects 'were not executed' in the terms in which they had been originally conceived, but there can, I think, be little doubt that the thinking about translation of which the 'Academy' was one example and the potential benefits which it could bring for the English language, both bore fruit, and were felt to have borne fruit, in the publications of the Tonson house over the next two decades, and it is to this aspect of Dryden's 'translating milieu' that we must now turn.[1]

In broad terms, the record speaks for itself. In the twenty years after Tonson became Dryden's principal publisher, he printed, as well as Ovid's Epistles, the first four volumes of Miscellany Poems (consisting very largely of translations from the Classical poets), Dryden's Virgil (1697), composite English versions of Plutarch (1683-6), Juvenal and Persius (1693), and translations of Horace (1684) and Manilius (1696) by Creech, Cicero's De Oficiis by L'Estrange (1688), Ovid's Art of Love, Book 1 and Musaeus' Hero and Leander by Hoy (1692). He also compiled, or published piece-meal in miscellanies much of the material that would be eventually collected (after Dryden's death) in the composite versions of Ovid's Metamorphoses (edited by Garth 1717) his Art of Love (1709) and Amores (included with the Epistles in the 1725 edition) and Horace's Odes and Satires (1715), and issuing two more volumes of Miscellany Poems in

1. Dryden later made complimentary references to Roscommon in the Parallel of Painting and Poetry (Scott, XVII, 327) and the Dedication and Postscript to the Aeneis (Kinsley, III, 1051, 1426).

1704 and 1709.[1]

The evidence which allows us to form some estimate of the precise part Dryden played in Tonson's enterprise and of the way in which both men worked to cultivate younger writers, to promote their enterprise and to build up a group of potential translators in these years has to be established more gradually, but is, I think, no less striking in its cumulative effect. A starting point can be found in examining the composite version of Plutarch's Lives which Tonson issued in five volumes between 1683 and 1686, which has always been known as 'Dryden's Plutarch'. A scrutiny of the contributors to these volumes reveals that several had already contributed to Ovid's Epistles and/or were to contribute to Miscellany Poems (1684), while no less than eleven of the contributors were graduates (and some of them Fellows) of Trinity, Cambridge, Dryden's old college. (Westminster, his old school, is also well represented in the list).[2] Since Malone first suggested it, it has been customary to attribute the short address of 'The Publisher to the Reader' in Volume One of the Plutarch to Dryden himself. The author of the address is

1. I shall be presenting evidence in Chapter 4 to suggest that the 1717 Metamorphoses was in preparation in the early 1690's. The 1715 Horace, as its Preface makes clear, was issued by Tonson as a riposte to a pirated edition ofthe same year 'by Persons who have no Right to the Printing thereof, the Copies therein being near all taken from the Miscellany Poems published by Mr. Dryden, and printed by Jacob Tonson'. (Sig. A3r).

2. The list of contributors is printed in the California edition, XVII, 430, and (with some differences) Macdonald, Bibliography, p.169, fn.2. Duke, Smallwood, Rycant, Browne, Arrowsmith, Cooper, Needham, Warren, Uvedale, Leman and Allen were all Trinity men. Duke, Smallwood, Cooper, Thornburgh, Needham and Uvedale were all former Westminster boys.

clearly echoing the Preface to Ovid's Epistles when he remarks that

> ...the English Reader...shall see...the very Spirit of the Original, Transfus'd into the Traduction.

and in his commendation of the contributors, Dryden (if it is he) is giving strong support to a group of contributors which, it seems likely, he had some substantial say in selecting:

> ... I have with all possible Respect, and Industry, Besought, Sollicited, and Obtain'd the Assistance of persons equal to the enterprize, and not only Criticks in the Tongue, but Men of known fame, and Abilities, for style and Ornament, but I shall rather refer you to the Learned and Ingenious Translators of this first part, (whose Names you will find in the next page) as a Specimen of what you may promise your self from the Rest.

Not that Dryden had total responsibility for choosing contributors. We know from a chance remark in a later book that Lord Somers' contribution to the Plutarch (the Life of Alcibiades in Volume 2) was due, as had been his earlier contribution to Ovid's Epistles, to his acquaintance with Tonson.[1] Tonson was always himself an assiduous 'talent spotter' as his later dealings with the young Pope clearly show.[2]

Some particularly interesting miscellaneous sidelights on the activity of the milieu in these years can be found in the relations of Tonson and Dryden in these years with Aphra Behn, and with the young translator whose talents Tonson very soon spotted, Thomas Creech (1659-1700). Mrs. Behn, an admirer of Dryden's of some years' standing, had, as we've seen, had two

1. Memoirs of the Life of Lord Somers (1716), p.11. Tonson 'had the Honour of being intimate with him, when he was a young Barrister'.

2. See Tonson's letter to Pope of 20 April 1706 in The Correspondence of Alexander Pope, ed. G.Sherburn (5 vols., Oxford, 1956), I, 17. Wycherley, writing to Pope two years later, describes Tonson as one 'who has been so long a Pimp, or Gentleman-Usher to the Muses' (ibid., p.50).

plays published by the Tonson brothers in the late 1670's.[1] We can thus, I think, plausibly conclude that it was due to Tonson's agency that her Oenone to Paris was included in Ovid's Epistles. Dryden manages a particularly tactful note in his Preface when he explains her presence in the collection even though she knows no Latin. We know from an extant letter of hers that Tonson acted as some kind of intermediary between her and Dryden.[2] Her admiration for Dryden continued for several years, and although she did not contribute further to the Dryden/Tonson Miscellanies she was clearly felt by Tonson to be still loosely a member of his 'group'.[3] She contributed, with Duke and Otway, commendatory verses to the London edition of Creech's Lucretius (1683, discussed below), and, with Dryden, to Henry Higden's version of Juvenal's Tenth Satire (1687). Her Poems on Several Occasions, published by Tonson in 1684, themselves contain commendatory verses by J.Cooper (a contributor to Ovid's Epistles and Miscellany Poems) and J.Adams (who had, with her, written complementary verses to Creech's Lucretius, and also himself appeared in Miscellany Poems).

1. See the Epistle to The Dutch Lover (1673) and Prologue to Sir Patient Fancy (1678) (quoted below).

2. See The Works of Aphra Behn, ed. M.Summers (6 vols., 1915; rpt. New York, 1967), I, xlv-xlvi. The letter was first printed in The Gentleman's Magazine for May 1836. It can probably be dated to 1684, since she later makes reference to her volume of Poems upon Several Occasions (published by Tonson with his brother Richard in that year) as if its publication were imminent.

3. As T.T.Dombras points out (Poetical Miscellanies, 1684-1716, p.258) her own Miscellany (1685), like Tate's of the same year, was closely based on Tonson's precedent.

She was attacked with Dryden in 1682, and again complimented him in some verses to Aesop's Fables (1687).[1] Dryden's final return compliment to her (delivered after her death) is to be found in the Prologue and Epilogue which he wrote to her play The Widow Ranter.[2]

If Tonson enrolled Aphra Behn (albeit briefly) into his translating ventures, and involved others (including Dryden) and her in the writing of complimentary verses to one another (his standard way of promoting his authors) he was also responsible for the recruitment of the brilliant young scholar Thomas Creech into what seems to have been his project to publish versions of all the major Classical authors for English readers. Creech had graduated B.A. from Wadham College Oxford in 1680 and in 1682 (aged 23) published at Oxford the first edition of his translation of Lucretius. The translation was an immediate success, being reprinted in Oxford and London the very next year. Tonson's further plans for Creech, and Dryden's part in the enterprise (or, rather, his lack of it) are told in a letter written by Tonson to his nephew over forty years later :

> Soon after ye first Edition of Lucretius, mr Creech came to Town & was very much caressed & esteemed for it; I brought him to mr Dryden & by mr Wallers means he was carried to mr Waller ye Poet When mr Creech returned to Oxford he wrot to me to get mr Dryden & mr Waller to write some verses to put before ye 2de Edition; I was much obleidgd to him & perticularly

1. See Macdonald, Bibliography, p.213.
2. Dryden's Prologue and Epilogue were not reprinted until well into this century. For full details, see California edition, III, 504-5. Presumably at this date Dryden was ignorant of the scabrous manuscript satire (unpublished till this century) which Mrs.Behn had written on him the same year. Her editor, Montague Summers, attributes the malice of this piece to her ill health. See The Works of Aphra Behn, VI, 400-1, 435-6. By 1699 Dryden was adopting a more critical tone towards her, but his remarks show no sign of personal animus. See Ward, Letters, p.127.

> for his doing some lives in Plutarch & his shewing mee some parts of his horace & promising mee ye printing of it ; Dryden really envyed thee reputation hee had gotten by Lucretius & I coud not prevail, but being loath to appear not to have interest enough I resolved to try to write a coppy that shoud be taken for Drydens & soe I wrote that coppy wch begins -
>
> How happy had our English tongue been made
> Were but our wit industrious as our trade - &c
>
> It was taken by Creech & every one else for Drydens & I trusted noe body wth ye Secret.[1]

Dryden was to keep as quiet about Tonson's fake verses as he did about his hand in Sir William Soame's version of Boileau's Art Poétique.[2] In the verses 'Dryden' exhorts Creech to stay in the tranquility of Oxford and continue with his already-embryonic version of Horace :

> Horace we have in Paraphrastick dress.
> (They who enlarge his Poems, make 'em less)
> Tho baulkt before wou'd see us once again,
> And Courts th'assistance of thy Juster Pen:
> On these, and such as these, if such there are,
> Imploy those hours Convenience lets thee spare
> For this in Wadhams peaceful Walls reside,
> Books be thy Pleasure, to do well thy Pride.[3]

Dryden's real feelings, according to Malone, were rather different. He attributes Dryden's encouragement to Creech to persist with Horace to

1. See S.L.C.Clapp, Jacob Tonson in Ten Letters By and About Him (Austin, 1948), pp.10-11. Parts of the letter were first published by G.Thorn-Drury in R.E.S., 1. (1925), 125-7.
2. As the same letter shows, Tonson also faked Waller's verses. The Boileau was published anonymously in 1683. Only when Tonson reprinted it in the second edition of The Annual Miscellany...Being the Fourth Part of Miscellany Poems (1708) did he supply the information (Sigs. A2r-v) that the translation was made by Soame in 1680, and that Dryden with whom Soame was 'very intimately acquainted' had 'made very considerable Alterations in it' including the substitution of the names of English authors for Boileau's French examples. For the possible influence in this respect of Etherege and Oldham on Dryden, see California, II, 369.
3. Sigs. C3v-C4r.

his knowledge that its certain failure would diminish the reputation which Creech had gained from the Lucretius. However, Creech went on to complete his Horace (which Tonson published in 1684) as well as being a regular contributor to the Tonson/Dryden collections: Plutarch (1683-6), Miscellany Poems (1684), Juvenal (1693), as well as writing commendatory verse for Religio Laici and making his own translations of Theocritus (1684) and Manilius (1697).[1]

Miscellany Poems (1684) shows how far Tonson and Dryden had gone towards assembling a coherent set of translating projects and a coherent group of translators by that date. As has been suggested, it seems almost certain that the volume grew out of a plan to produce composite versions of Ovid's Amores, Horace's Odes, and Virgil's Eclogues along the same lines as Ovid's Epistles.[2] Many of the translators of the Eclogues (which has a separate title-page and pagination in the volume) are the same as those for Ovid's Epistles. If Tonson had been, as we have seen, responsible for the recruitment of several of the contributors, Dryden's part as literary editor and arbiter in the enterprise seems also clear. As well as almost certainly enrolling contributors from his own circle of acquaintance (especially from the members of his own University and College) the fact of his detailed scrutiny and improvement of contributions is made clear by several pieces of evidence. Passing reference has already been made to his hand in Soame's version of Boileau's Art Poétique which was published

1. The Horace was dedicated to Dryden to whom (along with Roscommon) Creech expresses debts in the Preface.
2. The suggestion was made by T.T.Dombras (Poetical Miscellanies, 1684-1716), p.252 .

anonymously in 1683. Creech appears to have possibly modified a passage of his Lucretius in the light of criticisms made by Dryden.[1] The other evidence of Dryden's hand in other men's work comes from a few years later, but the example of Soame's poem shows that it was an extention of his earlier practice rather than a new departure. His correspondence with Walsh of 1691 (preserved in Walsh's Letterbook in the British Museum) reveals him subjecting an epigram of Walsh's to a detailed 'practical criticism'; every one of his suggestions was incorporated by Walsh in his published version.[2] But perhaps the most telling piece of all the evidence on this subject is that connected with one of the contributions to the composite Juvenal of 1693, the translation of the Eighth Satire by the poet and diplomat George Stepney (1663-1707). Stepney, like so many of the young men who translated for Dryden and Tonson had been educated at Westminster and Trinity (where he was elected Fellow in 1687) and was still an undergraduate at Cambridge when he made his début in Miscellany Poems (1684) with a translation of Ovid's elegy on Tibullus. It is partly to Stepney's testimony that we owe our knowledge that Dryden supervised the Juvenal with special care, and we also know from a letter of Stepney's that it was his custom to show his poems to Dryden for suggested improvements.[3] The most striking evidence for Dryden's role as Tonson's editor

1. In an undated letter (Ward, Letters, pp.14-16) Dryden, acting, apparently, as some sort of adjudicator between two contestants in a wager, offers certain criticisms of a passage in Book One of Creech's translation of De Rerum Natura. Although it has been noticed (by C.G.Gordon, the author of the standard bibliography of Lucretius) that Professor Ward quotes in his commentary from a later (1714) text of Creech's Lucretius, quite unlike that commented on by Dryden, what has not been noticed is that the later text of Creech implements exactly the criticisms made by Dryden in the letter.
2. See Ward, Letters, pp.33-36.
3. See J.M.Kemble, ed., State Papers and Correspondence (London, 1857), p.121, which reprints a letter from Stepney to the philosopher Leibnitz (of March 1693) to this effect.

is preserved on the holograph manuscript of Stepney's Eighth Satire of Juvenal which is preserved in the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library at the University of California.[1] On this manuscript appears a note in Pope's handwriting :

> Who compares this Original of Mr.Stepney's
> with that printed in Drydens Juvenal, will see
> ye vast advantages it receiv'd by passing under
> his hands. I question not, the same wd appear of
> ye other translations there, if ye originals were
> extant to make the same comparison. This was what
> That great Man did for almost all his acquaintance.

So far I hope to have established what might seem to be two separate (if to some extent overlapping) elements in Dryden's 'translating milieu' of the early 1680's - his activity with Roscommon in the 'Academy' to extend the possibilities of the English language via translation, and his involvement with Tonson in the publication and editing of marketable translations, and the recruitment of younger men to assist the enterprise. Some evidence has recently come to light that the overlap between these elements was even closer than it might at first sight seem. Near the beginning of his Essay on Translated Verse, Roscommon confidently exhorts his audience to contemplate the English achievement in translation which is now (because of the inherent superiority of the English tongue) in a position to rival the French:

> The noblest Fruits Transplanted in our Isle
> With early Hope, and fragrant Blossoms smile.
> Familiar Ovid tender thoughts inspires,
> And Nature seconds all his soft Desires:
> Theocritus do's now to Us belong;

1. Published as George Stepney's Translation of the Eighth Satire of Juvenal ed. T. &.E. Swedenberg (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1948).

> And Albion's Rocks repeat his Rural Song.
> Who has not heard how Italy was blest,
> Above the Medes, above the wealthy East?
> Or Gallus Song, so tender, and so true,
> As evn Lycoris might with pity view!
> When Mourning Nymphs attend their Daphne's Herse
> Who do's not Weep, that Reads the moving Verse!
> But hear, oh hear, in what exalted streins
> Sicilian Muses through these happy Plains,
> Proclaim Saturnian Times, our own Apollo Reigns.[1]

What has not been noticed hitherto is thatthis list is not the general commendation that it might at first seem, but is a quite specific encomium on the various translations published by the Tonson house since 1680 - the translations from Ovid in Ovid's Epistles and Miscellany Poems, Creech's Horace and Theocritus and the versions of Virgil's Eclogues and Georgics in Miscellany Poems. The point is conclusively clinched by the fact that twice Roscommon clearly echoes the precise wording of the Tonson versions in his descriptions.[2]

The Preface to Gilbert Burnet's translation of More's Utopia shows that by 1684 there was a general feeling that translation could be one means of realising the great potential of the English language :

> ...the French took no ill Method, when they intended to reform and beautify their Language, in setting their best Writers on Work to translate the Greek and Latin Authors into it. There is so little praise got by Translations, that a Man cannot be engaged to it out of Vanity, for it has past for a sign of a slow Mind; that can amuse it self with so mean an Entertainment; but we begin to grow wiser,

1. Roscommon, Essay, pp.2-3.
2. The precise echoes, as Mr.Mason points out in the piece of research referred to above, are of the refrain of Creech's First Idyll of Theocritus, and Stafford's version of Virgil's Tenth Pastoral in Miscellany Poems. Roscommon also seems to be referring specifically in his catalogue to Creech's Horace and Theocritus (both just published) and Chetwood's version (in Miscellany Poems) of Virgil's Second Georgic.

> and tho ordinary Translators must succeed ill in the esteem of the World, yet some have appeared of late that will, I hope, bring that way of writing in credit. The English Language has wrought it self out, both of the fulsome Pedantry under which it Laboured long ago, and the trifling way of dark and unintelligible Wit that came after that, and out of the course extravagance of Canting that succeeded this: but as one Extream commonly produces another, so we were beginning to fly into a sublime pitch, of a strong but false Rhetorick, which had much corrupted, not only the Stage, but even the Pulpit: two places, that tho they ought not to be named together, much less to resemble on another; yet it cannot be denied, the the Rule and Measure of Speech is generally taken from them: but that florid strain is almost quite worn out, and is become now as ridiculous as it was once admired. So that without either the Expence or Labour that the French have undergone, our Language has, like a rich Wine, wrought out its Tartar, and is insensibly brought to a Purity that could not have been compassed without much labour, had it not been for the great advantage that we have of a Prince, who is so great a Judg, that his single approbation or dislike has almost as great an Authority over our Language, as his Prerogative gives him over our Coin. We are now so much refined, that how defective so ever our Imaginations or Reasonings may be, yet our Language has fewer Faults, and is more natural and proper, than is was at any time before.1

Burnet in expressing his faith that the time is now ripe for translations, and that translations need the language as much as the language needs translations, is close to Roscommon's thought that the new dawn is actually visible. The early 1680's can be seen as years of growing confidence in the potential and achievement of translation.[2]

So in suggesting, in the Preface to Sylvae, that he had been partly

1. Utopia : written in Latin by Sir Thomas More, Chancellor of England : Translated into English (London, 1684), Sigs. A3v-A4v,

2. For further examples by Morgan, Eachard and L'Estrange, see I.D. MacKillop, The Milieu of Criticism, pp.79-80.

stimulated by the desire to put Roscommon's precepts into practice, Dryden must have realised that Roscommon's precepts had themselves, in their turn, been given weight by the practice both of himself and his fellow translators in the Tonson group, slender as much of that achievement seems to us now in comparison with what was to follow. And in claiming, in the same Preface, the need of the translator to

> wear [...] off the rust which he contracted, while he was laying in a stock of Learning

with the help of

> the knowledge of Men and Manners, the freedom of habitudes and conversation with the best company of both Sexes;
>
> (Kinsley, I, 391)

Dryden must surely have been thinking, at least in part, of the stimulus afforded him by working in his translating milieu in the years immediately preceding the publication of that volume, composing versions which were intended (as he wrote later of his Juvenal and Persius)

> ...for the Pleasure and Entertainment, of those Gentlemen and Ladies, who tho they are not Scholars, are not Ignorant: Persons of Understanding and good Sense; who not having been conversant in the Original, or at least not having made Latine Verse so much their business, as to be Critiques in it, wou'd be glad to find, if the Wit of our Two great Authors, be answerable to their Fame, and Reputation in the World.
>
> (Kinsley, II,658)

(iii) Dryden's Disenchantment with the Theatre

If one important element in Dryden's development in the 1680's was the inspiration and support of his involvement with Roscommon, Tonson and others in a group-endeavour to make translation both a commercial and artistic success, and to fulfil the potential that they, and others, thought to lie in the medium, equally important for him were certain reflections which he was increasingly entertaining during these years about the nature and implications of the earlier part of his own career. At the very moment when his immersion in the affairs of the court was about to reach its most intense (with the controversies following the publication of Absalom and Achitophel and The Medal) Dryden seems to have been having severe misgivings about his whole position as a court writer, and particularly about his career as a provider of modish plays, which, though many of them display - at least in embryo - a lively and active mind at work, had been written quite deliberately, and even unscrupulously, to appeal to the tastes of a court audience that he was now coming increasingly to despise.

Dryden's earliest commentators often remarked on what they took to be the regrettable features of his earliest plays, and not all these adverse comments can be written off as jealousy or irrelevant moralising. One of the most famous examples, and a convenient starting-point for the present discussion, is the following passage from Lord Lansdowne's poem, An Essay upon Unnatural Flights in Poetry, published in the year after Dryden's death :

> Dryden himself, to please a frantick Age,
> Was forc'd to let his judgment stoop to Rage;
> To a wild Audience he conform'd his Voice,

> Comply'd to Custom, but not err'd thro' Choice.
> Deem then the Peoples, not the Writer's Sin,
> Almanzor's Rage, and Rants of Maximin;

Lansdowne supplied the following footnote to this passage in his poem :

> Mr. Dryden in some Prologue has these two Lines :
> He's bound to please, not to write well; And knows
> There is a mode in Plays as well as Cloaths.
> Let the Censurers of Mr. Dryden therefore be satisfied that where he has expos'd himself to be criticiz'd, it has been only when he has endeavour'd to follow the fashion, To humour others, and not to please himself... those who write to live will be always under a necessity to comply in some measure with the Generality by whose approbation they subsist.[1]

Dryden's plays had, of course, been subjected to attack very early in his career in The Rehearsal (1672) and were later to be severely castigated by Langbaine and others. The couplet quoted by Lansdowne (it is from the Prologue to The Rival Ladies, Dryden's second play, published as early as 1664, and before he'd written any of the 'heroic' plays which later bore the brunt of the attacks) shows that Dryden perhaps felt right from the beginning of his playwriting career that he was operating under irksome constraints. In the Prologue to her play Sir Patient Fancy (1678) Aphra Behn portrays Dryden entertaining similar thoughts about his comedies :

> I've seen an elevated Poet sit,
> And hear the Audience laugh and clap, yet say,
> Gad after all, 'tis a damn'd silly Play;
> He unconcern'd, cries only - Is it so?
> No matter, these unwitty things will do,

1. See J. & H. Kinsley, eds. Dryden : The Critical Heritage (London , 1971), pp.243-4. It is interesting to note that Lansdowne admired, and wrote a poem on 'Dryden's several excellent translations of the ancient poets', which is printed (with its earlier title) in the Kinsleys' volume on pp.223-4. Further strictures on the way Dryden's earlier plays were designed to appeal to base tastes are to be found in Charles Gildon's The Laws of Poetry (London 1721), pp.213, 350, and John Oldmixon's Arts of Logick and Rhetoric (London, 1728), pp.238-40.

> When your fine fustian useless Eloquence
> Serves but to chime asleep a drousy Audience.
> Who at the vast expence of Wit would treat,
> That might so cheaply please the Appetite? [1]

Writing his account of Dryden's plays over a century later, Samuel Johnson began thus :

> ... in 1663, in the thirty-second year of his life, he commenced a writer for the stage; compelled undoubtedly by necessity, for he appears never to have loved that exercise of his genius, or to have much pleased himself with his own dramas.
>
> (Murphy, IX , 318)

Johnson's observation is confirmed by several further statements made by Dryden himself. In the Prologue to Lee's Caesar Borgia, probably acted in 1679 and published in 1680, Dryden took up again the subject of the playwright's dependence upon an unworthy audience :

> Th' unhappy man, who once has trail'd a Pen,
> Lives not to please himself but other men:
> Is always drudging, wasts his Life and Blood,
> Yet only eats and drinks what you think good:
> What praise soe're the Poetry deserve,
> Yet every Fool can bid the Poet starve:
>
> (1-6)

And in his Preface to The Spanish Friar (1681) Dryden reflected thus on his earlier heroic plays, Tyrannic Love and The Conquest of Granada :

> ... I remember some verse of my own Maximin and Almanzor, which cry vengeance upon me for their extravagance, ... All I can say for those passages, which are, I hope, not many, is that I knew they were bad enough to please, even when I wrote them; but I repent of them amongst my sins; and if any of their fellows intrude by chance into my present writings, I draw a stroke over all those Dalilahs of the theatre; and am resolved I will settle myself no reputation by the applause of fools. It is not that I am mortified to all ambition, but I scorn as much to take it from half-witted judges, as I should to raise an estate by cheating of bubbles.
>
> (Scott, VI, 376-377)

1. See The Works of Aphra Behn, IV, 8-9. Dryden is mentioned by name only a few lines earlier.

In each of these cases, however, we might be inclined not to attribute too much personal force to Dryden's statements. The Prologues might be thought of merely as characteristic exhibitions of the kind of wittily insulting attitude to the audience conventionally expected of the genre, and the Preface might be thought of as a rejection of a literary genre that was by now (1681) generally thought of as somewhat passé. But the same could not, I think, be said of this forceful passage which Dryden included in his poem of 1686, To the Pious Memory of the Accomplish'd Young Lady, Mrs. Anne Killigrew :

> O Gracious God! How far have we
> Prophan'd thy Heav'nly Gift of Poesy?
> Made prostitute and profligate the Muse
> Debas'd to each obscene and impious use,
> Whose Harmony was first ordain'd Above
> For Tongues of Angels, and for Hymns of Love?
> O wretched We! why were we hurry'd down
> This lubrique and adult'rate age,
> (Nay added fat Pollutions of our own)
> T'increase the steaming Ordures of the Stage?
>
> (56-65)

The vehemence of Dryden's language here (and in a context where it was not at all necessary for him even to mention the subject of the theatre) indicates that Dryden's feelings about his plays, and the circumstances which produced them entailed a revulsion far deeper than a merely dissatisfaction with their style and manner would produce. And (as we shall see in the next section) it was not an isolated outburst.

Of course, Dryden did not abandon the theatre in the 1680's. Economic circumstances forced him to return to the stage with Don Sebastian in 1689, when he used the excuse of that play's Preface to record his feelings on the matter:

> Having been longer acquainted with the stage than any poet now living, and having observed how difficult it was to please: that the humours

> of comedy were almost spent; that love and honour (the mistaken topics of tragedy) were quite worn out; that the theatres could not support their charges; that the audience forsook them; that young men, without learning, set up for judges, and that they talked loudest, who understood the least; all these discouragements had not only weaned me from the stage, but had also given me a loathing of it. But enough of this: the difficulties continue; they increase; and I am still condemned to dig in those exhausted mines.
>
> (Scott, VII, 292)

While it must be admitted that Don Sebastian was one of Dryden's best plays, evidently written, as Dryden himself felt, with more care than many of his earlier ones, and that Dryden's remarks in the Preface are clearly coloured by the political and personal calamity that had befallen him, I do not think there is any serious reason to doubt Dryden's own statement that his return to the stage went very much against the grain. He reiterated his feeling in the Preface to his penultimate play, Cleomenes (1692) :

> Nobody can imagine that, in my declining age, I write willingly, or that I am desirous of exposing, at this time of day, the small reputation which I have gotten on the theatre.
>
> (Scott, VIII, 198-9)

And, reflecting on the faults of The Spanish Friar in 1695, after he had finally retired from writing for the theatre, Dryden commented significantly (in the Parallel of Painting and Poetry),

> The faults of that drama are in the kind of it, which is tragi-comedy. But it was given to the people: and I never writ anything for myself but Antony and Cleopatra
>
> (Scott, XVII, 331)[1]

1. Dryden declared his retirement from play-writing in the poem 'To My Dear Friend Mr. Congreve' (1694):

   Already I am worn with Cares and Age;
   And just abandoning th'Ungrateful Stage:

Dryden's feelings here are the same as those he had expressed over thirty years before in the Rival Ladies Prologue, that in writing for the demands of a court audience and taste, rather than 'for himself', he was doing something which, whatever its incidental interest and side-benefit, was fundamentally unworthy of him, and (to quote the Killigrew Ode) nothing short of a prostitution of the 'Heav'nly Gift of Poesy' whose harmony was intended for something far worthier. In a later chapter I shall be suggesting that Dryden's sense of the limitations of his earlier drama was something that enabled him to see richer and more various possibilities in those 'dramatic' qualities in Ovid on which he had remarked in 1680. More immediately, it is necessary to investigate further why, in rejecting his dramatic career, Dryden had been moved, more than once, to use language of an almost religious intensity.

(iv) 'Towards a Poetry of Retirement' ; (I) The Oxford 'Epilogue' and the Dedication to 'Aureng-Zebe'

Though I have, for convenience of exposition, treated Dryen's disenchantment with the theatre in the previous section as a separable topic, it cannot, if its full significance is to be appreciated, be thus separated from some other tendencies in his thinking which also came to a head in the 1680's and which represent a sufficiently comprehensive and searching set of reflections on the implications and significance of his career hitherto that they can legitimately, I think, be described as 'religious'. I say 'came to a head in the 1680's' since, like his reflections on the theatre, they had, as we shall see, existed in embryo several years before that decade began.

This time it is Sir Walter Scott's account which provides us with a useful starting-point :

> Foremost in the race of pleasure, engaged in labours alien from serious reflection, the favourite of the most lively and dissolute nobility whom England ever saw, religious thoughts were not, as this period [i.e. immediately after the Restoration] , likely to intrude frequently upon his mind, or to be encouraged when they did so. The time, therefore, when Dryden began seriously to compare the doctrines of the contending sects of Christianity, was probably several years after the Restoration, when reiterated disappointment, and satiety of pleasure, prompted his mind to retire within itself, and think upon hereafter.
>
> (Scott, I, 306-7)

Scott here, obviously, has in mind primarily the period of Dryden's thinking, clearly one of intense soul-searching, which culminated in Religio Laici (1682) and, after his conversion to Catholicism, in The Hind and the Panther (1687). This area of Dryden's thought (the one which has received the largest amount of scholarly attention of late)

was obviously of the greatest importance to him in the 1680's, and, as several pieces of evidence make clear, his personal allegiance to the Catholic faith after his conversion remained absolute.[1]

However, it is not, I think, possible to restrict the application of Scott's apt phrases about Dryden's mind, in these years, 'retiring within itself' and 'thinking upon hereafter' to matters of a strictly or exclusively doctrinal nature. For while his self-searching in this period certainly manifested itself in one form in the 'confessional' passages, and the carefully-researched doctrinal debates of The Hind and the Panther, it also, I shall argue, found a very different kind of expression in other areas of Dryden's work.

It is a striking fact about Dryden's later career that after The Hind he turned increasingly not to the writing of more doctrinal verse or

1. The fullest recent examinations of this side of Dryden's development are to be found, perhaps, in Phillip Harth's detailed study of Religio Laici and The Hind and the Panther, Contexts of Dryden's Thought (Chicago, 1968) and in Vols., III and IV of the California edition. The most striking piece of evidence on the depth of Dryden's Catholic conviction, perhaps, is the conversion of all Dryden's sons to the Catholic faith, and their subsequent adherence to it, and periods of residence in Rome. Dryden's own later letters show, in various places a firm adherence to Catholicism. It seems likely that in 1691 he refused to accept an 'offer' made to him on the condition of his being prepared to compromise on his religious principles. See Ward, Life, pp.250-1 and Fredson Bowers, 'Dryden as Laureate : The Cancel Leaf in "King Arthur" ', TLS, 10 April 1953, p.244

prose, but to translating (and doing so with such an evident flair and commitment that make it impossible to dismiss the enterprise as hack-work) the verse of a number of pagan poets whose work, if taken seriously, does not only, on the face of it, seem unlikely to interest a newly-converted and evidently pious Catholic, but actually to be positively incompatible with such a man's beliefs and principles. I don't think that this phenomenon can be simply explained by the fact that after 1688 overt religious comment (like political satire) would have been impossible for Dryden, or by pointing to the submerged but very real political and Christian interests to be found in the later plays, poems and translations, with the implication that these are their real (if covert) subject.[1] Such a view would leave out of account too much verse of whose excellence Dryden was himself convinced (a conviction which later readers have often shared) but whose interest cannot be shown to centre on political or Christian issues. And the nature of Dryden's religious and political interests in his later poetry, when they are evident, seems significantly different from that of the earlier satires and doctrinal poems for which

1. For suggestions about the political resonances in various areas of Dryden's later work see especially: B.Proffitt, 'Political Satire in Alexander's Feast', Texas Studies in Lang. and Lit., II (1970), 1307-1317; George Watson, 'Dryden and the Jacobites', TLS, March 16, 1973, p.301; M.M.Kelsall, 'What God, What Mortal? the Aeneid and English Mock-Heroic', Arion, 8 (1969), 359-79; T.W.Harrison, 'Dryden's Aeneid', Dryden's Mind and Art, ed. B.King (Edinburgh, 1969), pp.143-167; J.R.Moore, 'Political Allusions in Dryden's Later Plays', PMLA, 73 (1958), 36-42; W.Myers, Dryden (London, 1973) Chapters 8-10; A.C.Dobbins, 'Dryden's "Character of a Good Parson" : Background and Interpretation', SP, 53 (1956), 51-9; C.H.Hinnant, 'Dryden's Gallic Rooster', SP, 65 (1968), 645-56; J.Kinsley, 'Dryden's "Character of a Good Parson" and Bishop Ken', R.E.S., 3 (1952), 155-8; Earl Miner, 'Dryden's Messianic Eclogue', R.E.S., 11 (1960), 299-301; H.H.Erskine-Hill, review of Vol.15 of the 'California' edition, TLS, August 12 1977, p.988; W.J.Cameron, 'John Dryden's Jacobitism', Restoration Literature : Critical Approaches, ed. H. Love (London, 1972), pp.277-308.

he is most famous today.

It is clear, at any rate, that by the late 1670's Dryden was making powerful mental connections between his reading and reflection on certain of his favourite authors, ancient and modern, and the feelings of frustration and disgust which he was beginning to entertain himself about his involvement with the court. The discrete elegance, and occasional nature of the following lines, written in 1674, make it necessary to apply particular tact in their interpretation, but I think it is striking, even so, to hear the terms in which Dryden, then at the height of his popularity as court dramatist, formulated his complimentary address to the University of Oxford in that year.[1]

> Oft has our Poet wisht, this happy Seat
> Might prove his fading Muses last retreat:
> I wonder'd at his wish, but now I find
> He sought for quiet, and content of mind;
> Which noisfull Towns, and Courts can never know,
> And onely in the shades like Laurels grow.
> Youth, e'er it sees the World, here studies rest,
> And Age returning thence concludes it best.
> What wonder if we court that happiness
> Yearly to share, which hourly you possess,
> Teaching ev'n you, (while the vext World we show,)
> Your Peace to value more, and better know?
>
> (1-12)

It is tempting to speculate that, in the same year in which he published The State of Innocence, and in which appeared the second edition of Paradise Lost, Dryden was not only complimenting Oxford on being a 'happy

1. It seems fairly certain that later, in 1687, Dryden was being actively considered for a post at Oxford though it is unlikely that this 1674 Epilogue was deliberately designed to further such an ambition. See Ward, Life, p.233 and p.360, fn.11 and Louis Bredvold, 'Dryden and the University of Oxford', MLN, 46 (1931), 218-224; R.G.Ham, 'Dryden and the Colleges', MLN, 49 (1934), 324-332; P.Legouis 'Dryden and Eton', MLN, 52 (1937), 111-115; J.A.W.Bennett, 'Dryden and All Souls', MLN, 52 (1937), 115-116.

seat' of learning, but on having for him at least some of the connotations of the 'happy rural seat of various view', the Paradise of Milton's poem (IV,247). However, evidence that what might still be thought merely a passing yearning for refuge from the turmoil of London life was to be soon converted in Dryden's mind into a matter of passionate conviction is to be found in the Epistle Dedicatory, addressed to John, Earl of Mulgrave, prefixed to Aureng-Zebe (1676), a document of the greatest importance in the present context, since it links the disenchantment with the theatre examined in the last section with a powerful expression of disgust at court life and gives urgency and substance to the longing for 'quiet and content of mind' which had been Dryden's ideal in the Oxford Epilogue.

Dryden begins the Epistle by citing Montaigne's authority on the subject of the corruption of Courts and their uncongenial aspects as a milieu for poets :

> ...in all courts, there are too many, who make it their business to ruin wit; and Montaigne, in other places, tells us, what effects he found of their good natures. He describes them such, whose ambition, lust, or private interest, seem to be the only end of their creation. If good accrue to any from them, it is only in order to their own designs: conferred most commonly on the base and infamous; and never given, but only happening sometimes on well-deservers. Dullness has brought them to what they are; and malice secures them in their fortunes.
>
> (Scott, V, 176-7)

The 'courtier without wit' recommends himself to the prince, says Dryden, by a 'diligence in waiting' which 'looks like love, though it is only interest'. Particularly insidious is the courtiers' behaviour to those who are weaker than themselves :

> They fawn and crouch to men of parts, whom they cannot ruin; quote their wit when they are present, and, when they are absent, steal their jests; but to those who are under them, and whom they can crush with ease, they shew themselves in their natural antipathy; there they treat wit like the common enemy, and, giving no more quarter, then a Dutchman would to an English vessel in the Indies, they strike sail where they know they shall be mastered, and murder where they can with safety.
>
> (Scott, V, 177-8)

Mulgrave is praised for his refusal to court popular acclaim, in terms very similar to those in which (in the Killigrew Ode) Dryden was to reflect on his own, and his contemporaries' conduct in their writing for the theatre :

> Your mind has always been above the wretched affectation of popularity. A popular man is, in truth, no better than a prostitute to common fame, and to the people. He lies down to every one he meets for the hire of praise; and his humility is only a disguised ambition.
>
> (Scott, V, 178)

Even when bearing in mind the immediate context of these remarks, I think it is plausible to see a force of personal implication (Dryden's disgust at the life of the court including an element of disgust at his own part in it) in these last sentences.

In the section of the Dedication containing Dryden's direct compliments to Mulgrave, his words have more than a merely complimentary significance. A lengthy quotation is necessary here to show the way in which Dryden draws on some of his recent reading to reinforce his notions (which are a direct result of his experiences at court) of what might constitute 'true greatness' :

> But I make haste to consider you as abstracted from a court, which (if you will give me leave to use a term of logic) is only an adjunct, not a propriety of happiness. The Academics, I confess, were willing to admit the goods of fortune into their notion of

felicity; but I do not remember, that any of the sects of old philosophers did ever leave a room for greatness. Neither am I formed to praise a court, who admire and covet nothing, but the easiness and quiet of retirement. I naturally withdraw my sight from a precipice; and, admit the prospect be never so large and goodly, can take no pleasure even in looking on the downfall, though I am secure from the danger. Methinks, there is something of a malignant joy in that excellent description of Lucretius;

> Suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis,
> E terrâ magnum alterius spectare laborem;
> Non quia vexari quenquam est jucunda voluptas,
> Sed, quibus ipse malis careas, quia cernere suave est.

I am sure his master Epicurus, and my better master Cowley, preferred the solitude of a garden, and the conversation of a friend, to any consideration, so much as a regard, of those unhappy people, whom, in our own wrong, we call the great. True greatness, if it be any where on earth, is in a private virtue, removed from the notion of pomp and vanity, confined to a contemplation of itself, and centering on itself :

> Omnis enim per se Divûm natura necesse est
> Immortali aevo summâ cum pace fruatur;
> -------curâ semota, metuque,
> Ipsa suis pollens opibus.

If this be not the life of a deity, because it cannot consist with Providence, it is, at least, a god-like life. I can be contented, (and I am sure I have your lordship of my opinion) with an humbler station in the temple of virtue, than to be set on the pinnacle of it :

> Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre
> Errare, atque viam palantes quaerere vitae.

The truth is, the consideration of so vain a creature as man, is not worth our pains. I have fool enough at home, without looking for it abroad; and am a sufficient theatre to myself of ridiculous actions, without expecting company, either in a court, a town, or a play-house. It is on this account that I am weary with drawing the deformities of life, and lazars of the people, where every figure of imperfection more resembles me than it can do others. If I must be condemned to rhyme, I should find some ease in my change of punishment. I desire to be no longer the Sisyphus of the stage; to roll up a stone with endless labour, (which, to follow the proverb, gathers no moss) and

> which is perpetually falling down again. I never thought myself very fit for an employment, where many of my predecessors have excelled me in all kinds; and some of my contemporaries, even in my own partial judgment, have outdone me in Comedy.
>
> (Scott, V, 181-3)

Dryden is, in this passage clearly incorporating the thoughts of Lucretius and his 'better master' Cowley into his own body of reflections on why the 'greatness' of the court is not 'true greatness', reflections which can only have been given greater edge by the Rose Alley incident of December 1679, in which Dryden was beaten up by ruffians, probably for his supposed hand in Mulgrave's Essay upon Satire, and by the increasing pamphlet attacks to which both his work and his personal character were subjected as a result of his court position. But part of the effect of the references to Lucretius is to give more than a purely personal resonance to Dryden's reflections. In his footnote to this passage, Scott remarked,

> Dryden ingeniously applies, to the calm of philosophical retirement, the Epicurean tranquillity of the Deities of Lucretius.
>
> (Scott, V, 182)

And in mentioning Cowley, Dryden is here clearly not thinking of the author of the Donneian exercises in The Mistress, but of Cowley the author of the Several Discourses by way of Essays in Verse and Prose, in which that author, disenchanted with the intrigues of the court in exile and disappointed in his attempts to secure an office from Charles after the Restoration, had written of the joys and consolations of rural retirement and philosophical contemplation, drawing for support, in conscious imitation of the Essays of Montaigne, on his favourite passages in the Classics (and particularly in Horace).

Dryden concludes the Aureng-Zebe Dedication by expressing his desire (a theme to which he often returned) to write an heroic poem, to 'make the world some part of amends, for so many ill plays'. While this was an ambition which he never realised (at least, not quite in the terms in which he had initially invisaged it) there are, I believe, signs that Dryden felt he had resolved some of the frustrations that he was registering in this Dedication during the 1680's, and it is to one aspect of this resolution which we must now turn. What is clearly shown in the Aureng-Zebe Dedication is that many connections were beginning to present themselves in Dryden's mind between the misguided (as it now appeared to him) direction of his early career and his literary ambitions for the future, his feelings about the court and the types of pointless and insidious self-seeking and vain ambition to be found there, and the philosophical ideals of retirement and detached contemplation which he had found in his reading of Horace, Lucretius, and the later Cowley.

(v) 'Towards a Poetry of Retirement' : (II) : 'Sylvae' and its Preface

So far in this chapter I hope to have established good reasons for believing that from the mid-1670's Dryden increasingly (if sporadically) began to entertain serious reservations about the propriety and permanent value of much of his earlier work, and to come to long for retirement and withdrawal from a court whose values he had grown to a large extent to despise (and to think directly responsible for many of his own artistic excesses) but upon whose patronage he was still, even increasingly, dependent for a living. Retirement from the court, in the very obvious sense, was, of course, to be enforced upon him at the Revolution of 1688, but his thinking before that date had, I would suggest, well prepared him to withstand the shock, so that, when his change of fortunes finally came, he bore it with what must, in the circumstances, be regarded as remarkably little bitterness. Indeed, while he does allow himself the occasional outburst, his tone in the years after 1688 seems far more often to emanate from something like the philosophical calm which he offers as an ideal stance in the Dedication to Don Sebastian :

> How much happier is he, ... who, centering on himself, remains immoveable, and smiles at the madness of the dance about him? he possesses the midst, which is the portion of safety and content. He will not be higher, because he needs it not; but by the prudence of that choice, he puts it out of fortune's power to throw him down.
>
> (Scott, VII, 285)

But such an ideal, he thought, was not to be sought by any attempt to achieve obliviousness to the painfulness of one's condition :

> ...the ruggedness of a stoic is only a silly affectation of being a god, - to wind himself up by pullies to an insensibility of suffering, and, at the same time, to give the lie to his own experience, by saying he suffers not, what he knows he feels. True philosophy is certainly

> of a more pliant nature, and more accommodated to human use; Homo sum, humani à me nihil alienum puto. A wise man will never attempt an impossibility; and such it is to strain himself beyond the nature of his being, either to become a deity, by being above suffering, or to debase himself into a stock or stone, by pretending not to feel it. To find in ourselves the weaknesses and imperfections of our wretched kind, is surely the most reasonable step we can make towards the compassion of our fellow-creatures.
>
> (Scott, VII, 287-8)

Such a note of realistic but equable acceptance is found throughout the prose (both public and private) of the 1690's.[1] So, in the Dedication to Amphitryon he writes

> ...I suffer no more than I can easily undergo; and so long as I enjoy my liberty, which is the birthright of an Englishman, the rest shall never go near my heart. The merry philosopher is more to my humour than the melancholic; and I find no disposition in myself to cry, while the mad world is daily supplying me with such occasions of laughter.
>
> (Scott, VIII, 9)

Here Dryden (in attributing to himself a Democritean rather than a Heraclitan temperament) seems to feel himself to be more like Horace 'who is commonly in jeast, and laughs while he instructs' than Persius, whose quietistic Stoicism he nevertheless commends in the Discourse Concerning Satire.[2]

1. Writing in the Discourse Concerning Satire about his response to the various libels against him, Dryden remarked

   > I have seldom answer'd any scurrilous Lampoon: When it was in my power to have expos'd my Enemies: and being naturally vindicative, have suffer'd in silence; and possess'd my Soul in quiet.
   >
   > (Kinsley, II, 646)

   On 'vindicative', see California, IV, 569. A particularly telling praise of 'retirement' is to be found in the Dedication to the Georgics (Kinsley, II, 917).

2. Kinsley, II, 643-4.

If Dryden's reflections on the previous course of his life had, by 1688, been resolved in a way that allowed him to accept severe personal misfortune with considerable equanimity, this was due, no doubt, in no small part to the spiritual comfort which he had derived from his new-found religion. It will be my contention, however, in this section that The Hind and the Panther was not the only poem in which Dryden recorded the resolution of his personal doubts and dilemmas of the 1680's, and that while in that poem he had laid his heart bare in a way that rendered him particularly vulnerable to the attacks of his enemies, his meditations found no less powerful (if more indirect) expression in another group of poems written in the same period, the translations published in Sylvae (1685), poems whose excellence has always been noted even by commentators with no special interest in Dryden's translations as a whole.[1] Indeed my primary 'evidence' for the depth of Dryden's personal commitment to the writing of the translations in Sylvae is the very quality of the verse, quality which reveals (with a directness that no other evidence could) the depth of his engagement with his poetic material. Not that this personal engagement was incompatible with a considerable receptivity on Dryden's part to what his originals had to offer in themselves. Indeed, one of my suggestions is that the discovery of his originals was partly a matter of self-discovery and that the two elements are inseparable when one is considering

1. The Lucretius versions have been praised, for example, by J.C.Collins, 'John Dryden', Essays and Studies (London, 1895),pp.53-4; T.S.Eliot, John Dryden : the Poet, the Dramatist, the Critic (New York, 1932) p.20; Noyes, p.xxx; M.Van Doren, John Dryden : A Study of his Poetry (1920; rev.ed. 1946; rpt. Bloomington 1963), pp.96-97. The Horace versions (especially that of Odes, III.29) have won the admiration of Samuel Rogers, Recollections (London, 1859), p.9; Thackeray, quoted in G.Saintsbury, Dryden (London, 1881), pp.142-3; W.Myers, Dryden (London, 1973), p.171; M.Van Doren, John Dryden, p.98.

the English poems that were the end-product. 'Good Verses' Dryden wrote (echoing Ovid) in the Epistle Dedicatory to Eleonora 'never flow but from a serene and compos'd Spirit'. I think it can be shown that these translations reveal Dryden discovering various kinds of serenity and composure and are, as it were, a culmination and pulling together of the various strands that have been our subject in this chapter.

They reveal, that is, both a more subtle understanding of the nature and possibilities of the translation process than anything Dryden had written hitherto and that they allowed him to write a kind of verse which, while being in no sense as nakedly personal as some passages in The Hind, drew out of him, and allowed him to give expression to, some of his most intimate thoughts about the possibilities and limitations governing life - to such an extent that he was himself both surprised and delighted with the result.

Dryden's Preface to Sylvae is, as critics have often observed, one of the most immediately attractive and engaging of all his critical essays. In the discussion of translation contained in this Preface, Dryden's emphasis is very firmly on the intense and exciting discovery that the various acts of translation had been (his 'hot fits' as he now calls them). Translation is now conceived of as a matter almost of surrendering oneself to those authors who had 'most affected [him] in the reading'. The increased confidence with which (as we saw in Chapter One) he can now speak of his role as a translator, and of the qualities needed in a translator, seems due, in no small part, to the support and stimulus given him by his 'translating milieu' in the early 1680's.

But there are signs that there was another element of equal importance

in Dryden's mind which acted as a catalyst in the years in which Sylvae was composed. In a letter to Tonson (No.11 in Professor Ward's edition, dated by him August 1684) Dryden is discussing the contents of the forthcoming Sylvae :

> You will have of mine four Odes of Horace, which I have already translated, another small translation of forty lines from Lucretius : the whole story of Nisus & Eurialus, both in the fifth, & the ninth of Virgils Eneids; ...there will be forty lines more of Virgil in another place; to answer those of Lucretius; I meane those very lines which Montaign has compar'd in those two poets :...

This apparently casual reference to Montaigne's essay Sur des Vers de Virgile, where Montaigne had compared Lucretius' invocation to Venus from the opening of De Rerum Natura with the 'Venus to Vulcan' passage in Book VIII of the Aeneid (both of which passages Dryden translated and included in Sylvae), reveals an influence on the volume which I believe has gone generally unrecognised.[1]

Dryden's interest in Montaigne is evident in several of his writings and has, of course, been the subject of much academic discussion this century, particularly by those debating the presence (or absence) of a consistent strain of 'Pyrrhonism' in Dryden's thought.[2] The significance

1. Except by T.A.Mason, Dryden's Chaucer, Chapter 3, on which I draw below.
2. Particularly in the books by Bredvold and Harth. On pp.117-9 of his book Bredvold lists evidence of Dryden's reading of Montaigne in the late 1670's. In the Life of Plutarch, Dryden translates a large section of one of Montaigne's essays in a way that indicates that he was familiar with the essay in the original French (his rendering does not seem at all indebted to Florio's version). Further evidence that Dryden continued to be attracted to Montaigne's manner is found in the way he expresses his indebtedness to this aspect of the Frenchman's writing in the Preface to Fables. Harth, p.7, judges that Dryden's admiration was for Montaigne 'as an essayist' rather than as a common believer in 'Pyrrhonism'.

of Montaigne for Sylvae is, however, of a rather different kind from that which interests these commentators. What seems to have particularly attracted Dryden to certain of Montaigne's essays while composing the volume is not any particular set of propositions that can be extrapolated from Montaigne's various remarks about Reason and Faith, but rather the special quality of Montaigne's attitude to the classics, both as stated and embodied in those essays, and the way he makes his own the thought of certain pagan writers.

In the light of his remarks in the Aureng-Zebe Dedication, it is not perhaps surprising that Dryden should have found particularly congenial matter for contemplation at this stage in his own life in the career and writings of a man who, after a career at court in which he had, on his own admission, given himself 'over to the desires that rule as freely and recklessly as anyone else', had then grown 'out of patience with the public duties and the servitude of the court', and retired to his chateau near Bordeaux to live 'a tolerable life that is a burden neither to [him] self nor any one else'. More particularly, many of the various passages which Dryden chose to translate in Sylvae - and all those which, in Dryden's versions, have subsequently gone on to win readers' particular admiration - were passages which had been singled out for particularly prominent treatment in several of Montaigne's essays. For as well as the comparison between the portrayals of Venus by Lucretius and Virgil, Montaigne had made very prominent use of the passage on death from the Third Book of Lucretius in his essay That to Study Philosophy is to Learn how to Die, had selected exactly the same fragment as that translated by Dryden from Lucretius' fifth book for discussion in his Apology for Raymond de Sebonde (and had treated, in the same essay,

the portrayals of human and animal sexuality in Lucretius' fourth book), and constantly uses the twenty-ninth Ode of Horace's Third Book and the second book of Lucretius to illustrate the kinds of attitude which a sane man might take up towards the vicissitudes of life.

Various passages in the Essays make clear how similar Montaigne's attitude to the classical authors he is using is to Dryden's attitude towards those poets whom he is translating. In his essay Of Books, Montaigne describes exactly how he uses the Classics :

> ...I make others say for me, what, either for want of Language, or want of Sense, I cannot my self well express. I do not number my Borrowings, I weigh them.
>
> (II.10)

And in a later essay, he describes how convinced he always is by the writer whom he is reading at that moment :

> The Writings of the Ancients, the best Authors, I mean, being full and solid, tempt and carry me which way almost they will: He, that I am reading, seems always to have the most Force, and I find that every one has Reason, tho they contradict one another. The Facility that good Wits have of rendring every thing likely they would commend;
>
> (II.12)

And, significantly, Montaigne sees the wisdom to be derived from the ancient poets as being inseparable from its expression (he is here speaking specifically of the power of Lucretius' portrayal of Venus) :

> 'Tis not a soft Eloquence, and without offence only, 'tis nervous and solid, that does not so much please, as it fits and ravishes the greatest minds. When I see these brave methods of expression, so lively, so profound, I do not say that 'tis well said, but well thought. 'Tis the spriteliness of the imagination that swells and elevates words.
>
> (III.5)

Again in Of Books, Montaigne writes of the kind of satisfactions offered him by his favourite reading in the historians. There he finds a presentation of the permanent conditions that govern human life both from within and without :

> ...immediately Man in general, the Knowledge of whom I hunt after, does there appear more lively and entire than any where besides the Variety and Truth of his Internal Qualities, in gross and piece-meal, the Diversity of Means by which he is united and knit, and the Accidents that threaten him.
>
> (II.10)

As well as the obvious similarities of thought and sensibility between these passages and Dryden's Preface to Sylvae, and the external evidence that Dryden was reading Montaigne intensely during this period, there is further evidence in the form of echoes of the prose of Cotton's translation (and the verse of its translations of Montaigne's classical translations), two volumes of which were published in the same year as Sylvae.[1] A further interesting scrap of evidence is that when Dryden had his portrait painted, also in the same year, by J.Maubert, a copy of Montaigne's works is shown among the books on his desk.[2] However, it is salutary at this stage to remember a warning issued by the writer of a recent essay on Montaigne :

1. There are, for example, several quite definite echoes of Cotton's version of Upon Some Verses of Virgil in Sigismonda and Guiscardo (ll.417-20, 34-5, 179-80). Venus to Vulcan, l.32 seems also to specifically derive from the same essay. See below for Dryden's use of Cotton in Against the Fear of Death and the version of Horace Odes III.29. For further suggestions of Dryden's echoing of Cotton's Montaigne, see T.A.Mason, Dryden's Chaucer, pp.152, 236-9.
2. Maubert's picture is now in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

> What in fact do textual borrowings tell us of the relation between two keen minds? What actually happened when Montaigne read his Lucretius? Frequent quotation suggests an interested or a constant reader. Does it not suggest anything else, as to the source of attraction or the effect of persistent reading? These are not the sort of things one can prove; let us beware of thinking them to be of little importance. 1

Mr. Moore's remarks remind us that when discussing Montaigne's influence on Sylvae (though its presence can be firmly established) we are dealing with a complex area - Dryden's perceptions being assisted or confirmed by suggestions from another mind with whom he felt substantial temperamental affinities. Bearing Mr. Moore's cautions in mind, what suggestions can be made about what it was that particularly attracted Dryden to his originals in Sylvae, and how Montaigne's use of those same originals might have prompted his perceptions?

In the Preface Dryden remarks first of all on Lucretius' confidently dogmatic manner, which he has been moved, in a way quite contrary to his natural temperament, to take up:

> ... If I am not mistaken, the distinguishing Character of Lucretius, (I mean of his Soul and Genius) is a certain kind of noble pride, and positive assertion of his Opinions. He is every where confident of his own reason, and assuming an absolute command not only over his vulgar Reader, but even his Patron Memmius. For he is always bidding him attend, as if he had the Rod over him; and using a Magisterial authority, while he instructs him. From his time to ours, I know none so like him, as our Poet and Philosopher of Malmsbury. This is that perpetual Dictatorship, which is exercis'd by Lucretius; who though often in the wrong, yet seems to deal bonâ fide with his Reader, and tells him nothing but what he thinks; in which plain sincerity, I believe he differs from our Hobbs, who cou'd not but be convinc'd, or at least doubt of some eternal Truths which he has oppos'd. But for Lucretius, he seems to disdain all manner of Replies, and is so confident of his cause, that he is before hand with his Antagonists; Urging for them,

1. W.G.Moore, 'Lucretius and Montaigne', Yale French Studies, 38 (1967), 109-114.

> whatever he imagin'd they cou'd say, and leaving them as he supposes, without an objection for the future. All this too, with so much scorn and indignation, as if he were assur'd of the Triumph, before he enter'd into the Lists. From this sublime and daring Genius of his, it must of necessity come to pass, that his thoughts must be Masculine, full of Argumentation, and that sufficiently warm. From the same fiery temper proceeds the loftiness of his Expressions, and the perpetual torrent of his Verse, where the barrenness of his Subject does not too much constrain the quickness of his Fancy. For there is no doubt to be made, but that he cou'd have been every where as Poetical, as he is in his Descriptions, and in the Moral part of his Philosophy, if he had not aim'd more to instruct in his Systeme of Nature, than to delight. But he was bent upon making Memmius a Materialist, and teaching him to defie an invisible power: In short, he was so much an Atheist, that he forgot sometimes to be a Poet. These are the considerations which I had of that Author, before I attempted to translate some parts of him. And accordingly I lay'd by my natural Diffidence and Scepticism for a while, to take up that Dogmatical way of his, which as I said, is so much his Character, as to make him that individual Poet.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 395)

Like Montaigne, Dryden finds Lucretius' manner inseparable from the appeal of his thought. He follows this passage with another in which he takes up the tricky subject of how Lucretius' poetry could possibly appeal when his doctrine was so obviously unacceptable to a Christian audience:

> ... As for his Opinions concerning the mortality of the Soul, they are so absurd, that I cannot if I wou'd believe them. I think a future state demonstrable even by natural Arguments; at least to take away rewards and punishments, is only a pleasing prospect to a Man, who resolves before hand not to live morally. But on the other side, the thought of being nothing after death is a burden unsupportable to a vertuous Man, even though a Heathen. We naturally aim at happiness, and cannot bear to have it confin'd to the shortness of our present Being, especially when we consider that vertue is generally unhappy in this World, and vice fortunate. So that 'tis hope of

> Futurity alone, that makes this Life tolerable, in expectation of a better. Who wou'd not commit all the excesses to which he is prompted by his natural inclinations, if he may do them with security while he is alive, and be uncapable of punishment after he is dead! If he be cunning and secret enough to avoid the Laws, there is no band of morality to restrain him: For Fame and Reputation are weak ties; many men have not the least sence of them: Powerful men are only aw'd by them, as they conduce to their interest, and that not always when a passion is predominant; and no Man will be contain'd within the bounds of duty, when he may safely transgress them. These are my thoughts abstractedly, and without entring into the Notions of our Christian Faith, which is the proper business of Divines.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 395-6)

But however much Dryden might profess in prose (and no doubt firmly believed with one part of his mind) the unacceptability of Lucretius' doctrine, I think it would be difficult for a reader fresh from the experience of reading Against the Fear of Death to conclude other than that, at least in the 'hot fit' of composition, Dryden had been so bowled over by the force of Lucretius' argument that he has surrendered to it, or rather achieved imaginative identity with it, in much the same way that, as we have seen, Montaigne felt himself 'carried' by the 'force' of the Classical author he was currently reading, even when that author was contradicting his consciously-held beliefs, or those of another writer to whom he had previously responded with equal warmth.[1] On the evidence

1. The reader will notice that my general sense of Dryden's interest in Lucretius differs from that of Norman Austin in 'Translation as Baptism: Dryden's Lucretius', Arion, 7 (1968), 576-602. Professor Austin (who is also the author of the commentary on Dryden's Lucretius translations in Vol.3 of the California edition) argues that Dryden both accommodates Lucretius into a Christian framework, and uses the occasion of his translation to undermine the implications of Lucretius' teachings. Austin also sees Dryden's Lucretius as a specific indictment of Horace. Mary Callagher in 'Dryden's Translation of Lucretius', HLQ, 28 (1964), 19-29, stresses the degree to which the interests of Dryden's Lucretius overlap with those shown elsewhere in Dryden's verse, Both writers seem to me to underestimate the degree to which Dryden was prompted by Lucretius (and Horace) to respond powerfully to ideas that ran counter to his consciously-held 'beliefs'. Johnson has some suggestive remarks on this topic in his Life. See Murphy, IX, 380-381.

of the poem itself (rather than of Dryden's de facto rationalisation of its issues) we may, I think, suggest that for Dryden the experience of reading Lucretius was analogous to that of a Montaigne who could, for example, without flinching, use the arch-atheist Lucretius' arguments to prove the futility of trying to 'know' what the Christian God is like, who on occasions uses 'God' and 'Jupiter' as if they were interchangeable. Dryden's feelings on reading Lucretius were perhaps not far removed from Montaigne's as described by W.G.Moore :

> We may therefore conjecture that to read Lucretius was for Montaigne an adventure, a liberation, exciting, even physically as we have seen, but surely intellectually as well, for in "ruminating" his great lines Montaigne was in contact with a mind both powerful and suggestive.

