SHAKESPEARE'S INFLUENCE ON DRYDEN

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I. CHANGES IN THE DRAMA BETWEEN THE ELIZABETHAN AND RESTORATION PERIODS.

In a study of Shakespeare's influence on Dryden, it is necessary to consider the differences between the literary values of the two periods in which these leading poets wrote. Furthermore, if the differences are to be explained, the intervening periods must also be considered so that the student may understand the changes in dramatic standards. It is artificial to make rigid demarcations between periods in modern English literary history, for taste is ever changing. Many writers, however, uphold the hypothesis that at the Restoration a whole new set of values was abruptly introduced into England from abroad.

The drama tends to express the values of the audience which it is intended to please. It is a mirror of many conditions in its time. A study of the values of a period, of its general social and political outlook, and of actual social conditions should therefore reveal the standards for drama of that period. Conversely, a study of the drama of a particular period and nation should reveal the values, aspirations, and social conditions of the contemporary national audience.

Elizabethan drama and actual life were close. In contrast to the typical Restoration audience which was limited to the Cavaliers and did not include any of the larger group

of Puritans, the Elizabethan audience represented much better the people at large. Hence, the values which the Elizabethan drama emphasized were the universal values of an age imbued with heroism, and the tastes to which it catered were those of the whole population.

Despite much social unrest caused by such revolutionary changes as the enclosure movement, the Elizabethan was an age of optimism. English power wielded by adventurers like Drake and Raleigh was in the ascendant. Heroism was commonplace. General awareness of intense new national vigour caused fervent patriotism. At its best, patriotism is behind the moral of Shakespeare's Chronicle Histories: to avoid internal strife and to be strong against external foes. At its worst, it causes the chauvinistic degradation of Frenchmen and Spaniards, which occurs in many plays of the period, including Shakespeare's Henry V. and Fletcher's Philaster. Ardent patriotism was natural, as Englishmen could anticipate national prosperity made possible by the defeat of Spain as the dominant power of Europe, by the success of English maritime ventures and by the potentialities of English colonization in North America. National vitality made literary escapism inadequate. Rather, it furnished materials for real drama so that even though favourite settings were Italy, Spain, or ancient Rome, Elizabethan drama is aptly termed "a great national utterance". Actually, it is a great human utterance.

Intellectual and physical energies of the Renaissance

stimulated Elizabethan dramatists. During the reign of Henry VII, inklings of the Renaissance reached England from its fountainhead in Italy. Not until Elizabeth, however, did the literary current of this movement emerge in England. The dramatists then became the most prolific writers. National stability under Elizabeth permitted schools to increase and centres of higher learning to prosper. To the universities, English scholars had returned from Italy and brought back classical learning and knowledge of Italian cultural accomplishments. In the universities, Marlowe and Kyd acquired the Greek, Roman, and Italian background from which they drew the plots and theatrical conventions for their new English drama.

The first public theatres were established in 1576. The drama which then appeared is the most vital that English civilization includes. Critics praise it for its fine penetration into human psychology. The Elizabethan is a moral drama, for in every moral issue, the dramatist supports the wronged party. Vulgarity is rarely allowed to impair dominant, elevated idealism. Nowhere is this more evident than in the attitude of the typical Elizabethan playwright towards romantic love. The sensual cynicism of a Iago is rarely made more attractive than the idealistic love of a Desdemona. This drama is rich in vivid descriptions. It is vital, for it portrays men in the heat of turbulent activity. It is romantic, for it reflects the best of conditions which were basically real and is not encumbered by "rules". It is realistic, for it abides

by essential truth in being relevant to human nature. Yet, this drama had certain serious faults. Elizabethan comedy often included coarse vulgarity. Slovenly writing and artless plotting were frequent. Dramatists often relied upon sensational brutality to please their following. An instance of pandering to animal crudeness is the rape of Lavinia in Titus Andronicus. The coarseness of the "thumping thriller," however, never overshadowed the more refined elements of Elizabethan drama.

Blank verse was used for the dialogue. It conformed readily to the cadence of the language and did not restrict the poet's imagination. After Marlowe had shown its potentialities, the other great dramatists generally employed it. In blank verse, Shakespeare wrought his miracles of expression. After the Restoration, when poets used the heroic couplet for drama, it was to blank verse that they returned when Shakespeare influenced them.

Apart from the elementary division of drama into tragedy and comedy, Elizabethan plays were diverse in form. No strict classification is possible, however, as one play often contained elements of several forms. Yet, critics generally agree upon a classification into several basic types: the conqueror play, the tragedy of revenge, the chronicle history, romantic comedy and tragedy, the comedy of humours, and the tragi-comedy.(1) Minor types are Lyly's mythological plays, the

domestic murder tragedy (Arden of Feversham), and domestic comedy. The conqueror play and the revenge tragedy cater to the Elizabethans' romantic enthusiasm for adventure, their love of grandiose heroes, and their interest in bustling activity. The chronicle history with its theme of English unity became popular through the new patriotism and interest in national affairs. It was Shakespeare who elevated the chronicle history. Romantic tragedy and comedy which were drawn from the Italian novelle were liked because of a fondness for Italy, the source of the Renaissance.

When James I became king of England, the English Renaissance had passed its peak. Dramatists had become less inventive, as a trend in art towards greater subtlety and refinement with less originality had started. Conditions in England were not conducive to a flourishing of the arts. A period of governmental and social change had begun. The nation had discovered that the Tudors' absolute monarchy was no longer necessary or desirable. The king was vigorously opposing parliamentary efforts to limit his powers. Abroad, the outlook was much worse. Religious contentions which culminated in the Thirty Years War had started in Germany. Spain was actively helping the Catholic side and was successful in preventing England from helping the Protestant side. The English people disliked the king's foreign policy which thwarted their desire to aid the Protestant cause and his domestic policy which failed to remedy internal grievances. Both in England and abroad, European civilization threatened to pass into chaos.

Social instability changed the outlook of the population. Pessimism and cynicism replaced Elizabethan optimism. Love of adventure and admiration for a superman, which made Englishmen like Marlowe's Tamburlaine, gave way to defeatism and a sense of futility expressed by such plays of villainy as Marlowe's Jew of Malta. In drama, the trend was away from ingenuous expression of emotion towards subtlization. Situations were exaggerated and sentiments were distorted. Such traits foretold the advent of the heroic play. Tragedy became macabre and satanic. According to Ellis-Fermor, the material and spiritual world had become divided. Marlowe, the first to indicate the new trend, had accepted the material world and rejected the spiritual.(2) Almost all other dramatists followed him. Beaumont and Fletcher ignored both worlds and escaped into fantasy.

Tragedy in this period centered in a fantastic stereotyped villain drawn from the popular misinterpretation of Machiavelli. This "pseudo-Machiavel" arose from prevalent English distrust of Italian morality and from distortions of Machiavellian philosophy. Provincial prejudice required that evil be blamed on foreigners. Machiavelli's conviction of depravity in human nature was exaggerated in the English stage villain who became a relentless advocate of evil for its own sake. His ideal of a unified Italy was completely overlooked. The "pseudo-Machiavel" became very popular, as the outlook of the audience changed from self-confidence to fear of treachery.

Another indication of new attitudes and their influence

on the drama is the Jacobean use of Seneca. Whereas the Elizabethanshad relied upon Seneca for themes, rants, and theatrical conventions, the Jacobeans, reacting against social instability, imitated Seneca's moralizing. As Ellis-Fermor says in The Jacobean Drama:

> The revulsion from this spectacle of universal decay and corruption . . . . . is almost invariably like Seneca's own. (3)

Thus bewilderment and confusion, anxiety and disillusionment pervade the drama of this period. The best Jacobean plays express this mood. Of Shakespeare's plays, Troilus and Cressida, Hamlet, and King Lear are the most notable examples.

Parliamentary and popular dissatisfaction plagued the reigns of the first two Stuart kings. That the outlook of the people should change within this period is difficult to believe. Yet, a return to equilibrium did occur before the death of James I.(4) Evidence that Spain was unable to invade England allowed the outlook of the nation to change. Also, friction between king and parliament seemed not to be increasing towards civil war.

The mood of the drama became the tragi-comic. Although Beaumont and Fletcher had written during the preceding era, they typify this period in revealing a triumph of pleasantness over gloom. Their plays show no fatalistic belief that catastrophe

is inevitable. Disasters are generally provided for the unsympathetic characters, but the outcome is always favourable to the heroes and heroines. In the happy ending, the Jacobean tragi-comedy resembles the Restoration heroic play, except that the hero of the latter is more than able to avoid disaster: he controls it and sends it after his foes. Still, the tragi-comic with its optimism of comedy and its confident toying with the woes of tragedy is the mood which prevailed in the serious drama after the Restoration.

A well-ordered and reasonably secure society is a prerequisite for a flourishing of the arts. As political and religious issues became increasingly serious during the reign of Charles I, drama became less important as a popular diversion and playwrights were not great. The Carolingian is not a significant period in the development of drama.

The Interregnum with its two civil wars, its wars with Scotland, Holland, and Spain, and its internal hostilities between factions with different aims in politics and religion was a period disfavourable to art. Yet, English drama was not completely abandoned. There were occasional clandestine productions of old plays and an occasional new play such as John Tatham's The Scotch Figgaries (1652). It is Sir William Davenant who did the most significant and influential dramatic work during this period. He wrote and produced The Siege of Rhodes (1656) which caused a renascence of drama and a new emphasis upon a hitherto neglected aid to dramatic presentation,

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The purpose of this thesis is to show that study of Shakespeare was an important factor in Dryden's dramatic career; that Shakespeare's art combined with the literary standards of the Restoration period to direct Dryden's talents in creating his better plays. The introductory chapter describes the differences between the accepted drama of Shakespeare's day and that of the Restoration. The second chapter outlines the development of Dryden's appreciation of Shakespeare. The third outlines the heroic play, the great non-Shakespearian factor in Dryden's drama. Its purpose is to show the background upon which Shakespeare's influence worked. The fourth is a study of Dryden's Shakespeare-emulation; the fifth, an account of his Shakespeare-adaptation. The sixth chapter is a review of Shakespeare's influence on Dryden's later drama. A brief conclusion summarizes the results of the study.

scenery. Stage setting and costuming had been previously used in masques, but it was Davenant who first used them extensively in regular plays. He also made music and song a feature of drama. This practice lasted long after the Restoration. The Siege of Rhodes is the closest precursor to the heroic play as Dryden defined it.

At the Restoration, the courtiers who returned from France introduced into England new values, or a new approach to life. Since they were the theatrical audience, it was their values and not those of the Puritan majority which the dramatist expressed. Apart from the works of the Puritan authors, Milton, Marvell, and Bunyan, the new literature reflected the outlook of the new audience, which was distinguished by a refusal to regard anything as unquestionably serious. In critical refinement and skeptical intelligence, this new aristocratic audience was superior to any previous English audience. However, the Restoration audience was less appreciative of vitally human drama than was the Elizabethan.

The courtiers enjoyed extensive and elaborate entertainments which reveal a general lack of moral purpose. No idealism beautified social relationships; every woman was regarded as a confirmed or potential strumpet; illicit love affairs were almost universal; and sensual synicism was the spirit of the age. Yet, the courtiers had many good qualities. They were cosmopolitan in taste, and they were familiar with

the cultural accomplishments of the continent, particularly with those of France. They were, or aimed at being, cultured, elegant, and above all, witty. The realistic comedy of manners mirrors Cavalier social life. It abounds in ribaldry and joins a superior intellect with moral depravity in the personality of the protagonist. Despite its faults, it is full of wit, and clever repartee. The unrealistic heroic play reflects the courtiers' tastes in the classical grace and smartness of the heroic couplet, in a nice construction, and in being an escape from the cynicism of real life. (5)

The greatest difference between literature after the Restoration and all previous English literature is that the language became more orderly and distinctly modern. This difference is more obvious in prose than in poetry. A comparison between the long, rambling prose sentences of Milton and the compact, summary prose of Dryden reveals great change. Not only did syntax change but a great number of words and forms which are now classified as archaic were dropped from the language. In poetry, a comparison between Dryden and Milton also indicates a trend towards the direct and succinct. Rules were becoming more restrictive. Objection by the professional playwrights to the licence of Elizabethan style was one of the chief reasons for revisions of Shakespeare.

In the drama, another important difference between the Elizabethan and the Restoration is that the older drama had few restrictions, whereas the newer was quite conventionalized,

and carefully regulated by classical precepts. The principal Restoration rules for drama were the three unities of Renaissance classicism. Much discussion during the age of Dryden centered in the relative importance of each unity. Did it improve a play in construction and verisimilitude? Though opinions differed, the unities were generally respected. Another great difference is that the Restoration drama was imitative of continental forms, whereas the Elizabethan, despite borrowings from alien sources, was quite indigenous. Still another difference is that whereas the Restoration playwrights often accompanied their works with brilliant critical reflections in a prefatory essay, the Elizabethan playwrights had not resorted to literary criticism to explain their aims to their following. This has prompted many writers to state the commonplace of criticism that whereas the Elizabethan period was creative, the Restoration was merely critical. This depreciative judgement is unfair, for Restoration contributions to literature were more valuable than criticism alone. Not only did Restoration playwrights write many great plays which are usually undervalued because of an abundance of inferior works, but they made marked improvements in dramatic construction and a radical modernization in theatrical presentation.

Materials and methods used in Restoration drama are sometimes a continuation of those used in the older drama and sometimes an innovation. An example of a continuation in method is the ludicrous unconcern for historical and cultural accuracy

of which both Elizabethan and Restoration dramatists were guilty. An example of a continuation in type of material is use of torture, murder and ghostly visitations from the supernatural. A romantic atmosphere and a conflict between artificial love and honour which characterize all Restoration heroic plays are present in varying degrees in the works of Beaumont and Fletcher. The egotistical rants of Dryden's Maximin are artificial exaggerations of earlier rants like those of Marlowe's Tamburlaine. Almanzor's manly bravery and independent aristocratic outlook recall the same traits in the great personality of Coriolanus. Differences, however, are greater than similarities. In comedy, the cynical Restoration audience liked illicit love to be the subject of every play. This audience was unaffected by the simple, ingenuous idealism of Shakespeare's comedies. The artificial idealism of the heroic play is radically different from the substantially human idealism of a Viola. Elizabethan tragedy had portrayed all human passions, whereas the Restoration heroic play relied upon artificially nice distinctions between love and honour. Elizabethan tragedy is often mingled with comedy. Restoration tragedy and comedy are usually separate. A notable exception is Dryden's great play, Don Sebastian. The Elizabethan propaganda for national unity and the eternal correctness of monarchy became ultra-monarchism in the plays of the noble amateurs and gentlemen professionals of the Restoration.

The medium of language for Restoration serious drama differed greatly from that of the Elizabethan. The rhymed heroic

couplet replaced blank verse. The couplet delighted the courtiers who had become accustomed to French literary refinement and insistence upon order. Furthermore, rhyme elevated sentiment above commonplace, courtly cynicism. Despite the generally accepted criticism that the intellectual smartness of heroic couplets precludes expression of sincere feeling, many deeply moving passages were written in them.

Even greater than changes in the substance of drama or changes in conventions of composition were the radical new changes in the art of presentation. The most important innovation was elaborate mobile scenery which (as has already been stated) Davenant introduced during the Interregnum. After the Restoration, scenery was much improved, largely through French example. So popular was this new aid to atmosphere that extensiveness and elaborateness of scenery became a point of emulation between the two English theatres. Since each article had to be used often enough to make its purchase economical, a new stability in the arrangement of scenes was imposed upon the drama. Lavishly coloured and ornamented costumes supplemented scenery in strengthening atmosphere. Recurrent use of the same scenery and costumes, however, made presentation monotonous. As valuable as scenery and costumes was the new picture-frame stage which strengthened the illusion and marked the beginning of the modern theatre.

An even more radical change was made in the personnel of dramatic production: women were introduced. This innovation

made possible better interpretations of feminine roles. Both the new and the old drama benefitted. Men and women, however, acquired the habit of specializing so that stock characters dominated Restoration drama. Acting was cultivated more than ever before so that the Restoration began an era of great actors.

Arts accessory to drama were important to the heroic play. Often they ceased to be accessory and became dominant. As Allardyce Nicoll states in A History of Restoration Drama, the contributory arts sometimes were more important than the drama itself.(6) The pleasure-loving courtiers were never disappointed, if a superficial play were bolstered by resplendent scenery, colourful masques, and lively music, singing and dancing.