At any rate, Dryden is clear that he considers all his versions of Lucretius to have been a success, and that, particularly, he had found the arguments of Nature against the fear of death (in Lucretius' Book Three) matter for serious philosophical contemplation :

> But there are other Arguments in this Poem (which I have turn'd into English,) not belonging to the Mortality of the Soul, which are strong enough to a reasonable Man, to make him less in love with Life, and consequently in less apprehensions of Death. Such as are the natural Satiety, proceeding from a perpetual enjoyment of the same things; the inconveniences of old age, which make him uncapable of corporeal pleasures; the decay of understanding and memory, which render him contemptible and useless to others; these and many other reasons so pathetically urg'd, so beautifully express'd, so adorn'd with examples, and so admirably rais'd by the Prosopopeia of Nature, who is brought in speaking to her Children, with so much authority and vigour, deserve the pains I have taken with them, which I hope have not been unsuccessful, or unworthy of my Author. At least I must take the liberty to own, that I was pleas'd with my own endeavours, which but rarely happens to me, and that I am not dissatisfied upon the review, of any thing I have done in this Author.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 396)

Equally 'philosophical' (but in a different way) seemed to Dryden the account of love in Lucretius' fourth book. There is surely just a hint of disingenuousness in the way he 'defends' his treatment of this subject in his versions (slyly working in a recommendation of Roscommon's Essay and Mulgrave's Essay on Poetry en route). His translation is acceptable, he says, because he has simply followed his author who was (as Montaigne had realised) giving a 'factual' account of love, and whose intentions were, in the best Horatian tradition, 'to instruct as well as please';[1] neither his, nor Lucretius' is the kind of obscenity that is incompatible with 'wit' - and anyway (a note that is becoming familiar in considering Sylvae) the passage 'pleased' Dryden:

> 'Tis true, there is something, and that of some moment, to be objected against my Englishing the Nature of Love, from the Fourth Book of Lucretius: And I can less easily answer why I Translated it, than why I thus Translated it. The Objection arises from the Obscenity of the Subject; which is aggravated by the too lively, and alluring delicacy of the Verses. In the first place, without the least Formality of an excuse, I own it pleas'd me: and let my Enemies make the worst they can of this Confession; I am not yet so secure from that passion, but that I want my Authors Antidotes against it. He has given the truest and most Philosophical account both of the Disease and Remedy, which I ever found in any Author: For which reasons I Translated him. But it will be ask'd why I turn'd him into this luscious English, (for I will not give it a worse word:) instead of an answer, I wou'd ask again of my Supercilious Adversaries, whether I am not bound when I Translate an Author, to do him all the right I can, and to Translate him to the best advantage? If to mince his meaning, which I am satisfi'd was honest and instructive, I had either omitted some part of what he said, or taken from the strength of his expression, I certainly had wrong'd him; and that freeness of thought and words, being thus cashier'd, in my hands, he had no longer been Lucretius. If nothing of this kind be to be read, Physicians must not study Nature, Anatomies must not be seen, and somewhat I cou'd say of particular passages in Books, which to avoid prophaness I do not name: But the intention qualifies

1. In the Sylvae Preface, Dryden makes the connection between Lucretius' 'philosophical' account, and that of Virgil in the Georgics, a poem that also presents with unflinching accuracy the effects of the universal force of love on human and animal alike.

> the act; and both mine and my Authors were to instruct as well as please. Tis the most certain that barefac'd Bawdery is the poorest pretence to wit imaginable : If I shou'd say otherwise, I shou'd have two great authorities against me: The one is the Essay on Poetry, which I publickly valued before I knew the Author of it, and with the commendation of which, my Lord Roscommon so happily begins his Essay on Translated Verse: The other is no less than our admir'd Cowley; who says the same thing in other words: For in his Ode concerning Wit, he writes thus of it;
>
> Much less can that have any place
> At which a Virgin hides her Face:
> Such dross the fire must purge away; 'tis just
> The Author blush, there where the Reader must.
>
> Here indeed Mr. Cowley goes farther than the Essay; for he asserts plainly that obscenity has no place in Wit; the other only says, 'tis poor pretence to it, or an ill sort of Wit, which has nothing more to support it than bare-fac'd Ribaldry; which is both unmannerly in it self, and fulsome to the Reader. But neither of these will reach my case: For in the first place, I am only the Translatour, not the Inventor; so that the heaviest part of the censure falls upon Lucretius, before it reaches me: in the next place, neither he nor I have us'd the grossest words; but the cleanliest Metaphors we cou'd find, to palliate the broadness of the meaning; and to conclude, have carried the Poetical part no farther, than the Philosophical exacted.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 396-7)

In commenting on his reasons for translating Horace, Dryden stresses how especially vital it is for any translator to capture Horace's manner which is almost as different as one can imagine from that of Lucretius - equally atheistic ('... he made use of Gods and providence, only to serve a turn in Poetry') yet mercurial; Horace is a master both of 'elevated flights' 'and in the sudden changes of his subject with almost imperceptible connexions'; the elegance of his style (the aspect of Horace later admired by Victorian commentators even when they felt Horace had nothing to say) is inseparable from the animating spirit of his poetry :

> That which will distinguish his Style from all other Poets, is the Elegance of his Words, and the numerousness of his Verse; there is nothing so delicately turn'd in all the Roman Language. There appears in every part of his

> Diction, or, (to speak English) in all his Expressions, a kind of noble and bold Purity. His words are chosen with as much exactness as Virgils; but there seems to be a greater Spirit in them. There is a secret Happiness attends his Choice, which in Petronius is call'd Curiosa Felicitas, and which I suppose he had from the Feliciter audere of Horace himself. But the most distinguishing part of all his Character, seems to me, to be his Briskness, his Jollity, and his good Humour: And those I have chiefly endeavour'd to Coppy;
>
> (Kinsley, I, 399)

Dryden anticipates the judgement of later readers in thinking his version, in the 'Pindarique' style, of Odes III. 29 (that inscribed to Rochester) his 'Master-Piece'.

Throughout his essays, Montaigne had quoted Lucretius and Horace illustratively as the two pre-eminent voices from the ancient world who encourage us (in their very different ways) to reject, or consider of little importance, the heady vanities of the world - restless ambition, search for possessions, desire for popularity - to accept the conditions of things as they are, and to live life to the full. Lucretius' scornful hectoring and derisive scoffing at those who, ignorant of the permanent physical principles of the universe, attempt vainly things of which their very human nature renders them incapable, and consequently live their lives in a hell of frustration and misery is frequently used by Montaigne to compliment Horace's genial and wittily 'throw-away' attitude to the cares of the world. Neither poet is seen as merely Epicurean in the vulgar sense. Montaigne is able to warm to both attitudes as equally compelling and sees them as inseparable from the manner which each poet adopts. Each embodies what he takes to be a sane attitude towards the perplexing and frustrating elements of life and it is because this 'attitude' is not just a matter of the paraphrasable content of the poems of Horace and

Lucretius, but conveyed in the imaginative force of the poetry itself that the attitude (though begotten of Paganism) is felt to be of sufficient power and permanence to be utilised by the Christian essayist. Both poets are seen as living examples, as it were, of the Platonic observation that 'the good man cannot be harmed'. Only a full recognition of the reality of the nature of things allows one to live truly contented. But if both Lucretius and Horace are Montaigne's chief authorities for rejecting the world, rejection for Montaigne involves (paradoxically) a maximum and passionate relishing of every tiny detail of existence and every possible aspect of creation, a relish found on every page of the Essays. For while Montaigne's ideal is to be 'above' the cares of the world it is also to be passionately living to the full every moment of life. In his final essay Of Experience, Montaigne describes the benefits of serenity :

> How great a benefit is it to a man to have his Soul so seated, that which way soever she turns her Eye, the Heaven is calm and serene about her? No Desire, no Fear or Doubt, that troubles the Air, nor any Difficulty past, present, or to come, that his Imagination may not pass over without Offence.
>
> (III,13)

And only a few sentences earlier Montaigne had written of the need to enjoy life to the full :

> By how much the possession of living is more short, I must make it so much deeper and more full. Others are sensible of Contentment, and of Prosperity, I feel it too, as well as they, but not only as it slides and passes by; and also a man ought to study, taste and ruminate upon it, to render condign thanks to him that grants it to us. They enjoy the other Pleasures as they do that of sleep, without knowing it; to the end, that even sleep it self should not so stupidly escape from me, I have formerly caus'd myself to b^e disturb'd in my sleep, to the end that I might the better and more sensibly relish and taste it.
>
> (III.13)

If Montaigne's ideal involves, in some senses, 'rejection' of the world, his thinking here is clearly at the opposite end of the spectrum from cynicism or nihilism. I think it was for reasons very similar to those which I have suggested were Montaigne's that Dryden can be shown to have been drawn, at this particular stage in his life, to the originals rendered in Sylvae. In these poems he was able to cultivate that interest in 'man in his general nature' which, as we have seen, was also a leading concern of Montaigne's, and which Johnson thought to be Dryden's characteristic poetic quality.[1]

Some brief examples from the poems themselves must now be given to support the general suggestion that in rendering his pagan originals in Sylvae Dryden both brought his own preoccupations and concerns to them, but was also, simultaneously as it were, drawn out of himself and enabled to enter imaginatively into certain states of philosophical speculation which lay outside the strict bounds of his own religious faith.

In his version of Horace's Second Epode, for example, a poem which praises the delights of the country as opposed to city life, Dryden has deliberately strengthened and pointed the contemporary significance, with the help of a passage he remembered from his reading of Virgil, of that part of Horace's poem which depicts life in the forum,

> Forumque vitat, et superba civium
> Potentiorum limina
>
> (7-8)

1. See the Life of Pope (Murphy, XI, 170): 'Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners'.

by translating it thus :

> The clamours of contentious Law,
> And Court and State he wisely shuns,
> Nor brib'd with hopes nor dar'd with awe
> To servile Salutations runs:[1]
>
> (14-17)

He has equally subtly coloured his version (without substantially re-setting it) not only with touches of a rural England which his readers would all know well, but with small allusions to Milton's rural paradise, and the composite ideal of the good life of the countryside which he found in several other poets, in a way that shows him not simply 'applying' Horace to his own condition, but discovering in Horace conditions of life, and aspirations towards a better life, that govern his own age as much as that of Augustan Rome or Renaissance Italy.[2]

1. cf. especially Georgic II; See his translation of that poem, ll.643-4, 703-4, 717-9. Dryden returned to his thoughts about 'servile salutations' in The Tenth Satire of Juvenal, ll.146-7. The previous section gives the reasons for believing that the lines had particular personal resonance for Dryden.

2. For example, 'virgin honey' (l.27) is a technical term for the best honey used for drinks such as metheglin, which (as Pepys noted) was drunk at court. 'Dared' (l.16) is also a technical term, from the 'daring' of larks (a kind of hunting - cf. Annus Mirabilis, l.780). At several points in his portrayal of a rural paradise, Dryden draws on Milton's portrayal of Eden. Compare Dryden's ll.30ff. with PL, VII, 315ff; Dryden ll.18-21 with PL, V, 209ff, Dryden, ll.58-60 with PL, IX, 205ff. Horace's poem has become part of the body of European commonplace on the subject of the satisfactions of a rural life. Dryden draws for details in his own version on other treatments of the same theme. Tasso (Gerusalemme Liberata, VII) and Spenser (FQ, VI. ix.xviii-xxv) had specifically used the Horatian 'topos' to highlight the torments of life at court, and the relief to be had from rural pursuits. On these subjects, see H.A.Mason, 'Dryden's Dream of Happiness', Cambridge Quarterly, 8 (1978), 11-55.

Similarly, in his version of the Twenty Ninth Ode of Horace's Third Book, while his use of the phrase 'I have liv'd today' (l.68) indicates that he had in mind, among other things, the version of part of Horace's poem which Cowley included in his Essay Of Myself (the essay in which, above all, he describes his content in retirement and his instinctive dislike of the court), and while the phrases 'nauseous pleasures of the great' (l.14), 'busie pagentry' (19), 'Lord Mayor' (41) 'City Faction' (41) 'giddy turns of State' (48) are all departures from the literal meaning of the Latin and indicate that the poet has at least one eye on his own times, the poem depends fundamentally not on any contemporary 'point' which Dryden has given to Horace's poem, but on the zest and genuinely carefree note (all the more impressive because achieved in the face of all the things that might make a manmerely depressed or despairing) heard rarely before in Dryden's verse. Rather than merely 'updating' Horace, or trying to assimilate him within any orthodox Christian framework, Dryden has discovered in the buoyant rhythms of his own English verse the 'briskness' and 'jollity' which he felt to be inextricable from Horace's wisdom :

VIII

Happy the Man, and happy he alone,
He, who can call to day his own:
He, who secure within, can say
To morrow do thy worst, for I have liv'd to day.
Be fair, or foul, or rain, or shine,
The joys I have possest, in spight of fate are mine.
Not Heav'n it self upon the past has pow'r;
But what has been, has been, and I have had my hour.

IX

Fortune, that with malicious joy,
Does Man her slave oppress,
Proud of her Office to destroy,
Is seldome pleas'd to bless,
Still various and unconstant still;
But with an inclination to be ill;
Promotes, degrades, delights in strife,

And makes a Lottery of life.
I can enjoy her while she's kind;
But when she dances in the wind,
And shakes her wings, and will not stay,
I puff the Prostitute away:
The little or the much she gave, is quietly resign'd:
Content with poverty, my Soul, I arm;
And Vertue, tho' in rags, will keep me warm.

X

What is't to me,
Who never sail in her unfaithful Sea,
If Storms arise, and Clouds grow black;
If the Mast split and threaten wreck,
Then let the greedy Merchant fear
For his ill gotten gain;
And pray to Gods that will not hear,
While the debating winds and billows bear
His Wealth into the Main.
For me secure from Fortunes blows,
(Secure of what I cannot lose,)
In my small Pinnace I can sail,
Contemming all the blustring roar;
And running with a merry gale,
With friendly Stars my safety seek
Within some little winding Creek;
And see the storm a shore.

(65-104)

In his version of part of Lucretius' Third Book which he calls Against the Fear of Death Dryden has similarly subsumed his own feelings and observations about the 'heady strife' of ambition at court into a powerful rendering of Lucretius' argument that fear of death, as much as restless striving, is ultimately vain, because based on a failure to recognise or come to terms with 'Nature's Laws', the conditions by which we all, whether we like it or not, live. Dryden has again rendered Lucretius' example in a way that makes clear he recognised their urgent

contemporary import, but only as one particular example of a general law governing the Vanity of Human Wishes:[1]

> But he's the Tityus, who by Love opprest,
> Or Tyrant Passion preying on his breast,
> And ever anxious thoughts, is robb'd of rest.
> The Sisyphus is he, whom noise and strife
> Seduce from all the soft retreats of life,
> To vex the Government, disturb the Laws;
> Drunk with the Fumes of popular applause,
> He courts the giddy crowd to make him great,
> And sweats and toils in vain, to mount the sovreign Seat.
> For still to aim at pow'r, and still to fail,
> Ever to strive and never to prevail,
> What is it, but in reasons true account
> To heave the Stone against the rising Mount;
> Which urg'd, and labour'd, and forc'd up with pain,
> Recoils and rowls impetuous down, and smoaks along the plain.
>
> (197-211)

1. Dryden had shown his feelings about the Duke of Buckingham's ambition years before he portrayed him as 'Zimri', in a letter to Rochester (Ward, Letters, pp.7-11). In his adaptation of Ulysses' famous speech in Troilus and Cressida, I.iii., Dryden renders Shakespeare's lines

> And appetite, an universal wolf
> (So doubly seconded with will and power),
> Must make perforce an universal prey
> And last eat up himself... (121-4)

thus

> For wild ambition, like a ravenous wolf,
> Spurred on by will and seconded by power,
> Must make an universal prey of all,
> And last devour itself.

The passage quoted above from Lucretius is, of course, the one specifically alluded to in the Aureng-Zebe Dedication.

The vigour with which Dryden has entered into this passage, enacted on a local level in the mimetic power of the verse, is conveniently highlighted by comparing it with the equivalent passage in a representative modern translation :

> But Tityos is here with us; he is the lover
> Whose heart is eaten alive, that is anguish enough;
> Or a man cut up by any other desire.
>
> Sisyphus too is before us in this life.
> He is the man who is always asking the people
> For the rods and axes and always withdrawing defeated.
> For seeking power is an empty request;
> It is never given; to spend all your effort on that
> Is just like pushing a heavy stone uphill
> And down it comes as soon as it gets to the top;
> It finds its way back to the level as soon as it can.[1]

As in the Horace poems, Dryden's mind has ranged, in rendering this episode in Lucretius, to other passages in his reading where the matters being dealt with by Lucretius have also been tellingly handled, thus revealing his sense of the universal implications of Lucretius' arguments. In his rendering of Nature's arguments he has recourse in his version to some of his favourite passages in Shakespeare, Homer, Virgil and Montaigne's essay <u>That to Study Philosophy is to Learn How to Die</u> for touches which reinforce his rendering of Lucretius' dramatisation of his theme. Thus the touching portrayal of the man bereft of wife and children incorporates touches of Macduff hearing the news of his childrens' destruction, as well as the Hector and Andromache episode in the Sixth Book of the <u>Illiad</u>, and in his portrayal of what he calls 'Th'avenging horrour of a Conscious Mind' (231) Dryden seems to have in mind at several points the hell-on-earth of Macbeth

1. CH.Sisson, <u>Lucretius De Rerum Natura - The Poem on Nature : a Translation</u> (Manchester, 1976), p. 101.

himself, particularly in the scene where Banquo's ghost appears at the banquet. Towards the beginning of the piece, Dryden writes :

> Yet thus the fools, that would be thought the Wits,
> Disturb their mirth with melancholy fits,
> When healths go round, and kindly brimmers flow,
> Till the fresh Garlands on their foreheads glow,
> They whine, and cry, let us make haste to live,
> Short are the joys that humane Life can give.
>
> (97-102)

And near the end :

> Thus every man o're works his weary will,
> To shun himself, and to shake off his ill;
> The shaking Fit returns and hangs upon him still.
> No prospect of repose, nor hope of ease;
> The Wretch is ignorant of his disease;
>
> (288-292)

We remember Lady Macbeth :

> You have displac'd the mirth, broke the good meeting,
> With most admir'd disorder.
>
> (III.iv.109-110)

And Macbeth himself (hearing of Fleance's escape) :

> Then comes my fit again. (III.iv.20)

and earlier :

> My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
> Shakes so my single state of man...
>
> (I.iii.139-40)

(later he refers to :

> ...these terrible dreams/That shake us nightly...
>
> (III.iii.18-19))[1]

These touches are not of a kind that could be strictly called 'allusions'.[2]

1. For these echoes, see T.A.Mason, Dryden's Chaucer, Chapter Three.
2. Their presence is made more plausible still by the palpable echo of the same scene in Macbeth in The First Book of Homer's Ilias, ll.774-779.

It is more that Dryden's imagination has been filled and coloured by all his most pressing reading and experience in the areas with which Lucretius' poem is dealing.

If he has responded to Lucretius' portrayal of the agony of the human mind haunted by 'eternal troubles', as well as the vanity of a human ambition that creates a hell-on-earth for itself, he has fleshed out with equal warmth those passages in which Lucretius (and Nature as his spokes-woman) exhorts us to adopt an attitude which (because it recognises 'Natures's Laws') allows us to enjoy life to the full, despite its impermanence :

> And last, suppose Great Natures Voice shou'd call
> To thee, or me, or any of us all,
> What dost thou mean, ungrateful wretch, thou vain,
> Thou mortal thing, thus idly to complain,
> And sigh and sob, that thou shalt be no more?
> For if thy life were pleasant heretofore,
> If all the bounteous blessings I cou'd give
> Thou hast enjoy'd, if thou hast known to live,
> And pleasure not leak'd thro' thee like a Seive,
> Why dost thou not give thanks as at a plenteous feast
> Cram'd to the throat with life, and rise and take thy rest?
> But if my blessings thou hast thrown away,
> If indigested joys pass'd thro' and wou'd not stay,
> Why dost thou wish for more to squander still?
>
> (121-134)

The dignity and conviction with which Dryden has rendered these lines can again be brought out conveniently by juxtaposing them with the modern version :

> If nature found a voice and began to scold
> This is the sort of thing she might say to any of us:
> 'What is all this fuss about because you are mortal?
> Have you got to burst into tears? What is wrong with death?
> If the life you have had so far has been quite pleasant
> And everything has not gone down the drain with a rush,
> Why not depart like a guest who has had enough?
> And, you fool, take your simple rest with a quiet mind?
> But if all the pleasures of life have turned to nothing
> And life is offensive, why do you want to add to it

Days which will end as badly as those you have had?[1]

Here Dryden's reworking of Lucretius is particularly indebted to Montaigne's 'running commentary' on the same passage :

> If you have made your profit of Life, you have had enough of it, go your way satisfied.
>
> Cur non ut plenus vitae conviva recedis. Lucret.l.3.
> Why should'st thou not go like a full gorg'd Guest,
> Sated with Life, as he is with a Feast?
>
> If you have not known how to make the best use of it, and if it was unprofitable to you, what need you care to lose it, to what end would you desire longer to keep it?
>
> --------cur amplius addere quaeris (omne?
> Rursum quod pereat malè & ingratum occidat. Ibid.
>
> Life in itself is neither good nor evil, it is the Scene of good or evil, as you make it;[2]
>
> (I.19)

Life, the combined voices of Lucretius and Montaigne are asserting, is to be lived to the full, and relished in its every detail, but death is not because of the goodness of life to be feared, because it is something to which all matter is subject, and therefore, viewed from that perspective, cannot reasonably be the object of fear. The process of Life as a whole is more glorious than any individual life. As Montaigne writes :

> Your Death is a part of the Order of the Universe, 'tis a part of the Life of the World.
>
> ...inter se mortales mutua vivunt,
> Et quasi cursores vitai lampada tradunt. Lucret.l.2.
> Mortals amongst themselves by turns to live,
> And Life's bright Torch to the next Runner give.
>
> 'Tis the Condition of your Creation; Death is a part of you, and whilst you endeavour to evade it, you avoid your selves. This very Being of yours that you now enjoy is equally divided betwixt Life and Death. The day of your Birth is one days advance towards the Grave.
>
> ... Who can complain of being comprehended in the same Destiny wherein all things are involved?
>
> (I.19)

1. Sisson, pp. 99-100.

2. Dryden, it will be noticed, picks up the word 'gorg'd' in l.160.

The sensible man, according to Lucretius, thus devotes himself to

> ... search more deeply for the cause;
> And study Nature well, and Natures Laws:
> For in this moment lies not the debate;
> But on our future,fix'd, Eternal State;
> That never changing state which all must keep
> Whom Death has doom'd to everlasting sleep.
>
> (295-300)

Only in this way can the hectic activity of life be seen in its true perpective :

> 'Tis pleasant, safely to behold from shore
> The rowling Ship; and hear the Tempest roar:
> Not that anothers pain is our delight;
> But pains unfelt produce the pleasing sight.
> 'Tis pleasant also to behold from far
> The moving Legions mingled in the War:
> But much more sweet thy lab'ring steps to guide,
> To Vertues heights, with wisdom well supply'd,
> And all the Magazins of Learning fortifi'd:
> From thence to look below on humane kind,
> Bewilder'd in the Maze of Life, and blind:
> To see vain fools ambitiously contend
> For Wit and Pow'r; their lost endeavours bend
> T' outshine each other, waste their time and health,
> In search of honour, and pursuit of wealth.
>
> (1-15)

The versions from Lucretius and Horace in Sylvae constitute powerful evidence that various developments had by that date taken place in Dryden's mind which allowed him to respond with a warm personal engagement to the 'philosophical' poetry he found in both these writers, poetry which has in common both an intense interest in 'Nature's Laws', a questing and marvelling inquisitiveness about the conditions of all Life on this planet, and an ability to shrug off the pains of existence or to look down as if from a lofty height on human existence and see it in a perspective which shows its vanities and ambitions in their true (because comprehensive) light. I shall go on to argue in the ensuing chapters that the very kind

of 'tranquillity without indifference' (in Johnson's phrase) both commended and embodied in these poems was one of the crucial factors which put Dryden in a particularly favourable position to translate Ovid's Metamorphoses, since in that poem Ovid seems, like his own Pythagoras (and not unlike Lucretius), to have delighted

> To look from upper light, and thence survey
> Mistaken mortals wand'ring from the way,
> And, wanting wisdom, fearful for the state
> Of future things, and trembling at their fate.
>
> (217-220)

but also had, like his Numa

> ...his study bent
> To cultivate his mind; to learn the laws
> Of Nature, and explore their hidden cause.
>
> (7-9)

CHAPTER FOUR

'VARIOUS FORMS' :

Aspects of Dryden's versions from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in *Examen Poeticum* (1693)

(i) Introductory

(ii) Plans for a complete English 'Metamorphoses' in 1692?

(iii) 'Wond'rous Principles' : Dryden and the 'miraculous' nature of the 'Metamorphoses'

(iv) 'Fancy' in 'The First Book'

(v) Ovid's gods

(vi) The 'inhumane human' and the bizarre effects of love

(i) Introductory

The main suggestion of the last chapter was that Dryden's involvement in Tonson's 'translating milieu', and his contact with the writings of Horace, Lucretius and Montaigne, combined felicitously in the early 1680's onwards with certain reservations which he had been entertaining for some time about the course of his earlier career. From 1685 onwards, I suggested, Dryden began to exercise in his verse with increasing success that 'comprehensive speculation' and to display that knowledge of 'man in his general nature' which Johnson, in his survey of Dryden's talents in the Life of Pope, was later to see as distinctive characteristics of his poetical personality. In this chapter I shall attempt to suggest some of the ways in which an interest in Ovid's Metamorphoses might have formed part of Dryden's continued desire, in the early 1690's, to 'study Nature well, and Nature's Laws'.

Dryden was clearly pleased with the versions from the Metamorphoses which he included in his third miscellany Examen Poeticum (1693). He refers to them in the Dedication to that volume as 'the best of all my Endeavours in this kind', and remarks further,

> Perhaps this Poet, is more easie to be Translated,
> than some others, whom I have lately attempted:
> Perhaps too, he was more according to my Genius.
>
> (Kinsley, II, 795)

There are fairly obvious ways in which the task of translating Ovid must have come as something of a relief after the rigours of Juvenal and Persius. It seems certain, anyway (for reasons that will be presented shortly) that he made in 1692 the spontaneous and independent decision to embark on a translation of a text which, as we have seen, he had known

intimately from boyhood.

It might seem at first sight a strange fact that at a period of his life when Dryden was being increasingly drawn to poetry which involved serious philosophical meditation on the human condition, he should have turned to the Metamorphoses, a poem which has often (particularly in the last hundred years) been denied 'seriousness' of any kind, and about whose author Dryden himself had (as we have seen) already expressed serious reservations.[1]

However we have also seen that it has been a marked characteristic of Ovid's after-life that his work seems always to have been secretly admired and relished, even by those who claimed to deplore and despise it. If Johnson was right in claiming that 'nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature', then, since there have been few books in Western literature which have pleased more or longer than the Metamorphoses, we must surely conclude that the poem has been found by countless readers to be, in some sense, a pleasing and truthful fictional representation of certain realities about the world we all live in.

So, in seeking to define the appeal of Ovid for Dryden in his later years, and the senses in which he found his work to be a 'just representation of general nature', we must clearly pay as much attention to the tale as to the teller. Dryden's discoveries about Ovid in his 'hot fits'

1. For Dryden's later remarks, see below, passim. For modern views, see, for example, T.E.Wright's summary in Chapter XI (pp.387-415) of Fifty Years (and Twelve) of Classical Scholarship (Oxford, 1968).

of verse composition, that is, may be a fuller and more reliable guide to the nature of his interest in the Latin poet than anything he said in his critical prose. But before turning to the poems themselves, it will be necessary to consider the evidence which reveals the extent of Dryden's designs on Ovid in the early 1690's.

(ii) Plans for a complete English 'Metamorphoses' in 1692?

Though the evidence is slender, it seems probable that first Dryden, and then Dryden and Tonson together, had larger designs on the Metamorphoses in the early 1690's than has, to my knowledge, been hitherto suggested. Indeed it seems likely that the enthusiasm for Ovid registered by Dryden both in the Examen Poeticum Dedication and in a letter to Tonson of 3rd October 1692 resulted, in the early 1690's, in a Dryden/Tonson plan for a complete English translation of Ovid's poem.[1]

The chief piece of evidence for this suggestion is found in an entry in The Gentleman's Journal for November 1692 which must be quoted in full.

> As there is a great difference between Flowers, so there is between Fables, and among the choicest of which Ovid's Metamorphoses deservedly challenge the first Rank. The Translation which Mr. Sandys made of that Poem, met with much Approbation; yet the too strict confinement to which he voluntary <sic> submitted, may perhaps be said to have made him darker and less shining in some places, than some could have wish'd him to be. He wrote in an Age when Men were not so nice as they are grown; and, tho' none can deny him a great deal of Praise for his Success in so high and laborious a Task, yet they must also grant, that the language and way of writing being much improv'd, his Translation cannot please our Age so much as it may have pleas'd his. Ovid's Epistles, his Elegies, and some other of his Works, have been thought worthy to be translated afresh some years ago, by the most eminent Writers of the Age: So now his Metamorphoses are to be put once more into English Verse, and there are so many able hands engaged in that Undertaking, that it is not to be doubted but that it will meet with a Success answerable to the expectation of the Ingenious. I am only sorry that the greatness of the Work will require a longer time to be completed, than their Impatience for a Book so universally desir'd would allow.
>
> (p.3)

1. Dryden's letter is preserved in part (see below) as a quotation in one of Tonson's letters to Dryden, No.23 in Professor Ward's collection.

The California editors, who refer to this paragraph without quoting it in full, imply that its writer is hailing, before publication, Dryden's contributions to Examen Poeticum.[1] But if this is the case, it is difficult to see why its author specifically speaks of 'so many able hands' engaged on what is clearly to be a complete English version of the Metamorphoses to replace Sandys' now outmoded one. Dryden's versions from the Metamorphoses were the only ones to be included in the first edition of Examen Poeticum in 1693. And it is surely striking that the remarks in the Gentleman's Journal about the inadequacies of Sandys' version so closely parallel Dryden's remarks on the same subject in the Examen Poeticum Dedication.[2] This, and the fact of Dryden's friendship with Peter Motteux, the editor of the Gentleman's Journal, might suggest that Motteux was giving, as early as November 1692, advance publicity for a scheme for a complete English Metamorphoses which was already in Dryden's head at this date.[3] Such a suggestion would seem to be supported by the specific complimentary references in the article to Ovid's Epistles and the translations from the Amores in Miscellany Poems (1684).

There are several smaller pieces of evidence which seem also to support the suggestion. Chief among them is the famous letter (No. 23 in Professor Ward's collection) concerning the business arrangements for Examen Poeticum.[4] Tonson is accusing Dryden in this letter of giving him

1. California, IV, 696.
2. Kinsley, II, 796.
3. On Dryden's friendship with Motteux, see his poem, 'To my Friend, the AUTHOR PETER MOTTEUX ' (Kinsley, III, 1434-6, 2069) and R.N.Cunningham Peter Anthony Motteux, 1663-1718 : a Biographical Study (Oxford, 1933), passim.
4. Professor Ward dates Tonson's letter, conjecturally, to November 1692. Malone had suggested January or February 1693.

short measure for the volume and exhorting Dryden to supply more. His remarks make it clear that the inclusion of Ovid in the proposed miscellany was definitely Dryden's idea in the first instance:

> You may please S^{r} to remember that upon my first proposal about ye 3^{d} Missellany, I offerd fifty pounds & talkd of several Authours without naming Ovid; You ask'd if it shou'd not be guynneas, & said I shoud not repent it; upon wch I imediately complyd, & left it wholy to you what, & for ye quantity too:
>
> (Ward, Letters, p.50)

Shortly after this, Tonson quotes back at Dryden some sentences from his own letter of 3rd October 1692 :

> "I am translating about six hundred lines, or somewhat less, of ye first book of the Metamorphoses. If I cannot get my price, wch shall be twenty guynneas, I will translate the whole book; wch coming out before the whole translation will spoyl Tate's undertakings. 'Tis one of the best I have ever made, and very pleasant. This, wth Heroe & Leander, & the piece of Homer, (or, if it be not enough, I will add more) will make a good part of a Missellany."

This passage presents the scholar with several problems.[1] In particular, as far as I know, no-one has explained Dryden's reference to 'the whole translation'. The overall sense of the paragraph surely requires us to conclude that by the phrase Dryden is referring not to 'the whole translation' of The First Book, but to a projected version of the

1. By 'about six hundred lines, or somewhat less, of y^e first book' Dryden presumably means the first 567 lines of the Latin text (i.e. down to the end of the Apollo and Daphne story). This tallies with Tonson's remark that Dryden had offered Motteux (in his capacity as publisher) 'y^e end of y^e Story of Daphnis' [= Daphne]. 'The piece of Homer' is presumably 'THE Last parting of Hector and Andromache. FROM THE SIXTH BOOK OF Homer's Iliads', printed in Examen Poeticum. Professor Ward remarks in his commentary (p.162), 'Hero and Leander were left out' (Scott had implied that this Hero and Leander was a projected Dryden translation which was never published). However, there was published 'for J.T.' in 1692 a volume entitled OVID'S / ART OF LOVE. / WITH/ Hero and Leander / OF / MUSAEUS./ From the Greek./ Translated by several Hands. / [quotation] / London, ...for J.T., 1692. This volume is, in fact, a re-issue (with a new title-page) of TWO/ ESSAYS./ THE FORMER/OVID. De Arte Amandi,/OR,/The Art of Love./ THE FIRST BOOK./THE LATER/Hero and Leander/OF/MUSAEUS./ From the GREEK./ By a Well-wisher to the Mathematicks. / [quotation]/ London, ... T.James for Richard Northcott...1682. The authorship of this volume is attributed, in the British Library Catalogue, the D.N.B. and elsewhere, to Thomas Hoy (1659-1718). The translation of Ovid's Art of Love was used by Dryden when making his own translation of that poem. It is presumably possible that Dryden had originally proposed the reprinting of Hoy's Hero and Leander in Examen Poeticum, but that plans were later changed and Tonson decided, instead, to re-issue the 1682 volume entire with his own title-page (This is assuming, of course, that 'J.T.' is Tonson. I can find no other likely publisher with these initials, but it is, I suppose, possible that another publisher was trying to pass off the volume as Tonson's). It should be noted that, in his list of 'Publications of the Tonson House' which forms Appendix II in his Jacob Tonson, Publisher : His Life and Work (1656-1736) (Auckland, N.Z., 1968), G.F.Papali lists the 1692 'J.T.' reissue as one of Tonson's publications, but confuses it in his cross-references with Dryden's version.

whole Metamorphoses, the version, I would suggest, which was announced by Motteux in the Gentleman's Journal only a month after this letter was written. Dryden's hope is, I take it, that by including his version of The First Book in Tonson's forthcoming miscellany he will give the public a taste of what they can expect from the complete version, thereby stealing the market from 'Tate's undertakings'. (By 'Tate's undertakings' I assume, with Professor Ward, that Dryden means the composite version of the Metamorphoses edited by Tate, of which the first - and only - volume appeared in 1697, but which was presumably being planned at this earlier date.[1])

Later in this same letter Tonson asks Dryden to consider submitting some more verse to make up what would seem to be a fair quantity of lines for the miscellany :

> When you have looked over ye rest of what you have already translated, I desire you would send it; & I own y^{t} if you dont think fit to ad something more, I must submit:

1. Ovid's Metamorphosis. Translated by Several Hands. Vol. 1. Containing the first Five Books. ... (London, 1697). The first book in this version was translated by Dryden's enemy, Milbourne. Tate's version of the opening of Met. vii appeared in Tonson's 1704 Miscellany, and in the Garth Metamorphoses of 1717. This was possibly a fragment which would have been included in the second volume of the Tate Metamorphosis, had it been published. Another possible 'left-over' from Tate's project is The Celebrated Speeches of Ajax and Ulysses... Essay'd in English Verse. By Mr. Tate, Poet Laureat; and Aaron Hill, Gent. (London, 1708). No copy of this very rare book is easily available in the U.K. I am grateful to the librarian of the Henry E. Huntington Library, California, for sending me a xerox copy.

Tonson says that he had 1446 lines of Dryden's verse in his hands at the time of writing the letter. Unfortunately we do not know exactly which poems constituted this total, but it seems plausible to suggest that Tonson's request to Dryden to look 'over ye rest of what you have already translated' rests on his knowledge that Dryden had, by the time this letter was written, translated more of the Metamorphoses than he had submitted by this date for inclusion in Examen Poeticum.[1] I would suggest, therefore, that Iphis and Ianthe and Acis, Polyphemus and Galatea were two such episodes which Dryden had already translated, and which he made available to Tonson in response to this request for more verse.

There are several other pieces of evidence which I think confirm the suggestion that Tonson and Dryden were planning a complete Metamorphoses at this period. One piece of 'internal' evidence is the inclusion of the beginning of the Phaeton story at the end of Dryden's version of The First Book - surely a 'transitional' passage which would only have been included if it were to be followed up by the main Phaeton story which occurs in Book Two.[2] Also, Tonson's Miscellanies of 1694, 1704, and 1709, and the

1. It is possible to conjecture that the poems which Tonson had before him were as follows :

The First Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses	1096 lines
The Last Parting of Hector and Andromache	195 lines
Song to a Fair, Young Lady	24 lines
Prologue to the University of Oxford, 1681	30 lines
Prologue ('Gallants, a bashful Poet...')	38 lines
Veni Creator Spiritus	39 lines
Rondelay	24 lines
	1446 lines

If this were the case, then Dryden added, in response to Tonson's request for more verse, Iphis and Ianthe, Acis Polyphemus and Galatea, the two epitaphs, and the five poems which had already been published elsewhere. See Macdonald, Bibliography, pp.72-4.

2. As it was in the 1717 Garth Metamorphoses, by Addison's particularly fine version, first printed separately in Tonson's Poetical Miscellanies: The Fifth Part... (1704).

second edition of Examen Poeticum (1706) contain several versions from the Metamorphoses by poets of Dryden's school.[1] Many of these were collected in the composite Tonson Metamorphoses which was published with an introduction by Dryden's friend Sir Samuel Garth in 1717. We know from one

1. They are as follows :

in The Annual Miscellany : being the Fourth Part of Miscellany Poems (1694)

(i) 'The Story of Salmacis, from the Fourth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses', by Joseph Addison.
(ii) 'The Passion of Byblis, From the Ninth Book of Ovid's Metamorphosis', by Stephen Harvey.
(iii) 'Jupiter and Europa : from the Fourth Book of Ovid's Metamorphosis', by Stephen Harvey.

in Poetical Miscellanies : the Fifth Part (1704)

(i) 'The Story of Phaeton, beginning the Second Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses', by Joseph Addison.
(ii) 'Europa's Rape, translated from Ovid', by Joseph Addison.
(iii) 'The Story of Medea and Jason beginning the Seventh Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses', by Nahum Tate (See fn.1 p.175)
(iv) 'The Story of Ants chang'd to Men, from the 7th Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses', by Mr. Stonestreet.
(v) 'Description of the Palace of Sleep, from the Eleventh Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses'.
(vi) 'The Third Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses', by Joseph Addison.

in Poetical Miscellanies : the Sixth Part (1709)

(i) 'The Story of Phaeton, translated from the Conclusion of the First and the Beginning of the Second Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses', by Joseph Trapp.

in Examen Poeticum : being the Third Part of Miscellany Poems (2nd edition, 1706)

(i) 'The Story of Phoebus and Daphne. From the first Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses', by Charles Hopkins.
(ii) 'Part of the Story of Jupiter and Europa ; from the latter end of the second Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses', by Charles Hopkins.
(iii) 'The Story of Cinyras and Myrrha; from the Tenth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses', by Charles Hopkins.

of Addison's letters that Tonson had approached him, probably in 1694, about translating Ovid.[1] My conjecture is that Tonson postponed the plans to compile a composite Metamorphoses once Dryden had embarked on the more prestigious (but, to him, less pleasing) task of translating Virgil.[2] Garth's 1717 volume includes all the versions from the Metamorphoses which Dryden had published in his lifetime, plus the previously unpublished fragment Aesacus transform'd into a Cormorant and a Preface by Garth with a measured encomium of Dryden contained in it. It is clearly intended to be partly a memorial volume to Dryden. I would suggest that this volume constitutes the eventual outcome of Dryden and Tonson's plans of the early 1690's, plans which were never realised in the poet's lifetime, but which took their initial stimulus from Dryden's return, in 1692, to a poet whom he found particularly 'according to [his] Genius'.

1. See Joseph Addison, Letters, ed. W.Graham (Oxford, 1941), p.3.

2. See Addison, Letters, ed. Graham, p.2. This letter shows that the Tonson Art of Love was similarly postponed. Dryden's qualms about the Virgil are revealed at several places in the Dedication and (most notably) in Dryden's Postcript to the Reader (Kinsley, III, 1424-1427).

(iii) 'Wond'rous Principles' : Dryden and the 'miraculous' nature of the 'Metamorphoses'

Dryden, then, included three translations from the Metamorphoses in Examen Poeticum, a complete rendering of The First Book, and versions of the episodes of Iphis and Ianthe from Book Nine and Acis, Polyphemus and Galatea from Book Thirteen. These passages in themselves give a fair sense of the variety of interest to be found in Ovid's poem and of the various kind of metamorphosis and transformation included within its scope.

Ovid's Book One begins with an account of the creation of the world out of chaos, the creation of man, the four ages - gold, silver, bronze and iron - the giants' war, and the assembly of the gods which results in Jove's destruction of mankind by a universal deluge. Life on earth is then restored by the agency of Deucalion and Pyrrha, the only human couple worthy enough to be spared the flood. Book One concludes with the first of many episodes in the poem recounting the amatory adventures of the Olympian gods - Apollo's pursuit of Daphne, and Jupiter's attempted seduction of Io, and subsequent transformation of her into a heifer.

The other two Ovidian episodes selected by Dryden are also love stories, this time involving human or semi-human characters. Iphis is a girl who has been brought up by her mother Telethusa as a boy, since Telethusa's husband Lygdus has told her during her pregnancy that any female offspring of theirs must be killed at birth. Iphis falls in love with a beautiful maiden Ianthe, but considers her love hopeless until the gods miraculously transform her into a boy, thus rendering her union with Ianthe possible. In the third episode, Galatea is courted by the repulsive cyclops Polyphemus, but really loves Acis. Polyphemus kills Acis in a fit

of jealous rage, but the youth is transformed into a river which preserves his name.

On the face of it, such stories would seem to have little to offer to someone of a decidedly religious temperament. Ovid himself had constantly professed his disbelief in the Olympian deities who people his stories and declared that for him they were merely convenient fictions.[1] Ezra Pound summed up the comments of many readers when he described Ovid's characteristic way of depicting the Graeco-Roman gods:

> The marvellous thing is made plausible, the gods are humanized, their annals are written as if copied from a parish register; their heroes might have been acquaintances of the author's father.[2]

The Ovidian gods are undignified, lecherous and often foolish.

Ovid's account of creation is also, as has been demonstrated, inconsistent and eclectic, drawing on the incompatible cosmogonies of several different Greek philosophers.[3] And the bringing to being of the world which opens the Metamorphoses is clearly not the doing of the anthropomorphic gods who people the body of the poem.[4]

Yet despite all this, and despite Ovid's general reputation as a smart urban sophisticate whom one would hardly expect to feel wonder at anything, least of all the phenomena of Creation and Nature, many commentators have

1. See Tristia, II, 64; IV, 7, 11-23; Am., III, 12, 21-42; A.A., I, 637ff.
2. The Spirit of Romance (rev. ed., London, 1952), pp. 15-16. Compare, for example, A.G.Lee's remarks in his edition of Met.I (Cambridge, 1953),p.21.
3. See Lee's edition, p. 70 and L.P.Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled (Cambridge, 1955), p.214.
4. See Brooks Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1970), pp. 91-109.

found precisely that quality in the poem.[1] It has often been felt that although the stories of the Metamorphoses are put before us as such palpable fictions, and though the author's attitude to his material is, in one sense, so obviously wry and conscious, what actually emerges from his collection of playful tall stories is a spirit of genuine wonder at the processes of the world which his poetry allows the reader to share. Critics have particularly admired, in this connection, Ovid's power of investing inanimate objects or abstractions, delightfully, with vividly physical characteristics, a process which often depends at the verbal level on a particularly skilful use of puns.[2] Readers have also observed that again and again transformations in the stories which seem at first entirely to inhabit the realm of fantasy, have a certain strange and haunting imaginative suggestiveness when applied to features of the world we all inhabit. As Professor Fränkel observed after his detailed analysis of the Daphne story, 'there is much in Ovid's metamorphosis fables which can easily be divested of the miraculous element and translated into some everyday occurence'.[3] It was this particular Ovidian quality, perhaps, the applicability of his stories to so many situations and problems in ordinary life, which made the stories so especially susceptible in earlier times to allegorical and symbolic interpretations. Though these interpretations often seem to us today to harden the Ovidian tales, to

1. See Lee's edition, pp. 27, 24 (the latter citing James Henry), and H.Fränkel, Ovid (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1956), p. 172.
2. On this subject, see particularly H.Fränkel, Ovid, pp. 77-78, 209.
3. H.Fränkel, Ovid, pp. 79-80.

restrict their range of meaning and to make them seem too simple and two-dimensional, they often genuinely reflect (albeit at the expense of other possibilities) significances and implications that can be seen to be there in the original tales.

It could perhaps be said that though Ovid (along, one supposes, with many sophisticated Romans of his day) did not believe in the gods of the conventional Graeco-Roman pantheon, and did not have any formal or systematic philosophy, the real 'gods' of his 'perpetuum carmen', the real sources of wonder, were the forms of matter and creation itself, constantly and wonderfully changing, evolving, overlapping in the imagination, and reassembling in the poetry itself.

It is perhaps not surprising then, that Ovid has always had such a powerful imaginative appeal for poets and painters wanting to depict the miraculous interrelatedness of the various parts of the created universe, even if their conception of the nature of that interrelatedness was quite different from his. It has often been noted, for example, that Milton drew heavily on Ovid at those points in Paradise Lost (particularly Book VII) where he was trying hardest to evoke a sense of the vital and joyous life of God's creation. It is also for this reason, I think, that Dryden can often employ in his version of The First Book a grand and stately diction, or the terminology of his own Christian religion, without this seeming blasphemously incompatible with the Book's more playful moments. In this regard, it is interesting to compare his rendering of Ovid's opening with those of his predecessors, Golding and Sandys.[1]

> In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
> Corpora. Dî coeptis (nam vos mutastis & illas)
> Adspirate meis. primaque ab origine mundi
> Ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen.
> (1-4)

1. Dryden made use of both the 1626 and 1632 editions of Sandys' Ovid when composing his own versions. For full evidence and documentation, see my article, 'Dryden and the Two Editions of Sandys' Ovid', Notes and Queries, n.s., 23 (1976), 552-554.

Golding rendered Ovid's first four lines thus :

> Of shapes transformde to bodies straunge, I purpose to entreate,
> Ye gods vouchsafe (for you are they ywrought this wondrous feate)
> To further this mine enterprise. And from the world begunne,
> Graunt that my verse may to my time, his course directly runne.

Sandys' 1632 version reads

> Of bodies chang'd to other shapes I sing,
> Assist, you Gods (from you these changes spring)
> And, from the Worlds first fabrick to these times
> Deduce my never-discontinued Rymes.
> (p.1)

Dryden draws on Sandys' version, but significantly re-shapes it, echoing Milton's vocabulary, and boldly including the specific assertion that his poem will present a series of 'Miracles'.[1] The opening is deliberately weighty, and couldalmost come from a work as serious as De Rerum Natura. We might also note incidentally that Dryden has strengthened Ovid's plea for the gods' assistance in his 'long laborious Work', and seems to have shifted the meaning of the lines slightly: he is not so much declaring (like Ovid) that the subject-matter of the poem would be continued up to the

1. Milton's first commentator, Patrick Hume (1695) noted many Ovidian sources and subsequent commentators have gone on to establish many more. The most extensive modern treatment of the subject is D.P.Harding's in Milton and the Renaissance Ovid, University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, No.4 (Urbana, 1946). The extent of Dryden's debt to Milton, not only in this translation, but in his later work generally, has been underrated. The California editors (IV, 706) remark on 'a number of slight Miltonic echoes' in The First Book, and Milton Freedman in'Dryden's Reported Reaction to Paradise Lost', Notes and Queries, n.s., 5 (1958), 14-16, remarks that by 1692, 'Dryden's enthusiasm for Paradise Lost and for Milton seems to have cooled'. In the account of creation in Book III of Paradise Lost, Milton wrote :

> The cumbrous Elements, Earth, Flood, Aire, Fire,
> And this Ethereal quintessence of Heav'n
> Flew upward, spirited with various forms. (714-716)

In Book V, Raphael tells Adam of

> ... one first matter all
> Indu'd with various forms various degrees
> Of substance, ... (472-4)

Dryden re-used the phrase in his translation of Silenus' speech in Virgil's Sixth Pastoral, l.55 :

> The Earth and Ocean various Forms disclose;

'Coelestial' is, of course, also a word given a special charge of meaning throughout Paradise Lost. I am indebted to Mr. John Mason for pointing out some of Dryden's Miltonic borrowings below.

events of contemporary times, but rather asking for his work to be granted poetic immortality ('perpetual Tenour').[1] The seriousness of this opening is not, I would suggest, incompatible with the playfulness of what follows - the 'Miracles' which follow are shown (as we shall see) to be genuine ones (if ones of a very different kind from those of the Christian religion or of Paradise Lost), and consequently can be seen to justify the tone of Dryden's opening, a tone which might otherwise seem inappropriately, even blasphemously, portentous:

> Of Bodies chang'd to various Forms I sing:
> Ye Gods, from whom these Miracles did spring,
> Inspire my Numbers with Coelestial heat;
> Till I, my long laborious Work compleat:
> And add perpetual Tenour to my Rhimes,
> Deduc'd from Nature's Birth, to Caesar's Times.
>
> (1-6)

Ovid's account of the chaos before the creation of the world had been one of the passages particularly drawn on by Milton in Paradise Lost.[2]

> Ante mare & tellus, &, quod tegit omnia, caelum,
> Unus erat toto Naturae vultus in orbe,
> Quem dixêre Chaos; rudis indigestaque moles;
> Nec quicquam, nisi pondus iners; congestaque eodem
> Non bene junctarum discordia semina rerum.
> Nullus adhuc mundo praebebat lumina Titan;
> Nec nova crescendo reparabat cornua Phoebe;
> Nec circumfuso pendebat in aëre tellus
> Ponderibus librata suis: nec brachia longo
> Margine terrarum porrexerat Amphitrite.
> Quaque fuit tellus, illic & pontus & aër:
> Sic erat instabilis tellus, innabilis unda,
> Lucis egens aër. nulli sua forma manebat.
> Obstabatque aliis aliud: quia corpore in uno
> Frigida pugnabant calidis, humentia siccis,
> Mollia cum duris, sine pondere habentia pondus.
>
> (5-20)

1. The phrase 'long laborious Work' (for which there is no equivalent in the Latin) perhaps constitutes further evidence for the suggestion that Dryden saw his First Book as Stage 1 in a new complete English Metamorphoses.

2. See D.P.Harding, Milton and the Renaissance Ovid, Chapter 5, passim.

Dryden's rendering of this passage reveals that he has Milton's language in mind at several points, but the version also shows equally clearly that he has seen as an essential feature of Ovid's account that it is strongly and consciously tinged with comedy, rather than presented with a straightforward grandeur.[1]

> Before the Seas, and this Terrestrial Ball,
> And Heav'ns high Canopy, that covers all,
> One was the Face of Nature; if a Face,
> Rather a rude and undigested Mass:
> A Lifeless Lump, unfashion'd, and unfram'd;
> Of jarring Seeds; and justly Chaos nam'd.
> No Sun was lighted up, the World to view; (13)
> No Moon did yet her blunted Horns renew:
> Nor yet was Earth suspended in the Skye;
> Nor pois'd, did on her own Foundations lye:
> Nor Seas about the Shoars their Arms had thrown; (17)
> But Earth and Air and Water were in one.
> Thus Air was void of light, and Earth unstable,
> And Waters dark Abyss unnavigable.
> No certain Form, on any was imprest;
> All were confus'd, and each disturb'd the rest;
> For hot and cold, were in one Body fixt;
> And soft with hard, and light with heavy mixt.
>
> (7-24)

1. Several of the words and phrases which have no direct equivalent in the Latin are again those which had been invested with special significance in similar contexts by Milton :

   'Heav'ns High Canopy' (8) : cf. PL, III, 556-7 : ...'the circling Canopie/Of Nights extended shade;...
   'pois'd' (16) : cf. PL, V, 578-9 : ...'Earth/Upon her Center pois'd'...
   'void of light' (19) : cf. PL, I, 181 : ...'voyd of light'...
   'dark Abyss' (20) : cf. PL, II, 405 : 'The dark unbottom'd infinite Abyss'
   1027 : 'Over the dark Abyss,...'
   VII, 233-4 : ...'Darkness profound/Cover'd th' Abyss: ...'
   X, 371 : ...'the dark Abyss.'

   The Miltonic 'sources' for these last examples are much closer than the Biblical parallel cited in California, IV, 708.

The comedy is generated partly by Dryden's deft exploitation in English idiom of Ovid's characteristic way of using with reference to inanimate objects terms (e.g. 'vultus' in line 6, or 'porrexerat' in line 14) which are normally only used of human characteristics or actions, partly by touches which endow inanimate objects with human qualities of mind (e.g. the sun's curiosity in l.14), and partly by his manipulation of diction. His lines 13-17, for example, closely imitate the repeated 'Nullus...Nec...Nec' pattern of Ovid's lines 10-12 in a way that, by their very over-explicitness, alerts us to the fact that momentous events in the world's creation are here being subjected to something different from solemn Miltonic handling. In line 9, the addition 'if a Face' has the effect of momentarily converting 'the Face of Nature' into a 'real' face, and Dryden makes humorous play of the idea which Longinus had cited as a prime example of Biblical sublimity by having the Sun's first appearance described as if it were the lighting of a street-lamp:

No Sun was lighted up, the World to view;

He has added, too, the 'blunted' in line 13,

No Moon did yet her blunted Horns renew:

bringing out more clearly the two possible implications in Ovid's 'nova... cornua' (11), and has incorporated a gloss from Cnipping's commentary for his witty

Nor yet was Earth <u>suspended</u> in the Skye; (14)
(my italics)

(for Ovid's

Nec...pendebat in aëre tellus. (12))[1]

1. See California, IV, 708, note to line 15 :
Cnipping quotes a note by Pontanus which includes the phrase <u>terrae ...suspensae</u>. ("of earth suspended").

But, despite all the playful touches, Dryden has also felt free to incorporate in his version, without any sense of incongruity or strain, words or phrases which had received a particular charge of meaning in Milton's more obviously serious portrayal of the universe in Paradise Lost - 'jarring', 'Canopy', 'dark Abyss', 'void of light'. The passage is also, incidentally, remarkable for its rhythmic variety and vigour, and shows that, whatever Dryden had said from time to time about the comparative monotony of Ovid's versification, he displayed no such monotony in his versions.[1] Consider, for example, in this connection, lines 9-12 :

> One was the Face of Nature; if a Face,
> Rather a rude and indigested Mass:
> A lifeless Lump, unfashion'd, and unfram'd;
> Of jarring Seeds; and justly Chaos nam'd.

I have suggested that one of the characteristics which drew Milton to Ovid's account of Chaos and Creation was its vision of a Universe endowed with a 'life of its own'. That Dryden himself, before embarking on the Ovidian translation, had responded to this quality, and to some of those very parts of Milton which draw on Ovid is shown in the first stanza of his Song for St. Cecilia's Day of 1687. Here, like Milton, Dryden is seeing Creation as an ordered process, and placing his emphasis

1. See Preface to Sylvae (Kinsley, I, 392):

> Ovid with all his sweetness, has as little variety of Numbers and sound as he: He is always as it were upon the Hand-gallop, and his Verse runs upon Carpet ground.

A 'hand-gallop', it should be noted, requires great control on the part of the rider.

on the integrating and liberating effect of harmony in resolving the primal chaos.[1]

From Harmony, from heav'nly Harmony,
  This universal Frame began.
When Nature underneath a heap
  Of jarring Atomes lay,
And cou'd not heave her Head,
The tuneful Voice was heard from high,
  Arise ye more than dead.
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
  And MUSICK'S pow'r obey.
From Harmony, from heavn'ly Harmony
  This universal Frame began:
  From Harmony to Harmony
Through all the compass of the Notes it ran,
The Diapason closing full in Man.

(1-15)

1. The poem in fact draws extensively on Miltonic language, and often, interestingly, on those very parts of Milton where he had himself been drawing on Ovid. T.Mason, in Dryden's Chaucer pp.31-33 points out the following echoes :

'heav'nly Harmony' (1) : cf. Comus, 242 : ...'all Heaven's Harmonies'
'universal Frame' (2) : cf. PL, V, 154 : ...'this universal Frame.'
'Nature underneath a heap' (3) : cf. PL, III, 708-9 :...'the formless Mass.../...came to a heap:'
'jarring' (4) : cf. PL, VI, 315 : ...'thir jarring Spheres confound.'
cf. At A Solemn Music, 19-20 : ...'disproportion'd sin/Jarr'd against natures chime, ...'
'Diapason' (15) : cf. ibid., 22-3 : ...'their motion sway'd/In perfect Diapason...'
'heave her Head' (5) : cf. PL, I, 210-11 : ...'nor ever thence/Had ris'n or heav'd his head,...'
cf. L'Allegro, 145 : 'That Orpheus self may heave his head'.

Where the Universe depicted in Milton, or in this Song, differs crucially from the account of Dryden's First Book is, of course, that while the latter is offered as something equally to delight in and marvel at, it is also seen as something amoral and virtually uncontrollable and therefore potentially (and actually) destructive.[1] Dryden has done everything to play up Ovid's jokes about the winds behaving with the arbitrariness of a quarrelsome family (e.g. at lines 22, 29, 30-1, 72),

1. It is interesting to note that John Oldham, the young poet whose premature death Dryden had so movingly lamented in 1684, had also drawn on the language of Ovid (probably in Sandys' translation) when he came to expand his poem Upon the Works of Ben Johnson to account for the miraculous way in which Jonson in his poetry reduces Chaos to order :

    Unform'd, and void was then its Poesie,
    Only some pre-existing Matter we
    Perhaps could see,
    That might foretell what was to be;
    A rude, and undigested Lump it lay,
    Like the old Chaos, e're the birth of Light, and Day,
    Till thy brave Genius like a new Creator came,
    And undertook the mighty Frame;
    No shuffled Atoms did the well-built work compose,
    If from no lucky hit of blund'ring Chance arose
    (As some of this great Fabrick idly dream)
    But wise, all-seeing Judgment did contrive,
    And knowing Art its Graces give:
    No sooner did thy Soul with active Force and Fire
    The dull and heavy Mass inspire,
    But strait throughout it let us see
    Proportion, Order, Harmony,
    And every part did to the whole agree,
    And strait appear'd a beauteous new-made world of Poetry.