Restoration standards induced a new attitude towards Elizabethan drama. Several playwrights revised Shakespearian plays. This practice lasted through the eighteenth century. Restoration dramatists believed that Elizabethan English was crude and irregular, while they regarded their own literary era with its pruning and polishing of couplets as more refined. They objected to many words and forms in Shakespeare's language which had become obsolete and to the loose structure of his blank verse. They considered the vocabulary of his comedy vulgar. Secondly, the Restoration dramatists disliked the loose construction of Shakespeare's plays. They saw chaos in his scene arrangements. This, they believed to arise from his disregard

for the unities. They objected to his mingling of tragedy and comedy. Thirdly, debilitated popular tastes demanded changes which did not better a play but which made it fashionable.

Playwright and audience generally shared tastes, but often changes were made when the dramatist was pandering to the whim of his following. For example, the dramatist must often have regarded ill-timed licentious jests as detrimental to his art. Yet, audience and playwrights alike must have gloried in the ribaldry of the revised Tempest. Dryden shared the tastes of his public when he rendered Troilus And Cressida "heroic" and when he exalted passion in All For Love. Both audience and dramatists believed that poetic justice in serious drama was necessary to good art. Hence, Naham Tate's revised King Lear in which the virtuous characters survive was more popular than the original down through the nineteenth century. Adaptations of Shakespeare were also made to exploit potentialities for operatic display. The fabulous elements of The Tempest furnished much good material for elaboration into "song-and-dance" frivolity. Lastly, the extreme monarchism which was natural to the recently restored Cavaliers prompted the dramatist to make changes in Shakespeare so as to point a political moral.

The greatest genius among the adapters was John Dryden. His first venture into Shakespearian drama was an adaptation of The Tempest (1670) in which he collaborated with Sir William Davenant. His second "Shakespearian" work was not an adaptation, but an emulation. This was his All For Love (1678) which

he wrote "in imitation of Shakespeare's style". Lastly, he wrote his Troilus And Cressida (1679) which he intended as an improvement of Shakespeare's play through conformity to the " more enlightened" rules of the Restoration.

That Dryden first revised, then emulated, and lastly sought to improve, suggests that he contemned Shakespeare. Yet, the opposite is true. He believed that Shakespeare's faults were due to the artless age in which he lived. Although early in his career as a critic, Dryden attacked Shakespeare's faults more vigorously than he praised his greatness (except in the Essay of Dramatic Poesy), he learnt better how to appreciate him. His mind was with his own age, but his aesthetic values became increasingly Shakespearian. His best works, apart from the three above-mentioned plays, which have a definite Shakespearian background, show that Shakespeare influenced him greatly.

II. DRYDEN'S SHAKESPEARE CRITICISMS

Two factors were decisive in the development of Dryden's dramatic theory and in the creation of his dramatic works. The more fundamental was his own formulation of the heroic play with its variegated classic, Italian, French, and English background. The other was his ever developing appreciation of Shakespeare. Though less fundamental to his plays, the Shakespearian factor was more important, for it promoted the greatest excellencies in them.

Dryden's attitude towards the Elizabethan era biased his earliest opinion of Shakespeare. In the Epilogue to The Conquest of Granada, he stated his preference for his own age:

> If love and honour now are higher raised,
> 'Tis not the poet, but the age is praised.
> Wit's now arrived to a more high degree;
> Our native language more refined and free.
> Our ladies and our men now speak more wit,
> In conversation, than those poets writ. (1)

Here, besides expressing his early belief that the values of his own age, love and honour, were more lofty than those which earlier dramatists had treated most, Dryden was contending that language and wit were more refined than ever before. Although Restoration English was undeniably more refined than Elizabethan, he was bitterly attacked.

The Defense of the Epilogue appeared in the same year, 1672. It was Dryden's answer to those who challenged his

disparagement of pre-Restoration dramatists. The chief issue is refinement of language, which Dryden discusses very analytically. His first point is that any age has the advantage of being able to study the successes and failures of preceding ages:

> One age learning from another, the last (if we can suppose an equality of wit in the writers) has the advantage of knowing more and better than the former..... It is therefore my part to make it clear, that the language, wit, and conversation of our age are improved and refined above the last. (2)

Dryden's initial point that it is an advantage to be able to profit by the examples of the past is sound. However, his apparent belief in "inevitable progress" is not justified by the history of art. "Wit" in this statement means intelligence. Here, Dryden's reasoning is fallacious. That men of two periods should equal each other in their average of intelligence is not important. Genius is an individual phenomenon and several occurrences of it in one period are more important than an "equality of wit" between any two periods. One Shakespeare in any period or country is worth more to art than any number of mediocre writers. "Equality of wit" between two groups of average writers means nothing. The greater refinement which Dryden stresses is unquestionably an improvement in itself; though it does not, as Dryden appears to assume, necessarily accompany a general improvement in drama. Romanticists hold that restrictions made to promote refinement lead to decadence. Refinement of wit and language may cause sophistication rather than vitality. Still, Dryden

rightly considers refinement a virtue in itself when he defines the new elegance of Restoration plays as "an improvement of our Wit, Language, and Conversation; or, an alteration in them for the better." (3)

By what process is language refined? Dryden says that it consists "either in rejecting such old words, or phrases, which are ill sounding or improper; or in admitting new, which are more proper, more sounding and more significant." (4) The value of deliberate refining is evident in both Restoration prose and poetic drama, particularly in Dryden's own revisions of Shakespeare's verse. For example, Shakespeare wrote:

> He doth relye on none,
> But carries on the streame of his dispose,
> Without observance or respect of any,
> In will peculiar, and in selfe admission. (5)

Dryden by simplifying this speech and eliminating the obsolete word "dispose" renders the thought:

> Why he relies on none,
> But his own will. (6)

This type of change, however, raises a problem of dramatic style. The simplest speech is not always the most dramatically revealing. Besides such changes to obtain brevity, Dryden makes retro-spective corrections in grammar such as "shaken" for "shooke" and modernizations such as "since" for "sith". (7) Dryden believes that scholars should deliberately improve and organize language. His changes, however, conform to current

practice, as grammatical corrections must. Yet, he is exposing himself to the charge of arrogance when he says of his predecessors:

> Those, who call theirs the golden age of poetry, have only this reason for it, that they were then content with acorns before they knew the use of bread. (8)

Dryden objected to Elizabethan crudity of wit as well as language:

> I have always acknowledged the wit of our predecessors, with all the veneration which becomes me; but, I am sure, their wit was not that of gentlemen; there was ever somewhat that was ill-bred and clownish in it, and which confessed the conversation of the authors. (9)

He concludes reasonably that since the Restoration poets come after Elizabethan pioneering in wit and better appreciate refined conversation, they ought to excel their predecessors in comedy. In the sort which courtiers liked, Dryden proved himself a master in Don Sebastian. According to Restoration standards, the cynicism which Dryden elegantly expresses in this play is markedly superior to Elizabethan humour.

In his critical prefaces, Dryden often referred to Shakespeare. He often compared Shakespeare to Jonson or Fletcher. His esteem for Shakespeare rose. Correspondingly, Shakespearian influence upon his drama increased. His allusions to Shakespeare are, however, difficult to discuss in chronological sequence as they refer to different elements of art: word usage and prosody, expression of great thoughts, character portrayal, and play construction. Yet, Dryden's

statements divide into two groups: those of praise and those of censure. These groups divide naturally into lesser categories as Dryden discusses different elements of dramatic art. Then, within these divisions, chronological order exists.

In the Defence of The Epilogue (1672), Dryden discusses Shakespeare's language:

> But, malice and partiality set apart, let any man, who understands English, read diligently the works of Shakespeare and Fletcher, and I dare undertake that he will find in every page either some solecism of speech, or some notorious flaw in sense; and yet these men are reverenced, when we are not forgiven. (10)

Perhaps for emphasis, Dryden repeats this objection to Shakespeare's and Fletcher's mistakes, and then concludes that since even the learned Jonson used faulty language, correctness cannot be expected from other Elizabethans:

> And what correctness, after this, can be expected from Shakespeare or from Fletcher, who wanted that learning and care which Jonson had? I will, therefore, spare my own trouble of inquiring into their faults; who, had they lived now, had doubtless written more correctly. (11)

Seven years later in the Preface to Troilus And Cressida (1679), Dryden, besides criticizing other elements of Shakespeare's art, repeats his old objections to unrefined language:

> Yet it must be allowed to the present age, that the tongue in general is so much refined since Shakespeare's time that many of his words, and more of his phrases, are scarce intelligible.

> And of those which we understand, some are ungrammatical, others coarse; and his whole style is so pestered with figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure.(12)

This statement reveals complacency. Many Elizabethan words that had become obsolete in Dryden's period were to come back into use. A language may revert to old forms as well as adopt new ones. Change occurs as the need for it arises. No language is at any particular pariod best for all times and purposes.