    (Poems and Translations, 1683, pp.71-2)

    This passage was inserted at a later date into what had originally been a conventional panegyric. See Bodleian MS Rawlinson Poet. 123, p.225.

even importing (e.g. l.26) a sly reference or two to the Civil War to press home the point. But the effect of assigning (in the very vocabulary he uses) all-too-frail 'human' attributes to the elements is not, I think, simply to trivialise the universe, or (in the case of the Civil War allusions) to use Ovid as an opportunity to make tasteless jokes about matters of great importance. It seems to be more the case that Dryden has found in these aspects of the Ovidian mode of wit a way of portraying as in some respects delightful and appealing, forces which, looked at in any other way, would seem incapacitatingly and anarchically horrendous.

If Dryden has sometimes brought Ovid's portrayal very close to Milton's it is not so much that Milton has 'displaced' Ovid in his mind but rather that he has deliberately brought Ovid's creation nearer to Milton's to show how different they really are. Consider, for example, God's role in Creation :

> Sic ubi dispositam, quisquis fuit ille Deorum,
> Congeriem secuit, sectamque in membra redegit;
> Principio terram, ne non aequalis ab omni
> Parte foret, magni speciem glomeravit in orbis.
> Tum freta diffundi rapidisque tumescere ventis
> Jussit, & ambitae circumdare littora terrae.
>
> (32-37)

> Thus when the God, what ever God was he,
> Had form'd the whole, and made the parts agree,
> That no unequal portions might be found,
> He moulded Earth into a spacious round:
> Then with a breath, he gave the Winds to blow;
> And bad the congregated Waters flow.
>
> (40-45)

Dryden seems in some of his additions ('with a breath', 'congregated Waters') to be deliberately bringing Ovid's account closer to the Biblical/Miltonic one, exploiting the traditional identification of Ovid and Genesis only to

side-step some of its more important features.[1] Ovid's Nature, in Dryden's version, is very vigorous, and his God is hardly in control. Indeed, we are left (ll. 25/40) in doubt even whether it is 'God' at all.

In the light of the suggestions set out in the last chapter, it is perhaps possible to see already some connections between Dryden's interest in the poetry of Lucretius and Horace and his delight in Ovid. In the Sylvae versions he had composed poems which, in reminding us of the Laws of Nature to which all our lives are subject, goes some way towards consoling us, and impressing upon us what the genuine goods in life are. In the Ovid of the Metamorphoses he had found, apparently, a poetic temperament that could look on the arbitrary flux of Nature not only without being troubled, but indeed with positive delight and wonder.

The moment in The First Book where Dryden seems most concerned to render the Ovidian portrayal of the material world as one which recognises

1. 'with a breath' (44) : cf. PL, VII, 525-6 : ...'in thy nostrils breath'd/
The breath of Life;...'
(from Genesis, II, 7)
'congregated Waters' (45) : cf. PL, VII, 307-8 : ...'the great receptacle/Of congregated Waters...'
(Milton's own source here was not the A.V. but the Vulgate's congregationesque aquarum : see J.Carey and A.Fowler, eds., The Poems of John Milton [London : Longmans, 1968] p.793)
A little earlier, Dryden's line
The next of kin contiguously embrace;
perhaps owes something to Milton's PL, VII, 271-3 :
... the loud misrule
Of Chaos farr remov'd, least fierce extreames
Contiguous might distemper the whole frame:
Dryden's tone is, of course, quite different.

and presents for our contemplation its genuinely 'miraculous' nature occurs in the passage where Deucalion and Pyrrha renew mankind after the flood by throwing the stones behind them, and it is to this part of the poem that I wish to devote the rest of this section.

Shortly after the account of the flood, the righteous probity of Deucalion and Pyrrha, and their status as the representatives of the human race, is neatly and economically established, with no hint of irony or playfulness.

> High on the Summet of this dubious Cliff,
> Deucalion wafting, moor'd his little Skiff.
> He with his Wife were only left behind
> Of perish'd Man; they two, were Humane Kind.
> The Mountain Nymphs and Themis they adore,
> And from her Oracles relief implore.
> The most upright of Mortal Men was he;
> The most sincere and holy Woman, she.
>
> (431-438)

And Deucalion's speech to Pyrrha has been invested in Dryden's version (particularly in its elaborate opening) with some of the dignity of the speeches which Milton's Adam makes to Eve, and with the touching quality that Dryden was later to give to Philemon when he addresses Baucis on the subject oftheir married life and its significance.

> Of Wife, oh Sister, oh of all thy kind)
> The best and only Creature left behind,)
> By Kindred, Love, and now by Dangers joyn'd,)
> Of Multitudes, who breath'd the common Air,
> We two remain; a Species in a pair:
> The rest the Seas have swallow'd; nor have we
> Ev'n of this wretched life a certainty.
> The Clouds are still above; and, while I speak,
> A second Deluge, o're our heads may break.
> Shou'd I be snatch'd from hence, and thou remain,)
> Without relief, or Partner of thy pain,)
> How cou'd'st thou such a wretched Life sustain?)

> Shou'd I be left, and thou be lost, the Sea
> That bury'd her I lov'd, shou'd bury me.
> Oh cou'd our Father his old Arts inspire,
> And made me Heir of his informing Fire,
> That so I might abolisht Man retrieve,
> And perisht People in new Souls might live.
> But Heav'n is pleas'd, nor ought we to complain,
> That we, th' Examples of Mankind, remain.
>
> (476-495)

Dryden's handling up to this point has convinced us that nothing short of a real 'miracle' can resolve their plight. In his interpretation of the oracle's 'dark AEnigma' (l.526) Dryden's Deucalion makes explicitly the connection between the animate and inanimate realms which is to be - on a metaphorical level - the basis for the wonderful poetical transformation which will shortly follow :

> This Earth our mighty Mother is, the Stones,
> In her capacious Body, are her Bones.
>
> (529-30)

In the Apology for Raymond de Sebonde, Montaigne has written, drawing on Lucretius for support, of the way in which the very processes of biology and body-chemistry make us more continuous than we might think with the inanimate Nature which surrounds us (Montaigne is perhaps thinking partly of the doctrine of transubstantiation) :

> As we see in the Bread we eat, it is nothing but Bread, but by being eaten, it becomes Bones, Blood, Flesh, Hair and Nails.
>
> Ut cibus in membra atque artus cum diditur omnes
> Disperit, atque aliam naturam sufficit ex se
>
> As Meat diffus'd through all the Members lose
> Their former Nature, and different things compose.
>
> The humidity suck'd up by the Root of a Tree, becomes Trunk, Leaf and Fruit: And the Air being but one, is modulated in a Trumpet to a thousand sorts of Sounds.
>
> (II.12)

The long metamorphosis which follows Deucalion's words must now be quoted in full in Dryden's version.

The Stones (a Miracle to Mortal View,
But long Tradition makes it pass for true)
Did first the Rigour of their Kind expell,
And, suppl'd into softness, as they fell,
Then swell'd, and swelling, by degrees grew warm;
And took the Rudiments of Humane Form.
Imperfect shapes: in Marble such are seen
When the rude Chizzel does the Man begin;
While yet the roughness of the Stone remains,
Without the rising Muscles, and the Veins.
The sappy parts, and next resembling juice,
Were turn'd to moisture, for the Bodies use:
Supplying humours, blood, and nourishment;
The rest, (too solid to receive a bent;)
Converts to bones; and what was once a vein
Its former Name, and Nature did retain.
By help of Pow'r Divine, in little space
What the Man threw, assum'd a Manly face;
And what the Wife, renew'd the Female Race.
Hence we derive our Nature; born to bear
Laborious life; and harden'd into care.
The rest of Animals, from teeming Earth
Produc'd, in various forms receiv'd their birth.
The native moisture, in its close retreat,
Digested by the Sun's AEtherial heat,
As in a kindly Womb, began to breed:
Then swell'd, and quicken'd by the vital seed.
And some in less, and some in longer space,
Were ripen'd into form, and took a several face.
Thus when the Nile from Pharian Fields is fled,
And seeks with Ebbing Tides, his ancient Bed,
The fat Manure, with Heav'nly Fire is warm'd;
And crusted Creatures, as in Wombs are form'd;
These, when they turn the Glebe, the Peasants find;
Some rude; and yet unfinish'd in their Kind:
Short of their Limbs, a lame imperfect Birth;
One half alive; and one of lifeless Earth.
For heat and moisture, when in Bodies joyn'd,
The temper that results from either Kind
Conception makes; and fighting till they mix,
Their mingl'd Atoms in each other fix.
Thus Nature's hand, the Genial Bed prepares,
With Friendly Discord, and with fruitful Wars.
From hence the surface of the Ground, with Mud
And Slime besmear'd, (the faeces of the Flood)

> Receiv'd the Rays of Heav'n; and sucking in
> The Seeds of Heat, new Creatures did begin:
> Some were of sev'ral sorts produc'd before,
> But of new Monsters, Earth created more.
>
> (537-585)

It is significant, I think, to note how, in the first two lines of this passage Dryden's direct imitation of Ovid's parenthesis

> ...(quis hoc credat, nisi sit pro teste vetustas?)
>
> (400)

has the double effect of both alerting us to how conscious both poets' attitude is to the 'old story' they are about to relate but of also enhancing, rather than diminishing, the genuinely 'fabulous' nature (in both senses) of what follows. A new kind of meaning has been discovered and created in the old myth, one which depends for its poetic force on the fact that both the English and Latin languages have a whole repertoire of what we might call 'one-word metamorphoses', words and phrases which can be used equally appropriately for both animate and inanimate objects and phenomena and which depend on us recognising both how similar (looked at from one point of view) the two kinds of objects are, and (as Montaigne realised) how they are continuous one with the other, even partaking of the same atoms.[1]

Dryden has coloured his language in the passage with echoes of those moments in Paradise Lost where Milton had adapted for his own purposes the Ovidian portrayals of gestation and birth as a vast cyclical process. In Milton's version they are, of course, manifestations of the power and glory of an omnipotent God. Consider, for example, how many resonances

1. See H.Fränkel, Ovid, pp. 77-78, 98, on this topic.

Dryden has picked up in his passage from these lines in Milton's seventh book :

> Thus God the Heav'n created, thus the Earth,
> Matter unform'd and void: Darkness profound
> Cover'd th' Abyss: but on the watrie calme
> His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspred,
> And vital vertue infus'd, and vital warmth
> Throughout the fluid Mass, but downward purg'd
> The black tartareous cold Infernal dregs
> Adverse to life: then founded, then conglob'd
> Like things to like, the rest to several place
> Disparted, and between spun out the Air,
> And Earth self ballanc't on her Center hung.
>
> (232-242)

> The Earth was form'd, but in the Womb as yet
> Of Waters, Embryon immature involv'd,
> Appeer'd not: over all the face of Earth
> Main Ocean flow'd, not idle, but with warme
> Prolific humour soft'ning all her Globe,
> Fermented the great Mother to conceave,
> Satiate with genial moisture, when God said
> Be gather'd now ye Waters under Heav'n
> Into one place, and let dry Land appeer.
>
> (276-284)

> The Sixt, and of Creation last arose
> With Eevning Harps and Mattin, when God said,
> Let th' Earth bring forth Soul living in her kinde,
> Cattel and Creeping things, and Beast of the Earth,
> Each in their kinde. The Earth obey'd, and strait
> Op'ning her fertil Woomb teem'd at a Birth
> Innumerous living Creatures, perfet formes,
> Limb'd and full grown:
>
> (449-456)

Despite Dryden's crucially different stress, his use of Milton is, I think, once more a sign that he had seen the older poet as having been fired in these passages by the capacity of Ovid's animistic metaphors to give a sense of the spontaneous abundance of creation. In Dryden's version, however, the 'renewal' of mankind is as mysterious as it is miraculous. He has done nothing, for example, to attempt to answer in his version the

charge of Ovid's commentator, Crispinus, that only by the command of God can life come forth. On Ovid's 1.420, Crispinus commented :

> Sunt haec pura Poëtarum figmenta; neque
> sine expresso Dei jussu potest terra animalia
> proferre.
>
> (p.25, fn.r)

Milton's version, of course, provides just such an answer.

In his rendering of Ovid's account of the original creation of Man, Dryden was translating another passage which Milton had already imitated closely in Paradise Lost:

> Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacius altae
> Deerat adhuc, & quod dominari in caetera posset.
> Natus homo est. sive hunc divino semine fecit
> Ille opifex rerum, mundi melioris origo:
> Sive recens tellus, seductaque nuper ab alto
> AEthere, cognati retinebat semina caeli.
> Quam satus Japeto, mistam fluvialibus undis,
> Finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta Deorum.
> Pronaque cum spectent animalia caetera terram;
> Os homini sublime dedit: caelumque tueri
> Jussit, & erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.
> Sic, modo quae fuerat rudis & sine imagine, tellus
> Induit ignotas hominum conversa figuras.
>
> (76-88)

Milton's adaptation occurs, again, in Book VII:

> There wanted yet the Master work, the end
> Of all yet don; a Creature who not prone
> And Brute as other Creatures, but endu'd
> With Sanctitie of Reason, might erect
> His Stature, and upright with Front serene
> Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence
> Magnanimous to correspond with Heav'n,
> But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
> Descends, thither with heart and voice and eyes
> Directed in Devotion, to adore
> And worship God Supream, who made him chief
> Of all his works: therefore the Omnipotent
> Eternal Father (For where is not hee
> Present) thus to his Son audibly spake.
> Let us make now Man in our image, Man
> In our similitude, and let them rule
> Over the Fish and Fowle of Sea and Aire,

Beast of the Field, and over all the Earth,
And every creeping thing that creeps the ground.
This said, he formd thee, Adam, thee O Man
Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breath'd
The breath of Life; in his own Image hee
Created thee, in the Image of God
Express, and thou becam'st a living Soul.
(505-528)

As can be readily seen, Milton has again not simply taken over the features which he borrows from Ovid's account, but charged them with his own special significance.[1] Whereas Ovid's Man is created simply 'dominari in caetera', Milton's Man is created 'erect' so that he might

...upright with Front serene
Govern the rest, self-knowing, ...[2]

His Man is made (as in the Bible) in God's image and recognises his divine origin by means of his God-given 'Sanctitie of Reason'.

In The Hind and the Panther (I, 245-275), Dryden had portrayed the creation of Man in terms which, while they draw on Ovid's account, are given a direction very close to Milton's.[3] But Dryden's version of the Ovid passage has a subtly, but definitely different stress:

A Creature of a more Exalted Kind
Was wanting yet, and then was Man design'd:
Conscious of Thought, of more capacious Breast,
For Empire form'd, and fit to rule the rest:
Whether with particles of Heav'nly Fire
The God of Nature did his Soul Inspire,
Or Earth, but new divided from the Skie,
And, pliant, still, retain'd the AEtherial Energy:
Which Wise Prometheus temper'd into paste,

1. D.P.Harding (pp.77-8) suggests that Milton was given the confidence to use this passage by Lactantius' Christian interpretation, which had also influenced Ovid's Renaissance commentators.

2. On the particular poetic significance of Adam and Eve's 'erectness' in Paradise Lost, see J.M.Newton, 'A Speculation about Landscape', The Cambridge Quarterly, 4 (1969), 273-282.

3. See California, III, 367.

And mixt with living Streams, the Godlike Image cast.
Thus, while the mute Creation downward bend
Their Sight, and to their Earthy Mother tend,
Man looks aloft; and with erected Eyes
Beholds his own Hereditary Skies.
From such rude Principles our Form began;
And Earth was Metamorphos'd into Man.

(97-112)

Dryden seems to have found in Ovid's passage an account of Man's creation which is in many ways more neutrally 'factual' than Milton's, one which, while it takes account of the ways in which Man does differ from the beasts, makes nothing like the effort of Milton's passage (or his own in The Hind) to establish Man's special place in creation.[1] The passage, rather, stresses Man's kinship with, and origins in, the inanimate world around him.[2] Dryden carefully follows Ovid's speculative note on the subject of how Man was made, and emphasises the way in which, however it came about, Man is actually moulded out of, and owes his vitality to, the elements of inanimate matter itself. In referring to Man's 'Godlike Image' Dryden is again exploiting the unavoidable Christian/Miltonic 'frisson' of such a phrase without committing himself to anything as consciously noble as the Miltonic conception. After all, we are shortly to see in the poem just what Ovid's gods are really like. Ovidian Man has 'erected eyes' not to signify his 'Sanctitie of Reason' ('Reason' is carefully avoided by Dryden in his translation), but more as an

1. In the very word 'design'd' (98) Dryden stresses the way in which Ovidian Man is almost a 'miracle of engineering'.

2. It is interesting to note that Dryden recalled his earlier phrasing when describing the bees in The Fourth Georgic :

... some have taught
That Bees have Portions of Etherial Thought:
Endu'd with Particles of Heavenly Fires: (321-3)

In line 108 Dryden prepares the reader for the Deucalion and Pyrrha metamorphosis.

expression of a natural inquisitiveness, felicitously captured by Dryden in the present tenses of lines 109-110.[1]

1. Montaigne had questioned, in the Apology for Raymond de Sebonde, Ovid's right to allow even this much supremacy to Man.

(iv) 'Fancy' in 'The First Book'

In the Dedication to the second composite translation of the Metamorphoses published in 1717, George Sewell remarked on what he calls Ovid's 'Creatures of Fancy' and the way they had influenced certain major English poets :

> The shadowy Beings, as they have been lately very properly term'd, which abound in Spenser, Milton, (and I might go back to Chaucer) are mostly owing to Ovid. Spenser in particular, is remarkable for imitating the Exuberance of our Poet in all his Creatures of Fancy. [1]
>
> (A4r)

Sewell is here alluding to some remarks made by Addison in No. 419 of The Spectator :

> There is another sort of Imaginary Beings, that we sometimes meet with among the Poets, when the Author represents any Passion, Appetite, Virtue or Vice, under a visible Shape, and makes it a Person or an Actor in his Poem. Of this Nature are the Descriptions of Hunger and Envy in Ovid, of Fame in Virgil, and of Sin and Death in Milton. We find a whole Creation of the like shadowy Persons in Spencer, who had an admirable Talent in Representations of this kind. ... Thus we see how many ways Poetry addresses it self to the Imagination, as it has not only the whole Circle of Nature for its Province, but makes new Worlds of its own, shews us Persons who are not to be found in Being, and represents even the Faculties of the Soul, with her several Virtues and Vices, in a sensible Shape and Character. [2]

It seems reasonable to suppose that by examining what Dryden made, in his version, of Ovid's 'Creatures of Fancy' we might discover further clues as to the kind of poetic interests which he seems to have found in

1. Ovid's Metamorphoses. In Fifteen Books. A New Translation... (2 vols., London, 1717).

2. The Spectator, ed. D.F.Bond (5 vols., Oxford, 1965), III, 573.

the Metamorphoses at this date. I shall examine two passages from The First Book, the portrayal of the South Wind, and the related account of the flood.

I take it that in the 'Creatures of Fancy' we have a test case for determining exactly what we might mean by calling Ovid a 'sophisticated' poet, since Ovid is in them treating with a display of considerable and conscious literary artifice subjects - primal forces such as gods, the elements, natural processes - which could be to another kind of mind or in another kind of literary handling the source of primitive awe and solemn reverence. The particular problem facing readers of Ovid's Book One might be to determine whether the realities of wind and flood are simply by-passed by Ovid in an attempt to be witty, or whether his witty handling constitutes a distinctive and pleasurable way of looking at these realities.

Ovid's description of the South Wind begins at line 262.

> Protinus AEoliis Aquilonem claudit in antris,
> Et quaecunque fugant inductas flamina nubes:
> Emittitque Notum. madidis Notus evolat alis;
> Terribilem piceâ tectus caligine vultum.
> Barba gravis nimbis; canis fluit unda capillis:
> Fronte sedent nebulae: rorant pennaeque, sinusque.
> Utque manu latâ pendentia nubila pressit;
> Fit fragor: hinc densi funduntur ab aethere nimbi.
> Nuntia Junonis varios induta colores
> Concipit Iris aquas, alimentaque nubibus adfert.
> Sternuntur segetes, & deplorata coloni
> Vota jacent; longique labor perit irritus anni.
>
> (262-273)

Dryden translated the passage thus :

> The Northern breath, that freezes Floods, he binds;
> With all the race of Cloud-dispelling Winds:
> The South he loos'd, who Night and Horror brings;
> And Foggs are shaken from his flaggy Wings.
> From his divided Beard, two Streams he pours,

His head and rhumy eyes, distill in showers.
With Rain his Robe and heavy Mantle flow;
And lazy mists, are lowring on his brow:
Still as he swept along, with his clench't fist
He squeez'd the Clouds, th' imprison'd Clouds resist:
The Skies from Pole to Pole, with peals resound;
And show'rs inlarg'd, come pouring on the ground.
Then, clad in Colours of a various dye,
Junonian Iris, breeds a new supply;
To feed the Clouds: Impetuous Rain descends;
The bearded Corn, beneath the Burden bends:
Defrauded Clowns, deplore their perish'd grain;
And the long labours of the Year are vain.

(356-373)

The South Wind is not presented here as anything which could be justly called an 'Allegorical' figure. Both poets' art has been lavished on something which is surely meant to be recognised and enjoyed in and for itself as a fictional and poetic creation. It is certainly a highly wrought piece of verbal art. Every vowel in Dryden's version is working to make a musical effect, and the surface of the verse is notable for its highly polished alliterative and antithetical verbal play.[1] The whole passage is, of course, touched with a humour that might at first sight seem inappropriate in a description of such an obviously destructive force. In this respect Dryden has actually extended his original, by the addition of the double beard (359), and by the way he draws on Spenser for the 'lowring' mists (362) and the 'flaggy' wings (358), and by the additional touch (365) where the clouds are made to resist the wind's

1. The passage might be a set piece for those very qualities desiderated by Pope in his Essay on Criticism, lines 337-383. See also California, IV, 715, line 355.

'squeeze' (but can't, of course, hold out for long).[1] But for all its humour, indeed through all its humour, the description is also very sensuously suggestive;[2] each joke is distilled from a palpable and precise observation from the real world - the way wings are shaken in the wind, the way moisture drips from drenched material, the way eyes, particularly old peoples' eyes, do exude rheum (another addition of Dryden's in l.360), the way a solid object (or, even more exactly, a sodden sponge) does resist the grip of a hand closing on it. I think our natural reaction on reading the passage is to be drawn by its detail and to find the description alerting our minds in all sorts of ways to exactly what the 'essence of wetness' might be like.[3] But even while we are attending to the humorous detail, and are finding the wind in some ways delightful, we don't, at the same time, forget its potentially destructive effect. Ovid's 'fancy' enables us to hold in our minds together more responses to the wind - responses that might otherwise seem incompatible - than a less 'witty' handling might allow. Whereas in normal human experience we quite often admit to being able to see the funny side of a calamity after the event, Ovid's wit allows us to apprehend

1. See FQ, III, vi, 39,7 : 'He flyes about, and with his flaggy wings.'
   I, xi, 10,1 : 'His flaggy wings when forth he did display.'
   'Lowring' is a favourite word of Spenser's.

2. Milton imitates the passage in PL, XI, 738-45 (quoted below). Milton's eighteenth-century commentator, Thomas Newton, preferred Milton's version (though he also admired Ovid) and pointed out that Milton needed to make the wind more majestic since it was the agent of God. See Paradise Lost ... A New Edition, With Notes of Various Authors, by Thomas Newton, D.D. (2 vols., London, 1749), II, 363.

3. H.Fränkel (Ovid, p.209) records a similar response to Ovid's original.

the humorous possibilities in the wind at the same time as we are seeing its power.

The extent to which Dryden's version depends for its effect on its precise sensuous detail and carefully controlled diction can be brought out neatly by a comparison with Sandys' much flatter version.[1]

> Rough Boreas in AEolian prison laid,
> And those drie blasts which gathered Clouds invade:
> Out flyes the South, with dropping wings; who shrouds
> His terrible aspect in pitchie clouds.
> His white haire stream's, his Beard big-swoln with showres;
> Mists bind his browes, Raine from his bosom poures,
> As with his hands the hanging clouds he crusht:
> They roar'd, and downe in showres together rusht.
> All-colour'd Iris, Iuno's messenger,
> To weeping Clouds doth nourishment confer.
> The Corne is lodg'd, the Husband-men despaire;
> Their long years labour lost, with all their care.
>
> (pp.6-7)

The description of the South Wind must, of course, be seen properly in relation to that of the flood which immediately follows it. This is one of the passages in the Metamorphoses which, as we have seen, had been objected to from the earliest times for its trivialising of the seriousness of its subject by 'pueriles ineptiae'. Addison re-iterated the younger Seneca's remarks at greater length when discussing Milton's adaptation of Ovid's episode for his portrayal of Noah's flood in Book XI of Paradise Lost:

> As it is visible, that the Poet had his Eye upon Ovid's account of the univeral Deluge, the Reader may observe with how much Judgment he has avoided every thing that is redundant or puerile in the Latin Poet. We do not here see the Wolf swimming among the Sheep, nor any of those wanton Imaginations which Seneca found fault with,

1. On which Dryden nevertheless draws. It is interesting to note how Dryden has here expunged, for the benefit of his English readers, many of Ovid's mythological references, which Sandys religiously preserves.

> as unbecoming the great Catastrophe of Nature. If our Poet has imitated that Verse in which Ovid tells us, that there was nothing but Sea, and that this Sea had no Shoar to it, he has not set the Thought in such a light as to incur the Censure which Criticks have passed upon it. The latter part of that Verse in Ovid is idle and superfluous; but just and beautiful in Milton.
>
> Jamque mare & tellus nullum discrimen habebant,
> Nil nisi pontus erat deerant quoque littora ponto. Ovid
>
> ...Sea cover'd Sea,
> Sea without Shoar... Milton.
>
> In Milton the former part of the Description does not forestall the latter. How much more great and solemn on this occasion is that which follows in our English Poet,
>
> ... And in their palaces
> Where luxury late reign'd, Sea Monsters whelp'd
> And Stabl'd ...
>
> than that in Ovid, where we are told, that the Sea Calfs lay in those places where the Goats were used to browze? The Reader may find several other Parallel Passages in the Latin and English Description of the Deluge, wherein our Poet has visibly the Advantage. The Sky's being over-charged with Clouds, the descending of the Rains, the rising of the Seas, and the appearance of the Rainbow, are such Descriptions as every one must take notice of.[1]

It is true that Milton expunges Ovid's jokes in his treatment of the flood, but what is perhaps even more striking is the extent to which (as Addison himself and other commentators have observed) he has nevertheless drawn so many of his details from the Roman poet:

> Meanwhile the Southwind rose, and with black wings
> Wide hovering, all the Clouds together drove
> From under Heav'n; the Hills to their supplie
> Vapour, and Exhalation dusk and mdst,
> Sent up amain; and now the thick'nd Skie

1. The Spectator, No.363, Saturday April 26th, 1712. See The Spectator, ed. Bond, III, 363-4.

Like a dark Ceeling stood; down rush'd the Rain
Impetuous, and continu'd till the Earth
No more was seen; the floating Vessel swum
Uplifted; and secure with beaked prow
Rode tilting o're the Waves, all dwellings else
Flood overwhelmd, and them with all thir pomp
Deep under water rould; Sea cover'd sea,
Sea without shoar; and in thir Palaces
Where luxurie late reign'd, Sea-monsters whelp'd
And stabl'd; [1]

(XI. 738-752)

Dryden, by contrast, has in his rendering, despite what was said in the Essay of Dramatic Poesie, relished every opportunity for humour which Ovid's account afforded him:

...hi redeunt, ac fontibus ora relaxant:
Et defraenato vulvuntur in aequora cursu.
Ipse tridente suo terram percussit: at illa
Intremuit, motuque sinus patefecit aquarum.
Exspatiata ruunt per apertos flumina campos;
Cumque satis arbusta simul, pecudesque, virosque,
Tectaque, cumque suis rapiunt penetralia sacris.
Si qua domus mansit, potuitque resistere tanto
Indejecta malo; culmen tamen altior hujus
Unda tegit, pressaeque labant sub gurgite turres.
Jamque mare & tellus nullum discrimen habebant.
Omnia pontus erant. deerant quoque littora ponto.
Occupat hic collem: cymbâ sedet alter aduncâ,
Et ducit remos illic, ubi nuper ararat.
Ille supra segetes, aut mersae culmina villae,
Navigat: hic summâ piscem deprendit in ulmo.
Figitur in viridi (si Fors tulit) anchora prato:
Aut subjecta terunt curvae vineta carinae.
Et, modo qua graciles gramen carpsere capellae,
Nunc ibi deformes ponunt sua corpora phocae.
Mirantur sub aquâ lucos, urbesque, domosque
Nereïdes: silvasque tenent delphines, & altis
Incursant ramis, agitataque robora pulsant.
Nat lupus inter oves: fulvos vehit unda leones:

1. Dryden, it will be noted, has drawn on Milton's 'Sea-monsters' (751) and 'Palaces' (750) for his 'Monsters' (410) and 'the Palace' (412), neither of which are strict equivalents for the words of the Latin.

Unda vehit tigres. nec vires fulminis apro,
Crura nec ablato prosunt velocia cervo.
Quaesitisque diu terris, ubi sidere detur,
In mare lassatis volucris vaga decidit alis.
Obruerat rumulos immensa licentia ponti,
Pulsabantque novi montana cacumina fluctus.
Maxima pars undâ rapitur: quibus unda pepercit,
Illos longa domant inopi jejunia victu.

(281-312)

The Floods, by Nature Enemies to Land,
And proudly swelling with their new Command,
Remove the living Stones, that stopt their way,
And gushing from their Source, augment the Sea.
Then, with his Mace, their Monarch struck the Ground:)
With inward trembling, Earth receiv'd the wound;)
And rising streams a ready passage found.)
Th' expanded Waters gather on the Plain:
They flote the Fields, and over-top the Grain;
Then rushing onwards, with a sweepy sway,
Bear Flocks and Folds, and lab'ring Hinds away.
Nor safe their Dwellings were, for, sap'd by Floods,
Their Houses fell upon their Household Gods.
The solid Piles, too strongly built to fall,
High o're their Heads, behold a watry Wall:
Now Seas and Earth were in confusion lost;
A World of Waters, and without a Coast.
One climbs a Cliff; one in his Boat is born;
And Ploughs above, where late he sow'd his Corn.
Others o're Chimney tops and Turrets row,
And drop their Anchors, on the Meads below:
Or downward driv'n, they bruise the tender Vine,
Or tost aloft, are knock't against a Pine.
And where of late, the Kids had cropt the Grass,
The Monsters of the deep, now take their place.
Insulting Nereids on the Cities ride,
And wondring Dolphins o're the Palace glide.
On leaves and masts of mighty Oaks they brouze;
And their broad Finns, entangle in the Boughs,
The frighted Wolf, now swims amongst the Sheep;
The yellow Lyon wanders in the deep:
His rapid force, no longer helps the Boar:
The Stag swims faster, than he ran before.
The Fowls, long beating on their Wings in vain,
Despair of Land, and drop into the Main.
Now Hills and Vales, no more distinction know;
And levell'd Nature, lies oppress'd below.
The most of Mortals perish in the Flood:
The small remainder dies for want of Food.

(386-424)

'Non est res satis sobria lascivire devorato orbe terrarum', remarked the younger Seneca of this passage, expressing what I suppose must have been the most perplexing feature of Ovid's description for serious pagan as well as Christian readers - the absence both of any evident compassion for or empathy with the victims of the flood, or of any attempt (such as Milton's) to place the flood within a moral or theological framework which, even if it might not make the disaster less horrific, would at least set it in a context where it could be seen as part of a rational scheme of things. Instead of sympathy we have jokes, and Ovid's Jove simply wipes out Man (or rather allows the elements to wipe him out) so that he can try his hand again after the first disaster.

And in his version Dryden, adds those touches which stress the waves' natural and irrational enmity to land (385) and which liken the waves, humorously, to newly-promoted 'N.C.O's' (386) or 'sappers' (396), here (as we have seen him doing before) drawing on his own observations of a civil disorder which he had elsewhere referred to in his work with deep horror to emphasise the lack of any order or control in what is happening.

At the point when Jove releases the waves by striking the ground with his mace we even have an echo of the supremely tragic moment of Eve's fall in Paradise Lost, but here, instead of the wounded earth registering its agony at the event which has happened, the earth in Ovid is all-too-willing to co-operate with the ensuing destruction.[1] The vigorous gusto of the waves in full flight is captured in a cadence which Dryden later

1. cf. PL, IX, 782.

used almost verbatim in his version of Virgil's Georgics.[1] But as well as the vigorous action, Dryden has also stressed in his rendering the highly 'turned' nature of Ovid's verse. In ll.402-3

> One climbs a Cliff; one in his Boat is born;
> And Ploughs above, where late he sow'd his Corn.

Dryden both adds a joke (in the 'Ploughs' - 'sow'd' antithesis) and also shows that he has his eye as firmly as Ovid on the actual scene being portrayed (it's merely a hill, not a cliff, that's being climbed in the Latin). Several touches elsewhere in the passage (e.g. 'bruise' (406), 'knock't' (407), 'entangle' (413)) confirm that Dryden saw that there was a crucial connection between the jokes and his imagining what might be the actual effects of such a disaster. Ovid's jokes, Dryden's version suggests, allow us to dwell very precisely on the

1. The First Georgic, 651-2 :

> And rolling onward, with a sweepy Sway,
> Bore Houses, Herds, and lab'ring Hinds away.

bizarre effects which water covering land would produce.[1] It is the Ovidian eye for such telling detail that presumably appealed to Milton, and struck him as sufficiently probable to include in an account of a flood which he himself believed to be both an historical fact and a work of God.

1. Again, Classical scholars have made similar remarks about the original. See, for example O.S.Due, Changing Forms (Copenhagen, 1974), p.109. The bizarre effects of the flood are epitomised, as it were, by Dryden in ll.402-3 :

> Now Seas and Earth were in confusion lost,
> A World of Waters, and without a Coast.

Dryden could have drawn the phrase 'A World of Waters' from Milton (PL, III,11 : 'The rising world of waters dark and deep') or from Spenser (FQ, I, 39, 2 : '...through the world of waters wide and deepe'). It is interesting to note that Samuel Johnson later took the phrase and put it into the mouth of Imlac in Chapter IX of Rasselas :

> "When I first entered upon the world of waters,
> and lost sight of land, I looked round about me
> with pleasing terrour, and thinking my soul
> enlarged by the boundless prospect, imagined that
> I could gaze round for ever without satiety;"
>
> (Murphy, III, 323-4)

A recent commentator on Rasselas has commented, apparently without knowledge of the phrase's origin :

> The abstraction, or intellectualisation, in
> Johnson's diction, converting the sea into a
> 'boundless prospect' and a 'barren uniformity',
> gives the plainest image a symbolic power; and
> the phrase 'the world of waters' sums up the
> fusion of ideas.

See Ian White, 'On Rasselas', The Cambridge Quarterly, 6 (1972), 6-31. The phrase has, I believe, a similarly suggestive effect in Dryden.

What Dryden's version also suggests, I think, is that Ovid's witty mode of presentation has the effect of carefully controlling the nature of our involvement with the victims of the flood, thus allowing us to focus on the event, we might say, as a phenomenon rather than a disaster, but not coldly or in a spirit of Schadenfreude. Though the wit prevents us from identifying with the flood victims, from seeing the events from their point of view, or from quite imagining ourselves there, it also liberates our minds to entertain other observations about the nature of the flood and its effects, ones equally important and true in their way, but ones which most literary handlings of the subject would inevitably have to exclude. As with the South Wind, we are enabled to see what would normally be a portentous disaster in a perspective which allows us to take a curious (in both senses) delight in such events.

We might be tempted in the light of these observations, to carry a little further the line of speculation suggested earlier, and to make some connections between the kind of interest Dryden seems to have found in Ovid's South Wind and Flood and the perspective on human activity recommended by Lucretius in the passage from his Second Book quoted (in Dryden's translation) on p. 164.

Certain poems by Horace and Lucretius had, as we saw in the last Chapter, provided Dryden around 1684 with both support and extension for his own diagnoses of the vanities of life, and had thereby enabled him to develop, in the versions which he made of them, a securer imaginative sense of what might constitute life's true goods. In the Ovid of the Metamorphoses, I would suggest, Dryden discovered a poetic temperament of an extraordinary kind, able to attend with minute interest and curiosity to the details of both human and natural conduct (and to take cognisance of so many different possibilities in 'the Laws of Nature') while at the same time having the capacity to remain in some ways detached from, and uninvolved in, that conduct, in such a way that allowed him to take delight in, rather than lament, or feel the bitter pathos of, the continuous change and flux which he observed to be 'Nature's Law'. Thus Ovid's poetry, for all its strangeness, can be seen as verse which has achieved, and which allows in the reader, an imaginative accommodation to the painfulness and vicissitudes of experience, thus enabling one to savour and take delight in every moment of life, even its hardships, in much the way that we have seen Montaigne doing in some of his later essays. It is such an overall conception of the Metamorphoses which, I would suggest, has allowed Dryden to respond so warmly to the humour those sections of The First Book which treat primal Chaos and the South Wind and the Flood. It hardly needs saying, however, that such an imaginative perspective requires a supremely delicate poise from the poet, and I shall be arguing later that at this date, Dryden seems sometimes to have responded more in his renderings to the strangeness of Ovid's vision than to its unexpected beauty. Nevertheless, what he has achieved in Examen Poeticum gives us confidence to

believe that it was an interest of broadly this kind that came to draw him more and more to the poem in the 1690's.

In his (possibly slightly dishonest) remarks on Sandys' Ovid in the Dedication to Examen Poeticum, Dryden commented that 'the greatest part' of 'Ovid's Poetry' had 'evaporated' in Sandys' version, and remarked of his own renderings :

> I have...given him his own turns, both on the Words and on the Thought; Which I cannot say are inimitable, because I have Copyed them: and so may others, if they use the same diligence: But certainly they are wonderfully Graceful in this Poet.[1]
>
> (Kinsley, II, 796)

I hope enough has already been done in this Chapter to clarify the connection between these two thoughts. 'Ovid's Poetry', the overall spirit and perspective on things to be found in his work, was now seen

1. Dryden remarks (Kinsley, II, 796) that he hadn't read Sandys' translation since he was a boy. However, he echoes it constantly in his own version. The California editors (IV, 702) interpret his remark as a tactical lie. However, as we saw in Chapter One, it is just possible that Dryden had retained large chunks of Sandys in his memory from schooldays. Also, though he used both editions of Sandys' translation (sometimes during the course of one episode) for the Ovid versions in Fables (thereby demonstrating conclusively that he must, at least, have re-read Sandys before 1699 - he could hardly have known both editions by heart) there is no evidence that he used any other than the 1632 edition of Sandys (or one of its derivatives) for Examen Poeticum.

by Dryden, in the act of translating, to be inseparable from his witty surface, and the 'turns' were seen to be, at their best, not just 'glittering Trifles', but verbal figures which allowed and created the reader a particular, and valuable, set of mental responses to the subject being treated.[1]

1. Dryden's phrase in the Preface to Fables . In Ovid's Metamorphoses : An Introduction to the Basic Aspects (Oxford , 1975), Professor G.Karl Galinsky suggests that the main effect of the 'turns' is to 'make the reader aware of the controlling presence of the poet' (p.21) who thus 'makes his own presence felt and forces the reader to think of Ovid, the ranconteur' (p.20). I hope the cumulative effect of the argument of this chapter will suggest that Dryden, at least, saw Ovid's 'turns' as having a rather broader and more complex function, one which creates a perspective on the substance of the tale itself rather than simply putting the focus (in the manner of some novels) on the mediating consciousness of the teller.

(v) Ovid's gods

In his rendering of Ovid's gods we have ample confirmation that Dryden saw the universe which Ovid had depicted in the Metamorphoses as decidedly amoral and unMiltonic, a universe with no-one firmly in control, and with gods who are in no sense paragons of virtue.

Throughout his critical prose, Dryden, like many other literary men of his day, was constantly in two minds about the very possibility of a modern poet being able to make proper use of the Classical gods in his work, or being able to draw for his 'machinery' on the figures of the Christian religion. While feeling drawn to the 'gods and spirits' which 'compose the most noble parts' of many of the writers whom he most admired, he also was conscious of the dangers of becoming merely derivative, or of falling into absurdities, if one used the Olympians.[1] He had also taken to heart Boileau's reservations about using Christian 'machinery'.[2] He was later to have his fears amply confirmed when he saw how ineptly the gods had been handled by Sir Richard Blackmore in his Prince Arthur (1695) and King Arthur (1697).[3]

1. 'Of Heroic Plays. An Essay', Scott, IV, 21. Watson (i, 160) suggests (fn.3) that Dryden's remarks here are merely a tactical reply to Davenant, and that his later reservations about 'machinery' represent his 'real opinion'. But this, I would suggest, omits the very important evidence of the poems themselves.
2. As expressed in L'Art Poétique. See lines 587-671 of the Soame/Dryden version (Kinsley, I, 348-350). For Dryden's own thoughts on the subject, see the 'Discourse concerning Satire' (Scott, XII, 22-30) and Letters, ed. Ward, p.71.
3. As he remarked in the Preface to Fables (Kinsley, IV, 1462).

But, as in the case of his writing on translation, and his remarks on certain authors, Dryden's critical prose was not always fully adequate to convey, or even recognise, the discoveries he had made, or would later make, in the act of poetical composition itself. For, as has been recently pointed out, several years before Dryden was admitting defeat in prose on the seemingly impossible subject of the Classical gods, he had produced, in some of the translations published in Sylvae, portrayals of the gods written with such evident warmth that it is impossible to view them merely as neo-classical trappings.[1]

Dryden seems to have been particularly attracted in these episodes, and later in his version of the Georgics, to the potential Lucretius and Virgil had found in their portrayal of certain Roman deities for depiciting a sexuality which is powerful enough to rule all Nature (and overthrow the rule of Reason in both the human and divine worlds) but also ludicrous and comic in some of its effects. Lucretius and Virgil, Dryden suggests in these renderings, had used the traditional Olympian personages to telling creative effect, as pointers to important and paradoxical truths about sexual behaviour which we can all recognise. And whatever he said in his prose, Dryden's interest in the imaginative possibilities presented by the Classical gods was clearly developing rather than diminishing in the poetry he was writing in the 1690's, notably in such poems as Alexander's Feast and the translation of The First Book of Homer's Ilias.

His interest cannot, I think, be simply attributed to the potential he saw in these deities for burlesque . For while the Classical gods

1. See T.A.Mason, Dryden's Chaucer, Chapter 3, Sect.4.

are often portrayed in Dryden's later poetry as comic figures, the poetry often works to enforce and underline their power as well as the humour their behaviour gives rise to. In his version of The Speech of Venus to Vulcan, for example, we, the readers, are 'seduced' by the insinuating wiles of Venus as much as Mars was (Montaigne thought that this was the effect of Virgil's original too), and if Jove's Love is shown, in Alexander's Feast, to be something which makes him ridiculous, it is also the means whereby his divinity is revealed.

Dryden had been able in 1684, and was able again in the late 1690's, to portray the subject of 'divine sexuality' with sympathetic delight and to revel in its amorality. What seems to interest him in Ovid's portrayal of Jove is the contemplation and enjoyment of a figure who combines promiscuous lusts with formidable powers. Dryden's reflections on his own experiences as the favoured poet at the court of a King who was himself thought to be nearly as sexually prodigal as Chaucer's Chanticleer but who at the same time was the Lord's Anointed can only have assisted him in his imaginative relish of the 'divine sexuality' which he found portrayed in the Classical gods.[1] He was later to render, in his version of the first book of the Iliad, a Zeus who is seen simultaneously as a domestic-comedy husband with a 'roving eye' and as a formidable presence at whose words his wife 'sate mute with Fear' (764).[2] But Dryden's interest in such a Jove cannot, I

1. That the joke was a stock one can be seen from the notorious lampoon for which Rochester was temporarily expelled from court. See The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, ed. D.Vieth (New Haven and London, 1968) pp.60-61.

2. See H.A.Mason's discussion in To Homer through Pope (London, 1972), pp. 51-60.

think, be merely ascribed to his having simply identified in Homer or Ovid, or read into them inappropriately, his contemporary concerns. It seems to be more the case that he came to see in the antics of the Roman gods, as they had been portrayed by the poets, a creative expression of those same 'laws of Nature' which accounted for all the paradoxes which had for a long time interested him in the sexual and tyrannical behaviour of monarchs.

Though Dryden's mind is, again, often travelling to Milton when talking about Jove, he is clearly not attempting to assimilate Ovid's god to the Father of Paradise Lost. Indeed, one question we might well ask ourselves after a reading of The First Book is whether Dryden intends us to see Jove in the poem as an omnipotent immortal or an impotent tyrant. At various places in the translation he seems to be endowed with a genuine power and majesty, for example at the moment where he destroys the giants. Here Dryden has drawn on the higher registers of the language of Paradise Lost to enhance the portentous nature of the events being portrayed.[1]

> Neve foret terris securior arduus aether;
> Affectasse ferunt regnum caeleste Gigantas:
> Altaque congestos struxisse ad sidera montes.
> Tum pater omnipotens misso perfregit Olympum
> Fulmine, & excussit subjecto Pelio Ossam.
>
> (151-155)

> Nor were the Gods themselves more safe above;
> Against beleaguer'd Heav'n, the Gyants move:
> Hills pil'd on Hills, on Mountains, Mountains lie,
> To make their mad approaches to the Skie.

1. Cf. PL, I, 175 (noted by California and Kinsley), II, 170ff.

> Till Jove, no longer patient, took his time
> T' avenge with Thunder their audacious Crime;
> Red Light'ning plaid, along the Firmament,
> And their demolish't Works to pieces rent.
>
> (193-200)

Dryden similarly draws on Milton at the moment where Jove is about to address the assembled gods :

> When all were plac'd, in Seats distinctly known,
> And he, their Father, had assum'd the Throne,
> Upon his Iv'ry Sceptre first he leant,
> Then shook his Head, that shook the Firmament:
> Air, Earth, and Seas, obey'd th' Almighty nod:
> And with a gen'ral fear, confess'd the God.
> At length with Indignation, thus he broke
> His awful silence, and the Pow'rs bespoke.
> I was not more concern'd in that debate
> Of Empire, when our Universal State
> Was put to hazard, and the Giant Race
> Our Captive Skies, were ready to imbrace:
> For tho' the Foe was fierce, the Seeds of all
> Rebellion, sprung from one Original;
> Now, wheresoever ambient waters glide,
> All are corrupt, and all must be destroy'd.
>
> (229-244)

Again, Ovid's Jove is touched in Dryden's rendering with attributes of the Miltonic God. 'Their Father' (230) is Dryden's addition. The couplet immediately preceding Jove's speech (substantially expended from Ovid's 1.181) is written in a deliberate imitation of several similar circumstances in Milton's epics, and the opening of the speech itself is invested with the sweeping grandeur of a Miltonic period, and cast in language much of which had been charged with a special significance by Milton.[1] The other gods acknowledge Jove with 'fear' (233 - another addition of Dryden's).

Yet this touch, and another one in the same passage, the three lines

1. Cf. PL, I, 83; IX, 895; PR, IV, 43.

> Upon his Iv'ry Sceptre first he leant,
> Then shook his Head, that shook the Firmament:
> Air, Earth, and Seas, obey'd th' Almighty nod;
>
> (291-3)

seem also to accommodate other possible ways of looking at Jove than that of solemn reverence. By the 'turn' which he introduces in l.232, Dryden indicates that he takes Ovid's imitation (179-80) of the famous nod of Homer's Zeus to be, if not openly comic, at least not entirely solemn.[1] And is the other gods' 'fear' of Jove that due to a righteous God or that felt towards a tyrant who happens to be in command at that moment? Jove's power is, we know from elsewhere in the poem, by no means absolute or permanent. He has himself deposed 'Good Saturne' (144) after whose reign his is a decline, a 'Silver Age' which is given in Dryden's version some of the attributes of Milton's portrayal of life after the Fall.[2] And even though he declares (256) that as he has heaven and earth at his command, he chooses the flood as a way of wiping out mankind, since he fears that if he starts a fire he might burn heaven down![3] As we have seen, his governing of the waves in the flood can hardly be described as 'control'. His fellow gods, contemplating the future holocaust, show an almost Lucretian lack of pity for Man, and seem most worried about the neglect of their worship that will ensue.[4] Jove's divine assembly is a 'General Council' (214 : Dryden here working in a sly allusion to

1. See A.G.Lee, ed., P.Ovidi Nasonis Metamorphoseon, Liber I (Cambridge, 1953), p.93, for Ovid's, and other Roman poets', imitations of Iliad, I, 528-30 .
2. Cf. PL, X, 651ff.; 668-75; 1060.
3. Cf. lines 349-50 with PL, I, 742; II, 1049.
4. Captured in the pun on 'waste' in line 333, where Dryden leaves it deliberately ambiguous whether they're worried about the devastation or merely the gap that man's destruction will leave.

Cromwellian times). His court is a place of modern 'class-distinction' (222-225) not a million miles (spiritually if not geographically), Dryden suggests, from one much better-known to his readers :

> This place, as far as Earth with Heav'n may vie,
> I dare to call the Loovre of the Skie.
>
> (227-8)

Scott objected to this touch, and others like it in Dryden's translations:

> These expressions, proper to modern manners, often produce an unfortunate confusion between the age in which the scene is laid, and the date of the translation. No judicious poet is willing to break the interest of a tale of ancient times, by allusions peculiar to his own period; but when the translator, instead of identifying himself as closely as possible with the original author, pretends to such liberty, he removes us a third step from the time of action, and so confounds the manners of no less than three distinct areas, - that in which the scene is laid, that in which the poem was written, and that, finally, in which the translation was executed.
>
> (I.512-3)

Ovid had, however, himself alluded at the equivalent point in his text (176) to the 'Palatia', thus confusing himself two of Scott's 'distinct areas', and I think it can be argued that Dryden has here replaced Sandys' mere 'updating' of Ovid's 'Palatia' ('Heaven's White-Hall') with a much more pointed touch and one which concentrates in itself the ambivalence which Dryden seems to have felt throughout his version about Ovid's Jove.[1]

Englishmen of Dryden's day would, of course, have readily picked up the implication that 'vying with Heaven' was just what the hated Louis was trying to do; the more perceptive of them would also have registered

1. Dryden had remembered Sandys' joke in 1682. See Kinsley, I, 262-3.

how precisely and wittily Dryden has imputed some of the characteristics of Louis' palace to Jove's - the Louvre being a palace just like that which Ovid gives Jove (a grand building surrounded by lesser ones). And they would also surely have recognised another resemblance - that, though French, it was genuinely grander than anything that this side of the Channel could boast at that date. Dryden's selection of the Louvre, then, would appear to be not, as Scott suggested, merely a piece of rather unfortunate updating, but entirely in tune with the wittily ambivalent stance which Dryden has taken up throughout in portraying Ovid's Jove.

Jove's blend of arbitrary power and absolute immorality is also shown in his role in the Io story at the end of The First Book as 'th'Almighty Leacher'. In his introduction to the 1717 Metamorphoses Sir Samuel Garth wryly observed,

> I was once representing the Metamorphoses, as an excellent System of Morality; but an illustrious Lady, whose least Advantage above her Sex, is that of being one of the greatest Princesses in Europe, objected, that the loose and immodest Sallys of Jupiter did by no means confirm my Assertion.
>
> (p.xv)

Dryden has emphasised Jove's lechery, first, in the way he renders the moment in Ovid where the god first approaches Io :

> ...pete, dixerat, umbras
> Altorum nemorum, (& nemorum monstraverat umbras)
> Dum calet, & medio Sol est altissimus orbe.
> Quod si sola times latebras intrare ferarum;
> Praeside tuta Deo nemorum secreta subibis:
> Nec de plebe Deo, sed qui caelestia magnâ
> Sceptra manu teneo; sed qui vaga fulmina mitto.
>
> (590-596)

In Dryden's version, Jove's words become more clearly a 'Royal invitation'. And by converting the parenthesis in Ovid's line 591 into direct speech Dryden allows us to imagine and enjoy the scene more precisely, capturing the swagger and generosity of the Royal 'proposal'; but at the same time we are reminded of Jove's power, the power we have seen him exercise earlier in the poem :

> The King of Gods, nor is thy Lover less,
> Invites thee to yon cooler Shades; to shun
> The scorching Rays of the Meridian Sun.
> Nor shalt thou tempt the dangers of the Grove
> Alone, without a Guide; thy Guide is Jove.
> No puny Pow'r, but he whose high Command
> Is unconfin'd, who rules the Seas and Land;
> And tempers Thunder in his awful hand.
>
> (805-812)

Dryden has further played up Jove's lechery in the way he has deftly exploited the language of Restoration domestic comedy at the moment where Juno finds her husband absent:[1] for her, such escapades are obviously an everyday occurrence; even the fields where Jove is roaming are (an extra joke in Dryden's version) 'fruitful':

> Mean time the jealous Juno, from on high,
> Survey'd the fruitful Fields of Arcady:
> And wonder'd that the mist shou'd over-run
> The face of Day-light, and obscure the Sun.
> No Nat'ral cause she found, from Brooks, or Bogs,
> Or marshy Lowlands, to produce the Fogs:
> Then round the Skies she sought for Jupiter;
> Her faithless Husband; but no Jove was there:
> Suspecting now the worst, or I, she said,
> Am much mistaken, or am much betray'd.
>
> (820-829)

1. As he was later to do at the end of The First Book of Homer's Ilias. J.Warton remarked on Jove's 'Dame, rest secure' (1024) : 'A vulgar form indeed, unworthy of the god'. See The Poetical Works of John Dryden... with notes by the Rev.Joseph Warton, D.D., etc. (London, 1883)

But if Dryden's interest in Ovid's Jove is in portraying a god who is simultaneously a powerful tyrant and an old lecher, he found in the figure of Ovid's Apollo an opportunity for portraying the irresistable and delightful force of youthful sexuality that had attracted him in Sylvae and was to form a major centre of interest in the Fables.

From the beginning of the tale, Dryden has created with a great sureness of touch the attractiveness of the young god, his 'immortal childishness' (613-20) and the heated sexual desire which possesses him. He has allowed us to feel the impulses behind Apollo's passion all the more tellingly, by expanding his portrayal of Daphne, the would-be servant of Diana, with small touches reminiscent of the famous portrayal of Venus in the first book of the Aeneid :

> ... fugit altera nomen amantis,
> Silvarum latebris captivarumque ferarum
> Exuviis gaudens, innuptaeque aemula Phoebes,
> Vitta coërcebat positos sine lege capillos.
> Multi illam petiêre: illa aversata petentes,
> Impatiens expersque viri, ...
>
> (474-479)

> The scornful Damsel shuns his loath'd Embrace:
> In hunting Beasts of Prey, her Youth employs;
> And Phoebe Rivals in her rural Joys.
> With naked Neck she goes, and Shoulders bare;
> And with a Fillet binds her flowing Hair.
> By many Suitors sought, she mocks their pains,
> And still her vow'd Virginity maintains.
> Impatient of a Yoke, the name of Bride
> She shuns, and hates the Joys she never try'd.[1]
>
> (636-644)

1. Lines 639 and 642-3 are considerably expanded by Dryden, Virgil's passage (Aen.I, 314ff) was a favourite of Dryden's. He later drew on it in Cymon and Iphigenia and Meleager and Atalanta. Spenser had imitated the passage in his portrayal of Belphoebe (FQ, ii, 3, 22ff), and Dryden drew on this rendering (as well as the original) for Cymon.

And he has also strengthened Ovid's suggestion that her rejection of his love is in some ways <u>unnatural</u>:

> ... votoque tuo tua forma repugnat.
>
> (489)

> For so much Youth, and so much Beauty joyn'd
> Oppos'd the State, which her desires design'd.
>
> (659-660)

He also allows us, even more than Ovid, to see Daphne's allurements from Apollo's point of view:

> Sic Deus in flammas abiit: sic pectore toto
> Uritur, & sterilem sperando nutrit amorem.
> Spectat inornatos collo pendere capillos.
> Et, Quid si comantur? ait. videt igne micantes
> Sideribus similes oculos. videt oscula; quae non
> Est vidisse satis. laudat digitosque, manusque,
> Brachiaque, & nudos mediâ plus parte lacertos.
> Siqua latent, meliora putat...
>
> (495-502)

> So burns the God, consuming in desire,
> And feeding in his Breast a fruitless Fire:
> Her well-turn'd Neck he view'd (her Neck was bare)
> And on her Shoulders her dishevel'd Hair;
> Oh were it comb'd, said he, with what a grace
> Wou'd every waving Curl, become her Face!
> He view'd her Eyes, like Heavenly Lamps that shone,
> He view'd her Lips, too sweet to view alone,
> Her taper Fingers, and her panting Breast;)
> He praises all he sees, and for the rest)
> Believes the Beauties yet unseen are best:)
>
> (668-678)

All this makes his desire something much more than mere lechery, and Daphne is much more than the merely passive sufferer of arbitrarily-imposed torments that we see in Io. Dryden's description of Apollo's pursuit of Daphne humorously undercuts the assumed 'control' of the floridly boastful rhetoric with which he'd courted her.[1]

1. Emphasised by Dryden in lines 685ff, especially line 692.

She heard not half; so furiously she flies;
And on her Ear, th' imperfect accent dies.
Fear gave her Wings; and as she fled, the wind
Increasing, spread her flowing Hair behind:
And left her Legs and Thighs expos'd to view;
Which made the God more eager to pursue.
The God was young, and was too hotly bent
To lose his time in empty Compliment.
But led by Love, and fir'd with such a sight,
Impetuously pursu'd his near delight.

(709-718)

We are allowed to entertain more than one point of view both about the lusty young god and the fleeing maiden, and by this point in the tale our sense of the pervading, irresistable and now predatory love of Apollo and the delicate vulnerability of Daphne is inextricably bound up with the pace and vigour of the story itself, and the brisk race of Dryden's couplets. In the simile that immediately follows, Dryden recreates the drama of the moment by drawing on the country-language of his own day.[1]

As when th' impatient Greyhound slipt from far,
Bounds O're the Glebe to course the fearful Hare,
She in her speed, does all her safety lay;
And he with double speed pursues the Prey;
O're-runs her at the sitting turn, and licks
His Chaps in vain, and blows upon the Flix;
She scapes, and for the neighb'ring Covert strives,
And gaining shelter, doubts if yet she lives:
If little things with great we may compare,
Such was the God, and such the flying Fair.
She urg'd by fear, her feet did swiftly move;
But he more swiftly, who was urg'd by Love.
He gathers ground upon her in the chace:
Now breaths upon her Hair, with nearer pace;
And just is fast'ning on the wish'd Embrace.[2]

(719-733)

1. As Scott and other commentators point out, Dryden is here drawing on his earlier version of the same simile in Annus Mirabilis, 521-8.

2. l.730 is a very good example of a 'turn' which isn't merely a stylistic device, but which releases a genuine perception about, and perspective on, Apollo's behaviour.

All the resources of Dryden's art have thus here worked to create a situation of deadlock which could only be resolved, as it were, by a miracle. We would certainly not be satisfied with the rape of Daphne as a conclusion. But neither would the permanent and absolute frustration of Apollo's desires (which have been so warmly, even lovingly, rendered) be an acceptable ending to the story. The metamorphosis which follows provides just the resolution we want.[1] All the pleasures and interests of the tale, as they have been carefully prepared for us, come together in Daphne's transformation:[2] Daphne is required to give up her resistance with

1. A recent commentator on Marvell has written interestingly on the subject of 'resolution' in the Metamorphoses :

> ...there is a cumulative sense in the Metamorphoses of rest and relief in being changed out of human life... the speech of Pythagoras at the end of the Metamorphoses suggests that even though they mercifully lose human consciousness, the changed creatures remain part of the universal flux,...

See S.Shrapnel, The Poetry of Andrew Marvell (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Nottingham, 1971), p.105.
See also, H.Fränkel, Ovid : a Poet between two Worlds, p.78 :

> ...the miraculous metamorphosis remedied a defect which could never be healed in the natural world. The fabulous nature of the Metamorphoses made it possible to offer half-satisfactory solutions for situations which were entirely hopeless otherwise. Daphne's lover Apollo was likewise only half frustrated; he chose the laurel tree for his personal plant and has ever since been wearing a branch of it on his head. Thus Daphne was, in a way, wedded to the god after all.