In the same essay, Dryden objects that Shakespeare often obscured meaning by coining new words and distorting old ones. His criteria for judging Shakespeare's style changed but little, and later when his own style was influenced by Shakespeare's, his praise was not inconsistent with his earlier censure.

Dryden criticized Shakespeare for frequent failures to satisfy high intellectual standards. Apparently unaware of the chronological order of Shakespeare's plays, he listed the following works which he considered inartistic: Pericles, Prince of Tyre, the chronicle histories, The Winter's Tale, Love's Labour Lost, and Measure for Measure. He asserted that they were "either grounded on impossibilities or at least so meanly written, that the comedy neither caused your mirth, nor the serious part your concernment." (13) From a writer of heroic plays, this is a strange criticism! The absurdities of plot in Pericles, Prince of Tyre are no greater

than the absurdities of character in heroic drama. That the serious part of Dryden's early drama did not "cause concernment", The Rehearsal proves.

Dryden criticized Shakespeare not only for frequently not using intellectual material but also for not expressing it properly when he did use it:

> Shakespeare, who many times has written better than any poet, in any language, is yet so far from writing wit always, or expressing that wit according to the dignity of the subject, that he writes, in many places, below the dullest writers of ours, or any precedent age. Never did any author precipitate himself from such height of thought to so low expressions, as he often does. (14)

Here, Dryden expresses a typical classicist's love for uniform excellence. To charge him with insolence or conceit is to fail to recognize the soundness of many of his arguments. To state that the Restoration poete wrote with uniform dullness and failed to reach sublimity even though they avoided bathos is likewise to leave unanswered Dryden's objections to Shakespeare's "nodding moments." He had an artist's love for perfection and he warns his fellow playwrights to be critical of Shakespeare:

> Let us therefore admire the beauties and the heights of Shakespeare, without falling after him with a carelessness, and, as I may call it, a lethargy of thought, for whole scenes together. (15)

Dryden criticized Shakespeare's characterizations. He believed that Shakespeare's age did not furnish materials

for the sort of man whom the Restoration called a "wit". This term was used as a compliment for a person adept at making clever, caustic remarks. Dryden believed that Shakespeare's manly realist in Romeo and Juliet was his nearest approach to a wit. He did not, however, believe that Mercutio's remarks were sufficiently barbed:

> That the wit of this age is much more courtly, may easily be proved, by viewing the characters of gentlemen which were written in the last ..... Shakespeare showed the best of his skill in his Mercutio; and he said himself, that he was forced to kill him in the third act, to prevent being killed by him. But, for my part, I cannot find he was so dangerous a person: I see nothing in him but what was so exceeding harmless, that he might have lived to the end of the play, and died in his bed, without offence to any man. (16)

Dryden objected to Shakespeare's character relationships:

> I would have the characters well chosen, and kept distant from interfering with each other; which is more than Fletcher or Shakespeare did. (17)

His practice was consistent with this criticism, as one may prove by comparing the simple dramatis personae of All For Love with the complex dramatis personae of Antony and Cleopatra.

In criticizing Shakespeare alone, or Shakespeare and Fletcher together, Dryden condemned the mechanical faults which he charged against all Elizabethan dramatists:

> Witness the lameness of their plots ..... which were made up of some ridiculous incoherent story

> which in one play many times took up the business of an age. (18)

After supporting the Aristotelian principle that a play should not be the history of one man's life but of a single action in one life, he says:

> This condemns all Shakespeare's historical plays, which are rather chronicles represented, than tragedies. (19)

This also condemns his own heroic plays which are not centered in one important action but in all sorts of actions which provide an opportunity for the superhuman hero to display his prowess. In discussing play construction, he makes an interesting comparison between Shakespeare and Fletcher:

> The difference between Shakespeare and Fletcher in their plotting seems to be this; that Shakespeare generally moves more terror and Fletcher more compassion: for the first had a more masculine, a bolder and more fiery genius; the second, a more soft and womanish. In the mechanic beauties of the plot, which are the observation of the three Unities, Time, Place, and Action, they are both deficient; but Shakespeare most. (20)

The first sentence is ambiguous. Does Dryden mean that Shakespeare moves more terror than compassion, or than Fletcher? Does he mean that Fletcher moves more compassion than terror, or than Shakespeare? That Shakespeare usually moves more terror than compassion or that Fletcher moves more compassion than terror is true. However, if Dryden is comparing the two playwrights, that Fletcher moves more compassion than Shakespeare is not true. The anguish of Shakespeare's

Troilus is more real and moves more compassion than the woes of any of Fletcher's forsaken maidens. No one can doubt that Shakespeare's plays reflect a more masculine mentality than Fletcher's. Shakespeare and Fletcher indeed did not observe the three unities of neo-classicism. Dryden's own practice of the unities, however, became more liberal. In calling them "the mechanic beauties of plot," he is over-emphasizing them as values in themselves. Dryden later realized that the unity of action is the most important one. Its value is that it makes possible a unified dramatic purpose. To admire a plot for its "mechanic beauties" rather than for its dramatic effect is pedantic.

Although Dryden objected to what he considered poor artistry in Shakespeare, he did not hesitate to find in him a precedent for an inartistic element of his own plays. This hedging occurred early in Dryden's dramatic career. In his Essay of Heroic Plays (1672), he writes:

> To those who object my frequent use of drums and trumpets and my representations of battles, I answer, I introduced them not on the English stage: Shakespeare used them frequently. (21)

He regarded such bravado as characteristically English and openly accused the French drama of effeminacy for not using it. However, in view of Dryden's own principle of artistic restraint which under different disguises he stresses again and again, Corneille was perhaps more artistic than either Shakespeare or Dryden in not indulging in a "frequent use of drums, trum-

pets, and representations of battles."

Dryden's praise of Shakespeare began almost simultaneously with his censure and the two exist together in his critical essays. His praise is often directed at some specific element in Shakespeare's art, but equally often it is indefinite in its application. His early reverence for Shakespeare was not as intellectual as his criticisms. His first important tribute to Shakespeare is: The Prologue to The Tempest (1670):

> Shakespeare, who (taught by none) did first impart
> To Fletcher wit, to labouring Jonson art.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> If they have since outwrit all other men,
> 'Tis with the drops which fell from Shakespeare's pen. (22)

Since Dryden criticized both Shakespeare's wit and his art and since The Prologue does not explain these "drops which fell from Shakespeare's pen", this praise indicates only an early indefinite respect for Shakespeare.

The Prologue to Aureng-Zebe (1676) shows that Dryden better understood Shakespeare's greatness. Also, it expresses his regret that he had criticized Shakespeare unsympathetically:

> But spite of all his price, a secret shame
> Invades his breast at Shakespeare's sacred name:
> Awed when he hears his god-like Romans rage,
> He, in a just despair, would quit the stage;
> And to an age less polished, more unskilled,
> Does, with disdain, the foremost honours yield. (23)

Here, Dryden is sufficiently impressed by Shakespeare's charact-

ers to call them "god-like" and by their language to enjoy hearing them "rage". Yet, despite admiration for Shakespeare's heights, and despite "despair" and professed willingness to quit the stage, he still prefers his own polished era, as he admits that it is with "disdain" that he yields to the earlier age.

In his Preface to <u>All For Love</u>, Dryden, besides explaining his Shakespeare-emulation, praises Shakespeare indirectly by making himself a follower. Modestly, he explains the discipleship thus:

> Yet, I hope, I may affirm, and without vanity that by imitating him, I have excelled myself throughout the play. (24)

Sincere, but general praise occurs again in the Preface to <u>Troilus And Cressida</u> (1679):

> . . . . . our reverence for Shakespears [is] much more just, than that of the Grecians for Aeschylus. (25)

The Prologue to <u>Troilus And Cressida</u> is another felicitous tribute. An actor who represents Shakespeare recites in the first person:

> Unnamed, methinks, distinguished I had been,
> From other shades, by this eternal green,
> About whose wreaths the vulgar poets strive,
> And with a touch, their withered bays revive.
> Untaught, unpracticed, in a barbarous age,
> I found not, but created first the stage. (26)

Here, Dryden credits Shakespearian influence for inspiring good

Restoration dramatic poetry. He also credits Shakespeare for having established the English theatre through genius rather than learning. He still believes, however, the Elizabethan era was a "barbarous age".