2. Dryden has, it will be noticed, considerably strengthened the suggestion that the laurel also denotes poetic immortality.

her earthly life (though she retains essential aspects of her form) and Apollo his ardent lusts; she is serenely grateful for the new role which the god gives her :

> Scarce had she finish'd, when her Feet she found
> Benumm'd with cold, and fasten'd to the Ground:
> A filmy rind about her Body grows;
> Her Hair to Leaves, her Arms extend to Boughs:
> The Nymph is all into a Lawrel gone:
> The smoothness of her Skin, remains alone.
> Yet Phoebus loves her still, and casting round
> Her Bole, his Arms, some little warmth he found.
> The Tree still panted in th' unfinish'd part,
> Not wholly vegetive, and heav'd her Heart.
> He fixt his Lips upon the trembling Rind;
> It swerv'd aside, and his Embrace declin'd.
> To whom the God, because thou can'st not be
> My Mistress, I espouse thee for my Tree:
> Be thou the prize of Honour and Renown;
> The deathless Poet, and the Poem crown.
> Thou shalt the Roman Festivals adorn,
> And, after Poets, be by Victors worn.
> Thou shalt returning Caesar's Triumph grace;
> When Pomps shall in a long Procession pass.
> Wreath'd on the Posts before his Palace wait;
> And be the sacred Guardian of the Gate.
> Secure from Thunder, and unharm'd by Jove,
> Unfading as th' immortal Pow'rs above:
> And as the locks of Phoebus are unshorn,
> So shall perpetual green thy Boughs adorn.
> The grateful Tree was pleas'd with what he sed;
> And shook the shady Honours of her Head.
>
> (742-769)

(vi) The 'Inhumane Human' and the bizarre effects of love

One main stimulus behind Dryden's decision to translate the whole of The First Book in 1692 (where his custom hitherto had been to translate only those short episodes from Classical poets in which he had developed a special interest) was, I have suggested, the desire to lay the foundation-stone of the complete English Metamorphoses then being planned. The choice of the other two episodes (from Ovid's books IX and XIII) which he included in Examen Poeticum, and which I have suggested he had already completed before sending Tonson the completed First Book, might be thought to provide some helpful clues as to the special interests which first drew him again to Ovid's poem. I shall devote this last section to two interrelated interests of this kind which are prominent in these episodes but which are also evident in places in The First Book. Both are interests which had existed in Dryden's other work before he re-discovered the Metamorphoses, but which the act of translation gave him ample scope to develop and extend.

One set of reflections which Ovid's poem seems to have encouraged in Dryden (as we have seen in The First Book), and which became one of the central preoccupations of his last volume, the Fables, concerns the problem of man's 'humanity' and the factors that might be thought (rightly or wrongly) to differentiate him from the beasts. Just as Montaigne had questioned in some of his Essays the superiority which Man affects towards the animals, and took delight in revealing the many ways in which this superiority could appear a mere illusion, Dryden seems to have found in the experience of translating Ovid's stories various opportunities for imaginative portrayal of 'the beast in man', and of the various ways in

which Man's conduct can be illuminated by exploring the circumstances in which it comes nearest to that of the animals or to the monstrous.[1]

In particular he discovered in Ovid another treatment of the subject that had so interested him in others of his favourite Roman poets (such as Lucretius, or the Virgil of the Georgics) - that Man comes nearest to the beasts in the area of love. This thought, put baldly, could, of course, be the basis of a cynical or nihilistic treatment, a Timon-like demonstration that Man is a mere beast and therefore disgusting, all his claims to dignity and lordship over the earth being just absurd delusions. In some of the Fables and Alexander's Feast Dryden seems to have had the confidence positively to revel in, and to portray with a genial delight, what we might call the 'gloriously absurd' way in which lovers behave. He was, for example, in his presentation of Alexander, able to extend to the treatment of human love some of the inclusiveness that we have seen him achieve in 1692 in portraying the figure of the divine lover, Apollo.

His imagination in Examen Poeticum, however, does seem also to have been captured by Ovid's portrayal of some of the more bizarre and less delightful resemblances between man and beast. This can be seen, for example, in his handling of the metamorphosis of Lycaon, where from the very start Dryden has stressed Lycaon's lack of some of the most valuable human qualities; Lycaon's door is 'Unhospitable' (285). Indeed, his whole way of receiving Jove is a grotesque inversion of the behaviour of some of the most touchingly 'humane' characters in Dryden - Evander, the Hind, and

1. For Montaigne's views, see particularly the Apology for Raymond de Sebonde.

Baucis and Philemon. Dryden plays up the horror of the story by stressing that the morsels which Lycaon offers Jove are 'mangl'd', and by the grim pun in ll.302-3,

> Some part he Roasts; then serves it up, so drest,
> And bids me welcome to this Humane Feast.

a pun which consciously exploits both the possible meanings of 'humane' (allowing the phrase to mean both 'a feast comprising the flesh of humans' and 'a feast lacking "humanity"'). The fact that the words are spoken by Jove lends them an extra significance still. He seems almost to be asking, 'What else can you expect from these humans?'. Dryden makes Lycaon's metamorphosis itself much more detailed than it is in the Latin, having prepared us, with Lycaon's 'grin' in l.288 for a transformation in which Lycaon's true character is revealed rather than being really changed.[1]

> The Tyrant in a fright, for shelter, gains
> The Neighb'ring Fields, and scours along the plains.
> Howling he fled, and fain he wou'd have spoke;
> But Humane Voice, his Brutal Tongue forsook.
> About his lips, the gather'd foam he churns,)
> And, breathing slaughters, still with rage he burns,)
> But on the bleating Flock, his fury turns.)
> His Mantle, now his Hide, with rugged hairs
> Cleaves to his back, a famish'd face he bears.
> His arms descend, his shoulders sink away,
> To multiply his legs for chace of Prey.
> He grows a Wolf, his hoariness remains,
> And the same rage in other Members reigns.
> His eyes still sparkle in a narr'wer space:
> His jaws retain the grin, and violence of face.
>
> (306-320)

Thus, when Jove declares, in Dryden's version (a phrase which has no equivalent in the Latin),

> Mankind's a Monster,

we recognise that the point of the story is being 'clinched' for us.

1. For Lycaon's grin, cf. line 320. This metamorphosis is discussed by W.Frost in Dryden and the Art of Translation (1955; rpt. New York , 1969), pp.60-61.

Though it would be dangerous to make too direct biographical connections here, it is tempting to speculate that there may be some relation (albeit a complex one) between the relish with which Dryden has recaptured Lycaon's 'monstrosity', and the way he has, earlier in The First Book, coloured and strengthened Ovid's portrayal of the Iron Age with thoughts suggested by meditation on his own times,[1] and the occasionally misanthropic outbursts which he was making in the early 1690's, such as this from the Examen Poeticum Dedication :

> . . . Why am I grown Old, in seeking so barren a Reward as Fame? The same Parts and Application, which have made me a Poet, might have rais'd me to any Honours of the Gown, which are often given to Men of as little Learning and less Honesty than my self. No Government has ever been, or ever can be, wherein Time-servers and Blockheads will not be uppermost. The Persons are only chang'd, but the same juglings in State, the same Hypocrisie in Religion, the same Self-Interest, and Mis-management, will remain for ever. Blood and Mony will be lavish'd in all Ages, only for the Preferment of new Faces, with old Consciences. There is too often a Jaundise in the Eyes of Great Men; they see not those they raise, in the same Colours with other Men. All whom they affect, look Golden to them; when the Gilding is only in their own distemper'd Sight. These Considerations, have given me a kind of Contempt for those who have risen by unworthy ways. I am not asham'd to be Little, when I see them so Infamously Great.
>
> (Kinsley, II, 790-791)

Later in the same Dedication Dryden actually refers to his own times as 'this Iron Age'.[2] Such outbursts (rare as they are) perhaps indicate that

1. And (cf. 184-192, 175-6) by the activities of Milton's devils. See PL, VI, 516-17 (noted in California). Similarly, the Golden Age is coloured with Horatian notions of 'content'. For line 129, Dryden has drawn on Spenser (FQ, V, Pr9, 5, almost verbatim) for his expression of the horrors of war.

2. Kinsley, II, 797.

Dryden had not, at this date, quite fully achieved the serenity he so desired.

The basic situation of The Fable of Acis Polyphemus and Galatea is summed up in a passage near the beginning, where Dryden's additions show that his mind was on matters in some ways close to those which he had identified in the Lycaon story:

> ...nempe ille immitis, & ipsis
> Horrendus silvis, & visus ab hospite nullo
> Impune, & magni cum Dîs contemtor Olympi;
> Quid sit amor sentit: nostrique cupidine captus
> Uritur; oblitus pecorum antrorumque suorum.
>
> (759-763)

> The Cyclops, who defi'd th' AEtherial Throne,
> And thought no Thunder louder than his own,
> The terrour of the Woods, and wilder far
> Than Wolves in Plains, or Bears in Forrests are,
> Th'Inhumane Host, who made his bloody Feasts
> On mangl'd Members, of his butcher'd Guests,
> Yet felt the force of Love, and fierce Desire,
> And burnt for me, with unrelenting Fire.
>
> (17-24)

If Dryden had been led to Ovid as part of his Lucretian programme 'to study Nature's Laws', it is clear that he had been led to discover in this particular episode the operations of Nature in all their peculiarity. That he certainly was making the connection with Lucretius and Ovid (and seeing that Ovid had done the same before him) is revealed in the way in which he invokes the 'fierce Desire' (Dryden's addition in l.23) which has overcome Polyphemus:

> ...pro quanta potentia regni
> Est, Venus alma, tui! ...
>
> (757-8)

Thee, Venus, thee, both Heav'n and Earth obey;
Immense thy Pow'r, and boundless is thy Sway.[1]
(15-16)

The results of Venus' 'boundless sway' are, of course, in this instance, comic and grotesque in the extreme, and Dryden has done everything he can to play up the humour of the 'Giant Lover', emphasising the ludicrousness of his comb (27) and his 'whistle' (57-61), making his tone seem (99-102) like a grotesque parody of Jove's 'patronage' in The First Book, rendering him (171-2) a 'contemptor divum'; the crowning absurdity is his calling Galatea 'inhumane' (188) for her disdaining of him.[2]

Yet while in a sense Venus is mocked by having such a one as Polyphemus as her servant, the effect of the humour is not merely to parody her power. His speech to Galatea is made, at some points, genuinely beautiful, and Dryden has emphasised this element in his version by building into his language delicate suggestions of modern love-poetry, and an almost Marvellian wit (110-111), and by colouring the picture which Polyphemus paints of his flocks and mode of life with touches of the Golden Age and the Horatian ideal of rural life which, as we have seen, he had himself

1. Cf. 'Lucretius The Beginning of the First Book' :
   Thee, Goddess thee, the clouds and tempests fear,
   And at thy pleasing presence disappear : (7-8)
   Dryden echoed the lines again in Palamon and Arcite, iii, 135. 'Alma Venus' is the opening phrase of line 2 of De Rerum Natura, and Ovid's audience would have presumably recognised the allusion immediately.

2. The 'dreadful hiss' of l.61 surely depends partly for its comic effect on our remembrance of PL., X, 508 : 'A dismal universal hiss, ...'

so seriously rendered in Sylvae.[1] The touches remain attractive, even while we are conscious all the time of who is speaking.

The metamorphosis which comes at the end of the Polyphemus story is, however, handled in a fairly peremptory way both by Dryden and Ovid - all the energy has gone into creating the situation rather than provoking thought about its consequences or resolution. This cannot be said, I think, about the other short episode from the Metamorphoses which Dryden included in Examen Poeticum, The Fable of Iphis and Ianthe.[2] The point of this story depends on our recognition that, however sophisticated the handling or remote the setting, the situation depicted therein has a definite basis in human experience, and is a situation which, we know, can give rise to great anguish and misery to those experiencing it. The choice of this episode was presumably Dryden's own, since it does not seem to have been traditionally one of the most famous sections of the Metamorphoses, and, unlike many of the episodes which Dryden translated, there had been, as far as I know, no previous separate translation or adaptation of the story in English.[3]

1. The introduction of the 'rising lilies' in 1.67 (not warranted by the Latin) perhaps owes something to Ben Jonson's widely imitated third stanza (beginning, 'Have you seen but a bright lily grow...') from A Celebration of Charis... 4. Her Triumph (Ben Jonson, Poems, ed. I.Donaldson [Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1975] p.133). For the 'Household Dainties' cf. 'From Horace, Epod. 2d.', ll.70,72. For the 'savage boar' cf. ibid., ll. 48-49.

2. The California editors remark, however (IV, 729) of both stories :

> The ultimate resolution of each dilemma is less interesting to Dryden than its intensification during the course of the story's retelling.

3. Sandys (1632 edition, pp. 334-5) uses it principally as a means of unloading his knowledge of Egyptian lore.

Scott's remarks on the poem stress the various ways in which Dryden has expanded and underlined Ovid's much 'cooler' handling of Iphis' predicament and her final transformation.[1]

> The story of Iphis in the Metamorphoses is much more bluntly told by the English poet than by Ovid. In short, where there was a latitude given for coarseness of description and expression, Dryden has always too readily laid hold of it.
>
> (Scott, I, 518)

The greater explicitness of Dryden's version, however, does not, I think, amount to anything we could justly call a greater prurience, even in the account of the final metamorphosis itself:

> Mater abit templo. sequitur comes Iphis euntem,
> Quam solita est, majore gradu: nec candor in ore
> Permanet; & vires augentur; & acrior ipse est
> Vultus: & incomtis brevior mensura capillis.
> Plusque vigoris adest, habuit quam foemina. jam, quae
> Foemina nuper eras, puer es.
>
> (785-790)

> Forth went the Mother with a beating Heart:
> Not much in fear, nor fully satisfi'd;
> But <u>Iphis</u> follow'd with a larger stride:
> The whiteness of her Skin forsook her Face;
> Her looks emboldn'd, with an awful Grace;
> Her Features and her Strength together grew;
> And her long Hair, to curling Locks withdrew.
> Her sparkling Eyes, with Manly Vigour shone,
> Big was her Voice, Audacious was her Tone.
> The latent Parts, at length reveal'd, began
> To shoot, and spread, and burnish into Man.
> The Maid becomes a Youth;
>
> (189-200)

Dryden's additions here seem not simply designed to produce a snigger. In inviting us to consider very carefully, both here and earlier in the poem, the potentially 'tricky' subject of just what it is that <u>does</u>

1. Confirmed by the California editors (IV, 731) who refer to ll.197-9 as 'Dryden's phallic and Restoration-like addition'.

differentiate male from female beauty, he has prepared us to see her transformation as an organic growth (almost a metamorphosis in the modern biological sense), and something which, for all its strangeness, we would want to call 'natural'. Iphis' transformation is a satisfying and miraculous resolution of a potentially painful dilemma that, for all its peculiarity, we can recognise as having a genuine basis in Nature.

Yet the successful handling of such a subject clearly depends on the poet having achieved a great deal of control in the precise degree of involvement which he allows us with the characters and situation. The very setting of the tale, among the quaint trappings of Egyptian religion, has the effect of removing it to a realm that is in some respects not quite our world, and Dryden has emphasised this by going to Spenser for some of his Egyptian detail.[1] He has also carefully followed Ovid's sceptical addition on the occasion of Telethusa's first vision, which teases the reader with whether the tale is to be accepted as 'fact' :

> Inachis ante torum, pompâ comitata suorum,
> Aut stetit, aut visa est.
>
> (686-7)

> She saw, or thought she saw, before her Bed
> A glorious Train, and Isis at their head :
>
> (31-32)

And the very order of events in the tale (Telethusa's vision of Isis coming immediately after Lygdus' declaration that their daughter, if they have one, must die) prepares us for the final resolution and prevents us

1. Cf. FQ.,v, 7, 4; v, 7, 13; v, 7, 6-7. For lines 182ff, Dryden is remembering Scene I of All for Love which itself derives from FQ., iii, 12, 3 and v, 7, 14. See R.N.Ringler, 'Dryden at the House of Busirane', English Studies, 49 (1968), 224-9.

from developing a tragic interest in Iphis. This frees the teller to present, in Iphis' speech, a 'turned' and witty portrayal of her dilemma which allows us to concentrate on the paradox of her predicament and the exact way in which it affects her thought-processes:

> And yet no Guards, against our Joys conspire;
> No jealous Husband, hinders our desire:
> My Parents are propitious to my Wish
> And she her self consenting to the bliss.
> All things concur, to prosper our Design:
> All things to prosper any Love but mine.
> And yet I never can enjoy the Fair:
> 'Tis past the Pow'r of Heav'n to grant my Pray'r.
> Heav'n has been kind, as far as Heav'n can be;
> Our Parents with our own desires agree,
> But Nature, stronger than the Gods above,
> Refuses her assistance to my love.
> She sets the Bar, that causes all my pain:
> One Gift refus'd, makes all their Bounty vain.
> And now the happy day is just at hand,
> To bind our Hearts in Hymen's Holy Band:
> Our Hearts, but not our Bodies: thus, accurs'd,
> In midst of water, I complain of thirst.
> Why com'st thou, Juno, to these barren Rites,
> To bless a Bed, defrauded of delights?
> Or why shou'd Hymen lift his Torch on high,
> To see two Brides in cold Embraces lye?
>
> (127-148)

Iphis' speech is not, I think, merely an example of 'Ovid the Rhetorician' frigidly concocting a 'test speech' for Iphis and pulling the appropriate forensic rabbits out of the hat. It is true that the witty handling prevents the kind of inwardness with the character that would be allowed, say, by a Shakespearian soliloquy, but it is also true that each 'turn' is based on a very precise psychological observation. The wit allows us to dwell on the effects of Iphis' passion rather than encouraging us to speculate on what might be the cause in Nature of such a predicament. By holding us back from engaging with her predicament in one way, Dryden can

allow us to see that predicament in other lights which a full empathy with the heroine would prevent, for example at the point in her speech where she gives away her true feelings :

> Know what thou art, and love as Maidens ought;
> And drive these Golden Wishes from thy thought.
> (123-124)

To summarise and conclude. A survey of the translations from the Metamorphoses which Dryden included in his Examen Poeticum suggests that he was drawn back to Ovid's poem for a variety of interrelated reasons. In particular, he seems to have been attracted by Ovid's detached point of view, his capacity to view events and experiences which would, in the normal course of life, seem overpoweringly traumatic with a cool but not callous loftiness or distance, which allows the reader to entertain simultaneously a wider spectrum of the possible thoughts about those events than would be possible if the account allowed us to become more personally involved with the characters or situation. But he clearly did notthink that the Ovidian detachment amounted to a lack of interest in human or natural affairs, or a simple incapacity for feeling, since his versions abound in precisely-imagined details of all kinds, and constantly show shrewd and warm insights into human psychology.

Dryden seems also to have been drawn to the way in which Ovid's very scepticism about Man's 'godlike' qualities, or about the order and control visible in the universe which we inhabit, actually allowed him to attend precisely to, and even take delight in, aspects of Man's behaviour that might normally be thought wicked or bestial, and natural phenomena that might otherwise seem frightening or bewildering. Also, in some of Ovid's

immoral gods, Dryden seems to have found the opportunity to portray with sympathy and insight forces which, for all their power and reality, his own religion might have led him in other circumstances simply to condemn.

If his interest had perhaps started as a fascination with Ovid's apprehension of the curious or bizarre in human behaviour and the natural world, it was quickly developing into a sense of Ovid's extraordinary openness to so many different kinds of experience, and his capacity, for all his 'sophistication', to view an ever-changing and anarchic universe with something like wonder and delight.

CHAPTER FIVE

'THE OVIDIAN RAKE' :

Dryden's versions from the *Amores* and the *Ars Amatoria*

Chapter Five : 'The Ovidian Rake'

(i) A new kind of 'rakishness'?

(ii) 'The rake metamorphos'd?' - Dryden's 'Amores'

(iii) 'Cupid's School' - Dryden's 'Art of Love'

(i) A New Kind of 'Rakishness'?

Shortly after the publication of Examen Poeticum in Summer 1693, Dryden turned to another work of Ovid's and began to translate the first book of the Ars Amatoria. In a letter to Tonson dated August 30th, he wrote,

> I have translated six hundred lines of Ovid;
> but I believe I shall not compasse his 772
> lines under nine hundred or more of mine.
>
> (Ward, Letters, p.58)

The Latin text of the first book of the Ars Amatoria comprises 772 lines in Cnipping's edition. Dryden's forecast was remarkably accurate. His finished version turned out to be 888 lines long.

It seems clear that Dryden's version of Book One of the Art of Love (like the version of The First Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses) was intended from an early date (perhaps from the start) to form part of a composite English version of Ovid's complete poem to be published by Tonson. It is likely, on the evidence of a letter of December 1697, that Tonson still had Dryden's manuscript in his possession at that date.[1] A letter from Addison to Tonson written on February 12th 1695 provides further evidence on the matter :

1. Ward, Letters, pp.98-99. The wording of this letter seems to indicate that Dryden had heard from another source that Tonson was about to issue the English Art of Love without having told him first. The wording, however, would also allow for the alternative explanation that Dryden had heard that Tonson was planning to issue a version of the Ars Amatoria by someone else, and was here urging the claims of his own rendering to be preferred to that version. If the former interpretation is accepted, then it would seem likely that the whole of the English Ars Amatoria as it was issued eventually in 1709 had been completed by 1697. Book II in this version was translated by Yalden and Book III by Congreve.

> I was walking this morning wth Mr. Yalden and ask him wn we might expect to see Ovid de Arte Amandi in English he told me yt he thought you had dropt ye Design since Mr Dridans Translation of Virgil had bin Undertaken, but yt he had done his part almost a Year ago and had it laying by him &c. Im afraid he has done Little of it I believe a Letter from you about it wou'd set him at work.[1]

Tonson did not act on Addison's advice immediately. Presumably he felt (as the gossip reported by Addison might tend to suggest) that all Dryden's energies were now needed for the Virgil, and that any time spent on revising his own version of Book One of The Art of Love and editing the other contributions to the volume would be an unwanted distraction from this main work in hand. At any rate, the Tonson Art of Love did not appear in print until after Dryden's death. Two short extracts were published in Tonson's 1704 Miscellany,[2] along with two of Dryden's versions from the Amores, and the complete version was published in a separate volume in 1709. The other two books were translated by Yalden and Congreve, notes were adapted from a French edition of the Ars Amatoria which had appeared in 1660, and the volume also contained some related items by Tate, Maynwaring and Charles Hopkins.[3]

1. Joseph Addison, Letters, ed. W.Graham (Oxford, 1941), p.2.
2. 'The Rape of the Sabine Women' and 'The Meeting of Bacchus with Ariadne' (lines 111-151 and 590-635 of the complete version).
3. On the notes, see The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, Vol.II : The Rape of the Lock and other Poems, ed. G.Tillotson (3rd ed., London : Methuen, 1962), p.33. The other items were Tate's translation of the Remedia Amoris and Medicamina Faciei (Art of Beauty), Arthur Maynwaring's The Court of Love, and Charles Hopkins' The History of Love, forming, as Kinsley describes it (IV, 2086), an 'erotic anthology'.

Dryden's return, after Examen Poeticum, to Ovid's amatory poetry, and particularly to the Ars Amatoria, might at first sight seem rather like a reversion on his part to a simpler, more characteristically 'Restoration' interest in the kinds of pleasure which Ovid's poetry has to offer. For, although it has been widely read and enjoyed down the centuries, many commentators on the Ars have seen it as a display of cynical wantonness in which its poet appears in propria persona as a heartless seducer and thoroughly corrupting advocate of heartless seduction in others.[1] Even those commentators who do find some pleasure in the poem often use epithets such as 'frivolous', 'superficial',or 'trivial' to characterise the kinds of pleasure it gives. Here, to cite a characteristic example, is the account of the poem offered by Professor J.P.Sullivan :

> Ovid has been described as the generaliser of Roman love elegy; he is the "general lover" and his Corinna has been generally regarded as a composite figure. But of course the "general lover" is the seducer; one who adopts for his own purposes all the postures of the genuinely enamoured romantic lover... Ovid degrades women, as the first book of the Ars Amatoria makes clear. They are not to be idealised: their paradigm is Pasiphae, the uncontrolled bestialist, and they are easy prey for the predatory male... The amorous sensibility of the elegists was replaced by the sexual cynicism of Ovid, ... Ovid was ready not only with advice on how to achieve the right true end of love,

1. For Renaissance and seventeenth century examples of this tendency, see the countless testimonies collected by John Carey in Chapter IV ('The English Renaissance Concept of Ovid and the Love Elegy') of The Ovidian Elegy in England (Unpublished D.Phil Thesis, University of Oxford, 1960). For more modern testimonies to the same effect, see the material collected on pp. 66-69 of F.A.Wright's Ovid : The Lover's Handbook : A Complete Translation of the Ars Amatoria (1932; rpt. London, 1955).

> but also with advice on the Remedia Amoris, the ways of extirpating a passion that was unproductive of happiness... Ovid is antiromantic, the cynical, worldly-wise seducer, who loves women, not a particular woman... Ovid may have been a tender husband, but as a poet of love he is, in a way he did not mean, merely a tenerorum lusor amorum... Dirnenliebe, the love of a harlot...is...vulgarised by Ovid and reduced to a heartless technique in the Ars Amatoria.[1]

For Professor Sullivan, the Ovid of the Amores and the Ars (in sharp contrast to the other Roman elegiac poets, Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius) is the chief source for what he calls the two typically "classical" attitudes to love :

> ...the conception of love simply as a physical appetite on a par with the appetites for food and drink, and the conception of love as a dreaded madness - whose object is undifferentiated, now a blood relative, now a social inferior, now a person of the same sex, now a member of a different species.[2]

All this might seem ominously close to what is sometimes taken to be the coarse touch with which Dryden customarily handled the subject of love. Writing to Scott on the subject of Dryden's Sigismonda and Guiscardo in 1805, Wordsworth remarked,

> I think Dryden has much injured the story by the marriage, and degraded Sigismonda's character by it. He has also to the best of my remembrance degraded her character still more by making her love absolute sensuality and appetite, (Dryden had no other notion of the passion).[3]

1. J.P.Sullivan, Ezra Pound and Sextus Propertius : A Study in Creative Translation (London, 1964), pp.51-54.
2. ibid., p. 47.
3. Letter of 7th November 1805. See The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, ed. E.de Selincourt, rev. C.L.Shaver (Oxford, 1967), I, 640-644.

And, in our own time, Ian Robinson has dismissed Dryden's love poetry in these terms :

> What was love for Dryden? His lyrics show his love as a matter of strong, jolly but rather trivial lusts, called 'fires'... If love is ... reduced to pleasure and/or pain, it is coarse yet tame. The fires are not fires anyone has had to pass through; they are furnaces stoked under the boilers. ...Dryden is therefore not a love poet, ... [1]

In one of the notes to his edition of Dryden, Joseph Warton registered his regret that Dryden had wasted his energies on what he thought were such unpleasant and trifling poems as the Art of Love and the two 1704 Elegies:

> We cannot see, without real regret and mortification, such a waste of time and talent as what our author has flung away in translating so loose and flagitious, as well as trifling work of his favourite Ovid, full of the most exceptionable and nauseous circumstances of ancient mythology. I most undoubtedly shall make no comment on it, nor on the two succeeding translations.[2]

In the light of such comments about both Ovid and Dryden, there might be a temptation to see the Art of Love and Amores translation as another example of that tendency in Dryden's work which Rochester had identified

1. See Ian Robinson, The Survival of English (Cambridge, 1973), p.195.
2. The Poetical Works of John Dryden... with Notes by the Rev.Joseph Warton, D.D., the Rev. John Warton, M.A., and others (London, 1883), p.343. It is interesting to note here that Scott was worried, for reasons of censorship, about including the translations from the Amores (along with the Fourth Book of Lucretius) in his edition of Dryden. See his letter to Ellis of 7 April 1806 in The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, ed. H.J.C.Grierson et al., (12 vols., London, 1932-7), I, 284.

in the 1670s - a willed and forced desire to emulate the rakish bawdy of Sedley and others of 'the mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease' which went (according to Rochester) against the grain of Dryden's natural talents. And this suspicion might tend to be confirmed both by the remembrance that versions of the Amores by Rochester, Sedley and Sir Carr Scrope had been included among the translations from that work published in Tonson's Miscellany Poems (1684), and also by the contemporary association of the 'gentlemanly ease' of Ovid's verse by writers such as Henry Felton with the 'wellbred' qualities to be found in the writings of the Court Wits of Charles II's reign.[1]

Felton, however, goes on immediately to differentiate Dryden from this group of writers, saying that he 'was indeed a Gentleman, but he writ more like a Scholar', and although some of the Prefaces and letters of the 1670's had shown Dryden fulsomely expressing his admiration for that milieu and anxious to ingratiate himself with some of its leading members, events both internal and external since then had caused him, as we have seen, to scrutinise and take stock of many of the

1. See Henry Felton, A Dissertation on Reading the Classics and Forming a Just Style. Written in the Year 1709, And addressed to the Right Honourable John Lord Roos, The Present Marquis of Granby (London, 1713), pp. 70-76.

values of the court and of his own implication in that world.[1] In particular, the passage from the elegy on Anne Killigrew quoted in Chapter Three shows him to have developed strong convictions by the later 1680's that the court writers (himself included) had specifically erred in their treatment of sexual matters. This conviction was reasserted in 1699 in these lines which he included in his version of Chaucer's Wife of Bath's Tale (the subject is the Court of King Arthur) :

> Then Courts of Kings were held in high Renown,
> E'er made the common Brothels of the Town:
> There, Virgins honourable Vows receiv'd,
> But chast as Maids in Monasteries liv'd:
> The King himself to Nuptial Ties a Slave,
> No bad Example to his Poets gave:
> And they not bad, but in a vicious Age,
> Had not to please the Prince debauch'd the Stage.
>
> (61-68)

1. See especially the Dedications to The Assignation (addressed to Sedley), and Marriage à la Mode (addressed to Rochester), both first published in 1673, and the Defense of the Epilogue : or an Essay on the Dramatic Poetry of the Last Age (1672).

   Sir George Etherege was expressing his regret in the letters he sent back from the continent during 1687-8 that by that date the wits' circle had broken up. See especially the letters of Dec. 29th 1687 and Jan. 26th 1688 in Sir George Etherege, Letters, ed. Frederick Bracher (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1974), pp.167, 175. The French servant Gervais in Dryden's comedy Limberham, first performed as early as 1678, remarks (II,i., Scott, VI, pp.33-4) :

   > ...debauchery is upon its last legs in England: Witty men began the fashion, and now the fops are got into it, 'tis time to leave it.

   For the collapse of the court wits' circle in the 1680's, see also J.H.Wilson, The Court Wits of the Restoration (Princeton, 1948), pp. 198-204.

However, the striking fact is that, whatever might be its difference in kind, Dryden's later poetry shows no diminution in the vigour and explicitness with which it treats sexual matters. This indicates, I think, that, for all his protestations in this direction, Dryden's 'repentance' was not merely an acceptance of the kind of moralistic criticism that he received from Jeremy Collier, but more a rejection of the way in which he and his contemporaries had handled sexual subjects. Dryden's regrets about his comedies were perhaps, as T.S.Eliot observed, based on what were fundamentally artistic rather than simply moral doubts.[1]

If we enquire what, at root, are the objections to the characteristic handling of love in much of the literature of the 1660's and 1670's - particularly in the verse of the drolleries and song-books and some of the comedies - we might conclude that it is the 'knowingness', complacency, and wilful partiality of this handling that is unacceptable. Rather than the lightness with which it deals with its subject, its broadness, or the licentiousness of the situations which it portrays, it is this complacency which, many critics find, very soon palls and ultimately becomes offensive.[2]

A perusal of the rakish verse conveniently collected, for example, in John Adlard's anthology The Fruit of That Forbidden Tree or the section on 'The Libertines' in Harold Love's Penguin Book of Restoration Verse reveals how, in so many of the minor poems of this court/theatre milieu, the writer fails to take cognisance, even humorously, of anything like the full range of factors which we recognise to be involved in the experience of being

1. T.S.Eliot, John Dryden : The Poet, The Dramatist, The Critic (New York, 1932), p. 41.
2. On this subject see particularly P.Cruttwell, The Shakespearean Moment (1954; rpt. New York, 1960), p. 230.

in love.[1] The 'Restoration' lover is seldom seriously out of control. He always knows what women are like and how they will react. And though these poets constantly talk of the 'fires of love', 'Cupid's dart' or 'Venus' power' (thus seeming to recognise the irresistible power of love to subvert and confound the lover) their metaphors usually fail to exist at any more than the level of inert convention - and a similar conventionality informs their handling of the equally important subject of lovers' mutual happiness. Rather than registering that they have felt the effects of love's power, these rakes are constantly, like the two (otherwise very different) characters, Etherege's Dorimant, and Aldo, the 'old sub-fornicator' in Mr. Limberham, out to titillate their flagging sexual appetites with added spice and excitement.

In the treatment of love and lovers in some of his earlier comedies, Dryden had left himself vulnerable to similar objections, though he never, of course, descended to the level of the weakest items in the drolleries. The already-quoted example of Mr. Limberham is notorious in this respect. And Professor L.C.Knights has suggested that even in Marriage à la Mode, which is usually taken to be his best comedy, love is too often evoked either (in the case of the affair between Leonidas and Palmyra) in the

1. J.Adlard, ed., The Fruit of that Forbidden Tree : Restoration Poems, Songs and Jests on the Subject of Sensual Love (Cheadle Hulme, 1975); H. Love, ed., The Penguin Book of Restoration Verse (Harmondsworth, 1968). Another interesting document in this respect is the body of non-Rochesterian poems printed as Rochester's in the 1680 'Antwerp' edition of Poems on Several Occasions : By the Right Honourable, The E. of R --.

forcible-feeble terms of heroic drama, or (in the scenes involving the two couples) as a trivial appetite which can be (depending on the circumstances) either indulged or thwarted, but which is never felt to have put the lover in seriously embarrassing or painful straits, even though it provides ample opportunity for clever scenes of intrigue. A simplistic idealising of love coexists uneasily in the play, Professor Knights suggests, with an equally simplistic cynicism about love. Though (as Dryden points out in the play's Epilogue) Marriage à la Mode is free from the grosser salaciousness which some members of its audience might have relished, and though Dryden does seem, in the comic scenes, to be making some attempt to 'place' the lovers' cynicism and to suggest its inadequacies, it is nevertheless possible, I think, to have at least some sympathy with Professor Knights' feeling that the 'discoveries' and 'reversals' of Marriage à la Mode happen, in the last resort, too much on the plot level alone, rather than having been made dramatically convincing.[1]

However, just as Rochester had himself managed to escape the grosser tendencies of his circle by the distinctively light note of ambivalent self-awareness and even self-mockery that is found in his finest poems, so Dryden had, in his own rather different way, found from quite early on a manner of writing in some of his poems which exploited, but also transcended, both the idiom and the coterie-values of the audience for which his comedies were written. This manner is seen to best advantage in some of his Prologues and Epilogues and in some of the songs which were included in the plays.

1. See L.C.Knights, 'Restoration Comedy : the Reality and the Myth', in Explorations (1946; rpt. Harmondsworth, 1964).

Dryden's practice in writing Prologues and Epilogues for his own plays and those of others had both allowed him to develop a mastery of a racily colloquial verse idiom (the pieces were often written for delivery by a particularly accomplished actor or actress) and also to find a manner of writing which extricated him in important ways from a simple complicity with the values of the audience he was addressing.[1] This was most obviously effected in those pieces where he rails at the rowdies and would-be critics in the audience, or comments satirically on the mores of the time, but also, on occasion, by striking a note which, while he is dealing in subject-matter close to that of the drolleries and song-books, and using an idiom close to that of the rakish dialogue of the comedies, neverthless allows a less partial and more inclusive perspective on those subjects.[2]

In the Prologue to Lee's The Princess of Cleves, for example (Kinsley, I, 380-381), a piece written to be delivered by Nell Gwyn herself, Dryden

1. On the actresses, Pepys commented (Diary, May 7th 1668) :

> ...but Lord, their confidence, and how many men do hover about them as soon as they come off the stage, and how confident they [are] in their talk.

2. See, for example, the Prologue to The Wild Gallant Reviv'd (1669), where Dryden mocks himself by comparing his own first attempts at comedy to the bumpkin dupe up from the country in London; the Prologue to An Evening's Love (1671), a piece which outraged Evelyn on its first delivery (See Kinsley, IV, 1846), where Dryden uses, bawdily but pointedly (see California, X, 466), the analogy of his audience to an unfaithful wife and himself to a cuckold; in the Epilogue to The Loyal Brother, Dryden again wittily treats the poet's predicament by likening the way in which he is approached by the various political factions to a girl being 'propositioned' by various lovers: in the Prologue to The Disappointment (1684) Dryden writes a miniature 'rake's progress', under the guise of praising the 'wits' in the audience.

strikes a witty note which cannot, I think, be described as either narrowly or knowingly 'masculine' in its appeal, or merely conventionally rakish. The girl is certainly 'placed', in the mock-confidential manner of the opening, and in the joke about being 'too well bred to Swear' (and the 'double entendre' of 'Lye'), but an equally essential part of the Prologue's humour lies in our recognition that we have here met someone who has wryly got the rakes' measure and who knows it, and who isn't at all impressed when they quote Ovidian precedent in defence of their conduct.

Similarly, in some of his songs Dryden managed to evolve a manner of writing which, while it might seem again superficially similar in idiom and subject-matter to that of some of the items in the drolleries, and while its vocabulary might seem at first quite close to the inert conventions of some of the songs in those collections, allows him to achieve effects more complex and subtle.

In the opening song from Marriage à la Mode, for example, the lilting rhythm surely prevents the song from being, as Professor Knights takes it, a cynical or merely callous statement to the effect that 'constancy is dull, and love only thrives on variety' and removes the subject-matter into an area where we, the audience, are aware that the sentiment expressed by the singer (Doralice) is only one possible way of looking at things. Moreover, the rhythms of the song, and its repetitions allow for the possibility of a note of delicate regret, rather than smug complacency, at the inevitability (as the singer sees it) of passion's decay.[1]

1. The 'anapaestic lilt' as Van Doren calls it (p.180), considering it 'Dryden's happiest discovery' and citing this song (p.181) as the best example of it in his work.

We lov'd, and we lov'd, as long as we cou'd,
Till our love was lov'd out in us both:
But our Marriage is dead, when the Pleasure is fled:
'Twas Pleasure first made it an Oath.

(5-8)

Such a note prevents our writing off love in this poem simply as (in Mr. Robinson's phrase) something 'coarse yet tame'.

In the song 'Sylvia the fair...' published in Sylvae, Dryden's subject is again a girl, this time a young girl being initiated into love's mysteries. Here it is again the lilting rhythm again, in combination with the diversity and precision of observation lying behind the various jokes, and a self-awareness in Dryden's artistry, that prevents the song - for all its broadness - from being a mere enunciation of a libertine ethic, smugly confident in a single attitude to its material. The song allows us to take a zestful delight in matters that could, in another sort of handling, so easily form the basis for, on the one hand, anti-clerical satire, or, on the other, a complacent sneer at the girl's naiveté. It takes cognisance, in a lightly humorous way, of the joys and absurdities of lovers' behaviour.

The best of the Prologues and Epilogues and the Songs show, I think, that in the same years as he was rejecting some aspects of his literary past with his conscious mind, Dryden was also instinctively, and, as it were, by a process of natural metamorphosis, growing in some of his writing out of the grosser habits which he had once shared with the lesser rakes, and discovering a series of ways of handling sexual matters which were franker, less trivial and more generously truthful to all the facts of the case than he had managed to be elsewhere. His translations from Ovid's amatory verse show him to have identified in those poems something of the

note - worldly and knowing, yet at the same time not complacently and securely sneering, the knowingness acting as a kind of vehicle for more interesting and diverse thoughts about love and lovers.

(ii) 'The Rake Metamorphos'd?' : Dryden's 'Amores'

Dryden's first essay as a translator of Ovid's amatory verse had been the single item which he had contributed to the series of versions from the Amores in the 1684 Miscellany Poems. Dryden's contribution is a rendering of Amores II, xix, an elegy in which the poet begs the husband of his mistress to guard her jealously, and begs the mistress herself to reject him, so that his desire for her might be intensified by double adversity.

The poem shows Dryden departing radically from the principles of translation which he had expounded in the Ovid's Epistles Preface written only four years previously. For though in one sense it keeps very close to its Ovidian original, rendering the Latin text of 60 lines in exactly the same number of lines of English verse, Dryden has allowed himself allusions to his own seventeenth-century London world, and departures from the prose sense of the Latin, which far transcend both the very slight touches of this kind which we have observed in the Epistles, and the latitude which he allowed himself under his definition of 'Paraphrase' in the Preface to that volume.[1]

In choosing to translate this particular elegy of Ovid's, Dryden had selected a poem whose subject matter was very close to a recurring theme in the drama of his own day. For the intensification of amorous pleasures by various kinds of deliberately-contrived adversity is one of the stock preoccupations of the so-called 'sex-comedies' of the 1670's. Near the

1. Dryden does, in fact, add a two-line 'coda', which is not directly prompted by anything in the Latin.

beginning of The Man of Mode, for example, Etherege's Dorimant had remarked,

> ... the Devil's in't, there has been such a calm in my affairs of late, I have not had the pleasure of making a Woman so much as break her Fan, to be sullen, or forswear herself these three days. [1]

And in Act III of Wycherley's The Country Wife, Sparkish had stated his rakish credo in these terms :

> I love to be envied, and would not marry a wife that I alone could love; loving alone is as dull as eating alone. Is not this a frank age? and I am a frank person; and to tell you the truth, it may be, I love to have rivals in a wife, they make her seem to a man still but as a kept mistress; ... [2]

And near the end of Dryden's own Marriage à la Mode, Doralice had remarked to her husband Rhodophil,

> Then I have found my account in raising your jealousy. O! 'tis the most delicate sharp sauce to a cloyed stomach; it will give you a new edge, Rhodophil.
>
> (Scott, IV, 334)

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that Dryden chose to exploit fully in his version of this Nineteenth Elegy the racy idiom of the rakes, and to incorporate into his rendering a number of circumstantial details from his own world which he substitutes for Ovid's Roman equivalents. Only a 'Sot' (rendering Ovid's 'ferreus' : 'man of iron'), says Dryden's lover,

> ... wou'd scorn to love with leave. (4) [3]

1. I. ii. 202-5. The Dramatic Works of Sir George Etherege, ed. H.F.B. Brett-Smith (2 vols., Oxford, 1927), II, 195.
2. The Complete Plays of William Wycherley, ed. W.C.Ward, 'Mermaid Series' (London, n.d.), p. 299.
3. cf. (among many examples) the Prologue to A True Widow, 31-2 :

> For where the Punk is common! he's a Sot,
> Who needs will Father what the Parish got.

He prefers a 'Jilt' (7, 33) to a faithful mistress.[1] If locked out by her he will

... lye rough on Bulks each other Night. (22)[2]

(Ovid's lover [21-22] merely slept on his mistress' doorstep in the frost). He despised a man

... who loves an easie Whetstone Whore, (32)[3]

(that is, one of the prostitutes who plied their trade in the notorious Whetstone Park, between Holborn and Lincoln's Inn Fields) and invites him to

... drink the Common Shore. (32)

(not the river water of Ovid's Latin [32] but that of the London sewers!). His rival, referred to as a 'sneaking City Cuckold' (45) and a 'Wittall' (48), should suspect 'An Orange-wench' (4, for Ovid's 'ancilla' : 'maid') who is a 'Letter-bearing Bawd' (42).[4]

1. cf. Epilogue to The Conquest of Granada, 7-8 :
   For, as those taudry Misses, soon or late
   Jilt such as keep 'em at the highest rate:
2. 'Bulks' are frameworks of stalls projecting from the front of a shop. See California, II, 375.
3. cf. Limberham, V. i. (Scott, VI, 109) :
   Aldo. It is very well, sir; I find you have been searching for your relations, then, in Whetstone's park.
   Scott glosses with a reference to the Dedication to Lee's Princess of Cleves. Dryden had also alluded to Whetstone Park in the Prologue to The Wild Gallant Reviv'd as a leading inducement for country bumpkins to visit London.
4. Dryden may have borrowed 'Wittall' from Marlowe's version, since Marlowe refers to 'a foolish wittalls wife' in his translation of this elegy. See All Ovid's Elegies : 3. Bookes, by C.M. (Middleburgh, [1595]), D5v. That the word was still current slang in Dryden's day can be seen from its use in Amphitryon, II.ii. (Scott, VIII, 49) :
   ...to be always speaking my husband fair, to make him digest his cuckoldom more easily! Wouldst thou be a wittol, with a vengeance to thee?

However, though the main impetus in Dryden's mind when translating this poem does seem to have been to point up for his readers the similarities between the situation in which Ovid's lover finds himself (and the attitude which he adopts) and those of a certain type of lover nearer home, Ovid's elegy has given him at one particular moment the opportunity to do a little more than merely simulate the utterance of a 'jaded courtier' trying to titillate his flagging sexual appetite.[1]

At one point in his elegy, Ovid had made his rake reflect for a moment (using a witty example from mythology) that the fatal attraction for men of women to whom access is difficult is a sad and inevitable fact of life (whose consequences he has suffered) rather than just a spice to be willingly and zestfully relished :

> Si nunquam Danaen habuisset aenea turris;
> Non esset Danae de Jove facta parens. ...
> Si qua volet regnare diu; deludat amantem.
> Hei mihi, quod monitis torqueor ipse meis!
> Cuilibet eveniat, nocet indulgentia nobis.
> Quod sequitur, fugio: quod fugit, usque sequor.
>
> (27-28; 33-36)

Dryden has rendered the lines in a way that conveys a note of delicate resignation and self-awareness in the lover's voice :

> Had Danae not been kept in brazen Tow'rs,
> Jove had not thought her worth his Golden Show'rs. ...
> The Jilting Harlot strikes the surest blow,
> A truth which I by sad Experience know.
> The kind poor constant Creature we despise,
> Man but pursues the Quarry while it flies.
>
> (27-28; 33-36)

Such a note removes the poem, as recreated by Dryden, slightly but definitely from the realm of the stock Restoration 'cuckold joke'; the

1. The California editors' phrase (II, 374).

rake is seen (albeit momentarily) as genuinely vulnerable, not sneering at his rival from a safe position. The vivid detail which Dryden has incorporated in his rendering, in such touches as lines 39-40 :

> If creaking Doors, or barking Dogs thou hear,
> Or windows scratcht, suspect a Rival there;
>
> (39-40)

(in which Dryden has enlivened Ovid's

> Incipe, quis toties furtim tua limina pulset,
> Quaerere : quid latrent nocte silente canes.
>
> (39-40))

shows how completely Dryden has re-thought Ovid's elegy in terms of contemporary life. But he has also followed Ovid in allowing the 'sneaking City Cuckold' have some of the edge in the poem, rather than merely being the butt of the lover's wit.

We do not know when Dryden made the other two versions from the Amores, which were published after his death in the fifth Tonson Miscellany of 1704. Presumably Tonson had retained them among his papers from several years previously. He had perhaps been intending to issue at some stage during Dryden's lifetime a complete composite English Amores using some of the 1684 translations as a basis, filling the gaps (and replacing unsatisfactory items) with new commissions. Dryden's versions of Amores I.i. and I.iv might well have been originally offered as contributions to such a collection, since they are brought in to replace the inferior 1684 versions (by Cooper and Scroope respectively) in the composite English Amores which Tonson did eventually append to a re-issue of Ovid's Epistles in 1725.[1] At

1. Ovid's Epistles, with his Amours by Dryden, Congreve etc. (London, 1725).

any rate, the date of Dryden's versions remains uncertain, and the California editors' ascription of the poems to 'around 1693' (the same period as the Art of Love) is, on their own admission, little more than guesswork.

Dryden's version of Amores I.i., the poem in which Ovid had described how Cupid had diverted him from his attempts at epic poetry and forced him to write love poetry instead, need not occupy us for long. It is a slight piece, and though some of Dryden's rather unusual choices of vocabulary might tempt one to see small hidden allusions to contemporary events, to Dryden's personal situation after 1688, or to his own unwritten epic, they are not by themselves clear or extensive enough to allow one to develop any strong convictions about the nature of Dryden's interest in the poem, or in the Amores as a whole.[1]

1. For example, the phrase 'Arbitrary sway' (16) (which is usually used in a political sense by Dryden) and 'On Subjects not thy own', and the couplet

> Already thy Dominions are too large;
> Be not ambitious of a Foreign Charge.
> (17-18)

might lead one to suspect a sly identification of Cupid with William III (who was fighting in Ireland and Europe in the early 1690's and who had, of course, been responsible for the change in direction of Dryden's poetical hopes after 1688). A similar personal reference could be found in 21-22 :

> Thus when with soaring Wings I seek Renown,
> Thou pluck'st my Pinnions, and I flutter down.

and 34 :

> While in unequal Verse I Sing my Woes.

One technical problem for an English translator of this particular poem (a problem which Dryden did not solve in his version) is to decide what to do about Ovid's reference (3-4) to Cupid's having forced him to write elegiac verse (couplets, with a hexameter followed by a pentameter) rather than his proposed heroic verse (hexameters), since Ovid's lines, of course, make no sense in terms of English versification. Cooper, in the 1684 version, had tried to convey Ovid's point by evolving his own 'English elegiac' (iambic pentameter followed by iambic tetrameter) for the poem, a solution unsatisfactory both in itself, and in view of the fact that the other translations in the volume are written in the very couplets which Cooper's version says he's abandoned! Dryden followed the precedent of Marlowe in making no attempt to 'naturalise' Ovid's point, but simply rendering it directly in his own verse :

> Six Feet for ev'ry Verse the Muse design'd,)
> But Cupid, Laughing, when he saw my Mind)
> From ev'ry Second Verse a Foot purloin'd.)
>
> (3-6)

The version of Amores I.iv. which also appeared in the 1704 Miscellany Poems is an altogether more interesting poem. An indication of its subject (like the Nineteenth Elegy, it concerns thwarted love) is given in the subtitle which Dryden translated from one of his scholarly editions :[1]

> To his Mistress, whose Husband is invited to a Feast with them. The Poet instructs her how to behave her self in his Company.

Like the version of Amores II.xix, this poem depends on Dryden's having divined some very direct similarities between Ovid's depiction of the behaviour of his young Roman lovers and that of the young lovers, real and fictional, of his own day. Without incorporating any of the direct allusions

1. The editions of Cnipping, Crispinus and Schrevellius all have the subtitle

> Amicam, qua arte, quibusve nutibus in coena praesente viro uti debeat, admonet.

to contemporary life and manners which he had utilised in the earlier poem, Dryden's version of this elegy is still quite close in idiom to the rakish dialogue of his own comedies and to that of their Prologues and Epilogues.

However, whereas the earlier poem had only included momentarily that note of self-realisation (the lover facing the inevitable absurdity of his position) which made it something fuller in interest than a conventional diatribe against 'City husbands', here every detail in the poem rebounds on the lover. Dryden's version indicates that he has seen the poem as one in which the situation created by the poet in all its precisely-observed detail allows us to recognise (as we see the lover himself recognises) the quite unreasonable and comic lengths that love will force a man to for such brief joys as this kind of lover can expect. We are neither allowed simple complicity with the lover in his attempts to thwart the husband, nor encouraged to disapprove of his conduct. The rakish diction and situation are therefore not so much ends in themselves, but as the means whereby the reader used to similar situations in the theatre can be presented with a series of reflections on lovers' behaviour which stress (but without condescension) how changeable, amoral and unreasonable lovers can be, and how these qualities can manifest themselves in particular conduct. The emphasis, in Dryden's version, on the contemporary application of Ovid's poem is less an attempt to simply 'update' the poem than a means of bringing out its permanent implications as a depiction of 'everyday love', un-Petrarchan perhaps, but touching lightly on truths about lovers' behaviour which we all recognise.

The lover in this poem is not one who (in Professor Sullivan's phrases) 'adopts for his own purposes all the postures of the genuinely enamoured lover' (he's not sufficiently in control to do this), nor is he the 'cynical, worldly-wise seducer' (his seduction techniques plainly don't work all the time). Nor does he love 'women, not a particular woman' (he is pursuing this particular woman even though he's having little success). Nor can his feelings be adequately characterised as 'a physical appetite on a par with the appetites for food anddrink' or as a 'dreaded madness whose love is undifferentiated'.

In his version Dryden has done everything he can to bring out the tone of aggrieved and petulant irritation which the lover feels towards his rival. In lines 39-46, for example, almost all the touches which specifically articulate his disgust at the husband's behaviour are Dryden's colourings :

> Si tibi forte dabit, quos praegustaverit ipse,
> Rejice libatos illius ore cibos.
> Nec premat impositos sinito tua colla lacertis:
> Mite nec in rigido pectore pone caput.
> Nec sinus admittat digitos, habilesve papillae.
>
> (33-37)

> If he, with Clownish Manners thinks it fit
> To taste, and offers you the nasty Bit,
> Reject his greazy Kindness, and restore
> Th'unsav'ry Morsel he had chew'd before.
> Nor let his Arms embrace your Neck, nor rest
> Your tender Cheek upon his hairy Brest.
> Let not his Hand within your Bosom stray,
> And rudely with your pretty Bubbies play.[1]
>
> (39-46)

The husband is 'nauseous' (5) and 'leud' (5 : both Dryden's additions),

1. California, IV, 44 suggests that Dryden is here drawing on Cnipping's gloss <u>Immiti aspero</u> and Crispinus' paraphrase <u>in sinus asperos</u>.

an 'officious' and 'outrageous' 'Cuckold' (34, 80), yet the very behaviour which he so vehemently deplores is, on his own admission, the same that he has himself employed on other occasions[1]:

> How many Love-Inventions I deplore,
> Which I, my self, have practis'd all before?
> How oft have I been forc'd the Robe to lift
> In Company; to make a homely shift
> For a bare Bout, ill huddled o're in hast,
> While o're my Side the Fair her Mantle cast.
>
> (57-62)

And, as in the earlier elegy, one of the best jokes is produced by the momentary comic extension of the situation provided by a mythological example. The lover here lightly touches on a topic which, as we have seen, had already interested Dryden in the Metamorphoses and which was to preoccupy him in various ways in the Fables : that passion brings man closest to the beasts, but that this need not necessarily be seen as merely reducing him to the 'bestial'. Ovid's lover comically alludes to his feelings by remembering the rape of Hippodamia :

> Now wonder not that Hippodamia's Charms,
> At such a sight, the Centaurs urg'd to Arms:
> That in a rage, they threw their Cups aside,
> Assail'd the Bridegroom, and wou'd force the Bride.

1. Dryden possibly drew here on Carr Scrope's version of the elegy in the 1684 edition (p.111) :

> ... your nauseous Husband ...

I am not half a Horse, (I wish I were:)
Yet hardly can from you my Hands forbear. [1]

(7-12)

The vignettes of the lovers' behaviour, so close to that of Dryden's own world, are constantly supplemented by a realisation of the straits the lover is in :

When all depart, while Complements are loud,
Be sure to mix among the thickest Crowd:
There I will be, and there we cannot miss,
Perhaps to Grubble, or at least to Kiss.
Alas, what length of Labour I employ,
Just to secure a short and transient Joy!
For Night must part us; and when Night is come,
Tuck'd underneath his Arms he leads you home. [2]

(69-76)

If it is true that Dryden certainly couldn't have made this version without the rakes and their poems and plays, the diversity of its interest makes it less vulnerable than had been Ovid's Epistles to Rochester's accusations of the 1670's that Dryden was trying (but failing) to imitate Sedley and others on their own terms.

1. The last couplet is an inspired re-working of Marlowe's

   I am no halfe horse, nor in woods I dwell,
   Yet scarse my hands from thee containe I well.
   (A4r)

2. Compare, for example, Mrs. Pinchwife in The Country Wife, Act.IV, Sc.ii (writing to Horner) :

   ..."if you and I were in the country at cards together...
   I could not help treading on your toe under the table" -
   so - "or rubbing knees with you, ..." (ed.cit., p.318)

   Dryden had used the word 'grubble' (slightly varied) in the Prologue to Mithridates, 15-16 :

   Who holding Chat did silently Encroach,
   With Treacherous Hand to grabble in the coach.

   and, in the same form, in Don Sebastian, I.i. :

   Now, let me roll and grubble thee
   (Scott, VII, 317)

(iii) 'Cupid's School' : 'Ovid's Art of Love. Book I'

In the letter to Tonson of December 1697 referred to at the beginning of this Chapter, Dryden provided a hint that he was not as satisfied with his version of the First Book of Ovid's Art of Love as he had been with the versions from the Metamorphoses included in Examen Poeticum. However, he evidently did think that the Art of Love translation was well worth publishing :

> You told me not, but the Town says, you are printing Ovid de Arte Amandi; I know my Translation is very uncorrect: but at the same time I know no body else can do it better, with all their pains.[1]
>
> (Ward, Letters, pp.98-99)

Dryden's intuition about his version was, I believe, broadly correct in both its main propositions. The poem is both brisker and livelier and more coherent in tone than the versions by Heywood, Wolferston and Hoy on which Dryden drew when composing his own version. Yet at the same time some of its transitions are less securely managed than they might have been, and the version as a whole might perhaps be justly characterised as an 'interesting experiment' rather than a fully coherent artistic entity.[2] However, Dryden has, I think, responded with sufficient liveliness to Ovid's poem to convince us that he has, at least, seen its wit as something more

1. This letter, dated December 1697 by both Malone and Ward, seems to indicate that Tonson was originally planning to issue his composite Art of Love shortly after the first edition of Dryden's Virgil which had been published in August that year.
2. It is possible that the poem as we have it is an unrevised draft. See the letter from John Taylor in N.Q. , 5th series, May 19th 1877, p. 386.

worthy of our respect, than is suggested, for example, by Professor Sullivan's characterisation quoted earlier.

A reader trying to come to some understanding of what kinds of pleasures Ovid's poem might hold beyond those of semi-pornographic titillation could perhaps discount comments by those puritans of all ages whose objections seem to be primarily to the poem's subject-matter, and who, one imagines, would object to almost any literature dealing so explicitly and uncensoriously with extra-marital sexual relations. A crucial critical problem for many readers of the Ars has been to decide precisely in what sense the poem is to be taken as offering advice to prospective lovers and precisely how its poet stands in relation to the advice being offered. For Professor Sullivan as (one assumes) for many of those who have objected to the poem on moral grounds, Ovid is very directly 'behind' the poem - a callous seducer with a knowing and degraded view of women and a view of love as an appetite to be fed or a tedious disease to be medicated, offering advice to his fellow males on techniques and strategies of seduction which he intends them to follow, and illustrating his case with stories which demonstrate and supports men's easy success at achieving their ends, and women's powerful (but secret and unacknowledged) desires to collaborate with them. For other commentators (particularly scholars informed about the possible analogues of Ovid's poem or its historical context) the main interest of the Ars is seen as more narrowly literary or historical - in the way, for example, in which it consciously exploits in incongruous circumstances the precedures and conventions of didactic poetry (both Hellenistic and Roman), or guys the lofty moral ideals of Augustus, or

turns on their heads the feelings and situations familiar to readers of the 'serious' love-elegies of Catullus, Tibullus, and Propertius.[1]

Dryden's way of translating the first book of the Ars shows us, I think, that he saw Ovid's poem as a discourse of a more interesting and (in the best sense) 'sophisticated' kind than is suggested by any of these accounts. He seems to have seen Ovid's manner in the poem almost as a kind of extension of the manner we have already observed in the Amores: the voice of the 'rakish' narrator is not something receiving the straightforward and unreflecting endorsement of the poet, but a vehicle whereby a series of surprisingly diverse thoughts about the nature of love are floated for our contemplation. After seeing the way in which Dryden has responded to the tone and manner of Ovid's original, one might have the confidence to offer a description of the Ars rather along the following lines: Ovid wittily exploits the fact that there are various 'arts of love' practised in everyday life, that men and women do adopt certain quite deliberate strategies and ploys to attract and keep their partners. These 'arts', however are, as Ovid realises, of quite a different kind from the sorts of technical expertise which, in ancient times, formed the traditional subject-matter of didactic verse - medicine, agriculture, fishing, etc. - and it is this discrepancy which forms the basis of many of the poem's comic effects. Ovid also exploits, in this poem, his own reputation as a 'master of the art of love' derived from his fame as author of the Amores. The Ars

1. See, for example, L.P.Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled (Cambridge, 1955), pp.118-135, passim, A.S.Hollis, 'The Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris' in Ovid, ed. J.W.Binns (London and Boston, 1973), pp. 84-115, passim.

contains, under the guise of 'advice', many shrewd observations about the real-life behaviour of men and women in love. The generous comedy of many of the little scenes prevents them from being merely callous sneering. And though the logic of the poem ought to make it a smug piece of male chauvinism, this is prevented by the fact that, as in the Amores, it is the men who are often shown up as dupes, and revealed to be less in control than they would like to be. Ovid, it appears, is not so imprisoned by a narrowly masculine set of assumptions and attitudes as he pretends he is, and is sometimes taken to be.[1]

This conception of the Ars (revealed to us by Dryden's version as a whole) explains, I think, how lightly he seems to have managed the many discrepancies and contradictions which, as commentators have noted, exist in the poem if one tries to think of it (as one is apparently invited by the poet to do) as a coherent argument, or tries to see its various examples as illustrative of a single viewpoint on, or thesis about, lovers' behaviour. Dryden seems to have thought of Ovid's poem as something altogether more opportunistic and teasing.

It would be quite possible to exerpt an anthology of passages both

1. For the popularity of Ovid among female readers, see Dryden's Preface to Fables

> ... besides many of the Learn'd, Ovid has
> almost all the Beaux, and the whole Fair
> Sex, his declar'd Patrons. (Kinsley, IV, 1445)

cf. also the Epistle to Wye Saltonstall's version of Ovid's Heroicall Epistles (1636), sigs. A3r-A5v, especially these lines :

> ... this his comfort was in Banishment,
> His Love, and Lines, did yeeld your sex content.
> Let English Gentlewomen as kind appeare
> To Ovid, as the Roman Ladies were.

from Ovid's original and from Dryden's version which, taken individually and out of context, could sound like extracts from a callous manual of seduction, or (in the case of Dryden's version) the advice offered by a 'tearing blade' to a younger companion. One could imagine, for example, these short passages from Dryden's version coming from the lips of a Woodall or a Horner, thus seeming to support a view of Ovid's intentions rather like that described by Professor Sullivan :

> ℙ First then believe, all Women may be won;
> Attempt with Confidence, the Work is done.
> The Grasshopper shall first forbear to sing,
> In Summer Season, or the Birds in Spring;
> Than Women can resist your flattering Skill:
> Ev'n She will yield, who swears she never will.
>
> (305-310)
>
> Man is more temp'rate in his Lust than they;
> And more than Women, can his Passion sway.
>
> (317-318)
>
> Doubt not from them an easie Victory:
> Scarce of a thousand Dames will one deny.
> All Women are content that Men shou'd woe:
> She who complains, and She who will not do.[1]
>
> (384-387)
>
> Act well the Lover, let thy Speech abound
> In dying words, that represent thy Wound.
> Distrust not her belief; she will be mov'd.
> All Women think they merit to be lov'd.
>
> (692-695)
>
> But 'tis a Venial Sin to Cheat the Fair;
> All Men have Liberty of Conscience there.
> On cheating Nymphs a Cheat is well design'd,
> 'Tis a prophane, and a deceitful Kind.
>
> (727-730)
>
> Thus justly Women suffer by Deceit;
> Their Practice authorises us to cheat.
>
> (741-742)

1. l. 385 is a close adaptation of Hoy's :
   You'll find scarce One in Ten who dares deny.

Perhaps she calls it Force; but if she 'scape,
She will not thank you for th'omitted Rape.
The Sex is cunning to conceal their Fires,
They would be forc'd, ev'n to their own Desires.
They seem t'accuse you, with a down-cast Sight,
But in their Souls confess you did them right.

(760-765)

It would, however, be equally possible to exerpt from the Book an alternative series of passages in which we are constantly reminded of how the seducer is, for all his techniques and strategies, very frequently caught out. One of the places recommended for picking up girls is the lawcourts. To bring out its point, Dryden has given Ovid's little scene the gentlest nudge towards the London of his own day :

And if the Hall it self be not bely'd,
Even there the Cause of Love is often try'd.
Near it at least, or in the Palace Yard;
From whence the noisy Combatants are heard.
The crafty Counsellors, in formal Gown,
There gain another's Cause, but lose their own.
There Eloquence is nonplust in the Sute;
And Lawyers, who had Words at Will, are mute.
Venus, from her adjoyning Temple, smiles,
To see them caught in their litigious Wiles.
Grave Senators lead home the Youthful Dame;
Returning Clients, when they Patrons came. [1]

(86-97)

Just as Venus is a real force to be reckoned with at the lawcourts, so she is also in evidence at the gladiatorial contests :

1. California (IV, 761) follows Kinsley (IV, 2087) in pointing out here an allusion to 'Westminster Hall, with Palace Yard adjacent', and citing Tom Brown's description of the place. ll. 92-93 are a considerably more pointed reworking of Wolferston's

Oft in this place the Eloquent are mute,
New things fall out, they must plead their own sute.

Nor at the Sword-play less the Lover thrives:
For there the Son of Venus fights his Prize;
And deepest Wounds are oft receiv'd from Eyes.
One, while the Crowd their Acclamations make;
Or while he Betts, and puts his Ring to Stake,
Is struck from far, and feels the flying Dart;
And of the Spectacle is made a Part.

(191-197)

The Baian baths, a Roman health resort, are also recommended as a pick-up point. But there, too, the biter is more often bitten :

The Bajan Baths, where Ships at Anchor ride,
And wholesome Streams from Sulphur Fountains glide:
Where wounded Youths are by Experience taught,
The Waters are less healthful than they thought.

(291-294)

And it is hard to see exactly how this passage (on the girl's birthday) fits into a poem which purports to be gloating smugly about man's mastery over the wiles of womankind; again the speaker, in the act of voicing his contempt of women, in fact reveals how easily they make men look ridiculous:

But than her Birth-day seldom comes a worse;
When Bribes and Presents must be sent of course;
And that's a bloody Day, that costs thy Purse.
Be stanch; yet Parsimony will be vain:
The craving Sex will still the Lover drain.
No Skill can shift 'em off, nor Art remove;
They will be Begging when they know we Love.
The Merchant comes upon th'appointed Day,
Who shall before thy Face, his Wares display.
To chuse for her she craves thy kind Advice;
Then begs again, to bargain for the Price:
But when she has her Purchase in her Eye,
She hugs thee close, and kisses thee to buy.
'Tis what I want, and 'tis a Pennorth too;
In many years I will not trouble you.
If you complain you have no ready Coin;
No manner, 'tis but Writing of a Line;
A little Bill, not to be paid at Sight;
(Now curse the Time when thou wert taught to Write.)
She keeps her Birth-day; you must send the Chear;
And she'll be Born a hundred times a year.
With daily Lies she dribs thee into Cost;

That Ear-ring dropt a Stone, that Ring is lost:
They often borrow what they never pay;
What e'er you lend her think it thrown away.
Had I ten Mouths and Tongues to tell each Art,
All wou'd be weary'd e'er I told a Part.[1]

(471-497)

And lines 692-695 (quoted above in my first list of examples) are immediately juxtaposed in the poem with these, quite different, thoughts :

Sometimes a Man begins to Love in Jest;
And after, feels the Torments he profest.
For your own sakes be pitiful ye Fair;
For a feign'd Passion, may a true prepare.

(696-699)

Despite the personal of rakish confidence, the poem is, indirectly, constantly bringing home to us in such passages the misplaced nature of that confidence.

In passages like the birthday scene, Dryden has clearly been (as he was in the Amores versions) greatly assisted in his task of translating by the similarity between certain of the everyday scenes of Roman and seventeenth-century English life. Indeed, the whole of his version depends crucially on the existence in Dryden's own day of a world of 'liberated' relations broadly analogous to that which obtained in Ovid's Rome.[2]

1. Significantly, this passage owes almost nothing (apart from an end-word from Heywood in 483) to Dryden's predecessors. Wolferston had rendered the scene in an almost humourless way. Hoy's version, like Dryden's, is jauntily colloquial but, unlike Dryden, he doesn't encourage us to enjoy the girl's wheedling at the expense of the man. Wycherley seems to have imitated this passage in the final scene of The Country Wife.

2. On this subject, see F.A.Wright, The Lover's Handbook, pp.72ff and J.P.Sullivan, Ezra Pound and Sextus Propertius, pp. 46-49 (citing J.P.V.D. Balsdon's Roman Women), and (on English conditions) J.H.Wilson, All the King's Ladies : Actresses of the Restoration (Chicago, 1958).

For example, the passages in his version depicting the theatre, while making no undue effort to 'update' Ovid's scene, would strike a note of immediate familiarity for any readers of, say, the materials collected and discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of Montague Summers' book, The Restoration Theatre.[1] Thus when Dryden writes, immediately after the episode describing the Rape of the Sabine Women,

> Thus Love in Theaters did first improve;
> And Theaters are still the Scene of Love.
>
> (156-157)

he is both giving a close rendering of Ovid's

> Scilicet ex illo solennia more theatra
> Nunc quoque formosis insidiosa manent.
>
> (133-134)

and also endowing the lines with a special significance for readers of his own days ('still' referring to 1693 every bit as much as 'nunc' did to 2 B.C.)

The ease with which Dryden hasaccommodated Ovid's little love-scenes to the mores of his own world, and the detailed life with which he has again and again invested their recreation (for example in the Circus scene, ll. 158-197, the scene concerning the maid, ll. 396-452, and the letter-writing episode, ll. 498-553) suggests that what has most appealed to him in many parts of the poem is Ovid's shrewd observation of the nature of lovers' behaviour, observation which is offered as advice, but which actually derives its attraction for the reader from the reality which every reader recognises from his own experience.

1. Montague Summers, The Restoration Theatre (London, 1934).

It thus seems a pity that, at the very opening of his version, in his anxiety to substitute his own little university-joke (one which, incidentally, seems to have attracted Keats),

> In Cupid's School, whoe'er wou'd take Degree,
> Must learn his Rudiments, by reading me.[1]
>
> (1-2)

Dryden has obscured Ovid's subtler expression of mild surprise that everyone is not a learned expert in the field of study that he's offering to teach :

> Si quis in hoc artem populo non novit amandi;
> Me legat; & lecto carmine doctus amet.
>
> (1-2)

As in his versions from the Amores, Dryden's attempts to bring home to his English readers the details of the behaviour of Ovid's lovers has led him to exploit the idioms of the rakish poetry and plays of his own times, and for this he has been taken to task (and in Ovid's name), for example by Professor F.W.Wright, writing in 1925 :

> ... I cannot help thinking that those critics who are most severe on Ovid are often influenced, perhaps unconsciously, by Dryden's English more than Ovid's Latin. Dryden is overfond of such words as brothel, cuckold, and the like, which here are quite out of place, and he frequently translates the inoffensive puella by a monosyllable, now fortunately gone out of polite use, which brings after it a train of ideas wherewith Ovid at least has no sympathy. 2

1. cf. Lamia, i. 197-8 :

> As though in Cupid's college she had spent
> Sweet days a lovely graduate, ...

The echo is cited in The Poems of John Keats, ed. Miriam Allott (London, 1970), p.625.

2. The Lover's Handbook, p. 72.

The editors of the 'Everyman' translation of Ovid cite some of Professor Wright's remarks approvingly, and add,

> Ovid's purpose was not, after all, to write an essay on harlotry.[1]

But neither, I think, was Dryden's, for although he considerably strengthened Ovid's lines

> Este procul vittae tenues, insigne pudoris;
> Quaeque tegis medios, instita longa, pedes.
> Nos Venerem tutam concessaque furta canemus:
> Inque meo nullum carmine crimen erit.
>
> (31-34)

in his own

> Far hence you Vestals be, who bind your Hair;
> And Wives, who Gowns below your Ankles wear.
> I sing the Brothels loose and unconfin'd,)
> Th' unpunishable Pleasures of the Kind;)
> Which all a-like, for Love, or Mony find.)
>
> (35-39)

it is clear from numerous passages in his version, as we have seen, that Dryden's poem has a broader range of reference than the goings-on in Whetstone Park. In this respect, Dryden is every bit as opportunist as Ovid seems to have been.

Such a suggestion is confirmed, I think, by the fact that Dryden seems to have seen Ovid's use of narrative episodes and mythological

1. Ovid, Selected Works, ed. J.C. & M.Thornton (London, 1939), p. xi. In the introduction to his edition, A.S.Hollis points out that Ovid is deliberately inconsistent about the precise status of the girls in his poem, perhaps to avoid charges of having recommended adultery, thereby flagrantly flaunting Augustus' puritannical Lex Julia of 18 B.C. Hollis points out that although Ovid says he's writing about meretrices (i.435; iii. 615; Tristia, ii. 303) the girls in the poem actually seem more like the married women that appear in the Roman love elegies.

examples not (as some commentators have done) just as 'relief' from the advice, but more as a means of giving extension and amplification to the various vignettes of lovers' 'manners', a witty and sophisticated means of suggesting that the lovers' behaviour being portrayed isn't merely the observation of a libertine 'specialist' at one point in time, but more a consciously humorous yet truthful illustration of the permanent and universal laws that can be seen to govern the behaviour of men and women in love.

One such episode (which Dryden has responded to with evident warmth) comes as part of the section of the poem advising the lover on what part drinking should play in his amorous activities :

> Dant etiam positis aditum convivia mensis:
> Est aliquid, praeter vina, quod inde petas.
> Saepe illic positi teneris adducta lacertis
> Purpureus Bacchi cornua pressit Amor.
> Vinaque cum bibulas sparsere Cupidinis alas,
> Permanet, & capto stat gravis ille loco.
> Ille quidem pennas velociter excutit udas:
> Sed tamen & sparsi pectus amore nocet.
> Vina parant animos, faciuntque caloribus aptos:
> Cura fugit multo diluiturque mero.
> Tunc veniunt risus; tunc pauper cornua sumit:
> Tunc dolor & curae, rugaque frontis abit.
> Tunc aperit mentes, aevo rarissima nostro
> Simplicitas; artes excutiente Deo.
> Illic saepe animos juvenum rapuere puellae:
> Et Venus in vinis, ignis in igne fuit.
>
> (229-244)

Dryden has rendered this passage (a notoriously tricky one - Classical scholars are still in substantial disagreement about some of the details of its meaning) so as to stress (rather more clearly and fully even than had Ovid) both the attractively seductive power of wine, and its effects, both beneficial and otherwise, for the lover.[1] What he has given us is

1. See the discussion in Hollis' edition, pp. 83-86.

not just a refined version of the words of Macbeth's porter, or a restatement of the sentiments of Wycherley's Horner :

> Wine gives you liberty, love takes it away. ...
> Wine makes us witty; love, only sots. Wine makes
> us sleep; love breaks it.[1]

but a little mythological scene whose wit allows us to hold together in our minds the full range of wine's effects and their equivocal interrelation with Love's; every line is here full of rich and precise humorous observation of the various ways in which wine and love both exalt and humiliate :

> In Feasts, as at our Shows, new Means abound;
> More Pleasure there, than that of Wine is found.
> The Paphian Goddess there her Ambush lays;
> And Love between the Horns of Bacchus plays:
> Desires encrease at ev'ry swilling Draught;
> Brisk Vapours add new Vigour to the Thought.
> There Cupid's purple Wings no Flight afford;
> But wet with Wine, he flutters on the Board.
> He shakes his Pinnions, but he cannot move;
> Fix'd he remains, and turns a Maudlin Love.
> Wine warms the Blood, and makes the Spirits flow;
> Care flies, and Wrinkles from the Forehead go:
> Exalts the Poor, Invigorates the Weak;
> Gives Mirth and Laughter, and a Rosy Cheek.
> Bold Truths it speaks; and spoken, dares maintain:
> And brings our old Simplicity again.
> Love sparkles in the Cup, and fills it higher:
> Wine feeds the Flames, and Fuel adds to Fire.[2]
> (261- 278)

1. The Complete Plays of William Wycherley, ed. cit., p. 256.
2. In his edition (commenting on l.264 of the Latin text) A.S.Hollis interprets Ovid's meaning as suggesting that Cupid holds down the horns of Bacchus as in wrestling. E.J.Kenney (cited in Hollis' edition on ll. 269-70) suggests that Ovid's meaning is that Cupid flies off, leaving the wine infected with Love. Crispinus' Interpretatio (I , 408) is, however, closer to Dryden's reading :

   > ...ille manet gravis in loco obsesso. Ille quidem movet celeriter pennas humidas: sed tamen laedit, & facit ut pectus amore moveatur.

   Hollis paraphrases Ovid's ll.237-44 more simply than Dryden: 'Wine prepares the heart for love; it removes all worries and inhibitions, making men behave in a completely natural way'. Dryden's 'exalts' (273) carries an overtone which colours the effects of the wine momentarily with an almost religious dignity.

What Dryden seems to have particularly valued in Ovid's episode is the opportunity its witty mode afforded to be true to more of the facts of the case than would be possible if one were trying to make a 'point' about drunkenness, or see it from one particular point of view. If much of the wit rebounds on the drunken lover (for example, in the double-edged implications of 'Simplicity') we are also reminded at many points of the potency and delight afforded by both Venus and Bacchus.[1] They may not be the gods of a formal religion, but they certainly stand for forces whose power in the world we recognise daily.

The same subject is treated again in the Bacchus and Ariadne episode. The comical behaviour of the drunken Silenus is vividly realised in Dryden's English.

> Silenus on his Ass did next appear;
> And held upon the Mane (the God was clear) [2]
> (610-611)

(for Ovid's

> Ebrius ecce senex pando Silenus asello,
> Vix sedet; & pressas continet arte jubas.
> (543-544))

Yet Bacchus' appearance itself is genuinely majestic and godlike, and his conduct towards the deserted Ariadne is marked by a real tenderness :

1. Wilkinson (cited by Hollis on Ovid 242) glosses 'simplicitas' less interestingly as 'pristine modesty'. Here Hollis's interpretation (...'wine strips away everything that hides a person's underlying character') is close to Dryden's.

2. 'Clear' is a contemporary cant term. See B.E.Gent., A New Dictionary of the Terms Ancient and Modern of the Canting Crew (London, 1699) :
   Clear, c. very Drunk. The Cull is clear, let's Bite him. c. The Fellow is Damn'd Drunk, let's sharp him.

And now the God of Wine came driving on,
High on his Chariot by swift Tygers drawn.
Her Colour, Voice and Sense forsook the fair;
Thrice did her trembling Feet for flight prepare,
And thrice affrighted did her flight forbear.
She shook, like leaves of Corn, when Tempests blow;
Or slender Reeds that in the Marshes grow.
To whom the God --- Compose thy fearful Mind;
In me a truer Husband thou shalt find.
With Heav'n I will endow thee; and thy Star,
Shall with propitious Light be seen afar:
And guide on Seas, the doubtful Mariner.
He said; and from his Chariot leaping light;
Lest the grim Tygers shou'd the Nymph affright,
His brawny Arms around her wast he threw;
(For Gods, what ere they will, with ease can do:)
And swiftly bore her thence; th'attending throng
Shout at the Sight, and sing the Nuptial song.

(616-633)

The end of the story wittily combines Bacchus' tenderness with his drinking in a way that avoids the sneer which might quite easily accompany this particular thought :

Now in full bowls her Sorrow she may steep:
The Bridegroom's Liquor lays the Bride asleep.

(634-635)

In the episode of the Rape of the Sabine Women Dryden seems again to have found in Ovid's story a generality of interest and implication which cannot be fully accounted for by merely taking the incident at its apparent face-value, as a digression offered by Ovid, love's preceptor, to his students to illustrate his advice on where to pick up girls. Ovid is ostensibly suggesting at this point in the Ars that the behaviour of Romulus and his soldiers provides an historical precedent for amatory adventures in the theatre! But Dryden's retelling of the episode indicates that he has seen it as a fable with broader implications, one which gives rise to, and acts as a focus for, speculations on two subjects which, as we have seen, were recurrent interests for him: the sexual license and

'generosity' of monarchs, and the bizarre and paradoxical results of natural passions.

Dryden seems to have regarded this passage very much as he regarded some of the Metamorphoses episodes in Examen Poeticum. Thus, while in his version he has included some particularly barbed comments on Romulus and his soliders (drawing not only on his feelings about William III but also on his experience of Charles II and on current feelings about the question of the 'standing army'), we are not allowed, partly because of the very jauntiness and vigorous race of the couplets, to view the rape simply as an act of gratituous violence (as his predecessor Thomas Hoy seems to have done) or to restrict our interest to that of witnessing a manifestation of a monarch's tyranny.[1] We are (deliberately, it seems) allowed, for example, no inwardness with the girls' feelings during the rape, and the moment of the onslaught itself is seen almost as a time-honoured sporting event :

> The Monarch gave the Signal from his Throne;
> And rising, bad his merry Men fall on.
> The Martial Crew, like Soldiers ready prest,
> Just at the Word (the Word too was the Best)
> With joyful Cries each other animate,
> Some choose, and some at Hazzard seize their Mate.
>
> (129-134)

At the end of the episode, Ovid's lover addresses his bride in terms which claim for his conduct the dignity of one of the most sacred natural

1. California IV, 762 suggests the satirical glance at William III. The subject of the 'standing army' had, of course, been a matter of concern from Cromwell's day. For Dryden's own feelings in the 1690's, see the headnote to The Sixteenth Satire of Juvenal, and Ward, Letters, p.124. The topic also provided him with a stroke for Palamon and Arcite :

> So laugh'd he, when the rightful Titan fail'd,
> And Jove's usurping Arms in Heav'n prevail'd.
> Laugh'd all the Pow'rs who favour Tyranny;
> And all the Standing Army of the Sky.
>
> (III. 669-672)

bonds known to the Romans.

> ...Quid teneros lacrymis corrumpis ocellos?
> Quod matri pater est, hoc tibi, dixit, ero.
>
> (129-130)

Dryden responded in his version to the seriousness of the claim :

> ...My Soul's far better Part,
> Cease weeping, nor afflict thy tender Heart:
> For what thy Father to thy Mother was,
> That Faith to thee, that solemn Vow I pass!
>
> (148-151)

(His predecessor Wolferston had made the soldier's words sound merely like a cynical sneer.

> ...Why weeps my Dear? I'le be no other
> To thee, than was thy Father to thy Mother.
>
> (129-130))

We can perhaps speculate with some confidence that Dryden was trying for a 'double' note here which would allow us to view Romulus' conduct <u>both</u> as a monstrous abuse, <u>and</u> a working out of the inevitable laws of Nature, so that both elements in the paradox 'matrimonial Rape' (126) are held in equipoise, and the humour in jokes like

> To his new Subjects a commodious Man;
>
> (112)

and

> Thus <u>Romulus</u> became so popular;
>
> (152)

becomes exquisitely two-edged.

In the episode of Pasiphaë and the bull, Dryden seems, again, to have seen the episode as one with almost an independent interest from that suggested by its immediate context in the <u>Ars</u>. Ovid is here ostensibly following up his suggestions to his students that women's passions are

(for all their protestations to the contrary) as strong, or stronger, than men's , with a story that provides conclusive proof of his point - that of Pasiphaë's love for a bull. Again, Dryden seems to have seen in the episode the opportunity to treat a series of events which, in almost any other imaginable kind of handling would inevitably involve callousness, prurience or pious horror, but which in Ovid's tale are presented almost neutrally (but not inattentively) as Natural phenomena which can be faced for what they are.

Far from encouraging us to view Pasiphaë as (in Professor Sullivan's phrase) an 'uncontrolled bestialist', Dryden seems intent on impressing upon us with a real delicacy and almost a note of wry astonishment the curious paradoxes in behaviour which such a strange passion would inevitably bring about, without passing any judgement on them or drawing any simple moral conclusion.[1]

> She cut him Grass; (so much can Love command)
> She strok'd, she fed him with her Royal Hand:
> Was pleas'd in Pastures with the Herd to rome;
> And Minos by the Bull was overcome.
> (336-339)

He deliberately avoids, for example, the disapproving note inevitably struck

1. An exception to this is perhaps the unfortunately coarse note in the pun on 'horn'd' in l. 347. In 'Dryden's Versions of Ovid', Comparative Literature, 26 (1974), 193-202, William Frost citesthis particular passage to illustrate Dryden's warm response to Ovid's skill at 'treating a galaxy of moral dilemmas arising out of human sexuality, with a full recognition of their pathos, their comedy, their eroticism, and their animality'.

when Wolferston and Heywood refer to her in their versions as 'lustful Pasiphaë', and recreates her jealousy with a wry but not unsympathetic vividness quite missed by Wolferston :

> Ah quoties vaccam vultu spectavit iniquo,
> Et dixit, Domino cur placet ista meo!
> Aspice, ut ante ipsum teneris exultet in herbis:
> Nec dubito, quin se stulta decere putet.
>
> (313-316)

> She curses ev'ry beauteous Cow she sees;
> Ah, why dost thou my Lord and Master please!
> And think'st, ungrateful Creature as thou art,
> With frisking awkardly, to gain his Heart.
>
> (352-355)

Wolferston's version had read

> How hath shee frown'd, when she did Heifers see,
> And said, why should my Lord so pleased bee?
> See how shee leaps before him, thinking to
> Please him, imagines hee's delighted so.
>
> (313-316)

Dryden's version of the Ars shows us that he has seen Ovid's poem not as a cynical manual of seduction, fit matter for the coarsest of the Court Rakes, but as a sophisticated kind of poem in which the ostensible occasion of a lecture on rakish strategy is used opportunistically to release a series of far more diverse and interesting thoughts about love and lovers than are allowed for in many current descriptions of the poem. However, although it contains many fine local touches and passages, the Ars has not, as Dryden himself seems to have recognised, provided him throughout with the inspiration to make as satisfying and coherent an English poem as he was enabled to do by parts of the Metamorphoses, and it is to his return to this poem, and to the versions from it which he included in his last volume, Fables Ancient and Modern, that we must now turn.

CHAPTER SIX :

OVID IN THE 'FABLES' (I) :

'OVIDIAN EXPERIMENTS'

Chapter Six : Ovid in the 'Fables' (I) : 'Ovidian Experiments'

(i) Ovid in the 'Fables'

(ii) 'Ovidian Experiments' : The Trojan War Fables and 'Meleager and Atalanta'

(i) Ovid in the 'Fables'

'Ovid, I keep repeating from one decade to another', wrote Ezra Pound in 1938, 'is one of the most interesting of all enigmas - if you grant that he was an enigma at all'.[1] Pound's feeling that the attraction of Ovid's poetry, while inescapable, has always been difficult to account for, and to face honestly, is amply confirmed, as we have seen, by a perusal of the prose remarks of Dryden and his contemporaries. As late as 1697, several years after composing the fine versions from the Metamorphoses and from Ovid's amatory poems considered in the last two chapters, Dryden again stated that his love of Ovid was one which coexisted with an abiding sense of the serious objections that could be made to his work. In his paraphrase of the Frenchman Segrais' defence of Virgil against charges of anachronism which he included in the Dedication to his Aeneis, Dryden included these remarks which are substantially his own :

> Shall we dare, continues Segrais, to condemn Virgil, for having made a Fiction against the order of time, when we commend Ovid and other Poets who have made many of their Fictions against the Order of Nature? For what else are the splendid Miracles of the Metamorphoses? Yet these are Beautiful as they are related; and have also deep Learning and instructive Mythologies couch'd under them: [2]
>
> (Kinsley, III, 1031)

Dryden's mixture of continued, and increasing, admiration for the Metamorphoses and his abiding worries about the poem's peculiarities of style, subject-matter and what we might call 'poetic attitude' perhaps

1. Ezra Pound, Guide to Kulchur (1938; rpt. London, 1966), p. 272.
2. Segrais' original simply reads
   > Pourquoy le condamnera-t-on d'avoir fait une fiction contre l'ordre du temps, si on permet bien quelquefois aux autres Poëtes d'en faire mesme contre l'ordre de la nature?

   There is no mention of Ovid. Se Jean Regnauld de Segrais, Préface to L'Énéide de Virgile (Paris, 1668), p.30.

accounts for the unevenness of the renderings of episodes from that poem which he included in his last volume of verse, Fables Ancient and Modern. For while the best of Ovid versions in that volume can rank, I believe, with the renderings of Chaucer, Boccacio and Homer both as fine translations and as fine English poems in their own right, some of the versions have struck many of their readers as, in different ways, experimental or only partially successful, versions which do little to make their puzzling original any more accessible to the modern reader, and which, as English poems, seem somehow only partially coherent or pleasing.

In this chapter I shall comment briefly and selectively on Dryden's 'Ovidian experiments' (as I shall call the two episodes dealing with the Trojan War and the story of Meleager and Atalanta), reserving the final chapter for a more extended and detailed consideration of those poems in which Dryden composed versions which are at one and the same time striking renderings of their Latin originals and fully self-validating English poems. Before turning to the experimental versions, however, some brief consideration must be given to the Fables volume as a whole, and to the place which the Ovidian versions might be thought to occupy in Dryden's scheme for that volume.

Near the beginning of the Preface to Fables, Dryden suggests that his original intention had been to compile a 'Trojan War miscellany', including both the Homeric and Ovidian accounts of crucial episodes in the Troy legend.[1] He was then led on, he says, by his interest, first in the fifteenth book,

1. Kinsley, IV, 1444-1445.

and then by other of his favourite Ovidian stories (stories which, he wrote in a letter to Mrs.Steward, 'best please my fancy') to include more and more Ovid in the collection.[1] Then, he says again in the Preface, he was struck by certain similarities between the artistry of Ovid and that of 'our old English Poet Chaucer', similarities in which, when they are compared, Chaucer can generally be seen to have the advantage over the Latin poet.[2] Drawn again by his impression of striking affinities (this time with another medieval writer) Dryden then, he says, included in the volume some versified tales from Boccacio's Decameron, and completed the

1. Ward, Letters, p. 109. The letter is dated by Dryden 'Candlemass-Day 1698' (i.e. 1698/9).

2. Kinsley, IV, 1445. Though many of his comments on individual writers in the Preface can be traced back to predecessors, Dryden's comparison of Ovid and Chaucer was, apparently, an entirely original one. See J.C.Sherwood, 'Dryden and the Rules : the Preface to the Fables', J.E.G.P., 52 (1953), 13-26. He was taken to task for it by his enemy, Tom Brown, who in his Letters from the Dead to the Living has an amusing dialogue between Chaucer and Dryden in which the former is made to remark, indignantly ,

> '... I tell you there is no more resemblance between us, as to our manner of writing, than there is between a jolly well-complexioned Englishman and a black-haired, thin gutted Italian.'

Dryden replies ,

> 'I tell you that you're mistaken, and your two styles are as like one another as two Exchequer-tallies.'

See Tom Brown, Amusements Serious and Comical and Other Works, ed. A.L.Hayward (London, 1927), p.461.

collection by adding some original poems of his own. Dryden's Preface and some of his personal letters of the same date show him to have been clearly pleased with what he had accomplished in the volume, and to have felt (as did his early readers) that he had amply compensated, by the vigour and vitality of his writing, for the physical infirmity and decrepitude from which, as a man of nearly seventy years, he was now suffering.[1]

Both the general tone and particular remarks in Dryden's own accounts of the genesis of Fables, then, indicate that though there was a certain element of attractive miscellaneity in the volume's conception (an element which surely precludes too schematised an account of the book's themes, structure or architectonics), the poet was certainly making, as he had done while composing Sylvae, various mental connections and comparisons between the poets translated therein, seeing Homer, Ovid, Boccaccio and Chaucer as four writers with (for all their apparent differences) certain similar preoccupations, preoccupations which, moreover, he thought that his own fellow-feeling with each of those authors had allowed him to bring out all the more clearly.[2]

For just as he had claimed Ovid in 1693 to be more 'according to his genius' than other writers whom he had previously translated, so now

1. See Preface, passim, Ward, Letters, pp. 109, 121, 128, and Kinsley, IV, 1446.

2. An attempt to attribute to the volume too ordered a plan, I think, mars Earl Miner's chapter on the Fables in his Dryden's Poetry (Bloomington and London, 1967), and, more seriously, Judith Sloman's article, 'An Interpretation of Dryden's Fables', in Eighteenth Century Studies, 4 (1970-1), 199-211, in which a highly selective and schematic account is given of the individual poems. Dryden says that he had been 'conversant in the same Studies' as Chaucer (Kinsley, IV, 1457), that Chaucer and Ovid's 'Studies were the same' (Kinsley, IV, 1450), and that Boccaccio and Chaucer 'had the same Genius, and follow'd the same Studies' (Kinsley, IV, 1459). By 'Studies', Dryden seems to mean something like 'set of meditations on the human condition'?

as we saw in Chapter One, he made the same claim (in the same words) for Homer, and also declared that he had felt entitled to expand on and flesh out Chaucer's meaning at some points in his versions of that poet since he found that he 'had a Soul congenial to his' and that he had been 'conversant in the same Studies'.[1] He also seems to have felt that his various originals in the volume were complementary, all of them having something distinctive to contribute, but none of them having the monopoly of insight into any given common material, and each of them supplying deficiencies to be found in the others. Chaucer, for example, for all that he shares with the Latin poet, can be seen to have 'writ with more Simplicity, and follow'd Nature more closely' than Ovid.[2] Chaucer's treatment of the subject of True Nobility in the Crone's speech at the end of The Wife of Bath's Tale can be compared (again, to the advantage of the Englishman) with the speech on the same subject by Boccaccio's defiant heroine, Sigismonda.[3] And (a comparison this time ranging outside the strict confines of the present volume itself), Homer's 'violence', 'impetuousness' and 'fire' (to which Dryden was a recent convert) put into relief the 'quietness' and 'sedateness' of Virgil's handling of very similar subject-matter.[4]

What, then, are the main common preoccupations which Dryden saw to be shared by the various originals translated in Fables? The answer to such a question would, of course, ideally follow a full exposition of each of the various versions in turn, but the existence of some recent scholarly

1. Kinsley, IV, 1448, 1457.
2. Kinsley, IV, 1452.
3. Kinsley, IV, 1460.
4. See Kinsley, IV, 1448, and Ward, Letters, p. 121. A full study of the nature and implications of Dryden's late interest in Homer has been made by R.E.Sowerby in Dryden and Homer (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1975).

studies of various aspects of the volume allows some brief pointers to be established here which can serve to create something of a context for the detailed discussions of the Ovidian poems which follow.[1]

Dryden's contemporaries and early admirers, we remember, saw Dryden's enforced retirement into his 'studies' (as he called them) in the late 1690's as having had an extraordinarily beneficial effect on him as a poet. In particular, these writers remarked on the combination of 'youthful vigour', 'ease', and 'serenity' in verse in which Dryden appears as a poet of 'comprehensive speculation'. The choice of originals for Fables reveals Dryden to have been attracted to tales which deal, in different, and overlapping, ways with the problems of love, the idea of heroism, and with various arguments and speculations which might serve to resign or to reconcile humans to 'Nature's Laws', the permanent and unavoidable conditions under which life on this planet must be lived. The volume can thus be seen as an extension of certain interests which, as we have seen, had been developing steadily in Dryden's work since the 1680's.

On the subject of love, Dryden seems to have been attracted to tales in which the full spectrum of lovers' behaviour is revealed, its power and intensity (in the speeches, for example, of Myrrha and Sigismonda), its callousness and brutality (in the rape of the country girl in The Wife of Bath's Tale, in the behaviour of the Lapiths and Cantaurs in The Twelfth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses, in the unadmirable behaviour of Palamon and

1. See especially T.A.Mason, Dryden's Chaucer and R.E.Sowerby, Dryden and Homer. Many of the points in my summary account draw on arguments fully presented and documented by Dr.Mason and Dr.Sowerby.

Arcite, in the rape and abduction perpetrated by Cymon, or in the behaviour of Alexander), its tenderness, delicacy and ennobling power (in the marriage of Baucis and Philemon, the love of Ceyx and Alcyone, and the initial transformation of Cymon), and its comic effects (in the behaviour of Chanticleer and Pertelote, in Iphigenia's lightning vacillations, and, again, in the transformation of Cymon - 'A Judge erected from a Country-Clown' - and some aspects of the behaviour of Palamon and Arcite). Dryden seems also, despite his protestations to Collier in the Preface to have written 'nothing which savours of Immorality or Profaneness', to have been especially alive to all those implications in his originals which suggest that love is something which, whether we like it or not, can transcend or defy all normal moral codes and make a mockery - sometimes tragically, sometimes comically - of all man's efforts to consider himself civilised or 'humane'.[1]

Dryden raises these matters in the introductory section (marked 'Poeta loquitur') to Cymon and Iphigenia :

> ...Love's the Subject of the Comick Muse:
> Nor can we write without it, nor would you
> A Tale of only dry Instruction view;
> Nor Love is always of the vicious Kind,
> But oft to virtuous Acts inflames the Mind.
> Awakes the sleepy Vigour of the Soul,
> And, brushing o'er, adds Motion to the Pool.
> Love studious how to please, improves our Parts,
> With polish'd Manners, and adorns with Arts.
> Love first invented Verse, and form'd the Rhime,
> The Motion measur'd, harmoniz'd the Chime;
> To lib'ral Acts inlarg'd the narrow-Soul'd:
> Soften'd the Fierce, and made the Coward Bold:
> The World when wast, he Peopled with increase,

1. Kinsley, IV, 1447.

And warring Nations reconcil'd in Peace.
Ormond, the first, and all the Fair may find
In this one Legend to their Fame design'd,
When Beauty fires the Blood, how Love exalts the Mind.

(24-41)

The particular edge to Dryden's wit here can be more fully relished if one remembers how Iphigenia, in the poem which follows, actually ends up being parcelled ignominously (but not reluctantly) from lover to lover. The lines are not the simple and conventional compliment that they might seem if one were only to remember the 'miraculous' aspects of the transformation effected in Cymon by Iphigenia at the beginning of the poem. But neither, I think, are the lines, and the tale which follows, designed to encourage us to snigger at Iphigenia's (and the Duchess of Ormond's) expense, Cymon's transformation is 'miraculous' (even if that is not all that it is), and the lines in which Iphigenia's fickleness is particularly pin-pointed -

Then impotent of Mind, with alter'd Sense,
She hugg'd th'Offender, and forgave th'Offence,
Sex to the last: ...

(366-368)

can be seen, in context, not as the sneer at females' expense which they might seem when quoted in isolation, but more as an expression of delight and amazement at Iphigenia's obliviousness to all the normal codes of decency and loyalty in her service to Love. The portrayal of Iphigenia thus avoids both sentimentality and cynicism.

The heroic figures in Fables are divested of much of the dignity which surrounds them in the Epic Theory to which Dryden had been to a

large extent wedded all his writing life.[1] Hence, Dryden's late-found (and remarkable) penetration through the distortions of Renaissance criticism and commentary to the true nature of the Homeric Achilles, at once the greatest of warriors and the most unreasonably passionate of men - the absolute converse of all that the seventeenth century admired in the Virgilian Aeneas.[2] Hence also the evident delight taken by Dryden in the mutual exposure of Ajax and Ulysses, the childishness of Palamon and Arcite, and the behaviour of Alexander, conqueror of the world, reduced by the arts of his musician Timotheus first to maudlin grief then to an irrational rage which induces him to fire a city. Hence also (to some extent at any rate) his interest in the Lapiths and Centaurs, whose battle is in some ways a bizarre parody of the many scenes of fighting in classical epic.

That the particular kinds of interest in lovers and heroes which Dryden found in his originals were not isolated or random phenomena, but part of the 'comprehensive speculation', the wide-ranging interest in 'Nature's Laws' which his early critics thought to be so characteristic of the temper of his mind in his last years can perhaps be best seen in

1. This is particularly prominent from The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy (1679) onwards, where the influence of the French epic theorist, René le Bossu, becomes dominant. See J.C.Sherwood, 'Dryden and the Rules ; the Preface to Troilus and Cressida', Comparative Literature, 2 (1950), 73-83. Dryden's remarks on epic heroes can be found (among other places) in the Character of St.Evremond (1692), the Discourse on Satire (1693), the Parallel betwixt Painting and Poetry (1695), and culminate in the Dedication to the Aeneis (1697).
2. Dryden's relation to the tradition of Homeric commentary is fully discussed in Dr. Sowerby's study.

the connections which he saw between his new-found ways of portraying lovers and heroes, and what one might call the passages of philosophical inquiry in several of the poems which he translated.

His Sigismonda, for example, argues the case for her passionate love before her father Tancred by inviting him to

> ...search...the secret Springs,
> And backward trace the Principles of Things:
> (499-500)

And Dryden makes the Crone (in The Wife of Bath's Tale) draw on the atomic theory of Lucretius and the scientific vocabulary of the Royal Society to add weight and authority to her curtain-lecture to the recreant knight on the subject of True Nobility.[1] Above all, Theseus, at the end of Palamon and Arcite, rests his lengthy appeal for the acceptance and enjoyment of life in the face of all that exists (and which the poem has shown us exists) to frustrate, confound and depress human endeavour, on arguments drawn not only from the Chaucerian original, but 'fortified' with complementary material from Horace, Lucretius, and Ovid, so that what could have been a series of commonplaces is converted into a speech of serene dignity and moving wisdom, a reasoned assertion of the worth of life and the possibilities which exist for the enjoyment of life in the face of a full recognition of all those things which might make life seem worthless and unendurable.[2]

1. See T.A.Mason, 'Dryden's Version of the Wife of Bath's Tale, Cambridge Quarterly, 6 (1975), 240-256.

2. See T.A.Mason, Dryden's Chaucer, Chapter Eight.

Commenting in the Preface on his selection of originals, Dryden remarked that he had

> ...endeavour'd to chuse such Fables, both Ancient and Modern, as contain in each of them some instructive Moral, which I could prove by Induction, but the Way is tedious; and they leap foremost into sight, without the Reader's Trouble of looking after them.
>
> (Kinsley, IV, 1447)

But even from what has been said already (as well as from the remarks of various commentators) it can be seen that the 'instructive Morals' in the fables translated by Dryden are not 'morals' of the simple didactic kind, but rather a series of diverse insights into the nature of things which, Dryden slyly hints, can only fully be appreciated through the act of experiencing and enjoying the poems in and for themselves. Like Cervantes in a different context, Dryden seems to be being a little less than perfectly straightforward in his suggestion that he could easily 'prove' the 'moral' of each poem 'by Induction'.[1] It was the combination of

1. There is a striking parallel with some remarks which Cervantes, then, like Dryden, an old man, made in the Prólogo al Lector printed with his Novelas Exemplares, and it even seems possible that Dryden had Cervantes in mind when writing his own passage. The Prólogo was not translated by James Mabbe in his English version of the Novelas (1640), but Dryden read Spanish, and Pepys, for example, owned a copy of the Novelas in the original (See S.Gaselee, The Spanish Books in the Library of Samuel Pepys, Supplement II to the Transactions of the Bibliographical Society, 1921 (Oxford, 1921), p.22).

   Cervantes' Novelas are, like the Fables, 'exemplary' in a more sophisticated sense than, say, the fables of Aesop. In his Preface (trans.W.Kelly [London, 1855] p.x) Cervantes remarks first, like Dryden, that the 'amorous intrigues' in his tales are 'so conformable to reason and Christian propriety, that they are incapable of exciting any impure thoughts in him who reads them with or without caution', then continues,

   > I have called them exemplary, because if you rightly consider them, there is not one of them from which you may not draw some useful example; and were I not afraid of being too prolix, I might show you what savoury and wholesome fruit might be extracted from them, collectively and severally.

frankness, vigour, humour, seriousness, and genial understanding with which Dryden revealed these 'morals' to his readers, and the sprightly and melodious verse in which they were contained, which particularly impressed those early critics who wrote so admiringly of the Fables.

(ii) 'Ovidian Experiments' : The Trojan War Fables and 'Meleager and Atalanta'

In the Preface to Fables, Dryden indicates how he came to translate The Twelfth Book of Ovid his Metamorphoses and The Speeches of Ajax and Ulysses from Ovid's Metamorphoses Book XIII :

> From translating the First of Homer's Iliads, (which I intended as an Essay to the whole Work) I proceeded to the Translation of the Twelfth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses, because it contains, among other Things, the Causes, the Beginning, and Ending, of the Trojan War : Here I ought in reason to have stopp'd; but the Speeches of Ajax and Ulysses lying next in my way, I could not balk 'em.
>
> (Kinsley, IV, 1444)

These two poems were, then, if their author is to be believed, the first episodes from the Metamorphoses to be translated for Fables, and their choice seems to have been, at least in the first instance, dictated by their subject-matter, matter similar to that of the Iliad, and which is (as Dryden's headnote to Book Twelve observes) treated in quite a different way from that of Virgil.

Dryden had for many years been impressed (as had many other readers) with the mastery of rhetoric displayed by Ovid in his virtuoso reworking of a stock Roman declamation subject - the speeches of Ajax and Ulysses over the arms of Achilles.[1] In his essay The Grounds of Criticism in

1. See, for example, Thomas Hall in Wisdoms Conquest. Or, An Explanation and Grammaticall Translation of the Thirteenth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses, Containing that Curious and Rhetoricall Contest Between Ajax and Vlysses, for Achilles Armour; Where is set forth to the Life the Power of Valour, and the Prevalence of Eloquence (London, 1651), Sig.A5v:
   > As for the story it self, I may call it, not Ovid's Metamorphosis, but Ovid's Master-piece; wherein for purity of language, elegancy of stile, aptness of matter, and most acute and accurate invention, he excells himself, and is no whit inferior to the very Wits of Athens.

   See also N.Tate and A.Hill, The Celebrated Speeches of Ajax and Ulysses... Essay'd in English Verse (London, 1708), Sig. A2r :
   > ...the Criticks are all agreed in their Sentiments, That This is his Master-Piece; containing a large Field of Rhetorick, with all the Artful Turns of Accomplish'd Elocuation.

   The subject was also a stock theme in Greek rhetorical teaching. See G.Lafaye, Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide et leurs modèles grecs (Paris, 1904) pp. 159-166.

Tragedy of 1679 he had borrowed from Le Bossu an approving description of the way in which Ovid's Ulysses skilfully manipulates his audience's sympathies.

> Ulysses,..., prepares his audience with all the submissiveness he can practice, and all the calmness of a reasonable man; he found his judges in a tranquillity of spirit, and therefore set out leisurely and softly with them, till he had warmed them by degrees; and then he began to mend his pace, and to draw them along with his own impetuousness: yet so managing his breath, that it might not fail him at his need, and reserving his utmost proofs of ability even to the last.[1]
>
> (Scott, VI, 259-60)

Dryden's version of the speeches in Fables indicates, I think, that the nature of his interest in them had not changed a great deal since 1679. He seems, that is, to have still seen the principal pleasure of the speeches as lying in Ovid's skill at displaying character through rhetoric, and in reworking (as in the Heroides) the subject-matter of Homer and Virgil from an entirely different viewpoint, one, moreover, which is far less flattering to the legendary heroic personages.

The version keeps, on the whole, very close to the Latin, and Dryden has resisted the obvious temptation to give the speeches any consistent modern direction or political application.[2] The episode indeed shows

1. See my 'Dryden, Le Bossu, and Ovid's Speeches of Ajax and Ulysses', N.Q., 25 (1978), 30-31.

2. I can see no specific support in the text for William Myers' suggestion (Dryden [London, 1973] p.186) that Ajax is to be identified with James II and Ulysses with William III, though Dryden's experience and observation of political figures in action had no doubt contributed in general terms to his interest in this episode. Mr.Myers is, however, surely right in his suggestion that Dryden was deliberately stressing in his version that neither hero had 'right' on his side.

Dryden, as Van Doren observed, 'in his best argumentative trim', and he has taken particular delight in rendering those moments where the two heroes most scornfully deride or abuse one another, for example, in Ajax's account of Ulysses' cowardice in the field[1] :

> His Elocution was increas'd by fear :
> I heard, I ran, I found him out of Breath,
> Pale, trembling, and half dead, with fear of Death.
> Though he had judg'd himself by his own Laws,
> And stood condemn'd, I help'd the common Cause:
> With my broad Buckler hid him from the Foe;
> (Ev'n the Shield trembled as he lay below;)...
>
> Good Heav'ns how light he rose, with what a bound
> He sprung from Earth, forgetful of his Wound;
> How fresh, how eager then his Feet to ply,
> Who had not Strength to stand, had Speed to fly!
>
> (110-116; 129-132)

Or Ulysses' scornful rebuke to Ajax :

> Now, what did Ajax while our Arms took Breath,
> Vers'd only in the gross mechanick Trade of Death?
>
> (337-8)

1. Van Doren, John Dryden, p.29; Ulysses in Dryden's Troilus had referred to 'brainless Ajax' (Scott, VI, 293) and Thersites, in the same play, had called Ajax and Achilles 'hard-headed rogues'. By 1699, Dryden was voicing such partial or minority opinions in propria persona. In the Dedication to Fables (Kinsley, IV, 1442) he remarked,

> Science distinguishes a Man of Honour from one of those Athletick Brutes whom undeservedly we call Heroes. Curs'd be the Poet, who first honour'd with that Name a meer Ajax, a Man-killing Ideot. The Ulysses of Ovid upbraids his Ignorance, that he understood not the Shield for which he pleaded: There was engraven on it, Plans of Cities, and Maps of Countries, which Ajax could not comprehend, but look'd on them as his Fellow-Beast the Lion.

Like Ovid, Dryden shows Ulysses' victory to be one of strategy and ingenuity rather than due to the rightness of his cause, and the contest is seen (as one commentator on the original puts it) as much one between deceitfulness and openness as one between brains and brawn.[1] So when, at the end of Ulysses' speech, the poet remarks,

> Thus Conduct won the Prize, when Courage fail'd,
> And Eloquence o'er brutal Force prevail'd.
>
> (591-2)

(for Ovid's

> ...quid facundia posset,
> Re patuit; fortisque viri tulit arma disertus.
>
> (382-3))

we recognise that the 'Eloquence' being referred to is a matter of strategic skill rather than the eloquence that comes from speaking the whole truth.

1. Pace many allegorical commentators who argued, like Sandys (p.446), that the episode displayed the clear superiority of 'councell and pollicy' over 'courage of mind and strength of the body'. Compare P. Du-Ryer, Les Métamorphoses D'Ovide..., avec de Nouvelles Explications Historiques, Morales & Politiques sur Toutes les Fables (Brussells, 1677), pp.411-12, and N.Renouard , Les Métamorphoses D'Ovide. Traduites en Prose Françoise ... Avec Quinze Discours, Contenant L'Explication Morale des Fables (Paris, 1640), pp.228-9. L.P.Wilkinson (Ovid Recalled, pp.228-35) argues a similar case, suggesting that Ovid was going against conventional Roman opinion in supporting Ulysses. However, Dryden has responded with particular warmth to Ovid's suggestions of Ulysses' deceit in ll.197-204 and 211-12 of his version. The latter example in Ovid's original (Ulysses wiping away crocodile tears) was perhaps the source for Absalom's strategic weeping in Absalom and Achitophel, l.717. See Otto Steen Due, Changing Forms : Studies in the Metamorphoses of Ovid (Copenhagen, 1974), p.154. On Dryden's version, see also William Myers, Dryden, p.186.

But the version does seem, in the last resort, one of the least interesting in the Fables, one of the very few which do indeed have an 'instructive Moral' of the simpler kind. Once this is grasped, the poem yields no further diversity of interest, and one can imagine that it was indeed written, as Dryden suggests, principally to round off the Trojan narrative. The episode is an experiment not so much because it is puzzling or unclear in its focus (quite the reverse) but because it seems to be, in the best sense of the term, an exercise - Dryden trying his practiced hand as a practitioner of 'argument in verse' at one of the most famous rhetorical debates in ancient literature.

But with the poem to which the speeches are a sequel, The Twelfth Book of Ovid his Metamorphoses, we are immediately on far more perplexing ground. Dryden seems to have had a very high regard indeed for this book of Ovid's, a book ostensibly telling the story of the Trojan War, but actually compressing this narrative (as Dryden himself points out) into a very brief compass at the beginning and the end, with accounts of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Achilles' strangling of Neptune's son Cygnus, and, finally, Apollo's engineering of the death of Achilles at the cowardly hands of Paris. Over half the book is taken up with a lengthy digression narrated by Nestor reporting the brutal legendary battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs at the wedding feast of Perithous and Hippodame.

Many critics have echoed Dryden's opinion, expressed in the headnote to his version and amply justified by his rendering itself, that the much-imitated passage near the beginning of the book describing the House of Fame (whence the news reaches Troy of the approaching Greek forces) 'is one of the most beautiful Pieces in the whole Metamorphoses'.[1] In his

1. Lines 56-88 in Dryden's version.

translation, Dryden has incorporated details from the courts and palaces he knew so well to emphasise the grandeur, business and insidious goings-on in Fame's dwelling. Some commentators have also expressed their admiration of the brisk and pointed account of Neptune's rape of Caenis and his subsequent transformation of her into an invulnerable male.[1] But Dryden seems to be virtually alone in thinking that 'The fight of Achilles and Cygnus, and the Fray betwixt the Lapythae and Centaurs, yield to no other part of this Poet'. No English translator before Dryden had rendered the episode separately; I can also find no earlier critic who had singled out the episode for special praise; and a glance at a representative selection of modern commentators on Ovid reveals that the episode has been met with almost universal hostility or blankness in our own day. It is described, for example, as 'tedious and otiose' and even 'repulsive', showing an 'ingenious gruesomeness', containing 'a succession of outré killings' and 'lurid and suggestive detail which today is the hallmark of the reporting on capital crime in the tabloid press'.[2] Ovid is thought to be 'revelling in ever new ways of imagining how bodies can be mangled, maimed and disintegrated' and catering for debased Roman tastes for a 'lurid curiosity for novel kinds of agony'.[3] Its appeal to a Roman audience has even been likened by one commentator to the taste displayed

1. See H.Fränkel, Ovid, p. 222; O.S.Due, Changing Forms, p. 148.
2. B. Otis, Ovid as Epic Poet, p. 281; H.Fränkel, Ovid, p. 232; Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, p. 168; B.Otis, Ovid as Epic Poet, p. 39; G.K.Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p. 137.
3. G.K.Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp. 126-8; H.Fränkel, Ovid, p. 102. See also G.Lafaye, Les Métamorphoses, p. 117.

by certain twentieth-century self-styled intellectuals for the 'spattering of blood and brains and furniture' to be found in the 'spaghetti western'.[1] The episode seems, on the face of it, the last kind of material to appeal to a poet for whom, as all the evidence both literary and biographical suggests, bloodshed and disorder were among the most abhorrent of human crimes. Few critics have commented on Dryden's version. Van Doren remarks (without further comment) that it is 'as graphic and gory' as its original, and Nestor's tale has been described by another critic of Dryden as 'the pornography of violence.'[2]

In some ways it is tempting to see the episode, as some critics have done, as a simple piece of 'debunking', the most transparent example of the critical treatment of 'Athletick Brutes' and 'Man-killing Ideots' which, as we have seen, is apparent in several places in the Fables.[3] It is certainly true that by 1699 Dryden was no longer able to commend the admiration of the traditional epic hero with the single-mindedness which he had managed in some of his prose pronouncements even as recently as two years previously.[4] Nor can one imagine (from such evidence as is available) that Ovid himself had much simple admiration for the heroic values of manly valour in battle. Nevertheless the peculiar qualities of Dryden's version of The Twelfth Book are such that it seems inadequate to

1. O.S.Due, Changing Forms, p. 148.
2. Van Doren, John Dryden, p. 219; Myers, Dryden, p. 185.
3. Myers, Dryden, p. 186. See also M.West, 'Dryden's Ambivalence as a Translator of Heroic Themes', H.L.Q., 36 (1973), 347-66.
4. M.West, 'Dryden's Ambivalence', R.E.Sowerby and T.A.Mason all document in detail the way in which, in his latest work, Dryden had clearly substantially abandoned many of his earlier French-based theories about the need to portray epic heroes as admirable or moral figures, or as figures who, in their very immorality, impress upon us indirectly some improving truth.

describe the effect or intention which he is attempting to convey in his rendering as being merely to burlesque the heroic fighting of Homeric or Virgilian epic by deliberately re-setting such fighting in a bizarre and incongruous context, substituting centaurs for heroes, and ridiculing the death-sequences of epic by the technique of reductio ad absurdum.[1]

Dryden's version perhaps indicates, rather, that he saw Ovid's episode of the Lapiths and the Centaurs as a kind of experiment in conducting a narrative which displays, as it were, in an extreme form the kind of witty distancing which we have already observed in the treatment of the flood in The First Book. But this time the technique is applied to situations not just of natural disaster but of brutal and bestial violence, and it is sustained at great length.

The comments of the allegorists who saw Ovid's episode as constituting a solemn warning against the dire effects of wine and lust seem, even more than usual, to be distorting its poetic direction and intention.[2] For though the episode, as so often in Ovid, depicts sexual passion in circumstances which closely link it with extravagantly violent behaviour, no obvious moral is to be drawn from the events which are portrayed. Often an event which might so easily be the occasion for a moral point from the narrator or which might occasion retribution in the narrative itself, such as the seizing of the altars or the stealing of the holy objects (made even more daring in the English version by Dryden's use of specifically Christian terms), is reported without any noticeable authorial pressure or disturbance.[3] The incongruities and absurdities of situation and character

1. As West suggests. Brooks Otis, in his Ovid as Epic Poet (pp.350-1, 359, 280-85 and passim) makes similar suggestions about Ovid's original.
2. See, for example, Alexander Ross, Mystagogus Poeticus (2nd. ed., London, 1648), pp. 55-57, where this aspect is stressed.
3. Dryden, ll.342-371, passim.

are continually stressed, but without anything being made of them.[1] Again, Dryden does nothing to minimise these in his version, even pointing them up in some touches of his own, for example where the behaviour of the two centaur-lovers, Cyllarus and Hylonome, is described in terms which momentarily - and quite incongruously - recall the paradisal love of Milton's Adam and Eve.[2]

It is as if Dryden has seen Ovid's episode as striving to achieve that same note of what one might call 'moral neutrality', a blankness in the face of events which might normally provoke an extreme reaction, which one can detect, for example, in the painting which Piero di Cosimo made of the scene (now housed in the National Gallery, London).[3] As in Ovid's descriptions, and Dryden's rendering, di Cosimo's Centaurs and Lapiths are virtually undistinguished and indistinguishable in the viewer's (or reader's) overall impression. All the emphasis in the painting is on the extraordinary groupings brought about by the Centaurs' attack. The panoramic nature of the canvass, with everything happening, as it were, simultaneously, has an analogous effect to the seemingly endless sequence of events in the poem. As in the Ovid and the Dryden, everything is precisely observed and depicted - this is not the vague violence of neurotic or sensationalist fantasy. But, again as in the Ovid, we feel no involvement with, or concern for, the victims.

1. The centaurs' 'horsiness' is continually stressed (see ll.336, 463, 467, 530-534, 592).
2. Note particularly the phrases '<u>Sylvan</u> Pleasures' (l. 555) and their 'shady cave' (l. 557)
3. Piero di Cosimo (?1461-1521?), <u>Battaglia fra i Centauri e i Lapiti</u>, reproduced in the text, by courtesy of the Trustees, The National Gallery, London.

Perhaps the two most extraordinary deaths in The Twelfth Book, as rendered by Dryden, are those of Aphidas and of Pholon. Aphidas' death occurs at line 436 in the English version.

> Amid the Noise and Tumult of the Fray,
> Snoring, and drunk with Wine, Aphidas lay.
> Ev'n then the Bowl within his Hand he kept:
> And on a Bear's rough Hide securely slept.
> Him Phorbas with his flying Dart, transfix'd;
> Take thy next Draught, with Stygian Waters mix'd,
> And sleep thy fill, th'insulting Victor cry'd;
> Surpris'd with Death unfelt, the Centaur dy'd;
> The ruddy Vomit, as he breath'd his Soul,
> Repass'd his Throat; and fill'd his empty Bowl.

Pholon's occurs later, at l. 585

> He threw at Pholon; the descending Blow
> Divides the Skull, and cleaves his Head in two.
> The Brains, from Nose and Mouth, and either Ear
> Came issuing out, as through a Colendar
> The curdled Milk : or from the Press the Whey
> Driv'n down by Weights above, is drain'd away.