No one ever honoured Shakespeare better than Dryden does in his Essay of Dramatic Poesy. The author (Neander) attempts to analyze for his fellow debaters the qualities which had made Shakespeare great:

> To begin, then, with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of all mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets. (27)

Thus Dryden honours Shakespeare for a grand and lofty soul, for great descriptive power, for having interpreted nature intuitively, and for plasticity of genius. Charitably, he criticizes Shakespeare for lapses in wit, but applauds him for great handling of fit subjects. Conspicuously, Dryden does not moderate this eulogy by objecting to Elizabethan linguistic crudeness. He was leaving petty criticisms,

and growing towards mature appreciation.

Continuing his panegyric, Neander compares Jonson to Shakespeare:

> If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare. (28)

This avowal suggests that whereas Dryden's mind favoured Jonsonian and Restoration classicism, his heart favoured Shakespeare.

Dryden several times discussed Shakespeare's characterizations. His most important remarks on this subject are in his Preface to Troilus And Cressida (1679). Shakespeare's sharp differentiation of characters impresses him more than any other quality:

> 'Tis one of the excellencies of Shakespeare that the manners of his persons are generally apparent and you see their bent and inclinations. (29)

He did not believe, however, that Shakespeare's characters were fitted narrowly into one set of inclinations or one personality type. Particularly did he admire Shakespeare's characterization of Henry IV who behaves differently, but consistently, in two different situations:

> . . . . our Shakespeare, having ascribed to Henry the Fourth the character of a king and of a father, gives him the perfect manners of each relation, when either he transacts with his son or with his subjects. (30)

Emphasizing distinctiveness, he concludes:

> . . . . . no man ever drew so many characters, or generally distinguished 'em better from one another, excepting only Jonson. (31)

The sharper differentiation of Jonson's characters is the obvious result of his humour theory and his great skill in applying it.

In the same essay, Dryden appraises the Brutus-and-Cassius scene in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. His opinion of this scene is important, for he several times strove to emulate it:

> . . . . . the passions in his [Shakespeare's] scene between Brutus and Cassius are extremely natural, the thoughts are such as arise from the matter, the expression of 'em not viciously figurative. (32)

Considering Dryden's liking for this scene and his use of it, as a model, such praise is exceedingly moderate! The naturalness of the passions, the pertinency of the thoughts, and the absence of the "viciously figurative" satisfy his classicist's criteria. He always sought the sound and logical. Absence of these qualities in his heroic plays did not prevent his attempting to convince himself and his audience of their presence. He concludes these judgments on Shakespeare's characterizations with another tribute:

> Shakespeare had an universal mind, which comprehended all characters and passions. (33)

In the Essay of Dramatic Poesy, Neander proves that Shakespeare influenced Dryden's theory of characterization:

> Our plots are weaved in English looms: we endeavour therein to follow the variety and greatness of characters which are derived to us from Shakespeare and Fletcher. (34)

This statement shows that early in his career Dryden recognized that Shakespeare's characters were worthy models.

Dryden's comments on Shakespeare's language were not confined to "faults" unavoidable in a "barbarous age". He also praised. Strangely enough, he found his opportunities to praise Shakespeare's language while discussing rhyme. In the Essay of Heroic Plays (1672) which he wrote during his initial enthusiasm over rhyme, he says:

> . . . . . we thought, because Shakespeare and Fletcher went no further, that there the pillars of poetry were to be erected; that, because they excellently described passion without rhyme, therefore rhyme was not capable of describing it. (35)

Thus early in his career, Dryden was willing to compliment Shakespeare for having "excellently described passion without rhyme," but he continued to believe that rhyme was an asset to poetry. By 1676, however, as he informs us in his Prologue to Aureng-Zebe, he liked rhyme less, even though he continued to employ it. Then in 1678 he discarded rhyme when he wrote All For Love so that he might more easily emulate Shakespeare. He says in the Preface:

> In my style, I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare; which that I might perform more freely, I have disencumbered myself from rhyme. (36)

Dryden does not mean that he had finally decided that rhyme was an encumbrance. Much later, he still held his original view that rhyme disciplined a great poet's unruly fancy. He thought it a credit to genius that without using rhyme, Shakespeare was "divine" rather than fantastic.

Further in the Preface to All For Love, Dryden again praises Shakespeare's language. This time, however, he does not refer to rhyme. He again discusses linguistic "purity". (What Dryden means by the "pure" is usage of stabilized, conventional forms.):

> Words and phrases must of necessity receive a change in succeeding ages; but it is almost a miracle that much of his language remains so pure; and that he who began dramatic poetry amongst us, untaught by any, and as Ben Jonson tells us, without learning, should by the force of his own genius perform so much, that in a manner he has left no praise for any who come after him. (37)

This is a complete reverse of his approach to Shakespeare's language in The Defense of the Epilogue. Here, he marvels at a "miracle of purity," whereas formerly he noticed only "flaws and solecisms". This better appreciation of Shakespeare's language allowed him to imitate Shakespeare's style.

Still, Dryden considered Restoration prosody superior to Elizabethan, and did not exempt Shakespeare's verse. After emphasizing that his own age was more genteel than the last, he qualifies himself:

> I mean for versification and the art of numbers; for in the drama we have not arrived to the pitch of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. (38)

This statement is in the Examen Poeticum of 1693 and therefore is a mature judgment. Thus Dryden believes that although the Restoration poets do not reach in drama "the pitch of Shakespeare," they do excel him (according to Restoration standards) in versification. He did not believe, however, that Shakespeare's "unenlightened" versification prevented poetic greatness, although he did believe that blank verse was an escape from the rigours of strict poetry. In Rhyme And Blank Verse (1694), he says:

> Shakespeare (who, with some errors not to be avoided in that age, had undoubtedly a larger soul of poesy than ever any of our nation) was the first who, to shun the pains of continual rhyming, invented that kind of writing which we call blank verse, but the French, more properly, prose mesuree; into which the English tongue so naturally slides that, in writing prose, it is hardly to be avoided. (39)

At the time of this statement, Dryden had written his best tragedies in blank verse. His defence of rhyme as a control over fancy (made in this essay prefixed to a comedy) shows that he never favoured blank verse for all drama.

Dryden's self-imposed discipleship prompted him to define proper imitation of Shakespeare. In the Preface to Troilus And Cressida, he says of Shakespeare and Fletcher:

> . . . . . we ought to follow them so far only as they have copied the excellencies of those who invented and brought to perfection Dramatic Poetry. (40)

He believed that these excellencies were numerous, and further in the same essay, says:

> If Shakespeare were stripped of all the bombasts in his passions, and dressed in the most vulgar words, we should find the beauties of his thoughts remaining. (41)

This statement indicates that Dryden accepted the theory that the "dress of thought" does not affect the value of its substance. Trial disproves this theory. Hamlet says to Horatio:

> Absent thee from felicity a while
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
> To tell my story. (42)

If Hamlet had said in vernacular, "Don't bump yerself off, bud, but stick around, 'til y've cleared m'good name," the thought would not be beautiful. Dryden re-emphasizes the point that he has already made, that it is Shakespeare's virtues, not his faults, that Restoration poets should imitate. Fourteen years later, however, virtues impress him so much more than faults that he eulogizes the inimitable Shakespeare:

> Peace be to the venerable shades of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson! None of the living will presume to have any competition with them; as they were our predecessors, so they were our masters. (43)

Dryden, who was too critical to be a Shakespeare-idolator, had become one of the best supporters that Shakespeare has ever had.

III. DRYDEN AND HEROIC DRAMA

John Dryden systemized the English heroic play. Although critics and literary historians regard Davenant's The Siege of Rhodes (1656) as the first English heroic play, Dryden first established premises for heroic drama. Between 1665 and 1678, the year of All For Love, he wrote his serious drama according to the "heroic" formula. In Aureng - Zebe (1676), however, Shakespeare's influence had noticeably altered his writing. In All For Love, this influence became more pronounced and the heroic formula no longer regulated his drama. Elements of the heroic play, however, often re-appeared in his later works.

Before the student can appraise the heroic play, he must understand its dramatic purpose. The heroic play attempts to take the epic hero into the the theatre. This hero is generally triumphant rather than tragic. It is to excite admiration for the stupendous deeds of an exaggerated hero that the plot is planned. Dryden stressed that the heroic play, which he patterned after the heroic poem, is a display of prowess, not an orthodox drama. In the Examen Poeticum (1693) which he wrote after he had abandoned serious drama, he states the purpose of heroic poetry:

> To cause admiration is, indeed, the proper and adequate design of an epic poem. (1)

Although this was not his first statement on the subject, it

expresses the epic principle which regulated the first half of his dramatic work. Much criticism of the heroic play has been irrelevant because the critic judged it as orthodox drama. It is important to remember that heroic plays involve no tragic conflict (love and honour cause no insurmountable difficulty), but are rather histories of spectacular, tumultuous careers. They may be condemned as a hybrid form of art, neither properly dramatic nor properly epic, but they should be judged with criteria for their own particular nature.

In forming a system for writing heroic plays, Dryden turned first to Italian romance. After reading Canto Primo of Ariosto's L'Orlando Furioso, Dryden in his Essay of Heroic Plays (1672) states his new principles:

> And the very first two lines of that poem gave me light to all I could desire:
>
> Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori,
> Le cortesie, l'audaci imprese io canto, etc.
>
> For the very next reflection which I made was this: that an heroic play ought to be an imitation, in little, of an heroic poem; and, consequently, that love and valour ought to be the subject of it. (2)

This is his first explanation that the heroic play is to have an epic basis. He then attempts to justify his giving dramatic form to epic material:

> And if that [the epic] be the most noble, the most pleasant, and the most instructive way of writing in verse, and withal the highest pattern of human life, as all poets have agreed, I shall

> need no other argument to justify my choice in the imitation. One advantage the drama has above the other, namely, that it represents to view what the poem only does relate. (3)

Here, Dryden differs from Aristotle who believed that freedom to the reader's (or auditor's) imagination allows the epic its wonders. What the drama "represents to view" is certain to be limited. What a good imagination can do with Achilles' victory over Hector goes beyond the limits of drama. Dryden's amalgamation makes both epic and dramatic elements lose value.

Ariosto was not the only Italian who influenced Dryden. Evidence that Tasso influenced him appears in the Essay of Heroic Plays, when Dryden says of his superman, Almanzor:

> The first image I had of him was from the Achilles of Homer; the next from Tasso's Rinaldo (who was a copy of the former) and the third from the Artaban of M.Calprenède who has imitated both. (4)

Although this statement evidences three inter-related influences, classical (Homeric), Italian, and French, Tasso's influence supplements Ariosto's, as both wrote the Italian poema eroica. Besides centering his poems in a hero who is both a brave soldier and a romantic lover, Tasso was unhistorical in treating his subjects. Dryden may have regarded Tasso's success as an excuse for ignoring the facts of foreign civilizations, although he had many more English precedents for cultural inaccuracy. According to B.J. Pendlebury, Tasso is important for amalgamating epic and romance. (5) Thus his work was a precedent for Dryden's own

fusion of epic, romance, and drama.

Dryden's acknowledgement of La Calprenède's Artaban as a model for his Almanzor is an understatement of his debt to the French romancers.(6) D'Urfé's Astrée (1624-28) marks the inception of the French heroic romance. La Calprenède and Scudery were successors of D'Urfé. They influenced Dryden directly. He took from La Calprenède a system of stock situations, incidents, and romance characters. The Indian Queen, The Indian Emperor and The Conquest of Granada conform to this system. The plot consists of stock incidents which elicit the hero's virtues and which create the illusion of a very exciting and romantic world. Often a sub-plot emphasizes the main plot by paralleling it. In using historical events and characters, La Calprenede admittedly "beautified the truth" to heighten entertainment. His characters are not individualized. Stock roles are the invincible hero and the pure heroine. Another is the generous and self-sacrificing warrior who is both friend and rival to the hero. Opposed to him is an unscrupulous rival. The ruler of the kingdom which the hero alternately saves and ruins is a tyrant. An ambitious, scheming woman loves the hero and attempts to harm the heroine. The force which motivates these characters is "heroic love" which is a love governed by a certain theory and code of behaviour which had developed in mediaeval and Renaissance romance. The hero must conform to the code of behaviour which emphasizes his subservience to the lady of his

choice. The dialogue expresses the etiquette of love. La Calprenède's language for describing deeds and sentiments is full of exaggerated images.

Although Dryden does not acknowledge a debt to Madeleine de Scudéry, her works were probably familiar to him, as she influenced the cultured classes of all Europe. In the prose romance, she excelled even La Calprenède. In her Clélie, one of her characters, Plotina, states the popular standards for romance literature:

> Were I to invent a History, I think I should make things much more perfect than they are. All women should be admirably fair, and all men should be as valiant as Hector, all my Heroes should slay at least a hundred men in every battel, I would build Palaces of precious stones, I would make Prodigies fall out of every moment, and without troubling myself to invent with judgment, I should suffer my fancy to act as it pleased; so that seeking out only surprising events, without examining; whether they were consistent to reason or no, I should certainly make very extraordinary things; a continual Shipwracks, burning of Bities [Cities] and a thousand like other accidents, which occasion handsome lamentations and descriptions. (7)

This, however, is not final, for another character, Anacrion, lectures to Plotina on verisimilitude. Still, the exaggerations which Plotina describes took root in the English heroic play. Another, and more important, influence of Scudéry was linguistic. She promoted refinement and developed "heroic style". Although the English language was independently becoming refined, Scudéry stimulated linguistic refinement all over Europe. The influence

of her "heroic style" on heroic drama is generally admitted. Thirdly, the endless discussions of love in her works are an important background for romantic debates in the English heroic play.

The romance was not the only French influence on the English heroic play, which was rivalled across the Channel. Dryden's judgments on French heroic drama suggest that he was professionally jealous of Corneille. In the Essay of Heroic Plays, he judges French use of the love-and-honour theme:

> I shall never subject my characters to the French standard where love and honour are to be weighed by drachms and scruples. (8)

This judgment on one element of French drama indicates an improper evaluation of the whole. That this criticism was ill- considered, a reading of Corneille's Le Cid (1636) reveals. In this play, the love-and-honour conflict is more real, more understandable, and dramatically, more effective than any problem that Dryden conceived or borrowed prior to his final tragedies. Although Allardyce Nicoll believes that the French drama might influence the English "towards an intensification of love and honour themes," Cornelian plays were good models for greater reasonableness in both love and honour. (9)

The French play with its conformity to neo-classical rules and its adroit construction was the subject of much controversy in England. Comparisons between strict French and

lenient English observance of the unities were a favourite diversion of the day. Having studied French practice, Dryden stated that the English theatre did not require strict observance of the unities, though he was particularly influenced by Corneille's use of liaison des scènes. Yet despite valuable French example, Dryden never ceased his disparagement of French drama. One of his remarks on the mingling of serious and comic typifies his attitude. In the Essay of Dramatic Poesy, he (Neander or Dryden) says of the French playwrights:

> As for their new way of mingling mirth with serious plot, I do not, with Lisideius, condemn the thing, though I cannot approve their manner of doing it. (10)

Since the French amalgamation was not inferior to the English, Dryden's judgment was probably impaired by two factors: professional jealousy and a desire to free himself and other English playwrights from the charge of having copied the French. The critic should not overlook these liklihoods when reviewing Dryden's judgments on French drama. Still, these judgments, whether commendatory or disparaging, show that Dryden was conscious of French Standards.

Influence on Dryden of French heroic verse is easily estimated because he himself acknowledges it. In the Essay of Dramatic Poesy, he justifies his use of rhyme by French example:

> The French, Italian, and Spanish tragedies are generally writ in it; and sure the

> universal consent of the most civilized parts of the world, ought in this, as it doth in other customs, to include the rest. (11)

Admirers of the Alexandrine hold that Cornelian influence led the heroic couplet to a more refined and elevated style. Although French influence can be over-emphasized at the expense of a native English movement towards better style, its existence is indisputable.

Although Dryden drew materials from Italian and French romance, a historical connection exists between the heroic play and the decadent romanticism of Beaumont and Fletcher. Davenant is the link. Although Davenant contributed much to the scenic art, his works prove him a superficial dramatist and are hardly worth mention. A study of romantic drama from Beaumont and Fletcher, through Davenant, to Dryden shows that romance literature had had a following in England before Dryden. Like French romance, the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher have an unreal setting occupied by unreal people possessing an unreal civilization. The mood is the relaxing, easily enjoyed, tragi-comic. The theme is usually romantic love which is often opposed to honour, as in the heroic play. Sentiments are frequently and lengthily expounded. The characters, including the hero and heroine, are mere types who do not determine the course or outcome of the action. The plot is constructed with interesting, or downright sensational, situations and events. Also, in the Beaumont and Fletcher plays are certain special traits such as unwavering

loyalty, many ideal friendships, and an emphasis on virginity. The counterpart to the device of mistaken identity, namely, the blood-will-tell motif, appears often. Beaumont and Fletcher, like Dryden, express strong royalism. (In Dryden's plays in which strong royalism is not evident, the contemners of kings such as Montezuma and Almanzor are themselves of royal origin, which, when discovered, mitigates the treason in their insubordination.) Beaumont and Fletcher foreshadow the heroic play.