From his rendering of both these descriptions we can perhaps conclude that in each case Dryden seems to have seen the purpose of Ovid's removal of all consideration of, or interest in, either character's feelings as a means of focussing the reader's mind on the extraordinary resemblances between such violent deaths and other quite different activities, resemblances which, if we were actually viewing a death, we would (even if they occurred to us) instantly suppress.

But often in this version the treatment topples over into something which must seem to the modern reader more straightforwardly callous or revolting, as for example, in the deaths of Grineus :

> ... the sharp Antlers stuck in either Eye :
> Breathless and Blind he fell; with Blood besmear'd;
> His Eye-balls beaten out, hung dangling on his Beard.
>
> (377-9)

or of Dorylas :

.. He reel'd around;
And drag'd his dangling Bowels on the Ground.
Trod what he drag'd; and what he trod he crush'd:
And to his Mother-Earth, with empty Belly rush'd.
(520-3)

Here the mind is allowed no relief even in the contemplation of bizarre resemblances, and the focus is too directly on the slaughter itself. Dryden's rendering has done nothing to prevent our seeing these passages as reflecting the taste of the practised Roman conoisseur of gladiatorial fights.[1]

There is, I think, little else in this very long version which would substantially alter the conclusions which these few examples press upon us, that in his version of The Twelfth Book Dryden has done little (except in the House of Fame passage) to substantiate or justify the very high value which he claims for this Ovidian episode. If in other poems (notably at the end of Cymon and Iphigenia) he was able to portray the combination of sexual passion and brutal violence in a way which (because of the total context in which it is set) is made acceptable, here he has not shown it as anything more than bizarre and curious, and the Ovidian effects of 'distancing' which he could, on occasion, see as a means to achieving satisfying and original artistic effects here remain in his version (as many commentators have found it in the Latin original) largely baffling, and indeed unattractive.[2]

1. As did Fränkel (Ovid, p. 109), commenting directly on the Latin original. See also W.W.Sellar, Roman Poets of the Augustan Age : Horace and the Elegiac Poets (London, 1892), pp. 356-7 .

2. William Myers noted (Dryden, p. 189) the similarity between the disruption at the wedding feast in the two poems, but the context, in the Boccaccio version (particularly our involvement with the fortunes of its hero), does allow us to enjoy the élan with which such brutal events are brought to their conclusion.

Of the three 'Ovidian experiments', the translation of Meleager and Atalanta from Book VIII of the Metamorphoses has perhaps the most obvious connections, in terms of its subject matter, with some of the other poems in Fables, dealing as it does with destructive gods, the overwhelming power of love, and the intensity of female passion. It tells of the arbitrary vengeance of the goddess Diana on the house of Oeneus, sent first in the form of a boar which ravages Calydon, and finally worked out, even more terribly, in Althaea's quasi-magical killing of her own son Meleager by burning a log the life of which, so the Fates have told her, will be coterminous with her son's. The first part of the story, containing a description of the hunting and final killing of the boar by Meleager and a succession of other heroes including the huntress-maiden Atalanta (with whom Meleager falls immediately, and, as it turns out, fatally in love) has descriptions of slaughter which are in some ways reminiscent of those in The Twelfth Book.[1] The second half, which is occupied by a long monologue in which Althaea debates with herself whether she should kill her son in revenge for his hasty killing of her two brothers, was a passage which, as we have seen, Dryden had admired for a long time. He had associated it many years before, in the dedicatory Letter to Annus Mirabilis, with the monologues of Byblis and Myrrha as one of those passages in which Ovid had 'described' its heroine 'well and naturally, in the violence of her passions' and which, therefore, produces

1. For example, the depiction of the death of Onesimus (ll. 129-32), the tripping of Telamon (147-150) and the death of Ancaeus (175-8).

great 'concernment' for its speaker in the reader.

It is the curious miscellaneity of Dryden's version which remains, after due consideration, perhaps its most striking and disappointing feature. Dryden has clearly been attracted by the Latin episode in several different ways, and his version contains few passages of merely slack and uninspired writing. But unlike the episodes which will form the subject of the next chapter, he seems in this case to have had no very sure conception of the whole, and the striking individual passages do not cohere, even after repeated readings. The episode, that is, seems to lack any central principle of organisation.

Indeed, in this respect the fault may possibly not have been entirely Dryden's, since, as several commentators record, this particular episode in the Metamorphoses is one whose various parts many readers other than Dryden have found it hard to reconcile or accommodate one to another.[1] The hunting scenes have been found 'tedious and grotesque', the final metamorphosis of Meleager's sisters 'ludicrous', and even the much-admired speech of Althaea has been found by some commentators disappointingly tedious, unclear in its direction (for all the apparent rhetorical clarity of the issues being debated), and insufficiently prepared for by what has preceded it, so that the poet can be thought to have, in fact, prevented the 'concernment' with Althaea's predicament which the young Dryden had thought was so characteristic of every reader's experience of the passage.[2]

1. On the incongruity of the episode's various parts, see A.S.Hollis, ed., Ovid : Metamorphoses, Book VIII (Oxford, 1970), p. 69.
2. Otis, Ovid as Epic Poet, p. 199; W.S.Anderson, ed., Ovid's Metamorphoses, Books 6-10 (Norman, 1972), p.379; Hollis, ed., Book VIII, pp. 89, 91-2, and Otis, Ovid as Epic Poet, p.20. Anderson, however (p.371) and the Oxford editor of 1826, quoted by Hollis on p.89, express a higher opinion of the soliloquy, closer to that which Dryden voiced in 1667.

An index of what I have called the miscellaneity of Dryden's version can be found in the way that, at several points in his rendering, he has been inspired by his original to particularly felicitous creative strokes which, however, seem to have no connection with anything else in the poem. A good example occurs in the portrayal of the forest from which the Calydonian boar emerges, where Dryden has expanded on his original :

> Silva frequens trabibus, quam nulla ceciderat aetas,
> Incipit à plano : devexaque prospicit arva.
>
> (329-330)

> There stood a Forest on a Mountains Brow,
> Which over-look'd the shaded Plains below.
> No sounding Ax presum'd those Trees to bite;
> Coeval with the World, a venerable Sight.
>
> (84-7)

The numinous mystery of the wood captured so tellingly in this short passage (the O.E.D. records this as the first occurrence of the Latinism 'coeval') seems in no way related to the narrative which follows. Something similar can be said of the comic vigour with which Dryden has responded in his version to Nestor's lucky escape from the Boar :

> Forsitan & Pylius citra Trojana perisset
> Tempora : sed sumpto positâ conamine ab hastâ,
> Arboris insiluit, quae stabat proxima, ramis:
> Despexitque loco tutus, quem fugerat, hostem.
> Dentibus ille ferox in querno stipite tritis
> Imminet exitio, ...
>
> (365-370)

> Nestor had fail'd the Fall of Troy to see.
> But leaning on his Lance, he vaulted on a Tree;
> Then gath'ring up his Feet, look'd down with Fear,
> And thought his monstrous Foe was still too near.
> Against a Stump his Tusk the Monster grinds,
> And in the sharpen'd Edge new Vigour finds;
>
> (133-138)

Another such passage is the wryly-observed reaction of the heroes towards the boar after Meleager has finally killed it.[1]

> Immanemque ferum multâ tellure jacentem
> Mirantes spectant : neque adhuc contingere tutum
> Esse putant : sed tela tamen sua quisque cruentant.
>
> (422-4)

> Then all approach the Slain with vast Surprize,
> Admire on what a Breadth of Earth he lies,
> And scarce secure, reach out their Spears afar,
> And blood their Points, to prove their Partnership of War.
>
> (206-9)

But again, these seem momentary and quite self-contained flashes, rather than part of any consistent view of the heroes which the author is encouraging and which we carry with us through the poem.

The appearance of Atalanta herself is coloured in Dryden's version with strong remembrances of one of his favourite classical passages, the moment in Book One of the Aeneid where Venus appears to her son in the costume of a huntress, and he was clearly interested, as he was in the initial portrayal of Iphigenia in Cymon and Iphigenia, in the particular combination, in the figure of Atalanta, of Diana-like chastity with Venus-like attractiveness.[2] But again, the interest goes nowhere -

1. Though there is no direct verbal similarity, Dryden's imagining of the heroes gingerly prodding the dead beast from a safe distance might owe something to his memories of Spenser's reworking of the same Ovidian scene (F.Q., I,xii.9-11) where the fear of the observers surrounding the dead dragon (as it is in Spenser) is given considerable stress.

2. In ll. 66-71 Dryden has added several details from Virgil's description (Dryden's translation, ll.433-438). In Cymon and Iphigenia (ll.95-106) Dryden draws not only, again, on Virgil, but on Spenser's reworking of the same scene in his portrayal of Belphoebe (F.Q., II.iii.22-31). See Kinsley, IV, 2081 and Thomas Warton, Observations on the Fairy Queen of Spenser (2nd ed., London, 1762), ii.140. In l.151, also, Dryden has referred to Atalanta as 'the Virgin-Huntress'. The association was well known. St.Evremond, in his 'A Fragment of the History of Atalanta, out of Aelian's Var.His. L.13.c.1.' remarked :

> ...Her Habit was without Cost and Artifice, very little differing from that of Diana, whom she said she was desirous to imitate in that particular, no less than in her Resolution to preserve her Virginity inviolable.

(See The Works of Mr. de St. Evremont [2 vols., London, 1700], II, 357).

Atalanta's particular part in causing the events which ensue is completely forgotten once the scene changes to centre on Althaea's monologue.[1]

Althaea's soliloquy, in the Ovidian original, was, as the commentators point out, another exercise in the Roman rhetorical form known as the suasoria. Here, as elsewhere in his version, Dryden has added 'boysims' of the kind which, as we have seen, he had frequently claimed to dislike in Ovid but which still sometimes seemed to be for him a fatal Cleopatra.[2] Lines 246-7, for example, are not warranted by anything in the Latin :

> Pale at the sudden Sight, she chang'd her Cheer,
> And with her Cheer her Robes; ...

But again, there are also local touches of great felicity. The lines just quoted are followed by a short passage which uses what at first might seem a mere schematic convention to alert us with great psychological precision to the nature of the conflict going on at this moment within Althaea :

> ... but hearing tell
> The Cause, the Manner, and by whom they fell,
> 'Twas Grief no more, or Grief and Rage were one
> Within her Soul; at last 'twas Rage alone;
> Which burning upwards in succession dries
> The Tears that stood consid'ring in her Eyes.
>
> (247-52)

And in the speech itself, Dryden has exercised some fine strokes in

1. In a manner characteristic of Fables, Dryden places even more stress than Ovid on the part the brothers' contempt for women plays in their downfall (see especially ll.224-230).

2. In, for example, the joke about Telamon's 'Wooden Gyves' in l.150. Scott remarked (Scott, I, 516-7) that

> ...he has been seduced, by the similarity of style, to add to the offences of his original, and introduce, though it needed not, points of wit and antithetical prettinesses, for which he cannot plead Ovid's authority.

imagining Althaea's momentarily vivid feelings for her murdered brothers :

> ...you, thin Shades, the Sport of Winds, are toss'd[1]
> O'er dreery Plains, or tread the burning Coast.
>
> (316-17)

and for her son :

> Ah! hadst thou dy'd, my Son, in Infant-years,
> Thy little Herse had been bedew'd with Tears.
>
> (324-5)

But these moments coexist uneasily with much else that is feebly declamatory, and therefore cannot allow us the inwardness with her conflict which is apparent in the fragments just quoted.

> I cannot, cannot bear; 'tis past, 'tis done;
> Perish this impious, this detested Son :
>
> (318-9)

And some moments are tediously antithetical (without the antitheses even having any real point beyond that of rhetorical patterning) :

> Thou liv'st by me; to me thy Breath resign;
> Mine is the Merit, the Demerit thine.
> Thy Life by double Title I require;
> Once giv'n at Birth, and once preserv'd from Fire:
> One Murder pay, or add one Murder more,
> And me to them who fell by thee restore.
>
> (326-331)

Such lines are more reminiscent of Ovid's Epistles than of the later Dryden, and to them could be aptly applied the account offered by one modern scholar of the effect of much of Althaea's soliloquy in the original Latin: 'Ovid's smooth antitheses destroy all illusion of a woman in agony of soul torn between conflicting loyalties'.[2] And the same scholar has, interestingly, attempted to explain some of the frigidity of Althaea's soliloquy in Ovid by suggesting that there was, in fact, an element of

1. Cf. P.L., III, 493.
2. Hollis, ed., Book VIII, p.89.

academicism in Ovid's very decision to dramatise the conflict between a mother's duties to her son and those to her brothers in this suasoria-form, since, though such a conflict was, apparently, a live issue in the early Greek communities from which the Althaea legend seems to have originated, for the Romans (as for us) the mother's feelings for her son would clearly predominate unless the brothers' claims were pressed (as they are not by Ovid) with some particular power and urgency.[1] It is certainly clear that such a conflict must have been even more remote from Dryden's experience and scheme of values. At any rate, he has not managed to render the speech with anything like the consistent conviction that, as we shall see, is evident in his reworking of the speeches of Myrrha in Ovid's tenth book.

These three Fables, then, Ajax and Ulysses, The Twelfth Book and Meleager and Atalanta, while all containing passages of local interest, are not poems in which Dryden was fired by his engagement with Ovidian originals to compose English poems of great intrinsic merit or coherence. Either (as in the case of Ajax and Ulysses) his attraction to the Ovidian episode seems to have been that of too limited and academic a kind to produce a version of sufficient diversity of interest, or (in the case of the other two poems) the various kinds of peculiarity which he found in his original proved too great, or too problematic, to be satisfactorily 'naturalised' into English verse. But not all the renderings from Ovid included in the Fables were as partially successful as these three poems, and it is to those versions in which Ovid is indeed (in Charles Brome's phrase) made to 'flourish in a British Soil' that we must now turn.

1. See Hollis' detailed discussion of this point on pp.91-2.

CHAPTER SEVEN

OVID IN THE 'FABLES' (II) : THE FOUR GREAT OVIDIAN TRANSLATIONS

Chapter Seven : Ovid in the 'Fables' (II): The Four Great Ovidian Translations

(i) Nature's Laws and Man's : 'Cinyras and Myrrha'

(ii) 'The good natur'd Story of Baucis and Philemon'

(iii) 'Tickling you to laugh'? : 'Ceyx and Alcyone'

(iv) The Flux of Nature : 'Of the Pythagorean Philosophy'

(i) Nature's Laws and Man's : 'Cinyras and Myrrha'

In translating the story of Cinyras and Myrrha from the Tenth Book of the Metamorphoses Dryden was undertaking to treat subject-matter very similar to that which he had handled in some of his plays and (as we saw in Chapter Two) in the salacious epistle of Canace to Macareus included in Ovid's Epistles.[1] For the Myrrha story, like Canace's epistle, is a tale of consummated incest, this time between father and daughter, resulting not, as in the earlier poem, in the suicide of the heroine (though this seems the likely outcome at one point in the story) but in the double miracle of Myrrha's transformation into an Arabian myrrh-tree and the birth of her child from the tree's trunk. Her child is not a hideous monster, but the beautiful Adonis, the future beloved of Venus herself. And a considerable part of the episode is taken up (as had been the earlier epistle) with the heroine's own reflections and meditations on the nature of her passion and the possible solutions to her dilemma.

Treating such a subject has its obvious pitfalls for any poet, and the example of Canace shows only too clearly the ways in which a writer could affect a glib superiority to a heroine in such a predicament, using his poem as an opportunity for a coldly masculine snigger at her expense. Indeed, several readers have found this to be precisely the effect of Ovid's handling of the Myrrha episode, and have judged his treatment of Myrrha's predicament to be melodramatic, frigid and even repulsive,

1. See particularly Aureng-Zebe, III.i. (Scott, V, 234), Don Sebastian, II.i. (Scott, VII, 346), V.i. (Scott, VII, 439), Love Triumphant, II.i. (Scott, VIII, 366-369), III.i. (Scott, VIII, 384), V.i. (Scott, VIII,431).

allowing no sympathy with the girl, and finally callously degrading her, in the metamorphosis itself, to the level of the sub-human.[1] Mark Van Doren clearly felt that Ovid's episode had once more encouraged Dryden to display his weakest, most narrowly 'Restoration' side, and judged that the story was rendered by him 'without restraint.'[2]

But not all readers have judged either Ovid's original or Dryden's version thus. Herman Fränkel, for example, found that Ovid's Myrrha had been afforded a 'new dignity' by her transformation, Jean-Marc Frécaut finds the wit in Ovid's episode an essential contributory factor to its artistic success, rather than a sign of Ovid's trivialising callousness, G.Karl Galinsky has stressed the pity which Ovid's handling allows us to feel for the girl, and a recent commentator on Book Ten, W.S.Anderson, has interestingly demonstrated the ways in which Ovid seems to have specifically modified his Alexandrian sources in order to transform the story from a simple one of divine vengeance (Venus punishing Myrrha for her illicit passion) into one which allows us to see Myrrha's predicament in all its complexity 'without prejudice' : the source of her passion is deliberately left obscure, so that we can focus on its nature.[3]

1. See, for example, M.M.Crump, The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid (London, 1931), pp. 230-232; W.W.Sellar, Roman Poets of the Augustan Age : Horace and the Elegiac Poets (Oxford, 1892), p. 347; G.Lafaye, Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide et leurs modèles grecs (Paris, 1904), p.171; Brooks Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1970), p.229.
2. Van Doren, John Dryden, p.219.
3. H.Fränkel, Ovid, p.100. J.-M.Frécaut, L'esprit et l'humour chez Ovide (Grenoble, 1972), p. 254. G.K.Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.101. W.S.Anderson, ed., Ovid : Metamorphoses, Books VI-X, p. 504.

As for Dryden's version, Sir Walter Scott (who, we remember, felt, like Dr. Johnson, that while Dryden 'fails in expressing the milder and more tender passions' he was nevertheless unsurpassed in depicting 'the stronger feelings of the heart, in all its dark or violent workings') described it as 'beautiful and unequalled', a leading instance of Dryden's capacity to rise to the demands of his subject.[1] Scott, that is, clearly did not feel that, in this instance, the 'points of wit and antithetical prettinesses' which, he felt, had marred some of Dryden's Ovid versions, in any way detracted from the poem's power or beauty.[2] And recently Professor William Frost has paid tribute to the delicacy of Dryden's rendering of the paradoxes of the Ovidian Myrrha's position.[3] In the account which follows I shall attempt to support and substantiate these high valuations of Dryden's version.

Though Ovid had himself given his Myrrha specifically religious vocabulary to describe her passion - she calls it both 'scelus' and 'nefas' and sees it as being contrary to 'pietas' (the Roman bond of love and duty within the family) - and though he clearly intends her acts and thoughts to carry some considerable element of horror and repulsion for his reader, the enormity of her thoughts and actions (and those of others in the tale, such as her father and the nurse who acts as their go-between) would obviously seem even greater to readers in the Christian era.[4] The

1. Scott, I, 515.
2. Scott, I, 517.
3. William Frost, 'Dryden's versions of Ovid', Comparative Literature, 26 (1974), 193-202.
4. See W.S.Anderson, ed., Ovid : Metamorphoses, Books VI-X, p. 505.

allegorizing tradition, for example, saw the episode as a cautionary tale about the evils of illicit lust and about sin and repentance. Arthur Golding in his 'Epistle' wrote that

> The tenth booke cheefly dooth containe one kynd of argument
> Reproving most prodigious lusts of such as have bene bent
> To incest most unnaturall. [1]

Du-Ryer judged the point of the story to be to encourage the reader to avoid such vice as Myrrha's, and attributed her transformation into a precious, rather than an odious, tree to the fact that, like Mary Magdalene, she repented of her sin.[2] Sandys, in his Commentary on Book Ten, described Myrrha as an 'impious soule' with 'hellish affections', and this sense of the story is borne out in the solemnly exhortatory tone of the opening of his translation :

> He, Cinyras begot : who might be stil'd
> Of men most happie, if with-out a child.
> I sing of Horror! Daughters, farre ô farre
> From hence remove! and You, who fathers are!
> Or if my winning verse your minds allure:
> Let them no credit in this part procure.
> Or if you will beleeue the same for true:
> Beleeue with all the iudgements that insue.
>
> (p. 344)

To be sure, Ovid uses religious language in his opening (echoing the 'procul hinc' formula used by the Romans to warn away 'profani' who might disturb the purity of a religious rite), but his story, it should be noticed, doesn't actually contain a 'punishment', at least in the sense defined and desiderated by Sandys :

> Editus hac ille est, qui, si sine prole fuisset,
> Inter felices Cinyras potuisset haberi.
> Dira canam. procul hinc natae, procul este parentes :

1. Ovid's Metamorphoses : the Arthur Golding Translation (1567), ed. J.F.Nimms (New York, 1965), p. 411.
2. P.Du-Ryer, Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide,...,avec de Nouvelles Explications Historiques, Morales & Politiques, sur Toutes les Fables (Brussells, 1677), p. 333.

Aut, mea si vestras mulcebunt carmina mentes,
Desit in hac mihi parte fides; nec credite factum :
Vel, si credetis, facti quoque credite poenam.[1]

(298-303)

Though his wording is in many respects strikingly close to Sandys', Dryden has clearly divined in this opening of Ovid's something of the disinegenuousness noted by several modern commentators, and has detected a note of sly humour in Ovid's seemingly earnest protestations.[2] One is reminded of Scott's remarks about how, often, in the Fables, 'There is indeed a quaint Cervantic gravity in [Dryden's] mode of expressing himself, that often glances forth, and enlivens what otherwise would be mere dry narrative'. 'The tone of expression,' Scott continues, 'he perhaps borrowed from Ariosto, and other poets of Italian chivalry, who are wont ever and anon to raise the mask, and smile even at the romantic tale they are themselves telling'.[3]

Nor him alone produc'd the fruitful Queen;
But Cinyras, who like his Sire had been
A happy Prince, had he not been a Sire.
Daughters and Fathers from my Song retire;
I sing of Horrour; and could I prevail,
You shou'd not hear, or not believe my Tale.
Yet if the Pleasure of my Song be such,
That you will hear, and credit me too much,
Attentive listen to the last Event,
And with the Sin believe the Punishment.

(1-10)

Yet the effect of what I have called this 'sly humour' is surely

1. See W.S.Anderson, ed., Ovid : Metamorphoses, Books VI-X, p. 503.
2. See Anderson, p. 503, J.-M.Frécaut, L'esprit et l'humour, p. 254. L.P. Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled (Cambridge, 1955), p. 207.
3. Scott, I, 499.

not to remove entirely our feelings of natural repugnance towards incest or to suggest that nothing of importance is at stake, for Myrrha or for us, as the tale unfolds. Though we have (as I am about to suggest) many other thoughts on our mind by the end of the poem, we never quite forget that, though the myrrh-tree into which Myrrha is finally transformed drops a rich gum and is part of the generally luxurious fragrance of Arabia, nevertheless (in words which are substantially Dryden's addition)

> Nor all her od'rous Tears can cleanse her Crime,
> Her Plant alone deforms the happy Clime:
>
> (20-21)

However, though we never quite forget the blot on Nature that incest, for us, must always be, Dryden's handling of the Ovidian story also never allows us to feel that Myrrha is a merely perverted creature with whom we can feel no kinship or sympathy. Nor do the various jokes and 'turns' with which the version certainly abounds seem designed (as in the case of <u>Canace to Macareus</u>) as little more than a set of smart devices for conoisseuring, from a position of safe security and cool distance, the girl's 'case'. They seem, rather, to be a means of creating a perspective on her behaviour and mental processes which, while certainly embracing a sense of the almost comically perverse implications of some of her words and actions, never has the effect of allowing us merely to laugh <u>at</u> her, smile at her expense, or think her perversity to be of a kind from which we are safely exempt.

We are confronted with all these issues in her very first speech, which Dryden has significantly expanded in his rendering :

...Quo mente feror? quid molior? inquit.
Dî, precor, & Pietas, sacrataque jura parentum,
Hoc prohibete nefas : scelerique resistite tanto;
Si tamen hoc scelus est. sed enim damnare negatur
Hanc Venerem pietas : coëuntque animalia nullo
Caetera dilectu. nec habetur turpe juvencae
Ferre patrem tergo : fit equo sua filia conjux;
Quasque creavit, init pecudes, caper : ipsaque cujus
Semine concepta est, ex illo concipit ales.
Felices, quibus ista licent! humana malignas
Cura dedit leges : & quod Natura remittit,
Invida jura negant. gentes tamen esse feruntur,
In quibus & nato genetrix, & nata parenti
Jungitur; & pietas geminato crescit amore.
Me miseram, quod non nasci mihi contigit illic,
Fortunâque loci laedor! ...

(320-34)

Ah Myrrha! whither wou'd thy Wishes tend?
Ye Gods, ye sacred Laws, my Soul defend
From such a Crime, as all Mankind detest,
And never lodg'd before in Humane Breast!
But is it Sin? Or makes my Mind alone
Th'imagined Sin? For Nature makes it none.
What Tyrant then these envious Laws began,
Made not for any other Beast, but Man!
The Father-Bull his Daughter may bestride,
The Horse may make his Mother-Mare a Bride;
What Piety forbids the lusty Ram
Or more salacious Goat, to rut their Dam?
The Hen is free to wed the Chick she bore,
And make a Husband, whom she hatch'd before.
All Creatures else are of a happier Kind,
Whom nor ill-natur'd Laws from Pleasure bind,
Nor Thoughts of Sin disturb their Peace of mind.
But Man, a Slave of his own making lives;
The Fool denies himself what Nature gives :
Too busie Senates, with an over-care
To make us better than our Kind can bear,
Have dash'd a Spice of Envy in the Laws,
And straining up too high, have spoil'd the Cause.
Yet some wise Nations break their cruel Chains,
And own no Laws, but those which Love ordains:
Where happy Daughters with their Sires are join'd,
And Piety is doubly paid in Kind.
O that I had been born in such a Clime,
Not here, where 'tis the Country makes the Crime!

(35-63)

In expanding Ovid's fourteen lines to twenty-eight of his own, Dryden has extended the implications of Myrrha's words to include a variety of kinds of incest, not just that between fathers and daughters. He has also made considerably more specific and vigorous Myrrha's descriptions of the various kinds of incest in the animal kingdom, and has made much more explicit than had Ovid the suggestion of Myrrha's that the incest-prohibition is a man-made law which actually runs contrary to the laws of 'Nature' (his own replacement for Ovid's 'pietas').

Though Dryden shows himself near the opening of The Cock and the Fox (in his portrayal of, and comments on, Chanticleer's relationship with his seven sister-wives) to have been fully alive to the equivocal conclusions which can emerge from juxtaposing sexual promiscuity and incest in the animal world with similar behaviour in the human, his particular inspiration for the present passage seems to have come from the equivalent moment in a version of the Myrrha story by the little-known James Gresham :

> The little Heifar scarce yet ag'd a yeare
> Her owne begetter on her backe may beare
> Yet not be turpious, And the lustie steed
> Couer the Mare which sprung from his own seed
> The leacherous Goat too, leapes the female she
> From whom himselfe was gendred : and that hee
> Proceeding from them both by carnall vse
> Oft tups the Dam that did himselfe produce.
> Birds with each other too do mate and by
> The so vp hatch'd doe like fructifie. [sic][1]

1. In The Cock and the Fox, Dryden had developed a particular interest in the incest of kings, in ll.55-66 (on which see p. 390 below) and the difference between the sexual capacities of humans and of cocks and hens (l.70, ll.421-424, 437-440), when the cock and hens are portrayed, comically, in very 'human' terms. The passage quoted is from James Gresham, The Picture of Incest. Liuely Portraicted in the Historie of Cinyras and Myrrha (London, 1626), p.3.

And in his strengthening of Myrrha's suggestion in the Latin that her kind of sin is not a sin against Nature, but one brought about by man-created laws (a subject on which he had occasionally touched in different contexts in his plays) he seems to have been helped by a passage from another version of the episode, this time by his younger contemporary, Charles Hopkins :

> But, foolish Man, against himself conspires,
> Inventing Laws, to curb his free desires.
> Industrious, to destroy his own content,
> He makes those bars, which Nature never meant.[1]

But if Dryden has in this passage drawn on these 'sources' to stress, in the earthy vigour and in the persuasiveness of his presentation, the senses in which Myrrha's conduct could be thought of as, in one sense of the term at least, profoundly 'natural' - what many men and women might do if the onerous laws of civilisation which bind them were suddenly to be lifted - his version also impresses on us with equal force the bizarre paradoxes of Myrrha's position, and the degree to which Myrrha herself, despite her own arguments, feels that what she's saying is also profoundly 'unnatural'. Civilisation cannot be so easily shrugged

1. See, for example, The Second Part of the Conquest of Granada, I.ii. (Scott, IV, 124), Amboyna, IV, ii. (Scott, V, 58). Charles Hopkins' version, 'The Story of Cinyras and Myrrha' appeared on pp. 31-53 of his Epistolary Poems; On Several Occasions (London, 1694). On Charles Hopkins, see the D.N.B article by A.H.Bullen, and Alice E. Jones, 'A Note on Charles Hopkins', M.L.N., 55 (1940), 191-194. For Dryden's opinion of Hopkins, see Ward, Letters, p. 124.

off.[1]

The paradoxical element is evident in the unexpected touches of verbal wit. For example, as well as appreciating the vigour of animal sexuality, we are also allowed to glance momentarily (in the little alliterative 'turn' and the witty verbal juxtaposition of animal and human) at its comic side :

> The Hen is free to wed the Chick she bore,
> And make a Husband, whom she hatch'd before.
>
> (47-48)

And the neatly pattered terms in which Myrrha is made to sum up her predicament in both the Latin and English versions allow us both to see things from her point of view, and at the same time to stand outside her, and to see that the word which Dryden gives her for her own condition, 'perverseness', even if it doesn't represent the whole truth about her, is an apt one :

> ... ergo si filia magni,
> Non essem Cinyrae; Cinyrae concumbere possem.
> Nunc quia tam meus est, non est meus; ipsaque damno
> Est mihi proximitas. ...
>
> (337-340)

> Then had not Cinyras my Father been,
> What hinder'd Myrrha's Hopes to be his Queen?
> But the Perverseness of my Fate is such,
> That he's not mine, because he's mine too much:
> Our Kindred-Blood debars a better Tie;
> He might be nearer, were he not so nigh.
>
> (68-73)

1. It is interesting to note that Montaigne, in his Apology for Raymond de Sebonde uses this very passage in Myrrha's speech to support the proposition that the laws we call 'Natural' are often simply those we are accustomed to. See Essays, trans. Cotton, II, 380-81.

The combination of psychological insight and a tender humour in these lines of Dryden's version crucially improves on the two sources on which he is drawing at this point, Sandys (who follows the Latin closely, but makes the wit sound stiff and awkward, and consequently prevents that subtly ambivalent play of mind which Dryden creates) :

> Were I not daughter to great Cinyras;
> All I conceive in my desires might passe.
> Now, in that mine, not mine : proximitie
> Dis-ioyness vs; neerer, were we not so nigh.
>
> (p.345)

and Charles Hopkins :

> Were I not so, all my desires were free,
> Alas! it is a Sin in none, but me.
> Engag'd already, in too strict a tye,
> I might be nearer, were I not so nigh.
>
> (p.35)

But Dryden's witty touches are complemented by, and delicately blended with, others in which he draws on the religious vocabulary of his own era to stress the degree to which Myrrha feels repelled by those very powerful feelings which are possessing her, and which she is attempting, with one part of herself, to argue for :

> Ye Gods, ye sacred Laws, my Soul defend
> From such a Crime, as all Mankind detest,
> And never lodg'd before in Humane Breast!
>
> (36-38)

(where the Latin is considerably expanded :

> Dî, precor, & Pietas, sacrataque jura parentum
> Hoc prohibete nefas : scelerique resistite tanto;
>
> (321-2))

Myrrha reverts to the crucial word 'sacred' (as well as revealing yet another dimension to the word 'Nature') later in the same speech, where

Dryden has again significantly expanded his original at the point when Myrrha is revealing what she will lose in succumbing to her passion :

> ... at tu, dum corpore non es
> Passa, nefas animo ne concipe : neve potentis
> Concubitu vetito Naturae pollue foedus.
>
> (351-3)

> But thou in time th'increasing Ill controul,
> Nor first debauch the Body by the Soul;
> Secure the sacred Quiet of thy Mind,
> And keep the Sanctions Nature has design'd.
>
> (94-97)

In thus strengthening the case both for and against what she is doing, Dryden allows us, as the story unfolds, to preserve a balance in our own minds about the various senses in which her behaviour is simultaneously 'natural' and 'unnatural', and to avoid not only the moral primness of Sandys' version, but also the prurience of his own earlier Canace to Macareus and the declamatory stiffness with which he had tended to depict the incestuous figures in his plays. The reader, that is, is not allowed to remain fixed in any one simple attitude toward the heroine.

In keeping with those touches in his version which give us significant glimpses into the religious disquiet (as I think we are entitled to call it) in Myrrha's mind are those slight but important additions of Dryden's which both bring home to us the inescapable power of the passion to which she is subject and which significantly stress the burden of responsibility which the two other main characters in the action must bear for the final outcome. Immediately after the end of her first long speech, Ovid describes how Cinyras invited his daughter to select a suitor

from those who were seeking her hand in marriage :

> ... at Cinyras, quem copia digna procorum,
> Quid facit, dubitare facit, scitatur ab ipsâ,
> Nominibus dictis, cujus velit esse mariti
> Illa silet primò : patriisque in vultibus haerens,
> AEstuat : & tepido suffundit lumina rore.
> Virginei Cinyras haec credens esse timoris,
> Flere vetat; siccatque genas; atque oscula jungit.
> Myrrha datis nimium gaudet : consultaque qualem
> Optet habere virum; Similem tibi, dixit. ...
>
> (356-364)

Dryden's small but telling additions stress the secret and inexplicable power of her feelings, and also delicately raise (particularly in the touching naïveté of her final response) the question: what <u>are</u> the proper limits of a daughter's feelings for her father? :

> ... But <u>Cinyras</u> who daily sees
> A Crowd of Noble Suitors at his Knees,
> Among so many, knew not whom to chuse,
> Irresolute to grant, or to refuse.
> But having told their Names, enquir'd of her,
> Who pleas'd her best, and whom she would prefer?
> The blushing Maid stood silent with Surprize,
> And on her Father fix'd her ardent Eyes,
> And looking sigh'd, and as she sigh'd, began
> Round Tears to shed, that scalded as they ran.
> The tender Sire, who saw her blush, and cry,
> Ascrib'd it all to Maiden-modesty,
> And dry'd the falling Drops, and yet more kind,
> He strok'd her Cheeks, and holy Kisses join'd.
> She felt a secret Venom fire her Blood,
> And found more Pleasure than a Daughter shou'd;
> And, ask'd again, what Lover of the Crew,
> She lik'd the best, she answer'd, One like you.
>
> (102-119)

One of Dryden's additional strokes in this passage is, I believe, subtly preparing us for a later development in the poem. At this stage in the narrative, even a reader of Dryden's version who was familiar with the details of the original might be inclined to pass over as of no special

significance his rendering of Ovid's line

> Flere vetat; siccatque genas; atque oscula jungit.
> (362)

by the couplet

> And dry'd the falling Drops, and yet more kind,
> He stroak'd her Cheeks, and holy Kisses join'd.
> (114-115)

But it is, I believe, of crucial importance, in Dryden's conception of the poem, to the balance of our sympathies at the moment of the incestuous act itself that we should feel delicate suggestions that Myrrha is, as it were, not entirely to blame for what happens, indeed that the incestuous feelings are not unique to her in the poem, or, for that matter, in the world generally.

Throughout the 'confession scene' Dryden has constantly and subtly underlined both Myrrha's vulnerability and shame and the nurse's persuasive powers, and, when the disclosure is finally made, the extravagantly melodramatic nature of her reaction (in ll. 222-225) to a revelation she'd been only too eager to extract.[1] And at the feast of Ceres, when Cinyras' wife is away, it is the Nurse,

> The Crafty Crone, officious in her Crime,
> (247)

(for which Dryden took his cue from a phrase - perversè officiosa nutrix - from the Interpretatio in Crispinus' edition) who enjoys her job as pandar between the two, and performs it thus :

1. See, for example, his renderings in ll. 163-4, 184-5, 196-7, 200, 204-5, 214-15, 219-20, 166-7, 169, 176-8, 190, 194, 201-2.

... The King she found
Easie with Wine, and deep in Pleasures drown'd,
Prepar'd for Love : The Beldame blew the Flame,
Confess'd the Passion, but conceal'd the Name,
Her Form she prais'd; the Monarch ask'd her Years,
And she reply'd, The same thy Myrrha bears.
Wine and commended Beauty fir'd his Thought;
Impatient, he commands her to be brought.

(248-255)

Cinyras' drunkenness and debauchery at this point in the story are considerably strengthened in Dryden's handling (Ovid merely has

Nacta gravem vino Cinyram male sedula nutrix,

(438))

and this stress has the effect of swinging our sympathies even further in Myrrha's favour, but both poets are equally reticent about the precise nature of the thoughts which the King has in his mind when the Nurse makes her final reply.

We carry this moment forward in our minds, I believe, to the scene where the actual deed of incest is finally committed :

Virgineo metus levat; hortaturque timentem.
Forsitan aetatis quoque nomine, Filia, dicat:
Dicat & illa, Pater; sceleri ne nomina desint.

(466-468)

He found she trembl'd, but believ'd she strove
With Maiden-Modesty, against her Love,
And sought with flatt'ring Words vain Fancies to remove.
Perhaps he said, My Daughter, cease thy Fears,
(Because the Title suited with her Years;)
And Father, she might whisper him agen,
That Names might not be wanting to the Sin.

(297-303)

While his touch is still most delicate, Dryden has here made more explicit the slightest hints in the Latin that Cinyras, just as he had earlier warmed to the Nurse's suggestion that his prospective mistress was to be

the same age as his daughter, is here, by his use of the word 'filia', unconsciously revealing the latent and unacknowledged incestuous tendency in his own heart.[1] The suggestion, as I have said, remains merely a suggestion: the moment, as Ovid and Dryden have both handled it, causes us to reflect yet further on the narrow borderline between illicit and permissible love.

That this suggestion is not merely the fanciful speculation of a modern mind accustomed to the findings of psycho-analysis is given some confirmation, I believe, by another of the Metamorphoses versions included in Fables. Dryden's version of Pygmalion and the Statue precedes Cinyras and Myrrha in that volume, as indeed it had in Book Ten of the Metamorphoses itself. The version, though successful, and, in its creation of a wry sympathy for Pygmalion, quite without the salaciousness which mars some other versions of the story (and, apparently, Ovid's own sources) is a slight poem which perhaps does not require extended discussion here on its own account.[2] Dryden was,

1. See Anderson's note on l.514: 'The words 'daughter' or 'child' and 'father' could be used until very recently to apply either to family relations or, as Cinyras thinks appropriate here, to define relative ages'. Ovid, I think (and Dryden) sees more equivocal possibilities in the use of these terms.

2. On salacious versions of the story, See H.Dörrie, Pygmalion : Ein Impuls Ovids und seine Wirkungen bis in die Gegenwart (Düsseldorf, 1971), passim. On p.99 (in his English summary) Dörrie remarks : 'Ever since the Renaissance, pleasure in the spicy and entertaining aspects of this subject has predominated'. An interesting English example of this is John Marston's poem The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image (1598) where the tone is so uncertain that scholars are divided as to whether the poem is pornographic or a satire on pornography. See Arnold Davenport, ed., The Poems of John Marston (Liverpool, 1966), pp.7-11. For Ovid's transformation of his sources in the direction of chasteness, see Brooks Otis, Ovid as Epic Poet, pp.268, 418-19, and W.S.Anderson's edition, p.495. It ought to be added that Van Doren (John Dryden, p.219) finds Dryden's treatment of what he calls this 'Restoration theme' vulgar, and remarks that Dryden 'could rarely be trusted with lovers'.

however, particularly struck by its connection with the Myrrha story which follows it :

> He falls in love with a Statue of his own making, which is chang'd into a Maid, whom he marries. One of his Descendants is Cinyras, the Father of Myrrha; the Daughter incestuously loves her own Father; for which she is chang'd into the Tree which bears her Name. These two Stories immediately follow each other, and are admirably well connected.
>
> (Headnote)

The connection which Dryden saw between the two stories was not, I think, merely one of the lineal descent of the main characters in each. Throughout his version of the Pygmalion episode, Dryden has anticipated one of the modern interests in Ovid's story in stressing that it is with one of his own creations, a triumph of his own art, that the sculptor has fallen in love.[1] In his prayer to the gods, Pygmalion won't ask for what he really, secretly, wants :

> ... cum munere functus ad aras
> Constitit; & timidè, Si Dî dare cuncta potestis;
> Sit conjux opto, non ausus, eburnea virgo,
> Dicere Pygmalion, similis mea, dixit, eburneae.
>
> (273-276)

> Pygmalion off'ring, first, approach'd the Shrine,
> And then with Pray'rs implor'd the Pow'rs Divine,
> Almighty Gods, if all we Mortals want,
> If all we can require, be yours to grant;
> Make this fair Statue mine, he wou'd have said,)
> But chang'd his Words, for shame; and only pray'd,)
> Give me the Likeness of my Iv'ry Maid.)
>
> (61-67)

This stress in Dryden's version allows us to suggest that the particular connection between the two fables which Dryden seems to have been struck by might have been that to which Montaigne drew attention at the end of his

1. See especially lines 8-10, 18-20. For the modern scholars, see H.Fränkel's discussion (Ovid, pp.93-97), cited with approval by G.K.Galinsky (Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.86).

essay Of the Affections of Father to their Children (a passage which Dryden certainly knew) :

> ... I make no great Question, whether [P] hidias, or any other excellent Statuary, would be so solicitous of the Preservation and Continuance of his Natural Children, as he would be of a rare Statue, which with long Labour and Study, he had perfected according to Art. And to those furious and irregular Passions that have sometimes flam'd in Fathers towards their own Daughters, and in Mothers towards their own Sons, the like is also found in this other sort of Parentry : Witness what is related of Pygmalion, who having made the statue of a Woman of singular Beauty, fell so passionately in love with this Work of his, that the Gods, in favour of his Passion, must inspire it with Life.
>
> (II.8)

Though its humorous side-effects are by no means ignored, Pygmalion's passion for his statue is seen, in Dryden's version (as in Ovid's original) not as a ludicrous perversion, but, like Myrrha's passion, as something requiring sympathy and understanding rather than outright condemnation. Pygmalion's incestuous passion for his creation, like Cinyras' for his daughter, is not openly acknowledged, but is revealed as a fact of Nature.

The delicate play of sympathy which, I have suggested, Dryden creates in the reader for Myrrha in her predicament, allowing us to see the full complexities of her plight, to understand the extent to which she is the victim both of circumstance and Natural Law, as well as a sinner, while at the same time being able to keep us sufficiently distanced from her to see also the perverseness and the paradoxical nature of her action and words is, as it were, quintessenced in one of the most striking of all his expansions of Ovid's Latin, at line 259, where Myrrha first hears that Cinyras will receive her :

So various, so discordant is the Mind,
That in our Will a diff'rent Will we find.
Ill she presag'd, and yet pursu'd her Lust;
For guilty Pleasures give a double Gust.

(259-63)

Dryden had occasionally touched in his plays on the subject of how our desires are intensified and sharpened by difficulties.[1] But in this instance, the theme is handled perhaps more satisfactorily than ever before in his work, since the general analysis offered in these lines is given such particularly telling embodiment and support in every detail of the presentation of Myrrha's predicament throughout the poem.

It is our strong sense of the irreconcilable paradoxes of Myrrha's position that make her final transformation seem an inevitable and blessedly fitting resolution of her plight. Rather than retribution or degradation, Dryden seems to have seen the keynote of the metamorphosis as being, as it were, a re-assimilation of Myrrha into the Nature of which she is a part, a re-assimilation in which her agonies are preserved, but changed into something which is also mysteriously beautiful :

... while she spoke, the Ground began to rise,
And gather'd round her Feet, her Leggs, and Thighs;
Her Toes in Roots descend, and spreading wide,
A firm Foundation for the Trunk provide:
Her solid Bones convert to solid Wood,
To Pith her Marrow, and to Sap her Blood:
Her Arms are Boughs, her Fingers change their Kind,
Her tender Skin is harden'd into Rind.
And now the rising Tree her Womb invests,
Now, shooting upwards still, invades her Breasts,
And shades the Neck; when, weary with Delay,
She sunk her Head within, and met it half the Way.
And though with outward Shape she lost her Sense,

1. See, for example, The Assignation, III.iii (Scott, IV, 404), Aureng-Zebe, II.i. (Scott, V. 211), Marriage à la Mode, IV.iii. (Scott, IV, 310).

With bitter Tears she wept her last Offence;
And still she weeps, nor sheds her Tears in vain;
For still the precious Drops her Name retain.

(338-353)

And her 'mis-begotten infant' appears, on birth, not as a Minotaur, or some other kind of monster, but thus :

The lovely Babe was born with ev'ry Grace,
Ev'n Envy must have prais'd so fair a Face:
Such was his Form, as Painters when they show
Their utmost Art, on naked Loves bestow:
And that their Arms no Diff'rence might betray,
Give him a Bow, or his from Cupid take away.

(374-379)

In returning to an episode in the Metamorphoses which, as we have seen, he had always admired, Dryden had (as this version, I believe, shows) extended his interest in Ovid's heroines beyond a mere admiration for Ovid's capacity to evoke 'pathos' and 'concernment' and had seen in the Myrrha story a subtle and many-faceted exploration of some crucial problems related to human sexuality and to the mysterious and paradoxical workings of Nature. It is true that some of the most appealing strokes in his versions (particularly those colouring the balance of our sympathies between the poem's various characters) are ones which only have the slightest suggestion in the Latin, and it seems the case that Dryden felt it necessary, as it were, to restore to the poem some of the humane concern or tenderness which he perhaps felt it lacked in Ovid's very cool and discreet telling. In this, Dryden can be thought of as supplying a distinctively Christian dimension to his pagan original. But his additions are, it should be stressed, very slight, and he seems to have been equally glad to enjoy the freedom afforded him by Ovid to treat certain

matters raised by this story more freely and openly than they could perhaps have been rendered in a specifically Christian setting.

In the dignity with which it allows it heroine (without at the same time being straight-laced or solemn in its treatment of her) it shares much with several others of the Fables. For it seems to have been one of Dryden's main concerns in the volume as a whole (one thinks particularly of Sigismonda and the Crone in The Wife of Bath's Tale) to give to some of his female characters an attractiveness, a stature, an authority and a passionate intensity, and to treat their predicament with a sympathy which he had seldom managed before, and which he is still often thought of as never having been able to achieve anywhere in his work.

(ii) 'The good natur'd story of Baucis and Philemon'

If, in Cinyras and Myrrha, Dryden was giving his original a slightly new, slightly more 'humane', direction, this poem nevertheless represents, as I have suggested, an extension and an expansion of an interest in a side of Ovid which had fascinated him from the beginning of his career - the Latin poet's distinctive treatment of the subject of female passion. In electing to translate the story of Baucis and Philemon from Ovid's Eighth Book, Dryden was turning to an episode of a very different kind, one which, as many commentators have observed, is already one of the most strikingly 'humane' and charming parts of Ovid's poem, and one which displays Ovidian qualities quite unlike any of those which he had hitherto mentioned in his critical prose as being within that poet's range.[1] For in this tale of the visit of the gods Jupiter and Mercury to the hospitable old couple, Baucis and Philemon, Ovid the sophisticated courtier and town poet had shown himself as a detailed and loving observer of the rural Italy of his day, and had composed an affectionate celebration of the virtues of hospitality and selflessness, which was to be much imitated by later Roman writers, which was even alluded to in the New Testament, and which subsequently became a common source for various kinds of

1. The version seems to be currently the most popular of the Ovid translations. It was warmly praised by Van Doren (John Dryden, pp.217-219) and finds a place, for example, in the Dryden selections of Bonamy Dobrée (London, 1934), James Kinsley (Oxford, 1963), John Arthos (New York, 1970), W.H.Auden (London, 1973) and John Conachan (London, 1978). For comments on the charm of the original, see, for example, G.K.Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p. 197.

Christian allegorizing and commentary, both literary and pictorial.[1]

As in his version of Cinyras and Myrrha, Dryden has exploited his own position in the Christian world, and has, in particular, made use of the tradition of interpretation which Ovid's episode had acrued to itself, without 'Christianising' the tale, or using it as an excuse for obtrusive didacticism, and, again, without substantially altering the point or direction of his original. His version is, as we shall see, neither simply playful nor a sermon, but has elements of both built into it.

When composing his original version of the episode, Ovid almost certainly had in mind, when writing the scene in which the gods stoop to enter the old couple's humble cottage, the moment in Book Eight of Virgil's Aeneid when the Latin King Evander invites Aeneas to enter his humble palace, addressing him in these words (in Dryden's translation) :

1. The details of the meal which Baucis and Philemon provide for the gods almost certainly have precedents (as the commentators point out) in the episode's Alexandrian sources, but they also draw closely on the Italian life of Ovid's own day. See particularly A.S.Hollis, ed., Ovid : Metamorphoses, Book VIII (Oxford, 1970), pp. 106-125, who points out numerous parallels with Italian peasant customs and diet as described by Livy, Cato, Columella etc. It is interesting to note that H.Fränkel (Ovid, p.216) finds much of the description 'redundant', and Brooks Otis (Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.204) sees it as merely a means to the only-too-obvious end of enforcing a moral about the old couple's piety. Ovid, he argues, wasn't at home in treating such earnest matters. Matthew Prior, in the parody of Dryden's version mentioned below, seems to be (ll.110-114) particularly tilting at the length of Dryden's descriptions. On later imitations, see Hollis' edition, p.106. On the episode's after-life, see especially M.Beller, Philemon und Baucis in der europäischen Literatur : Stoffgesichte und Analyse (Heidelberg, 1967) and Wolfgang Stechow, 'The Myth of Philemon and Baucis in Art', Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 4 (1941), 103-113.

Mean as it is, this Palace, and this Door,
Receiv'd Alcides, then a Conquerour.
Dare to be poor : accept our homely Food
Which feasted him; and emulate a God.
Then, underneath a lowly Roof, he led
The weary Prince; and laid him on a Bed:
The stuffing Leaves, with Hides of Bears o'respread.[1]

(477-483)

Dryden's mind had gone, in its turn, to this little Virgilian scene, and to Ovid's episode, when imagining the hospitality which the Hind proffered to the Panther :

She thought good manners bound her to invite
The stranger Dame to be her guest that night.
'Tis true, course dyet and a short repast,
(She said) were weak inducements to the tast
Of one so nicely bred, and so unus'd to fast.
But what plain fare her cottage cou'd afford,
A hearty welcome at a homely board
Was freely hers; and, to supply the rest,
An honest meaning and an open breast.

(II, 670-678)

A little later, the Hind takes the Panther into her cottage,

Who ent'ring first her lowly roof, (a shed
With hoary moss and winding Ivy spread,
Honest enough to hide an humble Hermit's head,)...

(II, 697-699)

Mark Van Doren recalled this episode in The Hind and the Panther when praising Baucis and Philemon, and suggested that its treatment, as well as its subject-matter, were of a similar kind.[2] But it is possible, I think, to feel at this moment in the earlier poem that Dryden has rather too much of a palpable design on us for our aesthetic comfort: we are, perhaps, being asked too soon to accept the symbolic significance of the Hind's welcome without that welcome having been itself presented to us

1. See Hollis' edition, p.106.
2. See Mark Van Doren, John Dryden, p.218.

with sufficient vividness and detail for it to capture our imaginations. It is just such detail (with no less significance, but with less anxiety to press its significance upon us) which the later translation offers us in abundance.

When we compare Dryden's version of Baucis and Philemon with Ovid's original, we immediately find several interests not obvious from a casual perusal of the Latin. Dryden has put more emphasis than Ovid, for example, on the almost sacred regard with which the old couple view their marriage. In this, he may well have taken the hint from a French version of the story made some years previously by Jean de La Fontaine, since the French poet had, near the beginning of his poem, expanded the smallest hint in Ovid's

> Illâ sunt annis juncti juvenalibus;... (632)

into an affirmation of the quality of their mutual love (a love which he later makes into the central point of his version) :

> Hyménée et l'Amour, par des désirs constants,
> Avaient uni leurs coeurs dès leur plus doux printemps.
> Ni le temps ni l'hymen n'éteignirent leur flamme;
> Clothon prenait plaisir à filer cette trame. [1]
>
> (17-20)

At any rate, there is no direct equivalent in the Latin for some of Philemon's words to Jupiter near the end of Dryden's version, after the

1. La Fontaine's version was first published in Ouvrages de Prose et de Poésie des Sieurs de Maucroix et de La Fontaine (Paris, 1685), I, 78-98. Quotations here are taken from the 'Pléiade' edition: J. de La Fontaine, Fables, Contes et Nouvelles, ed. E.Pilon and R.Groos (Paris, 1963). On La Fontaine's version of Baucis and Philemon, see R.E.Colton, 'Philemon and Baucis in Ovid and La Fontaine', Classical Journal, 63 (1968), 166-176, a helpful line-for-line comparison of the French poem with its Latin original.

god has asked the couple what they most desire :

> ...& quoniam concordes egimus annos;
> Auferat hora duos eadem : nec conjugis unquam
> Busta meae videam; neu sim tumulandus ab illâ.
>
> (708-710)

> ...since not any Action of our Life
> Has been polluted with Domestick Strife,
> We beg one Hour of Death; that neither she
> With Widows Tears may live to bury me,
> Nor weeping I, with wither'd Arms may bear
> My breathless Baucis to the Sepulcher.
>
> (171-176)

For Philemon's imagining of the tears (which have no warranty in the Latin), Dryden seems to have gone to a specific touch at the equivalent point in La Fontaine's version, where Philemon says

> Je ne pleurerais point celle-ci, ni ses yeux
> Ne troubleraient non plus de leurs larmes ces lieux.
>
> (133-134)

And Dryden's telling phrase 'polluted with Domestick Strife' (which he also used as a contrast to the blissful married state of Palamon and Emily at the end of Palamon and Arcite) combines with the carefully imagined details 'wither'd Arms' and 'breathless Baucis' to impress upon us the significance of his marriage for the old man. The final words of Dryden's old couple to one another, we notice, are

> ... Farewell, O faithful Spouse... (189)

(for Ovid's

> Vale.../O conjux... (717-718))

But as well as encouraging us to view the old couple and their relationship with the seriousness and inward sympathy which these passages force on us, Dryden can also, with no sense of strain or contradiction, allow us to see the humorous aspects of their situation, and to view them,

at times, with a charitable detachment which prevents the poem from being merely a sentimental picture of rural virtue and which removes from it the insistently didactic element which is so prominent, for instance, in the La Fontaine version.

For example, when describing Baucis' activity in preparing the meal, Dryden adds a detail not in Ovid :

> The good old Huswife, tucking up her Gown,
> The Table sets; th'invited Gods lie down.
>
> (82-83)

Here our feelings are not those of simple pathos and compassion;[1] Dryden allows us to smile, albeit sympathetically, at the gusto and enthusiasm of the old woman scuttling round the cottage. The furtive whispers in which the old couple discuss the gods' request (l.167) are, again, Dryden's addition (compare l. 705 in the Latin), and we note that their general frugality comes into operation when they realise that a sacrifice is appropriate. The goose they select for the purpose is not all they <u>had</u>, but

> ...all they cou'd allow... (130)

But perhaps the most striking feature of both the Latin and English

1. It is interesting to observe that Scott was obviously so taken with the moment where Baucis renders their ricketty table firm by putting a potsherd under the leg, that he worked it into one of his novels. In Chapter 11 of <u>Waverley</u>, Luckie Macleary is preparing her tavern for guests (we note, incidentally, that her tavern has 'sooty rafters' - cf. Dryden, l.64) :

> Luckie Macleary...set forth her deal table newly washed, propped its lame foot with a fragment of turf, arranged four or five stools of huge and clumsy form upon the sites which best suited the inequalities of her d[illegible] floor;

versions is the wealth of details with which the old couple's rural life is evoked for us. It was these details which perhaps first interested Dryden in Ovid's fable and prompted the remark in the Preface,

> I see Baucis and Philemon as perfectly before me as if some ancient Painter had drawn them.
>
> (Kinsley, IV, 1450)

In saying this, Dryden was perhaps remembering the note in which the commentator Crispinus had written

> Annon eâ curâ mores totámque aniculae rationem ob oculos ponit Poëta, ut ipsam coram cernere videaris? Ideò autem in re tam facili pedem sisto, ut tyronem ex ejusmodi descriptionibus parem sibi in scribendo seu loquendo comparare diligentiam & elegantiam adhorter.
>
> (Crispinus, II, 303)

Some sense of the particular kind of significance Dryden may have seen in the details of Ovid's portrayal, and amplified in his own version, may perhaps be gained by remembering the passage in Pope's notes to his translation of the Iliad where, discussing the last parting of Hector and Andromache in Book Six, he takes up the same topic :

> All these are but small Circumstances, but so artfully chosen, that every Reader immediately feels the force of them, and represents the whole in the utmost Liveliness to his Imagination. This alone might be a Confutation of that false Criticism some have fallen into, who affirm that a Poet ought only to collect the great and noble Particulars in his Paintings. But it is in the Images of Things as in the Characters of Persons; where a small Action, lets us more into the Knowledge and Comprehension of them, than the material and principle Parts themselves. As we find this in a History, so we do in a Picture, where sometimes a small Motion or a Turn of a Finger will express the Character and Action of a Figure more than all the other Parts of the Design... There is a vast difference betwixt a small Circumstance and a trivial one, and the smallest become important if they are well chosen, and not confused.[1]

1. The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, ed. J.Butt et al. (10 vols., London, 1939-1967), VII , 355-6.

It is in these 'small Circumstances' that we can see to best advantage Dryden's mind working over his predecessors, and using them creatively for his own purposes.

He has taken particular care to depict the precise details of the meal which the old couple set before their divine visitors. To increase the rusticity of his terminology, Dryden went back beyond Sandys to Arthur Golding's version of 1567.[1] Though Sandys had also used Golding, so that it is often difficult to determine precisely when Dryden had consulted Golding direct, we can see Dryden taking over words like 'colewort', 'sallow' and 'sherd', as well as several details of phrasing, from the earlier version, and from Sandys he introduced into his poetry the 'low terms' 'bacon', 'brushwood', 'chips', 'cushions', 'kettle', 'pickled', and 'settle'. He also expanded Ovid's already full and specific portrayal of the rustic banquet, to make more vivid the effect of the scene on our senses. For his description of the mint with which Baucis scrubs the table, as

> A wholesome Herb, that breath'd a grateful Scent.
> (89)

Dryden went again to the 'Delphin' edition of Crispinus, whose note on the word 'mentae' read

> Quae attritu gratum odorem emitterent.
> (II, 304)

1. On Dryden's use of rustic terms in his poem, see R.Brower, 'Dryden and the "Invention" of Pope', Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature : Essays in Honor of A.D.MacKillop, ed. Carroll Camden (Chicago, 1963), pp. 211-223. Brower does not, however, make any reference to Dryden's sources. In his edition of Pope (9 vols., 1797), III, 259, Joseph Warton remarked specifically on the 'pleasing effect that the use of common and familiar words and objects, judiciously managed' have in Dryden's verse, giving it 'a secret charm, and a natural air'.