The Restoration heroic play (as Dryden formulated it) is a drama of romantic material handled within certain definite conventions: the theme of love in conflict with honour, the dominant figure of a superman, and various extravagances of presentation acceptable to the times. Of these essentials, the most important is the theme of love. The hero's prowess is less important to the play than the theme, for it is the passion of a valorous man which interested the predominantly feminine audience. A stern hero like Beowulf who is not susceptible to the gentler sex never would have been a "sell-out" in Dryden's era. That the women in the audience wanted the hero subordinated to the heroine is recorded in Spectator No. 40:

> The ladies are wonderfully pleased to see a man insulting Kings, or affronting the Gods, in one scene, and throwing himself at the feet of his Mistress in another. Let him behave insolently towards the men and abjectly towards the Fair One, and it is ten to one but he proves a Favourite with the boxes. (12)

Thus, the women prescribed that the playwright magnify the theme

of love, which, despite its prominence, is just a frequently repeated word. As a concrete phenomenon resulting from romantic associations and biological attractions, genuine love was never present in the heroic play. "Heroic love" is like a wizard's spell: it strikes suddenly; it is immediately recognized; and, the person whom it afflicts assumes that it is unexplainable. Ardent "heroic" lovers sometimes seem deranged by their love. This suggests the interpretation in Burton's Anatomy: that love is a malady.(13) Occasionally, however, admiration for virtue inspires love, as in the Osmyn-and-Benzayda sub-plot of The Conquest of Granada. When a pair are in love, they debate extensively on etiquette for romance, and the heroine often suggests to the hero that self-control is desirable. She never doubts that his love is sound and both parties assume that the hero will love without change until death. No realist like Mercutio questions that a suddenly begotten attachment will last eternally.

"Heroic honour" is no more genuine than "heroic love". Almanzor's honour, for example, means only that Almanzor will not recede after he has requested Almahide whom he thinks he deserves. The heroine's honour is, however, often reasonable and ethical. Almahide refuses to marry Almanzor because she has consented to marry the king. Even her honour is sometimes ludicrous. Just before the end of the play, she announces that she cannot marry Almanzor because she has vowed that if the war end, she will become a nun. This illustrates how absurdly love

and honour become entangled in political and military affairs.

Dryden used the theme of pseudo-love vs. pseudo-honour for his heroic plays. A notable exception is Tyrannick Love which has as a theme piety, as Dryden explains in the preface. Even All For Love which he wrote after he had become conscious of Shakespeare has the love-and-honour theme. In this play, love overwhelms honour. Finally, however, when he wrote Don Sebastian (1690), he realized:

> . . . . . that love and honour (the mistaken topics of tragedy) were quite worn out. (14)

The tragic conflicts in this play are worthy of a great dramatist and Dryden proves that his abilities are sufficient for a great portrayal of human suffering.

The superman is the driving force in the heroic play. It is he who makes the love-and-honour theme interesting and he for whom the plot is a valour-eliciting soil. Dryden acknowledges three models for his superman, Almanzor: Achilles, Rinaldo, and Artaban. He lists Achilles first, whom he describes as:

> . . . . . of so fiery a temper, so impatient of an injury, even from his king and general, that when his mistress was to be forced from him by the command of Agamemnon, he not only disobeyed it, but returned him an answer full of contumely, and in the most opprobrious terms he could imagine. (15)

Almanzor too fits this description. In making his hero, Dryden's

debt to Tasso and La Calprenede is that his heroes and theirs fit into the same pattern of stupendous deeds. Although he is not a great character portrayal, Almanzor is more spectacular than Rinaldo or Artaban. As a convincingly human character, he does not approach the greatest of the three models, Achilles.

In the Dedication to The Conquest of Granada, Dryden describes Almanzor so as to explain his dramatic purpose. His description is apologetic. He seems to be anticipating the charge that he has committed absurdities in characterization:

> I designed in him a roughness of character impatient of injuries, and a confidence of himself, almost approaching to an arrogance. But these errors are incident only to great spirits; they are moles and dimples which hinder not a face from being beautiful, though that beauty be not regular . . . . . And such [good qualities] in Almanzor are a frank and noble openness of nature, an easiness to forgive his conquered enemies, and to protect them in distress; and above all, an inviolable faith in his affection. (16)

This description is not far from accurate. Whether Dryden thought of his foreign models when he made this statement, he does not say. Foreign models or not, these traits were already present in English character types. The first part of the description suggests Shakespeare's Coriolanus. Masculine roughness, arrogance, self-confidence, and invincibility (which Dryden overlooks) belong to both Coriolanus and Almanzor. The second part of the statement would pass for a description of Othello. The ingenuous nature which Dryden describes is basic to Shakespeare's conception of the hero. Shakespeare's best

male characters are frank and noble. Since Dryden could have found no better models for the ingenuous spirit, Shakespeare may have provided them for him.

Dryden cannot describe all his conquering heroes as flatteringly as he describes Almanzor. Maximin, who belongs to a different tradition in heroes, does not perform the gentlemanly courtesies of the noble Arab-Moor. He is a direct descendent of that brutal, ranting, aggressive sadist, Marlowe's Tamburlaine. (He is not, however, as convincing a character.) Fortunately, he is the only one; for although Dryden's other heroes may have inherited his boasting and ranting, he alone is made entirely according to standards for the tyrant.

Dryden tried to answer the charge that his invincible heroes were ludicrous. In the Essay of Heroic Plays, he argues that both fictional and real heroes "hazarded more and performed not less".(17) That this excuse is not sound in art, an Aristotelian principle establishes: a seemingly probably impossibility is better in art than an improbable possibility. However, when Dryden had outgrown the heroic play, he had also outgrown the superman, though occasionally, "Drawcansir" traits appear in his later heroes. Near the close of his dramatic career, Dryden in the Examen Poeticum (1693) utters his final judgment of his early heroes. Of Homer, he says:

> He stirs up the irascible appetite, as our philosophers call it; he provokes to murder, and the destruction of God's images; he forms and equips those ungodly man-killers, whom we

> poets, when we flatter them, call heroes; a race of men who can never enjoy quiet in themselves till they have taken it from all the world. (18)

Dryden's remarks on the Homeric hero describe his own Maximin and Almanzor and express his mature evaluation of them.

The characters who support the love-obsessed superman belong, like most romance characters, to simple, conventional types. Most prominent are the pure and refined heroine who acts as a counterpart to the invincible hero, a scheming villainess and several villains. They are all artificial, as no penetrating characterization is made.

The popularity of the heroic play was due to its extravagancies: complex situations, many superficial characters, and emphasis of the contributory arts. Dryden understood Restoration taste when he appraised that first specimen of the English heroic play, Davenant's The Siege of Rhodes:

> I observed then, as I said, what was wanting to the perfection of his Siege of Rhodes, which was design and variety of characters. (19)

This criticism is just, for although the characters number a full ten, all but three of them are like sawdust dummies, thrown in to answer the needs of the plot. The design is undramatic, for although the Second Part is divided into acts and scenes, the First Part consists of five short operatic entries which resemble simple tableaux more than parts in the development of a drama. This play, which is really a primitive opera, has

the extravagant scenery and recurrent music, singing, and dancing which Dryden realized were assets to the heroic play.

Extravagancy was not limited to the contributory arts. It is in the substance of the play. In the Essay of Heroic Plays, Dryden, after justifying his use of drums, trumpets, and battle scenes, by hedging behind Shakespeare, concludes:

> . . . . . I add further, that these warlike instruments, and even their presentations of fighting on the stage, are no more than necessary to produce the effects of an heroic play. (20)

Dryden retained this opinion when he wrote the Essay of Dramatic Poesy:

> . . . . . whether custom has so insinuated itself into our countrymen, or nature has so formed them to fierceness, I know not; but they will scarcely suffer combats and other objects of horror to be taken from them. (21)

Accordingly, the heroic play is full of fighting (or descriptions of fighting), bravado and rococo.

Dryden uses the supernatural to intensify the romantic atmosphere. In the Essay of Heroic Plays, he answers the charge that this is an absurd practice by asserting that an heroic poet is not limited to the real or even the probable and that people have always believed in the supernatural. However, the charge is just, for the supernatural is in heroic drama merely another device for heightening the atmosphere. For example, the ghost of Almanzor's mother is not dramatically relevant.