And in his description of

The party-colour'd Olive, Black and Green:
(91)

Dryden combines Sandys' line

Whereon they party-colour'd olives set

with the gloss on Ovid's word 'bicolor' in Borchard Cnipping's Variorum edition :

[Bicolor.] Oliva virides & nigrae.
(II, 430)

Crispinus' edition is also the source for Dryden's 'smoking Lard' which the boiling kettle sends to the table, for Crispinus had glossed Ovid's 'epulas calentes' by the phrase

Lardum nempe cum oleribus.[1]

Dryden also adds details of his own. The dates, described by Ovid as 'rugosi' (which Sandys had translated as 'rugged') are made, more specifically, 'wrinkled' in Dryden's version, and Dryden combines English custom with Ovid's Italian scene, when he portrays Philemon boiling the bacon

To tame the Flesh, and drain the Salt away.
(69)

And towards the end of the banquet scene, the 'Beechen Bowls' reveal their divine origin more delightfully in Dryden's version by being endowed in the verse with a life of their own. We are told that they

Ran without Feet, and danc'd about the Board.
(125)

1. Crispinus, II, 305, as noted by J.McG.Bottkol, 'Dryden's Latin Scholarship', M.P., 40 (1942-3), 241-254.

All these details are there, I think, not merely for what one might call their 'documentary' value, but to impress upon us, as we experience the scene, the true happiness of Baucis and Philemon's life. They are happy because they wish for nothing more.[1] Their poverty (not grinding penury, we note, but the ordinary conditions of frugal rustic life) is almost, indeed, made an article of faith for them; they are no wealth-seeking Chaucerian clerics :

> Now old in Love, though little was their Store,
> Inur'd to Want, their Poverty they bore,
> Nor aim'd at Wealth, professing to be poor.
>
> (34-36)

It is because of all this that Dryden is able to make us feel, without (like La Fontaine) insisting explicitly on the point, that their home is indeed uniquely fit to receive gods, and which makes the action of the gods stooping to enter 'through the little Door' (42) at once humorous, natural, and a perfect symbolic gesture towards the serious and sacred values embodied in their life-style and marriage.

It is to this effect also, I believe, that Dryden has drawn on (without committing himself in any literalistic way to) aspects of the Christian-allegorical tradition of reading this episode. Practically all commentators on Ovid, and many pictorial representations of this episode, had been anxious to point out, among many other such, the obvious parallels between the story of the visit of Jupiter and Mercury to the old couple and the story of the angels visiting Lot in Sodom, told in the Book of

1. The significance of Otto Van Veen's use of the Baucis and Philemon legend in his Emblem Book Horatius Emblemata (a use noted by Beller and Stechow in the works cited above) is commented on by H.A.Mason in 'Dryden's Dream of Happiness', Cambridge Quarterly, 8 (1978), 11-55.

Genesis. That Dryden was well aware of this tradition, and used it for his own purposes, can be seen in three passages in his poem. When the gods arrived at the cottage, the old couple, in Dryden's version

> ...bath'd their Feet,
> And after with clean Towels dry'd their Sweat:
> (75-76)

In Ovid's original it is merely their 'artus' (limbs) that are dried.[1]

More significant are Jupiter's words (not in Ovid's Latin) to the couple when he has exempted them from the dreadful calamity that will overcome their neighbours :

> Leave these accurs'd; and to the Mountains Height
> Ascend; nor once look backward in your Flight.
> (145-146)

Here we are surely to recall the angels' words to Lot :

> Escape for thy life, looke not behind thee,
> neither stay thou in all the plaine: escape to
> the mountaine, lest thou bee consumed.
> (Genesis, 19)

And for Ovid's 'flexere oculos' (696), Dryden substitutes

> They turn their now no more forbidden Eyes;
> (151)

It is inconceivable that Dryden included these touches merely to scoff at those who had seen the biblical paradigm in the pagan tale. For, though we smile when they arrive sweating and not looking to their dignity, and though we remember, from some of the earlier Ovid versions, and from his translations of Lucian and Molière's Amphitryon, that Dryden was by no means averse to portraying the classical gods in ridiculous and humiliating circumstances, the gods in this poem are gods of real power, and the

1. La Fontaine (1.53) also has them wash the gods' feet.

destruction they mete out is genuinely terrible. They are far removed, for example, from the buffoons and charlatans who form the gods in the two burlesque versions of the Baucis and Philemon story composed in the early eighteenth century by Matthew Prior and Jonathan Swift.[1]

1. See Matthew Prior, 'The Ladle' in Tonson's Poetical Miscellanies : the Fifth Part (1704) and Jonathan Swift, 'Baucis and Philemon', which exists in two versions, an incomplete manuscript, probably dating from 1706, and a printed version which first appeared in the 1709 Tonson Miscellany Poems. For details, see H. Williams, ed., The Poems of Jonathan Swift (3 vols., Oxford, 1937), I, 88-89.

   Prior (ll.45-52) burlesques Dryden's affirmation of the truth and solemnity of his tale, makes his old couple quite well-off (67-76) and always squabbling (79-86), comments specifically that he won't have any long descriptive passages (110-114), and has as his climax a 'miracle' which turns out to be a ribald parody of the very marital union which the old couple lack (135-140). Some of these emphases indicate that Prior is tilting specifically at Dryden's version, though he may also have had La Fontaine in mind. Prior's Oxford editors, H.B.Wright and M.K.Spears, note that in the 1707 Poems on Several Occasions, Prior's poem has the subtitle 'In Imitation of Fontaine', but, apparently ignorant of the existence of La Fontaine's version of the story, comment that this subtitle 'is incorrect, and may have been intended for Hans Carvel, to which it would apply'. See The Literary Works of Matthew Prior (2nd. ed., 2 vols., Oxford, 1971), II, 889.

   Swift's version is apparently designed (among other things) to demonstrate the sentimentality of Dryden's version. Although in the MS version the humble feast and the miraculous transformation of the wine are described fairly neutrally, in the later version Swift,hints (39-40) that the old couple suspect the gods to be impostors, makes Philemon suspect cuckoldry (153-8) and makes their final transformation an excuse for dismissive irony (172-178). For Swift as a parodist of Dryden in the poem, see D. Novarr, 'Swift's Relation with Dryden, and Gulliver's Annus Mirabilis', English Studies, 47 (1966), 344-346. E. Rothstein in 'Jonathan Swift as Jupiter : Baucis and Philemon', 'The Augustan Milieu : Essays Presented to Louis A. Landa, ed. H.K.Miller, E.Rothstein and G.S.Rosseau (Oxford, 1970), 205-224, seeks to minimise the influence of Dryden's version on Swift's poem, though he admits its existence, and, incidentally provides illuminating commentary on allegorised versions of the story.

Avoiding any hint of the blasphemous, Dryden subtly blends Christian ideas of a god made flesh and dwelling among us (there is even a hint of the Marriage at Cana in l. 127) with the pagan story, importing an element from his own culture and religion to bring out the eternally valid truths he sees in Ovid's Latin poem. His balancing of the comic and serious elements is so adroit that the parodies of Prior and Swift, witty though they are in many respects, leave Dryden's poem, at which they seem specifically directed, substantially unharmed. His version, that is, has that very 'balanced poise, stable through its power of inclusion' which, as I.A.Richards once noted, renders a work invulnerable to parody.[1]

The interests of the poem all come together in the episode of the goose :

> One Goose they had, ('twas all they cou'd allow)
> A wakeful Cent'ry, and on Duty now,
> Whom to the Gods for Sacrifice they vow:
> Her, with malicious Zeal, the Couple view'd;
> She ran for Life, and limping they pursu'd:
> Full well the Fowl perceiv'd their bad intent,
> And wou'd not make her Masters Compliment;
> But persecuted, to the Pow'rs she flies,
> And close between the Legs of Jove she lies:
> He with a gracious Ear the Suppliant heard,
> And sav'd her Life; then what he was declar'd,
> And own'd the God...
> (130-141)

There are many felicitous touches here. In his first two lines, Dryden has blended English rural custom (geese were regularly kept as 'watchdogs') with a hint from Crispinus' commentary reminding us that it was the geese

1. I.A.Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism (1924; rpt. London, 1976), pp. 194-5.

on the Capitol that saved Rome from the Gauls;[1] but though this goose too is

> A wakeful Cent'ry, and on Duty now,

they determine in their 'malicious Zeal' to sacrifice her on the spot. Here, I would suggest, is one of the moments where Dryden has distanced us from the old couple, partly by letting us see the action, in the phrase 'malicious Zeal' and, in the lines

> Full well the Fowl perceiv'd their bad intent,
> And wou'd not make her Masters Compliment;

momentarily from the goose's point of view. But as well as being a farmyard goose, independent-minded and unencumbered by any human notions of reverence or decorum, she also performs the most intimately human of all gestures, that of submissive suppliance before a god. Dryden has shown her at one and the same moment as a canny farmyard animal and a symbol of pious and vulnerable humanity.

In this passage occurs what is perhaps the most inspired of all Dryden's borrowings from his predecessors, for in Ovid's poem the goose had merely fled 'ad ipsos Deos'. It was again in La Fontaine's version that Dryden found the lines

> La volatille échappe à sa tremblante main;
> Entre les pieds des dieux elle cherche un asile.

From this, Dryden took his own

> And close between the Legs of <u>Jove</u> she lies:

1. Crispinus, II, 305, fn.r.

Dryden now effects the extraordinary change to Jupiter's sentence of death on the neighbourhood, by making his Jupiter sound like a god whom we should take seriously :

> Speak thy Desire, thou only Just of Men;
> And thou, O Woman, only worthy found
> To be with such a Man in Marriage bound.
>
> (164-166)

Here is a religious authority in which many different individual faiths can meet, and it carries our minds back to Lelex's equally sonorous, and equally comprehensive, statement at the beginning of the poem :

> Heaven's Pow'r is Infinite : Earth, Air, and Sea,
> The Manufacture Mass, the making Pow'r obey.
>
> (13-14)

(where Dryden's verse is altogether weightier than Sandys'

> Heauens powre, immense and endlesse, non can shun;
> Said he; and what the Gods would doe is done,
>
> (p.279))

In Baucis and Philemon Dryden has certainly given his version a point and emphasis which it hadn't got (and perhaps, given the moral climate of the pagan world, couldn't quite have had) in the original Latin. But, as with Cinyras and Myrrha, his change of emphasis is only a slight one, a projection, as it were, of lines already sketched for him by Ovid. In both poems he could, I think, justifiably claim that the additions were 'not stuck into him, but growing out of him'.[1] In Baucis, particularly, the combination of gravity and humour, tenderness and wry distancing, and the presence of details which carry with them unobtrusively

1. Kinsley, III, 1054.

a charge of value and significance are all there in the Latin original. In 'fortifying' Ovid with colourings from his own culture and religion, Dryden seems to have felt that he was only bringing out and making more explicit significances which were embedded, as it were, in the very structure and actions of Ovid's tale.

(iii) 'Tickling you to laugh'? : 'Ceyx and Alcyone'

In Cinyras and Myrrha and Baucis and Philemon we can see Dryden, in the very act of drawing out what he sees to be the qualities and implications of his two originals, going some way towards restoring to Ovid, as it were, some of the 'naturalness' in which, as we have seen, he felt the Roman writer to be somewhat deficient when set beside 'our old English Poet Chaucer', and imbuing Ovid's two stories with an element of involvement with, and compassion towards, the characters which, while it is not entirely his invention, goes beyond anything strictly warranted by the Latin. But his treatment of the story of Ceyx and Alcyone from the Eleventh Book of the Metamorphoses might seem at first sight to offer evidence of his having succumbed fatally this time to those very vices of the Ovidian manner which, as we have seen, he had always condemned in his critical prose, the very 'points of wit and antithetical prettinesses' in inappropriate circumstances to which Scott refers so critically in his general account of Dryden as a translator.

For in his treatment of this tale of the unexplained shipwreck of Ceyx, King of Trachin, and the subsequent bereavement of his faithful wife, Alcyone, Dryden seems to be making no attempt to play down the elaborate verbal wit which pervades the Latin original or to minimise the elements of fancy and humour with which Ovid has told this potentially tragic story. In particular, Dryden seems in this tale to be relishing to the full Ovid's wit as it is manifested in those very circumstances in which he anatomizes and condemns it in his own Preface :

> The Vulgar Judges, which are Nine Parts in Ten of all Nations, who call Conceits and Jingles Wit, who see Ovid full of them, and Chaucer altogether without them, will think

> me little less than mad, for preferring the Englishman to the Roman : Yet, with their leave, I must presume to say, that the Things they admire are only glittering Trifles, and so far from being Witty, that in a serious Poem they are nauseous, because they are unnatural. Wou'd any Man who is ready to die for Love, describe his Passion like Narcissus? Wou'd he think of inopem me copia fecit, and a Dozen more of such Expressions, pour'd on the Neck of one another, and signifying all the same Thing? If this were Wit, was this a Time to be witty, when the poor Wretch was in the Agony of Death? This is just John Littlewit in Bartholomew Fair, who had a Conceit (as he tells you) left him in his Misery; a miserable Conceit. On these Occasions the Poet shou'd endeavour to raise Pity: But instead of this, Ovid is tickling you to laugh.
>
> (Kinsley, IV, 1451)

Though the episode of Ceyx and Alcyone was once one of the most admired in the Metamorphoses (providing, for example, the medieval poets Chaucer and Gower with the stimulus for retellings of their own, and containing perhaps the most famous of all the Ovidian personifications, Somnus), and though it still has some passionate champions in our own day, many modern scholars seem puzzled at, and unhappy about, the humour of its lengthy descriptions and the wit and conceits given to its main characters in moments of extreme tension or pain.[1] Though some critics have tried to offer an account of the episode which seeks to reconcile its seemingly

1. For enthusiastic comments on the episode, see particularly Brooks Otis (Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp. 231-261, 421-3) and G.K.Galinsky. Galinsky, however, suggests (Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp. 145-7) that the main pleasure to be had from the storm scene is that of conoisseuring a bravura piece of literary parody, though he also comments very appreciatively (p.146) on Ovid's distinctive blend of lightness and seriousness in his handling of Ceyx and Alcyone's love, calling it (p.159) 'a humor which does not mean to wound or hurt but keeps just the right equilibrium between detached amusement and sympathy'.

incompatible elements, the 'Budé' editor, Georges Lafaye, for example, accuses Ovid of 'mauvais goût' in the description of Ceyx's drowning, and in Alcyone's lament for her dead husband, and the most recent English editor of Book Eleven, G.M.Murphy, remarks to similar effect at various points in his commentary on the episode :

> ...Ovid undercuts the pathos of his own narrative by pursuing fancy to the brink of the preposterous... the setting (sea winds, etc.) is continually allowed to distract from the tragedy itself... Ovid's visual realism leads him to puncture a general effect of dignified pathos... [he] mercilessly follows his hero into the waves to record his desperate gulps of sea water... [In 11.700-701] is the most extreme example of a type of word-play to which Ovid was addicted.[1]

The complaint is the by-now-familiar one that Ovid's wit seems to have the effect of preventing the reader from exercising any of what we would regard as the normal compassion and free flow of sympathy for a fellow human being <u>in extremis</u>. And from the discussion in the last chapter it emerged that, indeed, some of Dryden's versions of episodes in the <u>Metamorphoses</u> do little to dispel the doubts which so many modern commentators (like Dryden himself, in his critical prose) entertain about this aspect of his art. Though he does not mention Ovid specifically, Professor W.W.Robson has succinctly formulated the general artistic problem with which we are here faced in the following terms :

1. G.Lafaye, ed., <u>Ovide : Les Métamorphoses</u> (3 vols., Paris, 1928-1930), III, 21, 25; G.M.Murphy, ed., <u>Ovid : Metamorphoses, Book XI</u> (Oxford, 1972), pp. 71-2. See also E.J.Bernbeck, cited by J.-M.Frécaut, <u>L'esprit et l'humour</u>, pp. 257-259.

> ...a writer may take up (or believe that he is taking up) a consistent attitude of moral detachment from the characters, mores, and conduct he is depicting. But once again literary considerations, considerations of art, make it difficult to suppose that a work composed in this spirit could be of any interest. It would require some pretence on the writer's part of being 'above' or 'below' the human level, which (again appealing to the realistic canon he has accepted) must inevitably falsify his rendering; we cannot see human life from the point of view of a fly, or of the deities of Lucretius, Of course, no successful or interesting work has ever been really composed in this spirit; if Flaubert thought he had done so, he was mistaken.[1]

A further difficulty that might seem to face the reader of Ceyx and Alcyone is that Dryden appears, perhaps more than in any other of his Ovidian translations, to be trying to convey the full quiddity and uniqueness of his original, since (though his version is by no means a reversion to the kind of literalism he had condemned in 1680) here are none of the significant expansions or attempts to 'fortify' Ovid which we have witnessed in the versions already discussed in this chapter. For better or for worse, Dryden seems to have felt, when rendering this story, that there was something uniquely valuable in Ovid's manner of relating this episode which he wanted to preserve in his version and give 'the same Turn of Verse, which [it] had in the Original'.

However, whereas, in the case of The Twelfth Book and Meleager and Atalanta, the nature and quality of Dryden's renderings was such that it could do little to ameliorate the various kinds of reservations which

1. W.W.Robson, 'Purely Literary Values', Critical Essays, (London, 1966), p.8.

commentators have felt independently about his Ovidian originals, his translation of Ceyx and Alcyone has a vitality and (for all its unusual features) a coherence which might actually, I think, alert us, in this instance, to possibilities in Ovid's handling of his episode which some scholars have overlooked or undervalued.

One fact which might lead us to persist with Dryden's poem, and not immediately write it down as 'experimental' is the consistent wealth, precision, and density of its local verbal nuance and the sustained and assured quality of its verse. We must now examine Dryden's version in an attempt to discover if it indeed has qualities which might encourage us to see it as beautiful and appealing rather than merely blank, callous, or tasteless.

One thing, at any rate, seems certain - that Dryden wished to follow Ovid's lead in having the final metamorphosis of the guiltless Ceyx and Alcyone come as a complete shock after the workings of the zestfully malign, slothfully uninterested, or tiresomely irritated deities whose actions we have observed in detail during the main body of the story.[1] For throughout most of the tale, the gods appear either as impotent, or as indifferent to (or frankly hostile towards) the human characters. Aeolus, for example, as Alcyone tells Ceyx near the beginning, is quite different in this poem from the imperious deity who had calmed the storm in the first book of Virgil's Aeneid :

1. Brooks Otis (Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.232) points out, interestingly, that Ovid had apparently changed the story, when reworking the materials that were probably his sources, from one of divine vengeance for impiety, in which the final metamorphosis was seen as a simple punishment, and in which the storm was a direct result of Ceyx's misdeeds. Ovid, as Otis points out, makes Alcyone properly pious and presents the metamorphosis as a blessed relief from their predicament and an affirmation of the power of their love.

Nor let false Hopes to trust betray thy Mind,
Because my Sire in Caves constrains the Wind,
Can with a Breath their clam'rous Rage appease,
They fear his Whistle, and forsake the Seas;
Not so, for once indulg'd, they sweep the Main;
Deaf to the Call, or hearing hear in vain;
But bent on Mischief bear the Waves before,
And not content with Seas insult the shoar,
When Ocean, Air, and Earth, at once ingage
And rooted Forrests fly before their Rage:
At once the clashing Clouds to Battle move,
And Lightnings run across the Fields above:
I know them well, and mark'd their rude Comport,
While yet a Child, within my Father's Court:
In times of Tempest they command alone,
And he but sits precarious on the Throne:

(29-44)

This passage, from Alcyone's first speech at the beginning of the poem, in which she is trying to dissuade her husband from his fatal voyage, contains several of the features which are so characteristic of Dryden's handling of this episode. For he has amplified the care with which Ovid had imagined the vigorous malgnity of the liberated winds, and the almost comic impotence of their supposed commander Aeolus, which is captured particularly in lines which are substantially Dryden's own -

They fear his Whistle, and forsake the Seas;[1]

(where the diction allows in a touch of humour) and

In times of Tempest they command alone,
And he but sits precarious on the Throne:

(where the joke turns on a matter of obviously serious concern to Dryden and his fellow seventeenth-century Englishmen).

1. Sandys is here more straightforwardly solemn :

Nor let false hopes thy confidencie please;
In that my father, great Hippotades,
The strugling windes in rockie cauernes keepes
And at his pleasure calmes the raging Deepes.

(p.378)

The passage also contains several touches of that visual and psychological precision which are noticeable throughout the Latin and which are so characteristic of Dryden's handling. Where Ovid had written

> Cum semel emissi tenuerunt aequora venti;
> Nil illis vetitum est;...
>
> (433-434)

Dryden had imagined the little scene even more vividly, stressing the winds' heady zest :

> ...once indulg'd, they sweep the Main;
> Deaf to the Call, or hearing hear in vain;
>
> (33-34)

And the English poet has added a small stroke of animism to further enhance our sense of the winds' power to make the mighty quake, in rendering Ovid's

> ...incommendataque tellus
> Omnis, & omne fretum. ... (434-435)

thus :

> And not content with Seas insult the Shoar,
> When Ocean, Air, and Earth, at once ingage
> And rooted Forrests fly before their Rage:
>
> (36-38)

What I have called the 'psychological precision' is revealed in a stroke which, at the same time, displays, yet again, Dryden's genius as a borrower from his predecessors. For in rendering Ovid's couplet

> Quo magis hos novi, (nam novi, & saepe paterna
> Parva domo vidi)...
>
> (437-438)

Dryden has effected the smallest change in Sandys' rendering

> These knew I, and oft saw their rude comport;
> While yet a Girle, within my fathers Court.
>
> (p. 378)

to convert the remark (he perhaps had grounds for this in Ovid's insistent repetition of the word 'novi' and his positioning of 'Parva' prominently at the beginning of the line) into a touching girlish memory of Alcyone's :

> I know them well, and mark'd their rude Comport,
> While yet a Child, within my Father's Court:
>
> (41-42, my italics)

This kind of delicate psychological understanding is in evidence at countless points in the version. One example occurs in the description of the way in which Ceyx finally persuades Alcyone to let him go on his voyage. Dryden takes the hint from Ovid's use of the legal word 'causa' in his ll. 449-450 -

> Nec tamen idcirco caussam probat. addidit illis
> Hoc quoque lenimen, quo solo flexit amantem:

to indicate in his version that Ceyx is, perhaps, not fully convinced himself by the arguments which he is using to persuade Alcyone :

> Nor these avail'd; at length he lights on one,
> With which, so difficult a Cause he won:
>
> (60-61)

That this was a kind of precise attentiveness which he found amply in his Ovidian original can be seen in the description of Alcyone watching Ceyx's ship depart, where Dryden follows the Latin very closely :

> ...sustulit illa
> Humentes oculos; stantemque in puppe recurvâ,
> Concussâque manu dantem sibi signa maritum
> Prima videt: redditque notas. ubi terra recessit
> Longius, atque oculi nequeunt cognoscere cultus;
> Dum licet, insequitur fugientem lumine pinum.
> Haec quoque ut haud poterat spatio submota videri;
> Vela tamen spectat summo fluitantia malo.
> Ut nec vela videt; ...
>
> (463-471)

> The Queen recover'd rears her humid Eyes,
> And first her Husband on the Poop espies

Shaking his Hand at distance on the Main;
She took the Sign; and shook her Hand again.
Still as the Ground recedes, contracts her View
With sharpen'd Sight, till she no longer knew
The much-lov'd Face; that Comfort lost supplies
With less, and with the Galley feeds her Eyes;
The Galley born from view by rising Gales
She follow'd with her Sight the flying Sails:
When ev'n the flying Sails were seen no more
Forsaken of all Sight, she left the Shoar.

(75-86)

The cumulative effect of these examples (and there are many other such in this opening section of the tale) is to encourage an attitude in the reader towards the events being portrayed which is simultaneously minutely attentive and open to all possibilities. We are certainly aware of the deep love which binds the couple together. Dryden gives his Alcyone the Miltonic phrase 'the Sweets of Life' (20) to describe the life together that Ceyx will be forsaking, and, on Ceyx's departure, he has delicately pointed up the momentary similarity of Alcyone's plight to that of Virgil's deserted Dido, by rendering Ovid's lines

...vacuum petit anxia lectum:
Seque toro ponit. renovat lectusque locusque
Halcyonae lacrymas : & quae pars admonet absit.[1]

(471-473)

thus :

Then on her Bridal-Bed her Body throws,
And sought in sleep her weary'd Eyes to close:
Her Husband's Pillow, and the Widow'd part
Which once he press'd, renew'd the former Smart.

(87-90)

1. For the 'Sweets of Life', see particularly P.L. VIII, 185, where the phrase is used by Adam to characterise the particular wonder of God's having granted him the love of Eve. Dryden seems to have been particularly taken with Milton's phrase, giving it to Diomedes (Aeneis, XI,417) to express the tender domestic relations which war has deprived him of.

(recalling the moment in Book Four of the Aeneid which he had rendered

> She last remains, when ev'ry Guest is gone,
> Sits on the Bed he press'd, and sighs alone;
> Absent, her absent Heroe sees and hears;
>
> (117-119))

And near the end of the poem he has again stressed the poignancy of their parting, rendering Ovid's

> Dumque, Moratus ibi; dumque, Hîc retinacula solvit,
> Hoc mihi discedens dedit oscula littore, dicit,
>
> (712-713)

as

> 'Twas here he left me, lingring here delay'd,
> His parting Kiss; and there his Anchors weigh'd.
>
> (442-443, my italics)

Yet while we register each of these points as we read, we are not invited to dwell at length on Alcyone's grief or on the poignancy of their parting. We take in the significance of Alcyone's words and actions yet never quite put ourselves in her position. Then the story draws us immediately away to see the action of those winds and waves whose 'rude Comport', as we have been told, Alcyone has witnessed as a girl.

Ovid's descriptions of the storm at sea and Ceyx's drowning, as we we have seen, are passages which have sharply divided modern commentators, some critics considering them otiose and witty to a fault, others admiring the ways in which Ovid has reworked and reorientated Homeric and Virgilian source-material in a distinctive portrayal of the almost-human elation in the waves' destructiveness (a motiveless malignity engaged in with gusto) and the utter impotence of the sailors to resist or survive when faced with such forces of Nature.[1] Dryden's version, again, shows him to be frankly

1. See Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, p.204, Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.145-7, and Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.239-245.

relishing those moments in Ovid's tale which some modern readers have found hardest to enjoy. In his description of the waves mounting their final attack on the ship, for example, Dryden has drawn on details from storm and battle scenes in his own Aeneis to highlight the similarity between the waves and soldiers besieging a city, and has stressed, even more than it is stressed in the Latin, a sense of the waves' vying with each other to swamp the ship.[1] The effect of such a treatment is that we are put into an unusual frame of mind whereby, in recognising the waves' all-too-human motivation, along with the uncanny similarity between their behaviour and the movements of actual waves (heterogeneous ideas being here yoked together effortlessly) we can actually enjoy the portrayal of a sequence of events which would normally be too horrific or overwhelming even to contemplate :

> ℞ Now all the Waves, their scatter'd Force unite,
> And as a Soldier, foremost in the Fight
> Makes way for others : And an Host alone
> Still presses on, and urging gains the Town;
> So while th'invading Billows come a-brest,
> The Hero tenth advanc'd before the rest,
> Sweeps all before him with impetuous Sway,
> And from the Walls descends upon the Prey;
> Part following enter, part remain without,
> With Envy hear their Fellows conqu'ring Shout:
> And mount on others Backs, in hope to share
> The City, thus become the Seat of War.
>
> (161-172)

(for

> Dat quoque jam saltus intra cava texta carinae
> Fluctus : &, ut miles numero praestantior omni,
> Cum saepe assiluit defensae moenibus urbis,
> Spe potitur tandem; laudisque accensus amore
> Inter mille viros, murum tamen occupat unus.
> Sic ubi pulsarunt acres latera ardua fluctus;
> Vastius insurgens decimae ruit impetus undae:
> Nec prius absistit fessam oppugnare carinam,
> Quàm velut in captae descendat moenia navis.
> Pars igitur tentabat adhuc invadere pinum;
> Pars maris intus erat. trepidant haud segnius omnes;
> Quam solet urbs, aliis murum fodientibus extra,

1. Compare, particularly, Aeneis, I,86; II, 408, 679; X, 577, 1157-8.

Atque aliis murum, trepidare, tenentibus intus.
(524-536)

But it is in his treatment of the description of Ceyx's death that a reader might feel most inclined to quote back at Dryden the words from his own Preface,

> If this were Wit, was this a Time to be witty,
> when the poor Wretch was in the Agony of Death?
> ...On these Occasions the Poet shou'd endeavour
> to raise Pity : But instead of this, Ovid is
> tickling you to laugh.

'Tickling you to laugh' seems an apt description of the effect of certain of the 'turns' which Dryden adds in such deliberately over-explicit descriptions of Ceyx's thoughts when the ship is going down as this :

> His Wife he wishes, and wou'd still be near,
> Not her with him, but wishes him with her:
> (190-191)

In the Preface, we remember, Dryden had remarked that 'the Turn of Words, in which Ovid particularly excels all Poets...are sometimes a Fault, and sometimes a Beauty, as they are us'd properly or improperly; but in strong Passions always to be shunn'd, because Passions are serious, and will admit no Playing'. Could it be that Dryden, in his close imitation of Ovid's 'turns' in the description of Ceyx's drowning, and in his adoption, at certain moments, of diction at which we are surely intended to be scarce able to check our risibility, had seen this passage as one in which Ovid had quite consciously steered away from focussing the reader on 'strong Passions', and had quite deliberately prevented our feelings from going out straightforwardly to Ceyx in his distress, so that we can derive a sharper sense of the incongruity and indignity of the King's thoughts (which, again, we note, are very precisely observed) in such circumstances

as the present? And yet, paradoxically, the total effect of the passage (at least, as it is revealed to us by Dryden) is not merely to belittle or ridicule Ceyx's love for Alcyone, or to encourage us to view him as merely absurd or ludicrous. The very openness which the poetry has to so many seemingly incompatible perspectives on what is happening creates, in a curious way, its own distinctive kind of sympathy for Ceyx :

> Ev'n he who late a Sceptre did command
> Now grasps a floating Fragment in his Hand,
> And while he struggles on the stormy Main,
> Invokes his Father, and his Wife's, in vain;
> But yet his Consort is his greatest Care;
> Alcyone he names amidst his Pray'r,
> Names as a Charm against the Waves, and Wind;
> Most in his Mouth, and ever in his Mind:
> Tir'd with his Toyl, all hopes of Safety past,
> From Pray'rs to Wishes he descends at last:
> That his dead Body wafted to the Sands,
> Might have its Burial from her Friendly Hands.
> As oft as he can catch a gulp of Air,
> And peep above the Seas, he names the Fair,
> And ev'n when plung'd beneath, on her he raves,
> Murm'ring Alcyone below the Waves:
> At last a falling Billow stops his Breath,
> Breaks o'er his Head, and whelms him underneath.
> Bright Lucifer unlike himself appears
> That Night, his heav'nly Form obscur'd with Tears,
> And since he was forbid to leave the Skies,
> He muffled with a Cloud his mournful Eyes.
>
> (210-231)

A sharper sense of the subtle and unique blend of tones and attitudes in this passage, and a confirmation that it is not merely an incongruous mixture of the serious and the absurd but something that we might call a distinctively new compound, can be gained by comparing it with a rendering of the same paragraph in Ovid by a younger contemporary of Dryden's. For Charles Hopkins (on whose version, incidentally, Dryden drew extensively when composing his own) had here reshaped the original, trying for a note of more straightforward pathos, but with the result that some of

Ovid's witty strokes (which he feels obliged to preserve) seem strangely out of place.[1] The two elements, pathos and wit, remain separate, and the passage consequently misfires :

> Ev'n Ceyx, of the like support possest,
> Swims, undistinguish'd now, among the rest.
> To his Wife's Father, and his own, prefers
> His ardent Vows for help, which neither hears;
> To both, repeats his still neglected Prayer,
> Calls oft on both, but oftner calls on her.
> The more his danger grew, the more it brought
> Her dear remembrance to his restless thought.
> Whose dying wish, was, that the friendly Stream
> Wou'd roll him to those Coasts, whence late he came,
> To her dear hands, to be Interr'd by them.
> Still, as the Seas a breathing space afford,
> Halcyone rehears'd, forms every word.
> Half of her name, his lips, now sinking, sound,
> When the remaining half in him was drown'd.
> An huge black Arch of waters, which had hung
> High, in the gloomy Air, and threat'ned long.
> Bursting asunder, hurls the dreadful heap
> All on his head, and drives him down the Deep.
> His Father Lucifer, that dismal Night,
> Sought to retire, to shun the Tragick sight.
> But, since he cou'd not leave his destin'd Sphere,
> Drew round the blackest Clouds to veil him there.

The unique blend of the comic and the serious which can be found at so many points in this poem is nowhere more evident than in the Cave of Sleep episode, and here, again, comparisons, this time with other poems inspired by the Ovidian original or by Dryden's version, or remembered by Dryden in the act of composition, can assist us in recognising its peculiar qualities and appeal.

I take it that G.M.Murphy speaks for most readers of Ovid's poem when he praises the episode for its 'hushed and trance-like' quality (in

1. Hopkins' version appeared on pp.55-90 of his Epistolary Poems; On Several Occasions (London, 1694). He marks certain sections of the poem off with their own title - 'Description of a Storm, and Shipwreck', 'Description of the God of Sleep, and his Palace' - perhaps indicating that he saw Ovid's episode rather as a series of almost self-contained tours de force.

which, as he points out, the very sound of Ovid's verse plays a crucially important part) and remarks that 'Somnus...incorporates the very essence of sleepiness in live detail'.[1] The episode, that is, appeals to us partly because it embodies and presents a state of mind for which all human beings, at least with part of themselves, yearn - complete relaxation, and an indifference to all that makes daily life so onerous and tiresome.[2] This perhaps partly accounts for virtually every reader's enjoyment of and willingness to smile at Somnus' irritation at being disturbed by Iris (even though we know that his conduct is, looked at from another point of view, irresponsible and destructive). It is significant, I think, that Dryden can draw on another, intensely serious, expression of longing for sleep when translating Iris' address to Somnus :

> ...O sacred Rest,
> Sweet pleasing Sleep, of all the Pow'rs the best!
> O Peace of Mind, repairer of Decay,
> Whose Balm renews the Limbs to Labours of the Day,
> Care shuns thy soft approach, and sullen flies away!
>
> (308-312)

Small details in Dryden's wording indicate that he is recalling Macbeth's desperate yearnings for the restorative and healing properties of sleep :

> ...innocent Sleepe,
> Sleepe that knits up the ravel'd Sleeue of Care,
> The death of each dayes life, sore labors Bath,
> Balme of hurt Mindes...
>
> (II.ii)

But the comic elements in Ovid's episode were also, of course, an important source in Dryden's own lifetime for mock-heroic poetry, providing

1. G.M.Murphy, ed., Ovid's Metamorphoses : Book XI, pp. 73-74.
2. cf. Sandys' marginal note (p. 382) : ...what more inviteth sleep then an obliuion of cares?

the chief inspiration for Boileau's portrayal of La Mollesse in Le Lutrin, and thence on Dryden's own depiction of the kingdom of Shadwell in MacFlecknoe and on the portrayal of Sloth in Sir Samuel Garth's The Dispensary. And, as I have elsewhere demonstrated, Dryden was able to draw on details in Garth's poem when making his translation, and, in his turn, Garth subsequently borrowed some particularly attractive touches from Dryden's version when expanding his mock-heroic poem in its editions.[1]

The delicate blend of an evocation of the beauties of, and relief afforded by, sleep, and a wry awareness of its comic implications is diffused throughout the whole episode, but can perhaps best be sampled in two passages, first, part of the description of Sleep's cavern, where Dryden's couplets have that evocative melodiousness which the commentators find in the Latin original. The river becomes a stealthy and seductive creature, and are the poppies nodding in reverence to the god, or because they can, themselves, hardly keep awake?

> An Arm of Lethe with a gentle flow
> Arising upwards from the Rock below,
> The Palace moats, and o'er the Pebbles creeps,
> And with soft Murmers calls the coming Sleeps:
> Around its Entry nodding Poppies grow,
> And all cool Simples that sweet Rest bestow;
> Night from the Plants their sleepy Virtue drains,
> And passing sheds it on the silent Plains :
> No Door there was th'unguarded House to keep,
> On creaking Hinges turn'd, to break his Sleep.
>
> (282-291)

And in his rendering of Iris' appearance to the God of Sleep, Dryden seems to have found Ovid's witty and playful handling congenial in every tiny

1. See my 'Dryden's Cave of Sleep and Garth's Dispensary', Notes and Queries, 23 (1976), 243-245.

detail. The 'Dreams' are metamorphosed, on the verbal level, into curtains round a four-poster; the weight of the god's head, still sleepy, is vividly felt :

> Quo simul intravit, manibusque obstantia virgo
> Somnia dimovit; vestisque fulgore reluxit
> Sacra domus: tardâque Deus gravitate jacentes
> Vix oculos tollens; iterumque interumque relabens,
> Summaque percutiens nutanti pectora mento,
> Excussit tandem sibi se : cubitoque levatus,
> Quid veniat (cognorat enim) scitatur.
>
> (616-622)

> The Virgin entring bright indulg'd the Day
> To the brown Cave, and brush'd the Dreams away:
> The God disturb'd with this new glare of Light
> Cast sudden on his Face, unseal'd his Sight,
> And rais'd his tardy Head, which sunk agen,
> And sinking on his Bosom knock'd his Chin;
> At length shook off himself; and ask'd the Dame,
> (And asking yawn'd) for what intent she came?
>
> (300-307)

Though many important areas of the poem have not been touched upon, enough has perhaps by now been offered from the poem to support the general suggestion that one of the main attractions of Ceyx and Alcyone is that it enables the reader to view human suffering, and a world which seems calculated to frustrate and confound us, not (in Professor Robson's terms) with the indifference of a fly or a Lucretian god, but with the equanimity of a philosopher who can hold in his mind at one and the same time the joys, the sorrows and the absurdities of life and contemplate them with something approaching a serene delight. The 'distancing' effect of the wit could thus be described not as a tedious stylistic mannerism but as a means to achieving that very effect which Dryden described in two lines which he had given to Myrrha (they are not directly prompted by the Latin) :

Eyes and their Objects never must unite,
Some Distance is requir'd to help the Sight:
(74-75)

As I have suggested at the outset, Dryden's translation indicates that he seems to have felt the final metamorphosis of the two lovers as an unexpected surprise, and a perfect resolution of the poem's very diverse elements. A surprise in the sense that it seems, in Dryden's daring phrase, genuinely 'a present Miracle', a wonderful affirmation that despite all the indications we have had to the contrary the gods do care for humanity and the universe is, for all its malign elements, in the last resort a benign and meaningful place; and a perfect resolution, in that it reaffirms (but in an entirely unexpected way) Alcyone's two earlier prophecies, the first from near the beginning :

Then o'er the bounding Billows shall we fly,
Secure to live together, or to die.
(52-53)

and the second just after the appearance of the phantom-Ceyx to her in her dream :

At this not yet awake she cry'd, O stay,
One is our Fate, and common is our way!
(383-384)

In his rendering of the close, Dryden has been able to capture, in a way that none of his rivals can quite manage, that strange bittersweet note, and that inextricable 'blend of comedy and pathos, sympathy and detachment'[1] which, as we have seen, is so characteristic of this poem as a whole. In order to bring out the delicacy as well as the daring with which Dryden renders Ovid's portrayal of the couple's transformation, where they are released from their pain, while still preserving elements of their

1. cf. T. Mason, Dryden's Chaucer, p. 102.

former selves (including their marital closeness) in the bodies of small frail birds, under the benign protection of gods who before were unable or unwilling to help them, it will be necessary to quote the whole of the final section of the poem, from the point where Alcyone resolves to drown herself. Here, surely, Dryden's verse is capable of touching that area (in T.S.Eliot's words) 'of feeling which we can only detect, so to speak, out of the corner of the eye and can never completely focus', and of bringing delicately into conjunction emotions and feelings which are normally kept rigorously separate :

> Headlong from hence to plunge her self she springs,
> But shoots along supported on her Wings,
> A Bird new-made about the Banks she plies
> Not far from Shore; and short Excursions tries;
> Nor seeks in Air her humble Flight to raise,
> Content to skim the Surface of the Seas:
> Her Bill, tho' slender, sends a creaking Noise,
> And imitates a lamentable Voice:
> Now lighting where the bloodless Body lies,
> She with a Funeral Note renews her Cries.
> At all her stretch her little Wings she spread,
> And with her feather'd Arms embrac'd the Dead:
> Then flick'ring to his palid Lips, she strove,
> To print a Kiss, the last essay of Love :
> Whether the vital Touch reviv'd the Dead,
> Or that the moving Waters rais'd his Head
> To meet the Kiss, the Vulgar doubt alone;
> For sure a present Miracle was shown.
> The Gods their Shapes to Winter-Birds translate,
> But both obnoxious to their former Fate.
> Their conjugal Affection still is ty'd,
> And still the mournful Race is multiply'd:
> They bill, they tread; Alcyone compress'd
> Sev'n Days sits brooding on her floating Nest:
> A wintry Queen : Her Sire at length is kind,
> Calms ev'ry Storm, and hushes ev'ry Wind;
> Prepares his Empire for his Daughter's Ease,
> And for his hatching Nephews smooths the Seas.
>
> (472-499)

Nothing, then, it seems to me, is further from the truth than Mark Van Doren's observation that Ceyx and Alcyone is 'grotesque and literal'

and that it shows Dryden to be now 'plainly tired'.[1] On the contrary, there are few lines in it which do not contain some striking and delightful verbal felicity, the story is told with a sustained verve and pace, and the version as a whole seems to bear all the marks of the work of a master at the height of his powers, and with his mind fully engaged with his subject. Furthermore, the achieved mastery of this poem allows us, I think, to draw some general conclusions about, and to sum up, one of the distinctive kinds of fascination which the poetry of Ovid seems increasingly to have held for Dryden, a fascination which we have already seen developing in some of the earlier versions, and of which Ceyx and Alcyone is perhaps the finest expression.

We perhaps sometimes forget how much the great art-forms which often seem to us to represent the most serious literary presentations of the human condition - tragic drama and the realistic novel - have to exclude in order to achieve their wonderful effects. In order to enter the thought-processes and inner hell of Shakespeare's Macbeth, for example, we have to shut our ears temporarily to the hectoring voice of Lucretius' Nature who tells us that anyone who is deluded in the first place by the attractions of power or worldly fame is a fool not worth anyone's concern, and fully deserving everyone's scorn. In great scenes of grief (for example, Priam's and Hecuba's laments over Hector an the end of the Iliad) we have to exclude from our thoughts the suggestions of Lucretius (again), or Chaucer, or Boethius, or Montaigne, that to succumb to grief at all is a mark of weak-mindedness, since death is inevitable, fate irrevocably beyond our control,

1. Mark Van Doren, John Dryden, p. 219.

and, consequently, lamentation is absurd. And in both instances cited we have also to resolutely exclude from our thoughts the comedy which, we all know, is inherent in the most 'serious' of situations.

Could it be that one important factor that has attracted readers down the ages to Ovid is the very equanimity with which he can observe the extremes of human emotion and experience, and can manage to present them without pressurising the reader into taking up any one set of the various perfectly possible sets of alternative attitudes that one might take up towards such events? Such an equanimity (as I have called it) always runs the danger of seeming like mere callousness or lack of concern, the kind of attitude that Professor Robson described in the paragraph quoted above which, because it seeks to deny, or to by-pass altogether, the moral experience of mankind (taking 'moral' in its broadest sense) soon ceases to hold our imagination, striking us ultimately as brutal or facile. And, if Dryden's version of The Twelfth Book is a fair representation of the original, Ovid's poetry does indeed seem to be sometimes rather of this kind.

But there is, surely, a stage between the 'consistent attitude of moral detachment' (to use Robson's phrase) of The Twelfth Book and that of the narrative modes to which we are more naturally accustomed, one in which the author is not 'uninvolved' with his characters and events, but involved in a rather different, and larger, way than usual, a way which might be satisfying to the reader because it allows us to hold in the mind simultaneously attitudes which we normally keep apart and do not allow to mingle. If Ceyx and Alcyone is a poem of this kind, then those commentators, like G.M.Murphy, who have seen Ovid as grafting gratuitous humour on to what is basically a tale of serious pathos would be guilty of attempting to accommodate Ovid's distinctive mode of writing to one nearer those to which

they were accustomed, finding that it didn't quite fit, and then using their subsequent discomfort as a stick to beat Ovid with.[1] The fanciful descriptions and verbal wit of the episode, on the account which I have suggested, could be seen not as the excrescences which these commentators take them for, but an essential vehicle for creating the distinctively Ovidian perspective on the world.

1. L.P.Wilkinson, for example (Ovid Recalled, p.204) puts a great deal of stress on the reader's deep involvement and empathy with Alcyone. This surely takes too little account of the particularly obtrusive presence of witty 'turns' in her lament (imitated in ll.397-432 of Dryden's version).

(iv) The Flux of Nature : 'Of the Pythagorean Philosophy'

If Dryden's decision to render The First Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses in 1692 had perhaps been motivated, at least in the first instance, by the desire of poet and publisher to have the projected English version of Ovid's poem launched by its most distinguished contributor, his return, in the Fables, to what some commentators have called the 'philosophical frame' of the Metamorphoses (contained in its first and last books) and his singling out of Pythagoras' speech in Book Fifteen as 'the Master-piece' and 'the most learned and beautiful Part' of the poem seems to offer certain proof that Dryden's interest in that poem was now more than merely an interest in a series of individual tales, and that he had been drawn by the spirit which, he judged, informs the whole of the Metamorphoses. His version was, as far as I can discover, the first and last in English of any consequence to isolate the Pythagorean section of Book Fifteen for separate treatment.

It was not, I think, that Dryden's interest in the doctrines of Pythagoras was of a similar kind to that displayed by those of his contemporaries who were trying to reconstruct in a scholarly way the teachings of the ancient philosopher and (in some cases) to 'square' them logically with their own Christian beliefs, or that, any more than modern scholars, he felt that Ovid had, in the discourse of Pythagoras, provided a rationale for, or an explanation of, the succession of myths which occupy the main body of the poem, of a kind that would satisfy a theologian or

a logician.[1] Rather, he seems to have felt that Ovid had used the occasion of Pythagoras' exposition of what was intrinsically (apparently) almost as alien a doctrine to the Roman poet as it was to the seventeenth-century Englishman as a vehicle for an attractive and profoundly impressive poetic vision of Nature in a continuous and eternal process of conception, birth, growth, decay, flux and renewal, a vision which has a loose and suggestive (rather than a systematically logical) relation to the

1. See, for example, Bulstrode Whitelocke's An Essay of Transmigration, In Defense of Pythagoras, Or, a Discourse of Natural Philosophy (London, 1693), J.Norris' Hierocles, upon the Golden Verses of the Pythagoreans (London, 1682) and Edmund Arwaker's Thoughts well Employ'd; or the Duty of Self-Observation, in the Care and Regulation of Life, according to the Royal Pattern (2nd ed.) To which are added, Pythagoras' Golden Verses made Christian (London, 1697). Pythagoras also plays a part in the discussions on religion and natural philosophy in the works of Dryden's friend and collaborator on the Juvenal, the deist Charles Blount, particularly Anima Mundi (1679), the translation of Philostratus' Life of Apollonius (1680) and The Oracles of Reason (1693), which contains (pp.117-127) an essay Concerning the Immortality of the Soul. In Anima Mundi, Blount dismisses Pythagoras' doctrine of transmigration (pp. 66-70) on the grounds that the pagans did not perceive 'how much a Diviner Nature and Power the Soul is, than the Body'. There seems to have been a revival of interest in Pythagoreanism after the appearance in 1707, a year after its first publication in France, of the English translation of André Dacier's Life of Pythagoras, with a translation of Pythagoras' Golden Verses by Nicholas Rowe. See the discussions in The Spectator, Nos. 186, 211, 221, 334, 343, 447, 550. For modern scholarship, see especially D.A.Little, 'The Speech of Pythagoras in Metamorphoses 15 and the Structure of the Metamorphoses', Hermes, 98 (1970), 340-360 and John Barsby, Ovid, Greece and Rome New Surveys in the Classics No. 12 (Oxford, 1978), p. 35, who take issue with earlier scholars like L.Alfonsi, G.Hermann, R.Crahay, J.Hubaux and D.A.Slater, who had argued that the Pythagoreanism of Book XV provides a quasi-philosophical 'scheme' or rationale for the Metamorphoses. In their zeal in denying Pythagoras' speech one kind of relation to the whole Metamorphoses, however, these scholars run the risk of underestimating the other ways in which Pythagoras' vision is related to the rest of the poem. On this, see R.A.Swanson, 'Ovid's Pythagorean Essay', Classical Journal, 54 (1958), 21-24, H.Fränkel, Ovid, p. 110, Brooks Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp. 81-2, 298-9.

mysterious transformations to be found in the stories of the Metamorphoses themselves.[1] It seems certain, at any rate, that Dryden, with Sandys and Garth in his own day, and many scholars in our own, felt that Ovid had (however unexpectedly) risen to new heights of dignity and gravity in expounding the Pythagorean doctrine, and that the element of ridicule and even burlesque with which one can imagine a poet like Ovid might well have treated such matters is entirely absent from his handling.[2] And the

1. See LP.Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, p.215.

2. See Sandys (1632 edn.) p.511 : ... his Muse flags not after so long a flight (the infelicity almost of all other poets) but rather flies a more lofty pitch, both in matter and expression. Garth (Ovid's Metamorphoses, in Fifteen Books, [1717], p.x) remarked : ... 'how emphatical is his Reasoning!' Wilkinson (Ovid Recalled, pp.216-17), Otis (Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.294-301), Fränkel (Ovid, p.110) all stress (and cite other commentators on) the gravity and loftiness of Ovid's tone, and remark on his frequent echoes of Lucretius. Several scholars have attempted to see Met. XV as a burlesque of Pythagoreanism. See M.M. Crump, The E pyllion from Theocritus to Ovid, p.211, Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.104-7, C.P.Segal, 'Myth and Philosophy in the Metamorphoses : Ovid's Augustanism and the Augustan Conclusion of Book XV', A.J.P., 90 (1969), 257-90. But as Wilkinson points out (Ovid Recalled, p.215), this is not consonant with its tone. W.Myers (Dryden, p.187) sees Dryden's version as simultaneously exposing the 'superstitious fantasies' as well as revealing the 'brilliant insights' of Pythagoras' vision. C.P.Segal, citing L.Ferrero' Storia del Pitagorismo nel Mondo Romano, usefully documents the diversity of possible opinions about Pythagoras current in Ovid's Rome.

similarities which can be observed between passages in his rendering of this episode of Ovid and other passages elsewhere in his prose and verse indicate also that Dryden felt that Ovid was here dealing with matters which are both of great general interest and which also struck particular chords for the aged Dryden himself.

Although it is always more than merely competent, and contains enough striking felicities throughout to assure us that no minor poet could have written it, not all of Dryden's version of this long episode manifests the density of poetic life which can be found in its finest passages, and it may be possible to sense from his version that he did feel, in the act of composing it, a certain incongruity between the loftiness and cogency of its central sections and the succession of short and sometimes rather inconsequential 'curiosities' which round off Pythagoras' discourse. It may also be that Dryden felt slightly uneasy that the grand generalities of the central section of Pythagoras' speech (in which the less generally acceptable Pythagorean elements occupy very little prominence, and which have much in common with other philosophical and poetical arguments to which we know Dryden to have been attracted) were subsequently set aside as the speaker reverts to expounding the less generally applicable doctrine of vegetarianism which his speech had taken as its starting point. At any rate, in attempting to discover the core of what this episode meant to Dryden, we will here be primarily concerned with the central sections of Pythagoras' speech, those dealing with the nature of death, the flux and change to which everything in this world is subject, the progress of the seasons and the ages of man.

Some very definite indication of the seriousness with which Dryden means us to receive the utterances of the Ovidian Pythagoras is given in

the two paragraphs which introduce his discourse (ll. 77-98 in Dryden's version), where he has expanded thirteen lines of Ovid's already grand Latin into twenty-two of his own :

> Vir fuit hic ortu Samius : sed fugerat unà
> Et Samon & dominos ; odioque tyrannidis exsul
> Sponte erat. isque, licet caeli regione remotos,
> Mente Deos adiit : &, quae natura negabat
> Visibus humanis, oculis ea pectoris hausit.
> Cumque animo , & vigili perspexerat omnia curâ;
> In medium discenda dabat : coetumque silentum,
> Dictaque mirantum, magni primordia mundi,
> Et rerum caussas, & quid natura, docebat:
> Quid Deus : unde nives : quae fulminis esset origo:
> Juppiter, an venti, discussâ nube tonarent:
> Quid quateret terras; qua sidera lege mearent;
> Et quodcunque latet. ...
>
> (60-72)

> Here dwelt the Man divine whom Samos bore,
> But now Self-banish'd from his Native Shore,
> Because he hated Tyrants, nor cou'd bear
> The Chains which none but servile Souls will wear:
> He, tho' from Heav'n remote, to Heav'n cou'd move,
> With Strength of Mind, and tread th'Abyss above;
> And penetrate with his interiour Light
> Those upper Depths, which Nature hid from Sight:
> And what he had observ'd, and learnt from thence,
> Lov'd in familiar Language to dispence.
> The Crowd with silent Admiration stand
> And heard him, as they heard their God's Command;
> While he discours'd of Heav'n's mysterious Laws,
> The World's Original, and Nature's Cause;
> And what was God, and why the fleecy Snows
> In silence fell, and rattling Winds arose;
> What shook the stedfast Earth, and whence begun
> The dance of Planets round the radiant Sun;
> If Thunder was the Voice of angry Jove,
> Or Clouds with Nitre pregnant burst above:
> Of these, and Things beyond the common reach
> He spoke, and charm'd his Audience with his Speech.
>
> (77-98)

In his filling out of Ovid's text here, Dryden is clearly not only colouring his verse with vocabulary which carries a strong charge of resonance from his own religion ('interiour Light', 'Heav'ns mysterious Laws'), but is also drawing on some of Milton's images of the grandeur

and gaiety of the heavens, as well as on some of Virgil's examples in a famous passage from the Georgics where that poet is in his turn drawing on his own eminent predecessor Lucretius to expound the Nature of Things, and to recommend that intent spirit of enquiry which can alone enable him to live,

> His Mind possessing, in a quiet state,
> Fearless of Fortune, and resign'd to Fate.[1]
>
> (The Second Georgic, 700-701)

Dryden's intention seems to be to 'fortify' Ovid's lines by reinforcing his description of Pythagoras with a synthesis of pagan and Christian definitions of the inquiring spirit. He has, in addition, stressed the fact that Pythagoras is a man with a rare capacity for imparting wisdom and pleasure through his gift of words. Ovid's Pythagoras tells merely of 'quodcunque latet' (72), whereas Dryden describes his activity thus :

> Of these, and Things beyond the common reach
> He spoke, and charm'd his Audience with his Speech.
>
> (97-98)

These various touches thus reinforce the parallel with the kind of enquiry praised in Dryden's description of Numa near the beginning of the poem, who, we are told

> ...his Study bent
> To cultivate his Mind: To learn the Laws
> Of Nature, and explore their hidden Cause.
>
> (7-9)

The kind of wisdom sought after by Numa and imparted by Pythagoras is

1. 'Abyss' (1.82) has, of course, obvious Miltonic overtones. For 'the dance of Planets' (1.94), cf. PL, III, 50, V, 178, 620, VII, 374, VIII, 125, IX, 103. For 'Nitre', cf. PL, II, 936-7. For the echoes of Virgil, compare 1.84 with Dryden's version of The Second Georgic, ll. 677-8 and 1.94 with ibid, ll. 687-90.

thus seen as very similar to that which, as we have seen, Lucretius had recommended in his third book, the kind of wisdom which enables us to live in accord with the world around us by understanding, and learning to accept, the inexorable principles by which it is governed, and not to incur the inevitable misery and vain frustration which inevitably ensues if we seek to deny, or to ignore those principles.

That Dryden's thought was ranging even further than these literary parallels, and seeing subterranean connections between the movements of his own mind and those embodied in the words of the Ovidian Pythagoras can be established from several interesting pieces of evidence. In the Preface to Fables, Dryden had noted that

> ...Thoughts...come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only Difficulty is to chuse or to reject; to run them into Verse, or to give them the other Harmony of Prose. I have so long studied and practis'd both, that they are grown into a Habit, and become familiar to me.
>
> (Kinsley, IV, 1446-1447)

Though these remarks have been used by commentators unsympathetic to the poet as further evidence of the essentially limited and prosaic nature of his talent, Scott saw no need for apology when remarking that

> ...accurate observation may trace in his works, the repetition of some sentiments and illustrations from prose to verse, and back again to prose... [1]
>
> (Scott, I, 524)

If, as we saw in Chapter One, Dryden was not the first writer to use the metaphor of metempsychosis for the relation of a poet to those other poets of the past on whom he had drawn for inspiration and for the very substance of his work, the Preface to Fables surely carries that

1. For hostile comment, see, for example, H.W.Smith in Scrutiny, 18 (1951-2), 301.

metaphor much further than it had ever been carried before, and the close parallels between Dryden's descriptions of the translating process in the Preface and the wording of some passages from the speech of Ovid's Pythagoras indicate that here is one of the instances in which Dryden's mind is freely making connections, in the very same Hobbesian manner recommended in the Preface itself, between the Ovidian vision of souls moving from body to body and forms being created and re-created in a simultaneous process of destruction and preservation, and the position in which he now finds himself as a poet vis-à-vis the originals which he is currently engaged in translating.

Consider, for example, the vocabulary in which Dryden chooses to speak of poetic influence near the beginning of the Preface :

> Milton was the Poetical Son of Spencer, and Mr. Waller of Fairfax; for we have our Lineal Descents and Clans, as well as other Families: Spencer more than once insinuates, that the Soul of Chaucer was transfus'd into his Body; and that he was begotten by him Two hundred years after his Decease.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 1445)

Or the way in which he defines the permanent interest for readers in subsequent ages of Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims :

> We have our Fore-fathers and Great Grand-dames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days; their general Characters are still remaining in Mankind, and even in England, though they are call'd by other Names than those of Moncks, and Fryars, and Chanons, and Lady Abbesses, and Nuns: For Mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of Nature, though everything is alter'd.
>
> (Kinsley, I, 1455)

Here Dryden is returning to an idea which he had formulated four years previously in the Parallel Betwixt Painting and Poetry, when discussing the poet's 'invention' :

> ...if the story which we treat be modern, we are to vary the customs, according to the time and the country where the scene of the action lies; for this is still to imitate nature, which is always the same, though in a different dress.
>
> (Scott, XVII, 314)

But the larger implications of the later formulations are surely closer, are indeed strikingly close, to Pythagoras'

> Then, Death, so call'd, is but old Matter dress'd
> In some new Figure, and a vary'd Vest:
> Thus all Things are but alter'd, nothing dies;
>
> (237-239)

and again :

> Thus are their Figures never at a stand,
> But chang'd by Nature's innovating Hand;
> All Things are alter'd, nothing is destroy'd,
> The shifted Scene, for some new Show employ'd.
>
> (386-389)

and again :

> Nor dies the Spirit, but new Life repeats
> In other Forms, and only changes Seats.
>
> (229-230)

and again :

> ...as the soften'd Wax new Seals receives,
> This Face assumes, and that Impression leaves;
> Now call'd by one, now by another Name;
> The Form is only chang'd, the Wax is still the same:
>
> (247-250)

These examples might encourage us to see a more than casual significance in Dryden's claim that it is because he has a 'Soul congenial' to Chaucer's that he is entitled to amplify the older poet's text in his own renderings. And Dryden's declaration that

> Another Poet, in another Age, may take the same Liberty with my Writings : if at least they live long enough to deserve Correction.
>
> (Kinsley, IV, 1457)

is perfectly in accord with the discreet strokes of self-reference which he has worked into his translation of the Ovid, affirming his full recognition that he too will be subject to the same processes of flux that hold good for the rest of creation. Not all the details, for example, or all the gently mocking 'turns', in Dryden's portrayal of the characteristics of late middle and old age are to be found in Ovid's original :

> Excipit Autumnus, posito fervore juventae
> Maturus, mitisque inter juvenemque senemque;
> Temperie medius, sparsis per tempora canis.
> Inde senilis Hyems tremulo venit horrida passu;
> Aut spoliata suos, aut, quos habet, alba capillos.
> Nostra quoque ipsorum semper, requieque sine ullâ,
> Corpora vertuntur : nec quod fuimusve,
> Cras erimus. ...
>
> (209-216)

> Autumn succeeds, a sober tepid Age,
> Not froze with Fear, nor boiling into Rage;
> More than mature, and tending to decay,
> When our brown Locks repine to mix with odious Grey.
> Last Winter creeps along with tardy pace,
> Sour is his Front, and furrow'd is his Face;
> His Scalp is not dishonour'd quite of Hair,
> The ragged Fleece is thin, and thin is worse than bare.
>
> (312-319)

Though the implications of the passage are of course general, it is perhaps in order here to remember Garth's tribute to Dryden :

> The falling off of his Hair, had no other
> Consequence, than to make his Lawrels be
> seen the more.

And Dryden seems even to be incorporating a wry squint at the very volume he is now writing when he describes the horrors of death as

> Vain Themes of Wit, which but in Poems pass,
> And Fables of a World, that never was!
>
> (225-226)

As with the poet, so with his times. A contemporary reader of the

lines quoted above concerning the new impressions received by the wax on seals may well have been struck by the applicability of the thought to the Great Seal, that symbol of regal legality to which James II had attached such importance, and on which his 'face' (there is no mention of a 'face' in the Latin) had now been replaced by those of William and Mary.[1]

But the most obvious allusion in the poem to contemporary affairs occurs, of course, in ll. 274-277 :

> ...For former Things
> Are set aside, like abdicated Kings:
> And every moment alters what is done,
> And innovates some Act till then unknown.

where Dryden has considerably expanded his original :

> ...nam quod fuit ante, relictum est:
> Fitque, quod haud fuerat : momentaque cuncta novantur.
> (184-185)

In fact, some commentators have seen these references to James II's enforced abdication, and Dryden's carefully chosen 'Act' as the virtual raison d'être of the poem - an excuse for Dryden to use translation to return to his favourite subject of comment on contemporary politics.[2] But, just as, when reflecting on the curious similarities between Chanticleer's incest and that of monarchs in The Cock and the Fox, Dryden's field of reference had not been limited to monarchs whom he had

1. On this subject, see Macaulay's History of England, ed. C.H.Firth (6 vols., London, 1914) where the Great Seals of James II (III, 1172-3) William and Mary (III,1294-5) and William III alone (V,2478) are reproduced, James II had, of course, thrown his Great Seal into the Thames before he fled in 1688.

2. See William Myers, Dryden, p. 187.

known, and he had built into his poem a kaleidoscope of parallels between Chanticleer and Henry VIII, the Hapsburgs, the Ptolemys and Louis XIV (as well as Charles II and William III) to emphasise the seemingly universal dubiety of royal sexuality, so here the reference seems not narrowly or exclusively Jacobite in its resonance.[1] The word 'Act' is left, significantly general in its application (no one specific Act of Parliament seems to be in the forefront of Dryden's mind) and the phrase 'abdicated Kings' could include in its implications, say, the famous historical instance of Charles V of Spain as well as James II. The purpose of the allusion seems to be to suggest that the political causes for which men had fought and died in Dryden's own lifetime, to which they had committed themselves and in whose service they had been ruined, were not unique occurrences but merely the most recent instances of an inexorable process of change that has always been in operation. The Ovidian occasion, that is, was allowing Dryden, now freed from the shackles of a political or polemical task, to stand back from the events in which he had been so closely involved and to see them in their proper perspective, as parts of a larger process.

These reflections are given greater weight, I think, by examining the context in which the passage about 'abdicated Kings' is to be found in the poem. It comes from the paragraph in which the Ovidian Pythagoras declares that he is now rising to the inspired height of his theme :

> And since, like Tiphys parting from the Shore,
> In ample Seas I sail, and Depths untry'd before,
> This let me further add, that Nature knows

1. On Henry VIII, see Kinsley's note in IV, 2075. On the Hapsburgs, see Saintsbury, cited in Noyes, p.1032. On Charles II, see Earl Miner, 'Chaucer in Dryden's Fables', Studies in Criticism and Aesthetics, 1660-1800 : Essays in Honor of S.H.Monk, ed. H.Anderson and J.S. Shea (Minneapolis, 1967), p.64. On Louis XIV, see Charles Hinnant, 'Dryden's Gallic Rooster', SP, 65 (1968), 647-56.

No steadfast Station, but, or Ebbs, or Flows:
Ever in motion; she destroys her old,
And casts new Figures in another Mold.
Ev'n Times are in perpetual Flux; and run
Like Rivers from their Fountain rowling on;
For Time no more than Streams, is at a stay:
The flying Hour is ever on her way;
And as the Fountain still supplies her store,
The Wave behind impels the Wave before;
Thus in successive Course the Minutes run,
And urge their Predecessor Minutes on,
Still moving, ever new : For former Things
Are set aside, like abdicated Kings:
And every moment alters what is done,
And innovates some Act till then unknown.

(260-277)

This passage is one in which, as has been recently demonstrated, Dryden is perhaps, even more than anywhere else in the poem, reinforcing the point of his original and lending it extra dignity, resonance and diversity of implication by drawing on a number of other, very different writers whose thought, he felt, was in consonance with that of the Ovidian Pythagoras.[1] He seems to have felt, that is, that Ovid had here risen above the oddities of Pythagorean vegetarianism and metempsychosis, and had seen within them the opportunity to formulate (in the words of Johnson's Imlac) those 'general and transcendent truths, which will always be the same.'

For Dryden's language in this passage is coloured with his reminiscences of Valerius Flaccus' description of Tiphys, the helmsman of the Argo, setting out into uncharted waters, of Bacon's description 'Of Vicissitudes of Things', of Nature's affirmation (in Lucretius' Third Book) that the destruction effected by Time is also the means whereby Time brings about change and renewal, of an anonymous translation in his own miscellany Sylvae (again from Lucretius) dealing with the 'ebb and flow' of Nature,

1. See the discussion in T.A.Mason, Dryden's Chaucer, pp. 115-119, from which my examples are taken.

of Rochester's poignant lament at the passing of 'the flying hour' in his own life, of that moment in The Book of Revelation where 'former things' are said to have 'passed away', thereby removing the feeling of pain or sorrow, and of a poem cited by Montaigne which describes the 'successive' rolling of waves in a stream.[1] In this context, Dryden's remembrances of Marvell's description of Cromwell's endeavour

> To ruine the great Work of Time,
> And cast the Kingdome old
> Into another Mold.

which seems to have given him the cue for his own

> Ever in motion; she destroys her old,
> And casts new Figures in another Mold.
>
> (264-265)

can be seen, again, perhaps, not so much as 'Dryden the political poet' reverting to his 'real' subject, but more as 'Dryden the poet of comprehensive speculation' reflecting on how the events of politics and history, too, are subject to the same ever-changing processes of destruction, renewal and rebirth to which everything must ultimately submit, but which are (an important point) ultimately as creative as they are destructive, since

> Those very Elements which we partake,
> Alive, when Dead some other Bodies make:
> Translated grow, have Sense, or can Discourse,
> But Death on deathless Substance has no force.
>
> (394-397)

1. The verse by La Boétie, cited by Montaigne in his last essay Of Experience, and translated by Cotton thus :

> So in a running stream one wave we see
> After another roll incessantly,
> And as they glide, each does successively
> Pursue the other, each the other fly:
> By this that's evermore pushed on, and this
> By that continually preceded is:
> The water still does in the water swill,
> Still the same brook, but different water still.

Here the obtrusive use of the word 'translated' makes the crucial metaphorical connection between all the other kinds of rebirth and renewal included in the poem's vision and the specifically literary ones.

It is in this distinctively Ovidian stress on perpetual flux and recreation that Dryden seems to have found a necessary complement to the stern Lucretian conception of a death which is the end of all (and one which was, perhaps, more easily reconcilable with his own Christianity). For even in his earlier version from Lucretius' Third Book, Dryden had subtly softened the blow of Lucretius' blunt statement on the poets of old -

> adde Heliconiadum comites, quorum unus Homerus
> sceptra potitus eadem aliis sopitu' quietest.
>
> (iii.1037-1038; Loeb text)

in his own rendering :

> The Founders of invented Arts are lost;
> And Wits who made Eternity their boast;
> Where now is Homer who possest the Throne?
> Th'immortal Work remains, the mortal Author's gone.
>
> (251-254)

So, in Of the Pythagorean Philosophy, Dryden often shows himself, in details of the wording of his version, to be fully aware of how close Ovid was to Lucretius in style and spirit in this Fifteenth Book, while at the same time allowing for a continuity and immortality in the midst of destruction and change which the older poet had sternly denied :

> Nor dies the Spirit, but new Life repeats
> In other Forms, and only changes Seats.
>
> (229-230)

and again (near the end of the episode) :

> ...whatever lies
> In Earth, or flits in Air, or fills the Skies,
> All suffer change, and we, that are of Soul
> And Body mix'd, are Members of the whole.
>
> (670-673)

Dryden gave some indication of just how much this conception of a nature ever-changing yet ever-constant meant to him by drawing on it when filling out Theseus' great vision at the end of Palamon and Arcite of a prime-mover who somehow makes sense (but not in any simply consolatory way) of the seeming randomness of the created world, and can thus impress upon us the inevitable necessity of concluding,

> What then remains, but after past Annoy,
> To take the good Vicissitude of Joy?
> To thank the gracious Gods for what they give,
> Possess our Souls, and while we live, to live?
>
> (III. 1111-1114)

The Ovidian colouring in Theseus' words is seen most clearly in this passage (where Chaucer's original - given here in the text printed at the end of Fables - has been considerably expanded in a way that reveals clear connections of phrase and conception with Of the Pythagorean Philosophy) :

> The first mouer of the cause aboue,
> Whan he first made the faire chaine of loue;
> Great was theffect, and hie was his entente;
> Wel wist he why, and what thereof he mente;
> For with that faire chaine of loue he bonde
> The fire, the aire, the water and the londe,
> In certain bondes, that they may nat flee
> The same prince and that mouer, quod he,
> Hath stablish'd in this wretched world adoun
> Certen of daies and duracioun
> To all that are engendred in this place,
> Ouer the which daie they may nat pace :
> All mowe they yet tho' daies abredge,
> There needeth non aucthorite to ledge:
> For it is proued by experience,
> But that me list declare my sentence:
> Then may men by this order discerne,

That thilke mouer stable is and eterne.
Well may men know but he be a foole
That euery part is deriued from his hoole:
For nature hath nat taken his beginning
Of one part or cantell of a thing;
But of a thing that perfit is and stable,
Discending so till it be corrumpable:
And therefore of his wise purueiaunce,
He hath so well beset his ordinaunce,
That spaces of things and progressions
Shullen endure by successions,
And not eterne, without any lie;
Thus mist thou vnderstand, and see at iye.

(p. 608)

The Cause and Spring of Motion, from above
Hung down on Earth the Golden Chain of Love;
Great was th'Effect, and high was his Intent,
When Peace among the jarring Seeds he sent.
Fire, Flood, and Earth, and Air by this were bound,
And Love, the common Link, the new Creation crown'd.
The Chain still holds; for though the Forms decay,
Eternal Matter never wears away:
The same First Mover certain Bounds has plac'd,
How long those perishable Forms shall last;
Nor can they last beyond the Time assign'd
By that All-seeing, and All-making Mind:
Shorten their Hours they may; for Will is free;
But never pass th' appointed Destiny.
So Men oppress'd, when weary of their Breath,
Throw off the Burden, and subborn their Death.
Then since those Forms begin, and have their End,
On some unalter'd Cause they sure depend:
Parts of the Whole are we; but God the Whole;
Who gives us Life, and animating Soul.
For Nature cannot from a Part derive
That Being, which the Whole can only give:
He perfect, stable; but imperfect We,
Subject to Change, and diff'rent in Degree.
Plants, Beasts, and Man; and as our Organs are,
We more or less of his Perfection share.
But by a long Descent, th'Etherial Fire
Corrupts; and Forms, the mortal Part, expire:
As he withdraws his Vertue, so they pass,
And the same Matter makes another Mass:
This Law th'Omniscient Pow'r was pleas'd to give,
That ev'ry kind should by Succession live;
That Individuals die, his Will ordains;
The propagated Species still remains.

(III, 1024-1057)

That Dryden had come to see the vision of the Ovidian Pythagoras as one which affirms gloriously that the universe, despite all indications to the contrary, coheres (but in a way totally different from, say, Pope's vision in the Essay on Man of an ordered, symmetrical and hierarchical whole) is further confirmed in his warm and masterly rendering of the passage likening the progress of the seasons to the progress of a man's life. But here 'likening' is an utterly inadequate term to describe the working of the verse, since the interconnection between and interpenetration of the two subjects is so absolutely achieved on a verbal level in the description (human terms being used for the inanimate and vice versa) that the verse allows us to feel and enjoy, in the very act of reading, the interrelatedness and metamorphosis of all Nature's parts which is being affirmed in the poem :

> Perceiv'st thou not the process of the Year,
> How the four Seasons in four Forms appear,
> Resembling human Life in ev'ry Shape they wear?
> Spring first, like Infancy, shoots out her Head,
> With milky Juice requiring to be fed:
> Helpless, tho' fresh, and wanting to be led.
> The green Stem grows in Stature and in Size,
> But only feeds with hope the Farmer's Eyes;
> Then laughs the childish Year with Flourets crown'd,
> And lavishly perfumes the Fields around,
> But no substantial Nourishment receives,
> Infirm the Stalks, unsolid are the Leaves.
> Proceeding onward whence the Year began
> The Summer grows adult, and ripens into Man.
> This Season, as in Men, is most repleat,
> With kindly Moisture, and prolifick Heat.
> Autumn succeeds, a sober tepid age,
> Not froze with Fear, nor boiling into Rage;
> More than mature, and tending to decay,
> When our brown Locks repine to mix with odious Gray.
> Last Winter creeps along with tardy pace,

Sour is his Front, and furrow'd is his Face;
His Scalp if not dishonour'd quite of Hair,
The ragged Fleece is thin, and thin is worse than bare.[1]

(296-319)

And in the passage which follows, Dryden renders equally warmly Ovid's minutely attentive and delighted portrayal of the growth and development of an infant, a process which is seen not (as in the fragment from Lucretius' fifth book which he had rendered fifteen years before) as something grimly separate from a hostile surrounding Nature, but as something integrated into Nature's greater processes. This was a passage, too, which contributed to Theseus' speech in Palamon and Arcite[2] :

1. It is perhaps relevant to comment here how inappropriate to this particular passage are these remarks by F.R.Leavis on Dryden's poetical metaphors in an essay referred to in Chapter One (Leavis is discussing All for Love, but clearly intends to represent that play as characteristic of the workings of Dryden's poetic imagination as a whole) :

   > Metaphor is simile with the 'like' or 'as' left out, and simile, when sustained, is lucid, uncomplicated and uncompressed; a matter of simple point-by-point comparison, illustrative and obvious, the felicity residing in the obviousness.

   (English Literature in Our Time and the University [London, 1969], p.93). Similarly inappropriate, and for similar reasons, seem these remarks of F.W.Bateson in his English Poetry and the English Language (Oxford, 1934), p.58 :

   > The poetry of Dryden and Pope differs...from earlier and later English poetry in that it is not a poetry of suggestion but of statement. The 'meaning' of a metaphysical or a romantic poem, the totality of impressions created by it is implicit - an obscure complex in which the contributions of logic, rhythm, and emotional suggestion are almost inextricable. But an Augustan poem is explicit. The meaning is, and must be, on the surface,...

2. See T.A.Mason, Dryden's Chaucer, p.306.

Time was, when we were sow'd, and just began
From some few fruitful Drops, the promise of a Man;
Then Nature's Hand (fermented as it was)
Moulded to Shape the soft, coagulated Mass;
And when the little Man was fully form'd,
The breathless Embryo with a Spirit warm'd;
But when the Mothers Throws begin to come,
The Creature, pent within the narrow Room,
Breaks his blind Prison, pushing to repair
His stiffled Breath, and draw the living Air;
Cast on the Margin of the World he lies,
A helpless Babe, but by Instinct he cries.
He next essays to walk, but downward press'd
On four Feet imitates his Brother Beast:
By slow degrees he gathers from the Ground
His Legs, and to the rowling Chair is bound;
Then walks alone; a Horseman now become
He rides a Stick, and travels round the Room:
In time he vaunts among his youthful Peers,
Strong-bon'd, and strung with Nerves, in pride of Years,
He runs with Mettle his first merry Stage,)
Maintains the next abated of his Rage,)
But manages his Strength, and spares his Age.)
Heavy the third, and stiff, he sinks apace,
And tho' 'tis down-hill all, but creeps along the Race.
Now sapless on the verge of Death he stands,
Contemplating his former Feet, and Hands;
And Milo-like, his slacken'd Sinews sees,)
And wither'd Arms, once fit to cope with Hercules,)
Unable now to shake much less to tear the Trees.)

(324-353)

Here surely is a moment where Ovid's attempt to view the total spectrum of a man's life from the loftiest of perspectives (at least, as it seemed to Dryden's eyes, and is conveyed in his version), far from seeming to derive from a lack of concern for human affairs or an attempt to debase or scoff at Man or merely a desire to display the poet's misplaced ingenuity, is actually a means of affirming the poet's boundless delight at the observation of Nature's mysterious processes.

I hope by now enough has been done to support my opening suggestion that in Of the Pythagorean Philosophy Dryden had found an original which was deeply congenial to what had become some of his own most cherished poetical and personal concerns, and that he had in his version achieved

a comprehensiveness and serenity of vision that far transcends any awkwardness that an English reader might find with the poem's ostensible purpose - the exposition of the alien doctrine of Pythagoreanism. Ovid's episode, he seems to have felt, is indeed the 'major meditation on the fundamental problems of human life' which one modern commentator has justly called Dryden's version of the episode,[1] an epitome of that open and enquiring spirit which, at their best, informs the stories of the Metamorphoses themselves, and which made it possible for him to affirm that though they might seem from one point of view to have been written 'against the Order of Nature', they nevertheless 'have also deep Learning and instructive Mythologies couch'd under them', 'instructive' that is, not in the way the allegorists had thought, but in a way only visible to a poet, or to the sensitive reader of poetry, in the particular perspective which they allow on their events and characters, in their diverse play of mind, in their openness to the full range of life's possibilities and their capacity to contemplate the broadest possible spectrum of life's joys, trials, miseries, even death itself.

If Dryden had found these qualities in Ovid increasingly towards the end of his life, then it must have been the case that Ovid's influence was - along with those of Lucretius, Montaigne, Virgil, Chaucer, Homer and Boccaccio - one of the factors that brought about that glorious late flowering in his verse which all his earliest commentators noted and which we too, with some sympathetic attention, can very substantially recapture. In discovering

1. William Myers, Dryden, p. 187.

new possibilities in Ovid (which, as we have seen, he was continually doing after his very unpromising start in 1680), Dryden was discovering new possibilities in himself and his poetical talent.

APPENDIX

Dryden's Ovid and its English Predecessors

Introductory Note

It is the intention, in the tables which follow, to provide in as economic a form as possible a list of the chief parallels between Dryden's Ovid translations and their English predecessors. The style of abbreviation employed is based substantially on that devised by Professor William Frost for his first list in 'Appendix F' in Vol. X of The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope. Such lists can never be quite definitive for several reasons. First there is often no means of establishing for certain whether a verbal parallel with a predecessor can be strictly designated a 'borrowing' or whether it is attributable to coincidence. Second, where the wording of several predecessors simultaneously parallels that of Dryden it is often impossible to tell with absolute certainty which version he was remembering. Third, it is not possible in a list such as those which follow to differentiate between the various kinds of parallel (similarity of rhyme, end-word, or phrasing within the line) evident in the passages cited. However, passages which are particularly close in wording to a predecessor are underlined, as in Professor Frost's tables. My tables record only the parallels with previous English translators of Ovid. Echoes of Spenser, Milton, Cowley, Garth and other English poets, and of other works by Dryden himself are not recorded, nor are indebtednesses to continental translations or to the seventeenth-century editions of Ovid. A number of borrowings from all the aforementioned categories are, of course, discussed in the main body of the text. A careful comparison of my tables with the volumes so far published of the California edition will reveal that I have found many parallels not recorded in that edition. But no doubt when Volume VII of that edition (Poems, 1697-1700) is published, my tables will have, in turn, to be supplemented from the findings of the California editors.

English Translations of Ovid used by Dryden

(an asterisk indicates that the use of the version by Dryden was the discovery of the present writer)

Aus	* H.Austin, The Scourge of Venus: Or, the Wanton Lady (1614)
El	Ovid's Elegies; or a Translation of his Choicest Epistles (1683)
Gre	* J.Gresham, The Picture of Incest. Lively Portraicted in the Historie of Cinyras and Myrrha (1626)
Gol	A.Golding, The XV Bookes of P.Ovidius Naso, Entytuled Metamorphosis (1567)
Hey (1)	* T.Heywood, 'Hellen to Paris' in Canto 10 of Troia Britanica (1608)

Hey (2) [T.Heywood,] Publii Ovidii Nasonis De Arte Amandi, Or The Art of Love [?1600-1610]

Hop (1) * C.Hopkins, 'The Story of Cinyras and Myrrha'

Hop (2) * C.Hopkins, 'The Story of Ceyx and Halcyone'
both in Epistolary Poems ; On Several Occasions (1694)

Hoy [T.Hoy], Ovid's Art of Love. With Hero and Leander of Musaeus (1692)

Ker *[P.Ker,] Λογομαχία : or The Conquest of Eloquence (1690)

Mar C.Marlowe, All Ovid's Elegies (?1599)

Sal W.Saltonstall, Ovid's Heroicall Epistles (1636)

San G.Sandys, Ovid's Metamorphosis English'd, Mythologiz'd, and Represented in Figures (1632)

(Dryden also made use of the 1626 folio of Sandys' Ovid - see p.181,fn 1 . Parallels with this edition are abbreviated San (1626)).

She J.Sherburne, Ovid's Heroical Epistles (1639)

Tur G.Turbervile, The Heroycall Epistles of...Publius Ovidius Naso (1567)

Wol F.Wolferston, The Three Books of Publius Ovidius Naso De Arte Amandi (1661)

Parallels between Dryden's Ovid and its English Predecessors

Ovid's Epistles (1680) :

Canace to Macareus

4 She, Tur; 5 Tur; 5-6 Sal, She; 19-20 Sal; 24 She; 32 Sal; 35 Sal, She; 43 Sal; 44 Tur; 52 She; 53 Sal; 54 She; 59-60 Sal; 61-62 Sal; 67-68 Sal; 86 She; 94 She; 99-100 Sal; 100 She; 102 Tur; 104 Tur; 105 Tur; 113 Tur; 121 Tur; 138 Tur; 143 She; 146 Tur, Sal.

Helen to Paris

5 She; 10 She; 17 She; 21-22 Sal; 23 She; 27-28 Sal; 34 Tur; 40 Hey; 41-42 Sal; 47-48 Hey; 57-58 Tur; 62 She; 65 She; 66 Tur; 73-74 Tur,Sal; 76 She; 78-79 Tur; 87-88 Tur; 88 She; 90 Tur; 98 She; 107 Tur; 109 Hey; 115 Hey; 121 Sal; 123-124 Sal; 125-126 Sal; 147 Tur, She; 153 Tur, Hey, She; 154 Tur; 162-163 Hey;

164-165 She; 170-171 Hey; 174 Tur; 177 Hey, Sal; 190-191 Hey; 198 Hey; 201 Hey; 204 Tur, Hey, Sal; 209 Tur, Sal, She; 216-217 Sal; 233 Hey, Sal; 239 Hey; 243 Hey; 244-245 Sal; 252 Hey, She.

Dido to Aeneas

3-4 She; 5-6 Sal; 13 Tur; 19-20 She; 20 Tur; 24 She; 29-30 She; 32 Sal; 45-46 She; 46 Tur, Sal; 49 She; 64 Tur, She; 72 Tur, Sal, She; 73-74 Tur; 76 Sal; 76-77 Tur; 79-80 Tur, Sal, She; 81 Tur, Sal; 102 Tur; 109-110 Sal; 121 Tur; 121-122 She; 128 Sal; 131-132 Sal; 149-150 She; 171 Sal; 175-176 Tur, Sal; 177 Tur; 181-182 She; 184 Tur, She; 186 Sal; 187-188 Sal; 192 Sal; 195 Sal, She; 195-196 Tur; 198 She; 201 She; 201-202 Tur; 211 Tur; 212 She.

Miscellany Poems (1684) :

Ovid's Elegies : Book II. Elegy the Nineteenth

48 Mar

Examen Poeticum (1693) :

The First Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

1-2 San; 5-6 San; 10 Gol, San; 11 Gol, San; 11-12 San; 13 Gol; 15 Gol; 19 Gol; 19-20 San; 28 San; 34 San; 51 Gol, San; 58-59 San; 59 Gol; 67 Gol; 77 Gol; 82 Gol; 86 Gol; 95-96 San; 100 San; 105 Gol; 109 San; 113 San; 116 San; 122 San; 126-127 San; 132 Gol; 134 San; 135 San; 136 Gol, San; 137 San; 145 San; 147 Gol; 157 San; 160-161 Gol, San; 174 San; 175 Gol; 176 San; 179 Gol; 179-180 Gol; 183 Gol; 196 Gol; 208 San; 209 San; 210 San; 225 Gol; 227-228 San; 231 San; 237 San; 250-251 San; 254 San; 273 San; 285 San; 304-305 San; 321-322 Gol; 325-326 San; 328 San; 342 Gol; 347 San; 354-355 Gol; 359 Gol; 360-361 San; 377 San; 390 Gol; 396 Gol; 415 San; 415-416 Gol; 419-420 San; 423-424 Gol; 428 Gol; 435-436 San; 437-438 San; 452-453 San; 456 San; 464 San; 478 San; 481 Gol; 495 San; 505-506 San; 507 San; 527-528 San; 529-530 San; 531-532 Gol; 534 San; 547 San; 552 Gol; 558-559 San; 561 San; 563 Gol; 570 Gol; 572-573 San; 574 San; 580-581 Gol; 603-604 San; 613 San; 623-624 San; 627-628 San; 631 San; 640 San; 649 Gol; 663-664 San; 680 Gol; 681 Gol, San; 684-685 San; 689 Gol; 694 San; 696 Gol; 696-697 San; 704 San; 705-706 San; 713 San; 719 San; 720 Gol; 744 Gol, San; 754-755 Gol, San; 758 San; 770-771 San; 782 Gol; 784 San; 794 Gol; 802 Gol; 805 San; 813 San; 836 San; 842 Gol; 845-846 San; 862-863 Gol, San; 870-871 Gol, San; 880-883 Gol, San; 891-892 San; 895 Gol; 897-898 Gol; 903-904 San; 909-910 San; 911 Gol; 913-914 San; 926 San; 931-932 San; 950-951 San; 956 San; 974 Gol; 995-997 San; 1001-1002 San; 1006 Gol; 1047 San; 1051 Gol; 1075 San; 1087-1088 San.

The Fable of Iphis and Ianthe

1-2 San; 20 San; 23 San; 40 San; 41-42 Gol; 47 San; 53 San; 58-60 San; 60 Gol; 71 San; 89-90 Gol; 92 San; 101-102 San; 117-118 San; 119-120 San; 123 San; 123-124 Gol; 128 Gol; 136 San; 143-144 San; 159 San; 161-162 San; 166-167 San; 182 San; 191 San; 192 San; 201 Gol; 204 San.

The Fable of Acis, Polyphemus, and Galatea

3 Gol; 8 Gol; 21-22 San; 23 San; 25-27 San; 32 San; 44 San; 47 San; 48 San; 55 San; 68 San; 74-75 San; 81-82 San; 86 Gol; 90 San; 92 Gol; 94 Gol, San; 95-96 San; 107 Gol, San; 109 Gol; 110-111 Gol; 112 San; 116 San; 117 San; 120-121 Gol; 125 Gol; 142-143 Gol; 156 San; 157 Gol; 158 Gol; 161-162 San; 163-164 San; 170 San; 171-172 San; 203 San; 206 San.

Ovid's Art of Love. Book I

4 Hoy; 13 Hoy; 31-32 Wol; 36 Hey; 40 Hoy; 41 Hey; 42-43 Wol; 44 Hoy; 48-49 Hey; 53 Hoy; 60 Wol; 63 Wol; 64 Hoy; 84 Hoy; 91 Hey; 92-93 Wol; 103-104 Wol; 109 Hey, Wol; 137 Wol, Hoy; 140-142 Wol; 141 Hoy; 143-144 Hey, Wol; 163 Hey, Wol; 168-169 Hoy; 179 Hey; 182 Wol; 196 Hey, Wol; 198/200 Wol; 207 Wol; 219 Hey; 241 Hoy; 253 Hoy; 255 Hoy; 278 Hey, Wol; 299 Hey; 301-302 Wol; 303-304 Hoy; 305 Hey; 307-308 Hey, Hoy; 310 Hoy; 321-322 Hey; 323 Hey; 326 Hoy; 341 Hoy; 353 Hoy; 357 Hey; 363 Hoy; 368-369 Hey; 371 Wol; 374 Hey, Wol; 376-377 Wol; 384 Wol; 385 Hoy; 394-395 Hey, Wol; 397 Hoy; 400 Hey; 406-407 Hey; 427 Hey; 446-447 Hey; 467 Hey; 468 Hoy; 483 Hey; 494-495 Hoy; 496-497 Hey; 500 Hoy; 504-505 Hey; 514 Hey, Wol, Hoy; 516 Wol; 516-517 Hey; 520 Hoy; 558 Hoy; 561 Wol; 570 Hey, Wol, Hoy; 594 Hoy; 602-603 Wol, Hoy; 606 Hey; 610 Wol, Hoy; 617 Wol; 623 Wol; 625/7 Wol; 648 Wol, Hoy; 656 Hoy; 662 Wol; 681-682 Hey; 690 Hoy; 701 Wol; 704 Hoy; 708-709 Hey, Wol; 710-711 Hey; 740 Hey, Wol; 745-746 Wol; 748 Wol; 749 Hey, Hoy; 753-754 Wol; 766-767 Wol; 769 Wol; 789/791 Wol; 796 Hoy; 803 Wol; 814-815 Hey; 821 Wol; 824-825 Hey; 826 Wol; 831 Wol; 834 Wol; 837 Hey; 837-838 Wol; 849 Wol; 852 Hoy; 854-855 Wol; 865 Hey; 870-871 Hey; 876 Hey, Wol.

Ovid's Amours. Book I. Elegy I

9 El; 17-18 Mar; 25 Mar, El.

Ovid's Amours. Book I. Elegy IV

4 Mar; 11 Mar; 31 Mar; 32 Mar.

Fables (1700) :

Meleager and Atalanta

5 San; 7 Gol, San; 16-17 San; 20-21 San; 25 San; 31/33 San; 55 Gol; 56/58 San; 66 San; 69 Gol; 74-76 San; 81-82 Gol; 82 San; 99 Gol; 122 Gol, San; 130-131 San; 143 San; 147-148 Gol; 152 Gol; 153-154 Gol; 156-157 Gol; 158 San; 173 San; 182 Gol; 183 Gol, San (1626); 191 San; 196-197 San; 204 Gol; 215 San; 216 San; 224 San; 231 San; 240-241 Gol, San; 244 San; 262 San; 265 San; 291 San; 295 San; 297 San; 299-300 Gol; 310 San; 313 Gol; 331 San (1626); 340-341 Gol, San; 349 San; 356 San; 368 San; 386 Gol, San; 401 Gol.

Baucis and Philemon

3 San; 6 San; 8 San; 13 San; 15 San; 19 San; 21 Gol, San; 30-31 Gol; 37-38 San; 39-40 Gol; 42 San; 45-47 Gol; 47 San; 49 Gol; 52 San; 56 Gol; 58 Gol; 62-63 San; 74-75 Gol; 78 Gol; 79 San; 86 Gol; 87 San; 91 San; 92-93 San; 93 Gol; 95 San; 98 San; 105 San;

112 San; 116 San; 121 San; 122-123 San; 129 Gol; 130 San; 160 San; 169 San; 174 San; 177 San; 180 San; 182 San; 186 San; 187-188 San; 191-192 San; 194 San; 195 San; 197 San.

Pygmalion and the Statue

1-2 Gol, San; 32 Gol; 39 San; 40 Gol; 42 San; 45-46 Gol, San; 50 San; 51-52 San; 52 Gol; 55 San; 56 San; 67 San; 68 San; 78 Gol; 85-86 San; 94 San (1626)

Cinyras and Myrrha

4-5 San; 6 Gre; 7-8 Aus; 10 Gre; 11-12 San; 15-16 Hop; 17 Gre; 22-23 San; 23 Gre; 26 San; 28-29 Hop; 30 San; 32 San; 45 Gre; 46 Gre; 53 Hop; 54 Hop; 68 Gre; 60-61 Hop; 62-63 Hop; 65 Gre, San; 72-73 Hop; 73 San; 79-80 Hop; 81-82 San, Hop; 88-89 Hop; 91 Gre; 93 San; 96 Gol; 102 San; 105 San; 106-107 Hop; 111 Gol; 119 Gol, Aus, Hop; 120-121 Gre; 122-123 Gol; 123 San; 124-125 San; 127 Hop; 130 Gre; 136-137 Gre, San, Hop; 142-143 Aus, San; 144-145 San; 148-149 Gol, San; 155 San; 156 San; 157 Hop; 160-161 San, Hop; 164-165 San; 165 Gre; 166 Hop; 168-169 Gre, San; 170 San; 202-203 Hop; 209 Hop; 210 San; 211 Hop; 215-216 San; 221 Gre, San; 222-223 San; 224 Gol, Aus, San, Hop; 226 Hop; 230-231 Aus; 231 San, Hop; 235 Gol, Gre; 238-239 Hop; 239 San; 245 Gol, San; 252-253 Hop; 255 Hop; 260 Gol, Aus, Gre, San; 265 San; 268-269 Gol, Hop; 272 San; 275 Gol, Gre; 276 San; 280 Gol; 281 Gre, Aus, San; 281-282 Hop; 283 Gol; 286 San; 288 San, Hop; 292 San; 295-296 Aus; 296 San; 304 San, Hop; 307 San; 312-313 Hop; 314-315 Hop; 316 San; 322 Gol; 322-323 Hop; 330 San; 342-343 Aus, San, Hop; 345 San; 346-347 Hop; 347 Gol; 349 Hop; 350 San; 351 San; 364 San; 376 San; 380 San; 383 San; 384 San; 398 San.

[See bottom of page]

Ceyx and Alcyone

1-2 San; 12 San; 21-22 San; 29 San; 29-30 Gol; 33 Hop; 41-42 San; 49/51 San; 49-50 Hop; 54 San; 63 San, Hop; 65 Hop; 66 San; 70-71 San; 75-77 San; 87 San; 89-90 Gol; 91 San, Hop; 93 Hop; 93-94 San; 95 San; 98 San; 102-103 Gol, San; 105 San; 107-108 San; 110 San; 111 Hop; 121-122 San, Hop; 125 San, Hop; 130 San; 137 Gol, San; 139-140 San, Hop; 145-146 San; 148 San; 149-150 Hop; 155-156 Hop; 157-158 Hop; 160 San; 162 San; 165-166 Hop; 175 San; 186-187 Gol, Hop; 188-189 San; 194-195 Hop; 198-199 San, Hop; 202-203 San; 207 San; 208 San; 220-221 San; 227 San (1626); 231-232 San; 254 San; 268 San; 268-269 Hop; 276 Hop; 281 Gol; 284-285 Hop; 286 San; 291 San, Hop; 292 San, Hop; 296 San, Hop; 298-300 San; 302 Hop; 310/312 San; 313 Gol; 313-314 Hop; 320 San; 326 Hop; 336 San; 340 Gol; 345-346 Gol, San, Hop; 346 Hop; 349 Hop; 356 Hop; 363-364 San, Hop; 365 San; 368-369 Hop; 370 Gol; 370-371 San; 372-373 San; 382 Hop; 382-384 San; 389 San; 393-394 San, Hop; 395 San; 402 Gol; 405 San; 408 San; 414 Hop; 419-420 San; 425-426 San; 431 San; 443 San; 446 San; 456 San; 457 Hop; 464 San; 465 San, Hop; 468-469 Hop; 471 San, Hop; 472-473 San, Hop; 478 Gol; 488 San; 491 San; 494 Gol; 495 San, Hop.

[Cinyras and Myrrha : insert after 170 (above) : 171 San; 175 San; 179 San; 182 Gol; 184 Hop; 188-189 Gre, Hop; 198 San;]

The Twelfth Book of Ovid His Metamorphoses

2 Gol; 6 Gol; 17 San; 38 Gol; 43 Gol; 50 Gol; 54-55 San; 56-57 Gol; 58 San; 62 San; 70 San; 73-74 San (1626); 93 San; 101 San; 106 Gol; 109-110 San; 130 San; 139 San; 153 San; 153-154 Gol; 158 San; 187 Gol; 192 Gol; 196-197 San; 206 Gol; 206-207 San; 213 San; 219-220 San; 222-223 San; 226-227 San; 231 San; 235 San; 241 San; 247 San; 248-249 Gol; 258-259 San; 266 San; 304 Gol; 318 San; 328-329 San; 330 San; 334-335 San; 338-339 San; 348-349 San; 369 San; 377 Gol; 393 San; 404 San; 407 San; 428 San; 435-436 San; 438 San; 445-446 San; 460 San; 465 Gol; 477-478 San; 486 Gol; 489 San; 503 San; 506 San; 509-510 Gol; 517 San; 520 San (1626); 531 Gol; 532 San; 536 Gol; 542-543 Gol; 546-547 San; 570 San; 577 San; 588 Gol, San; 613-614 San; 619-620 Gol; 631 San; 632 Gol; 640 San; 662 Gol; 664 Gol, San; 665 Gol, San; 669 San; 678 San; 680 San; 690 San; 692-693 San; 697 San; 701 Gol; 705 Gol, San; 718 San; 722 Gol; 731 San (1626); 752 Gol; 755-756 Gol; 757 San; 760 San; 774-775 Gol; 779 San; 798 San; 816-817 San; 828-829 San.

The Speeches of Ajax and Ulysses

1-2 San (1626); 3 Ker ; 7 San; 23-24 San; 25 San; 27 Gol; 29 San; 40 San; 46 San, Ker; 52 San; 57-58 San; 65 San; 65-66 Ker; 68 Ker; 69-70 Ker; 74 San; 76 Gol; 77 San; 78 Gol; 84 Gol; 88 Ker; 119-120 San; 121 Ker; 121-122 Gol; 124 San; 133-134 San; 138 Ker; 150 Ker; 151 San; 158 Gol; 163-164 San; 170 San, Ker; 182 San; 195-196 San; 196 San (1626); 198 Gol; 205-206 San; 207-208 Ker; 209-210 San; 215-216 Gol; 216 San; 221 San; 221-222 Ker; 235-236 Ker; 237 San; 249 San, Ker; 266 San; 274 San; 284 San; 304-305 San, Ker; 315-316 San, Ker; 318 San; 329 San, Ker; 343 Ker; 345-346 San, Ker; 374 San; 375/377 Gol; 383 Gol; 388 San; 390-391 Ker; 404 Gol; 410-411 San; 417 San; 445 San; 451 San; 458-459 Gol; 464 Gol; 468-469 Ker; 471 San; 478 San; 487 San; 495-496 San; 498 Gol, Ker; 499 Ker; 501 Gol; 501-502 San, Ker; 508 San, Ker; 524 San, Ker; 529-530 San, Ker; 531-532 San, Ker; 539-540 San; 540 Ker; 546 San; 553 San (1626); 558 San; 560 San; 577 Ker; 579 Gol.

Of the Pythagorean Philosophy

7 Gol; 17 San; 20-21 San; 21 Gol; 55 Gol; 55-56 San; 69 San; 69-70 Gol; 73-74 San; 77 San; 90 San; 91 Gol; 106 San (1626); 110 San; 115 Gol; 116 San; 123-124 Gol; 187 San; 203 San; 220 San; 233-234 San; 235 San; 239-240 San; 263 Gol, San; 268 San; 274 San; 281 Gol; 283 San; 287 San; 296-297 San; 298 San; 306-307 San; 331-333 San; 337 San; 347-348 Gol; 351 San; 355 San; 358-359 San; 361 San; 370 San; 384 San; 390 Gol; 390-391 San; 406-407 Gol, San; 409 Gol; 418/420-421 San; 433 Gol; 440 San; 449-450 San; 453 San; 459 Gol, San; 468 San; 469 Gol; 480-481 San; 495 San; 498 Gol; 499 San; 509-510 San; 529-530 San; 533-534 San; 541 San; 552 San; 556 San; 559 San; 563 San; 566 San; 576-577 San; 586-588 San; 599 Gol; 607-608 San; 611 Gol; 630-631 San; 649 San; 653-654 San; 654 Gol; 658-659 San; 672 San; 719 San.

Ovid's Metamorphoses in Fifteen Books (1717) :

Aesacus transform'd into a Cormorant

1 San; 5 San; 8 San; 10 Gol; 15 San; 16 San; 24 San; 35 Gol; 51 San.

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Note : This bibliography is restricted to works which contributed directly to the thesis, or which are cited in the text. I have not listed the many more general books on Dryden and Ovid which served to establish an overall background for my work. Verse miscellanies are listed chronologically under 'Miscellany'. Editions of the works of Dryden and Ovid (in whole or part) are listed chronologically under their respective authors. Translations from Ovid are listed under the name of the translator. I was not able to consult a copy of David R. Hauser's The Neo-Classical Ovid : Ovid in English Literature, 1660-1750 (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1957), since the library at Johns Hopkins had mislaid their copy of the work at the time I made enquiry.

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DRYDEN'S CAVE OF SLEEP AND GARTH'S "DISPENSARY"

IN composing his translation of *Ceyx and Alcyone* from the eleventh book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, first published in *Fables* (1700), Dryden seems not only to have made use of the previous versions of the episode by Arthur Golding, George Sandys and Charles Hopkins,[1] but also to have drawn, for his rendering of the passage depicting the Cave of Sleep, on certain details in the portrayal of the God of Sloth in the first Canto of Sir Samuel Garth's mock-heroic poem, *The Dispensary*.

Dryden's use of Garth in this context is particularly interesting for two reasons. First, Garth's model for his Sloth passage, Boileau's portrayal of La Mollesse in Canto II of *Le Lutrin*, had not only itself derived certain of its characteristic features and insights from the very passage of Ovid which Dryden was now translating, but had also inspired Dryden himself, some eighteen years earlier, when composing his own mock-heroic portrayal of Shadwell's kingdom in *Mac Flecknoe*.[2] A second point of interest is that Garth, as I hope to show, seems to have gone back to details in *Ceyx* when embellishing and amplifying his portrayal of Sloth in the later editions of *The Dispensary*, printed after Dryden's death.

Dryden's *Fables* were with the printer by December 1699.[3] Publication of *The Dispensary* was announced in *The Post Boy* for 6-8 May 1699,[4] and there were three editions before the end of the year. We do not know whether *Ceyx and Alcyone* was among the "seaven thousand five hundred verses, more or lesse" of *Fables* which were already in the hands of Dryden's publisher, Jacob Tonson, by 20 March 1699,[5] but, in any case, Dryden was almost certain to have seen his friend's poem in manuscript prior to publication, and one may suppose that he would have taken special note of a passage, such as the portrayal of Sloth, which derived, albeit indirectly, from one of the very passages of Ovid which he was himself currently translating.

Dryden's borrowings from Garth can, I think, be demonstrated with some certainty

[1] Until the recent publication of Volume 4 of the "California" edition, it was not, I think, generally known that Dryden went back beyond Sandys' version (1626 and 1632) to the Elizabethan translation of Ovid by Arthur Golding, printed in 1567. There are many small but significant borrowings from Golding to be found in Dryden's Ovid translations. Towards the end of *Ceyx and Alcyone*, for example, Dryden seems to have gone to Golding's line:

And with her crocking neb then growen to slender bill and round,

for his own 1. 478:

Her bill, tho' slender, sends a creaking Noise,

I have recorded Dryden's borrowings from Charles Hopkins' *Epistolary Poems* (1694) in *Notes and Queries*, ccxix (1974), 419-421.

[2] See A. F. B. Clark, *Boileau and the French Classical Critics in England: 1660-1830* (Paris, 1925), 156-168.

[3] See Dryden, *Letters*, ed. C. E. Ward (Durham, N.C., 1942), 130.

[4] See *Poems on Affairs of State*, Vol. 6 (1697-1704), ed. F. H. Ellis (New Haven and London, 1970), 61. Professor Ellis provides a variorum text of *The Dispensary* in this volume. For the reader's convenience, I use the sigla for the various editions of the poem printed by him on p. 722. My quotations are from the Bodleian copies of the early editions.

[5] The Dryden-Tonson contract for *Fables*, of that date, has been reprinted most recently in *William Congreve: Letters and Documents*, ed. J. C. Hodges (London, 1964), 103-104.

where a deviation in Dryden from the literal meaning of his Latin original contains a striking verbal similarity with Garth, and cannot be seen to derive from any of the Latin commentaries or previous English versions of Ovid used by Dryden. When several borrowings of this type have been firmly established, it may then be possible to argue with some plausibility for other touches, which in themselves do not perhaps present conclusive evidence, having been influenced by Dryden's reading of Garth. Garth's borrowings from Dryden, on the other hand, are easily identified by isolating those touches (which in this passage must have been added for artistic reasons, rather than to increase the poem's topicality) which Garth added to the Sloth episode in the later editions; as will be seen, several of these touches bear traces of Dryden's wording.

Two lines in Dryden's text seem to derive from Garth's line describing Sloth's repose:

The careless Deity supinely nods. (1699,[2] p. 5)

Dryden's god likewise:

. . . slept supine, his Limbs display'd abroad: (295)[6]

There is no source for the epithet "supine" either in the Latin:

Quo cubat ipse Deus, . . . (612)

or in the commentaries or sources from which Dryden worked. Similarly, Dryden's telling use of "nodding Poppies" a few lines earlier (286) seems to derive from Garth's line, the epithet "nodding" being again suggested by nothing in Dryden's texts or sources.

Dryden's passage describing the awaking of Sleep is particularly striking:

The God disturb'd with this new glare of Light
Cast sudden on his Face, unseal'd his Sight,
And rais'd his tardy Head, which sunk agen,
And sinking on his Bosom knock'd his Chin;
At length shook off himself; and ask'd the Dame,
(And asking yawn'd) for what intent she came?
(302-307)

This time, Dryden seems to have been remembering two couplets from Garth:

The slumb'ring God amaz'd at this new Din,
Thrice strove to rise, and thrice sunk down agen.
(1699,[2] p. 7)

But as the slothful God to yawn begun,
He shook off the dull Mist, and thus went on.
(1699,[2] p. 10)

[6] Quotations from Dryden are from Vol. 4 of James Kinsley's O.E.T. edition (4 vols., Oxford, 1958). Quotations from Ovid are from Cripping's manuscript *Variorum* (2nd. ed., 3 vols., Amsterdam, 1683).

The similarities of cadence and vocabulary here are obvious. Dryden also imports the yawn from Garth (Ovid's Somnus does not yawn) and adapts Garth's:

He shook off the dull Mist, . . .

to form his own phrase:

At length shook off himself; . . .

which translates Ovid's:

Excussit tandem sibi se: . . . (621)

In the light of these borrowings, it is perhaps plausible to conjecture that Dryden was fascinated by some other features of Garth's vocabulary. For example, might not his addition of "silent" (which appears nowhere in the Latin) in l. 267:

Descends to search the silent House of Sleep.

owe something to Garth's prominent use of "Silence" in the couplet:

The lonely Edifice in Sweats complains,
That nothing there but empty Silence reigns.
(1699,[2] p. 5)?

Also, in the line:

But lazy Vapors round the Region fly, (272)

the epithet "lazy" (not warranted by the Latin) and the translation of Ovid's "nebulae" as "Vapors" (which is not, as might be expected, prompted by a gloss such as "vapores" in one of the Latin commentaries) can both be traced back to Garth:

And lazy Fogs bedew his thoughtless Head.
(1699,[2] p. 6)

More he had spoke, but sudden Vapours rise,
(1699,[2] p. 12)

And Dryden's slightly unexpected rendering of Ovid's "ignavus" as "drowzy" in the line:

Deep in a Cavern, dwells the drowzy God; (269)

may well have been prompted by Garth's:

Nought heard, but drowzy Beetles buzzing round.
(1699,[2] p. 11)

The most noticeable of Garth's "reborrowings" from Dryden was first printed in the Sixth Edition of the poem (1706).[7] Near the beginning of his description of Sloth's palace, Garth inserted the following lines:

Indulging Dreams his Godhead lull to Ease,
With Murmurs of soft Rills, and whisp'ring Trees.
The *Poppy* and each numming Plant dispense
Their drowzy Virtue, and dull Indolence.
(1706, p. 6)

The combination of "soft" and "Mur-

[7] The lines actually first appear, apparently, in the manuscript corrections to a copy of the 1703 *Dispensary* in the Yale Medical Library, called 1703A in Ellis's sigla.

murs" within the line seems to indicate Garth's remembering of Dryden's line 285:

And with soft Murmers calls the coming Sleeps:

which derives directly from Ovid's:

. . .: per quem cum murmure labens
Invitat somnos . . . (603-604)

And in the phrase "drowzy Virtue", Garth combines the word which, as we have seen, Dryden had already borrowed from his poem with the unusual "Virtue" from Dryden's:

Night from the Plants their sleepy Virtue drains, (288)

Again, in the Seventh Edition of 1714, Garth changes the second line in the 1699 couplet:

The lonely Edifice in Sweats complains,
That nothing there but empty Silence reigns. (1699,[2] p. 5)

to:

That nothing there but sullen Silence reigns. (1714, p. 6)

Surely the change of "empty" to "sullen" was prompted by Dryden's line:

Care shuns thy soft approach, and sullen flies away! (312)

Similarly, in the 1706 edition, Garth had changed the 1699 line:

But dull Oblivion guards his peaceful Bed, (1699,[2] p. 6)

to:

But dark Oblivion guards his peaceful Bed, (1706, p. 6)

perhaps remembering the telling use of "dark" in Dryden's:

Near the *Cymmerians,* in his dark Abode (268)

And, again in the 1706 edition, Garth replaces the 1699 line:

The careless Deity supinely nods. (1699,[2] p. 5)

with:

Supine with folded Arms he thoughtless nods. (1706, p. 5)

Here we can perhaps see Garth modifying his text, stimulated by Dryden's borrowing from his earlier version. For, as we have seen, Dryden had changed Garth's 1699 word "supinely" to "supine" in his own phrase:

And slept supine, . . .

In the 1706 *Dispensary*, Garth changes his text to follow Dryden's adjective, and places it in an equally prominent position in the line.

The cumulative effect of these examples in such a relatively small passage of verse must, I think, make it certain that in Dryden's *Ceyx and Alcyone* and Garth's *Dispensary* we have a most interesting example of reciprocal borrowing.[8]

Further evidence that Garth had Dryden's *Fables* in mind when revising *The Dispensary* is found in Canto 6, where (in the editions from Ellis's 1703A onwards) we find the following couplet added:

Here Jealousie with Jaundice Looks appears,
And broken slumbers, and Fantastick Fears.

Garth seems here to be remembering the description of Venus' temple in Book II of *Palamon and Arcite* (ll. 484-489):

Expence, and After-thought, and idle Care,
And Doubts of motley Hue, and dark Despair:
Suspicions, and fantastical Surmise,
And Jealousie suffus'd, with Jaundice in her Eyes;
Discolouring all she view'd, in Tawney dress'd;
Down-look'd, and with a Cuckow on her Fist.

D. W. HOPKINS.

University of Leicester.

[8] It is interesting to note that Pope thought that "there was hardly an alteration of the innumerable ones through every edition [of *The Dispensary*], that was not for the better". (Quoted in Ellis, p. 723.)

DRYDEN AND THE TWO EDITIONS OF SANDYS'S OVID

GEORGE SANDYS's translation of the *Metamorphoses*, which Dryden used extensively when composing his own versions of episodes from Ovid's poem, was frequently reprinted during the period from the appearance of the first complete edition in 1626 to the last of the duodecimo issues in 1690. In attempting to discover which edition of Sandys Dryden consulted, it seems only really necessary, however, to consider two: the small folio of 1626 and the elaborate Oxford edition, printed in a large folio in 1632, with extensive apparatus and commentaries. These editions represent the two basic forms in which Sandys's translation was read during the seventeenth century.[1]

The extensive marginal glosses, unique to the 1632 folio and its cheaper reprint of 1640, though often very close in wording to Dryden's verse, in themselves seem to provide no conclusive evidence of Dryden's preference for the 1632 Sandys. Many of the glosses simply provide factual or mythological exegesis of a kind that would have been available to Dryden from many contemporary commentaries on Ovid and mythological handbooks. A detailed examination of those glosses which verbally resemble touches in Dryden's text very closely reveals that, in each case, the similarity can be paralleled either from the earlier translation of Arthur Golding (1567) or one of the Latin commentaries which Dryden is known to have worked from.

For example, in *The First Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses*, where Dryden might be

[1] The editions of Sandys's Ovid before 1626 need not concern us, as they contain a version only of Books One to Five. All the other editions printed in the seventeenth century derive either (in the case of the 1628 12mo) from the 1626 folio, or (as in the case of the folio of 1640 or the 12mos of 1638, 1656, 1664, 1669, 1678 and 1690) from the 1632 folio. Thus, if Dryden sometimes used (as is presumably quite possible) a 12mo reprint of Sandys, he was, for the purposes of my present argument, consulting a text deriving, directly or indirectly, from one of the two major editions. On the various early editions of Sandys's Ovid, see R. B. Davis, "The Early Editions of George Sandys's Ovid: the Circumstances of Production", *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, xxxv (1941), 255-276, and Fredson Bowers and R. B. Davis, "George Sandys: A Bibliographical Catalogue of Printed Editions in England to 1700", *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, liv, Nos. 4-6 (1950).

thought to have cast his eye down to the 1632 Sandys gloss on Ovid's "Boreas" (l. 65):

The North wind: so called of his blustring. (p. 2)

for his own l. 67:

Nor were those blustring Brethren left at large,

he was probably in fact following Golding's phrase:

. . . with colde and blustring windes. (l. 62)

which renders the exactly equivalent portion of Ovid's text.

Similarly, in the same poem, where Dryden's line:

Now, wheresover ambient waters glide, (1.243)

might seem to derive from Sandys's gloss on Ovid's 'Nereus' (l. 187):

A Sea God, here taken for the ambient Ocean. (p. 5)

we discover an equally plausible source in one of the notes in Crispinus's "Delphin" edition of Ovid of 1689:

Nereus] Deus est marinus, qui saepe pro Oceano ponitur, terram ambiente, undarúmque mugitibus illi obstrepente. (Vol. 2, p. 13)

However, as well as adding the glosses and commentaries, Sandys considerably altered the text of his translation between the 1626 and 1632 editions, and by a careful collation of the two editions, and a comparison of each of Sandys's changes with Dryden's borrowings (where the two can be seen to coincide), it is possible to draw some definite conclusions about Dryden's use of the two editions.

In a number of instances, Dryden has borrowed a rhyme or end-word from the 1632 edition of Sandys at a point where Sandys had made a change from his 1626 text. Thus in *Cinyras and Myrrha*, from the *Fables* (1700), Dryden's couplet:

She stumbled thrice, (an Omen of th' Event;)
Thrice shriek'd the Fun'ral Owl, yet on she went, (275-276)

clearly draws on the 1632 Sandys:

Thrice stumbled she; the funerall Owle thrice rent
The ayre with ominous shreekes: yet on she went:

where the arrangement of the 1626 text is quite different:

By stumbling thrice reuok'd; the funerall Owle
Thrice sadly shreekt; yet shee proceeds: the scoule
Of Night, and Darknesse, modestie bereft.

Similarly, in *The Twelfth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses*, also from *Fables*, Dryden's couplet:

I saw *Petraeus* Arms, employ'd around
A well-grown Oak, to root it from the Ground. (445-446)

again draws on the 1632 Sandys:

I saw *Petraeus* tearing from the ground
A well growne Oke: while he imbrac't it round

whereas the 1626 Sandys has:

I saw *Petraeus* striue t' vproot an oke:
And while his brawnie armes the tree prouoke

And at the very opening of his version of *The First Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses*, in *Examen Poeticum* (1693):

Of Bodies chang'd to various Forms I sing:

Dryden has drawn the shape of his opening line from the 1632 Sandys:

Of bodies chang'd to other shapes I sing:

rather than from the 1626 version:

Of formes, to other bodies chang'd, I sing.[2]

Other examples where Dryden can with some certainty be seen to be following readings from the 1632 Sandys in preference to the 1626 edition can be found in the following lines (I use the abbreviations for the titles of each poem from Guy Montgomery's standard *Concordance* to Dryden): M8: 82-83; CAM: 376-377; M11: 137, 232; M12: 196-197, 404; AU: 57-58, 215-216, 445-446; M15: 468. There are also a number of smaller verbal touches, less certain than those recorded above, but which nevertheless can be argued with some plausibility to show evidence of Dryden having used the 1632 rather than the 1626 Sandys. These occur at the following places: M1: 143, 403; M8: 31, 33; CAM: 304; M11: 140, 355; M12: 139, 371; AU: 137.

There is also evidence, however, to suggest that on occasion Dryden chose to use the 1626 Sandys, even when he had preferred the later edition elsewhere in the same poem. For example, in *The Twelfth Book*, Dryden's couplet:

Confus'd, and Chiding, like the hollow Roar
Of Tides, receding from th' insulted Shore. (73-74)

obviously owes more to the 1626 Sandys's:

As Seas that sallie on far-distant shores;
Or as *Ioues* terminating thunder rores.

than to the 1632 reading:

Such as from farre by rowling billowes sent;
Or as *Ioues* fainting Thunder almost spent.

In *The Speeches of Ajax and Ulysses*, Dryden seems to have preferred the neat alliteration of the 1626 Sandys's:

[2] The "California" editors of this poem in *The Works of John Dryden, Vol. 4: Poems, 1693-1696* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1974) quote exclusively throughout their commentary from the 1626 Sandys.

And let him weare, that wins the prize from thence.

for his own:

And let him wear who wins 'em in the Field. (96)

to the 1632 rendering:

And let him keepe, that takes the prize from thence.

though, as we see, he has retained the end-word from the later Sandys text. And in *Meleager and Atalanta* (a borrowing first noted by Professor James Kinsley[3]) Dryden's phrase:

The Strong may fight aloof; (183)

seems to owe more to the 1626 Sandys's:

The wise in valour should aloofe contend.

than to the line as altered in 1632:

The wise in valour should aloft contend:

Other smaller, and not necessarily so conclusively demonstrable, instances of Dryden's preference for 1626 readings occur at these places: M8: 331; M10: 96; M11: 227; M12: 520, 731; AU: 1, 553; M15: 106.

From these examples, then, we can, I think, conclude that Dryden, like Pope,[4] drew, according to his artistic needs of the moment, on both the main editions of Sandys's Ovid when making his own translations.

D. W. HOPKINS.

University of Leicester.

[3] *The Poems of John Dryden*, ed. James Kinsley (4 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), iv, 2072.

[4] As the "Twickenham" editors have noted. See *The Poems of Alexander Pope, Vol. 1: Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism*, ed. E. Audra and A. Williams (London: Methuen, 1961), 332, 338-339.

DRYDEN'S TRANSLATIONS FROM OVID, by D.W.Hopkins

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Dryden's versions from Ovid span the full length of his translating career, and thus provide a unique opportunity to observe his principles and practice as a translator, the development of his translating art, and his constantly-evolving relationship with a single ancient author.

Dryden had known Ovid from boyhood, and frequently echoed in his prose criticism the strictures on Ovid's verse which had been made from Roman times onwards: that Ovid was frequently 'witty out of season' and that his verse was often prolix, and 'against the order of Nature'. His earliest Ovidian translations, those included in the collaborative Ovid's Epistles (1680), do little to convince a sceptical reader of the high claims which he had made for Ovid as a skilful portrayer of female passion, since their wit often seems cold and callous (or merely tedious wordplay) and they manifest an awkward declamatory stiffness.

But Dryden returned to Ovid in 1692 after a period of deep reflection both on the art of translation and on the course of his own life and literary career. The best of the late Ovidian translations, especially those in Fables (1700), reveal, more fully than any of his prose comments, that Dryden now saw Ovid as a poet who, by means of the very effects of witty distancing and strokes of 'fancy' which so many commentators have found uncongenial, was able to create a distinctive perspective on reality, in which reactions and emotions normally kept quite separate, and thought of as incompatible, could be delightfully fused. Ovid's witty mode, Dryden seems to have thought, was a means of creating a kind of philosophical detachment or serenity, whereby distressing, even brutal, events could be viewed with a unique combination of wit and pathos, tenderness and humour, distance and sympathy.