The contributory arts enriched and enlivened Restoration drama. Dryden recognized their importance long after he had abandoned the typical heroic play. In Nature And Dramatic Art (1681), he describes the trend of the age:

> The truth is, the audience are grown weary of continual melancholy scenes; and I dare venture to prophesy that few tragedies except those in verse shall succeed in this age if they are not lightened with a course of mirth. For the Feast is too dull and solemn without the fiddles. (22)

Although Dryden may intend this statement to excuse combining serious and comic, much meaning is in the phrase "too dull and solemn without the fiddles". The spirit of the age prompted the dramatists to intersperse their heroic plays with masques and festive ceremonies with attendant music, singing and dancing.

An important feature of the heroic play is its aristocratic level. Dryden's early works involve only royalty. This aristocratic milieu is an inheritance from background material. Villains are royal because a plebeian villain would not fit into the dramatis personae. Otherwise, royalty is presented very favourably, for the heroic play, like the French romances and the Italian heroic poems, portrays only the noble loves of exalted people. This convention was congenial to Dryden's uncritical monarchism. He differs from Shakespeare who evaluated his kingly subjects accurately.

The dialogue of the heroic play was in heroic couplets. In his critical prefaces, Dryden tried diligently to vindicate

the couplet. Sir Robert Howard had challenged the practice of having characters in drama speak in rhymed dialogue. His argument was that the heroic couplet was too far removed from ordinary discourse. Dryden's answer was:

> If nothing were to be raised above that level [level of ordinary conversation] the foundation of poetry would be destroyed (23)

That the heroic couplet did maintain the speech of exalted people at a lofty level is appropriate in heroic drama. However, it permitted no variation in speech level. The pitch of expression is uniformly, often monotonously, high. Dryden's other argument for the rhymed couplet, that it artistically restrains an overactive imagination is apparently sound. He finally realized, however, that it is too restrictive and abandoned it for blank verse.

The narrowness of the heroic couplet did not interfere with Dryden's famous rants. Rather, its regularity kept the rant uniformly bombastic, though Dryden at first argued that artistic judgment controlled his verse:

> The sum of all depends on what before I hinted, that this boldness of expression is not to be blamed, if it be managed by the coolness and discretion which is necessary to a poet. (24)

Yet, a rant with its "boldness of expression" is opposed to "coolness and discretion". In Nature And Dramatic Art (1681) Dryden admits the absurdity of bombast:

> . . . . . I am sensible, perhaps too late, that I have gone too far: for I remember

> some verses of my own, Maximin and Almanzor, which cry vengeance upon me for their extravagance, and which I wish heartily in the same fire with Statius and Chapman. (25)

Despite the extravagance of rants and the pomposity of couplets, great verse appears often in Dryden's plays. That he sought to make his poetry understandable, a statement in The Essay of Dramatic Poesy proves:

> . . . . . you took no notice that rhyme might be made as natural as blank verse by the well placing of the words, etc. (26)

This point is more valuable for what it indicates about Dryden's syntax than as an argument for rhyme. As T.S.Eliot explains in Homage to John Dryden, Dryden was a master of the "natural style". (27) Simple sentence or verse structure and natural word order make his dialogue easy to follow.

In straightforward, well disciplined language, he exercised his talent for clever, sententious remarks. His characters are adept at coining epigrams out of "high-brow armchair philosophy". Even the first scene of The Conquest of Granada, which is primarily a quarrel, is rich in pithy statements. Yet Dryden, unlike Shakespeare, cannot bring forth an image so suggestive that it stimulates the mind to greater activity. He proceeds like a scientist who indicates facts bluntly and perfunctorily, though with this mode of expression, he often attains great heights. In The Conquest of Granada, Almanzor's answer to Boabdelin's threat of death and in Aureng-Zebe, the hero's lamentation over the deceptiveness of life are specimens of sublime poetry.

Heroic plays are often criticized as though they were intended as true tragedy. This is not the correct approach. A study of Dryden's principles of craftsmanship proves that he did not base his early drama upon tragic issue. In the essay On Comedy, Farce and Tragedy (1671) he explains his early dramatic credo:

> On this foundation of the story, the characters are raised: and, since no story can afford characters enough for the variety of the English stage, it follows that it is to be altered and enlarged with new personal accidents, and designs, which will almost make it new. When this is done, the forming it into acts and scenes, disposing of actions and passions into their proper places, and beautifying both with descriptions, similitudes, and propriety of language, is the principal employment of the poet. (28)

Here, Dryden's conception of a play is a framework of "new personal accidents and designs" adorned with beautiful language. His belief in the dramatic value of poetic justice shows that in heroic drama he was not writing orthodox tragedy. How can suffering cause pity and terror, unless it is undeserved and uncompensated? In Nature And Dramatic Art (1681) which Dryden wrote after his heroic plays but before his tragedies, he says:

> Neither is it so trivial an undertaking to make a tragedy end happily; for 'tis more difficult to save than to kill. The dagger and the cup of poison are always in a readiness; but to bring the action to the last extremity, and then by probably means to recover all, will require the art and judgment of a writer, and cost him many a pang in the performance. (29)

According to the Restoration definition, a play which ended happily could still be a tragedy. Dryden's discussion of the skill required "to make a tragedy end happily" proves that he regarded a happy ending as dramatically equal to or better than a catastrophe. Here, he differs from Aristotle:

> The tragic experience is: destructive or painful actions such as deaths in plain view, extreme pains, wounds, and the like. (30)
>
> . . . . . .
>
> According to art, then, the best tragedies are constructed along these lines. Therefore those who blame Euripides because he follows this practice in his tragedies and has many of them end unhappily are in error. As was just said, this is the correct ending, and here is the greatest proof of it: on the stage and in the contests, such plays, if their plots are well constructed, appear to be the most tragic; and Euripides, even if he does not construct his plots well in other respects, appears to be the most tragic of the poets. (31)

The Restoration audience, however, preferred the "tragedy which ends happily". Dryden was usually well adjusted to the standards of his age. This one, unfortunately, is an obstacle to great drama.

Although the heroic play deserves condemnation, it is pointless to judge it with criteria for a form to which it does not belong. Margaret Sherwood who presents a good analysis of the heroic play bases her criticism on a confusion of the two forms. She condemns the heroic play for its failure to satisfy the requirements of tragedy. Her objections are: that great events

take the place of tragic conflict; no relationship exists between character and event ——— no "growth toward decision"; and dramatic tension does not rise to a crisis.(32) Her criticisms are just but why should her standards be used when an heroic play is not intended as a tragedy but as "an imitation in little of an heroic poem"? Sir Walter Scott does not forget its nature when he defines it as "a metrical romance of chivalry in form of a drama".(33) However, the artistic worth of this hybrid is very small. It provides the spectator or reader with vicarious excitement, only if he represses his intellect. It is comparable to the modern "costume drama" film.

The typical heroic play did not last long. As early as The Rehearsal which satirized heroic drama and which appeared in the year following The Conquest of Granada, the courtier audience was tired of chivalric nonsense. Elements of the heroic play, however, persisted in Dryden's later works, despite his study of Shakespeare, though he did abandon the typical form. As Shakespeare influenced him, his plays became less "heroic". Aureng-Zebe is less an heroic play than The Conquest of Granada and All For Love is an acceptable tragedy despite prominent "heroic" elements. Of Dryden's tragedies after All For Love, Don Sebastian is the greatest. The tragic conflicts of Sebastian and Dorax are genuine and dramatically revealed. They prove that Dryden passed beyond his heroic formula.

IV. ALL FOR LOVE

In 1678, Dryden wrote All For Love, his first serious drama not constructed according to the heroic formula. Shakespearian influence on his prosody which appeared in Aureng-Zebe becomes conspicuous in All For Love, which he wrote to emulate Shakespeare. His emulation closely approaches an imitation of style, as he is careful to acknowledge. The obvious similarity in material between All for Love and Antony and Cleopatra makes comparison especially fascinating and instructive. In other ways, Shakespeare's influence on Dryden when he wrote All For Love was not extensive enough, if it existed at all. In character portrayal and in a deeper and truer insight into tragedy, Dryden did not profit by Shakespeare's superior conceptions. Elements of the heroic play appear occasionally in the characterization and style.

Shakespeare's influence thus prompted Dryden to emulation. Choosing a subject that Shakespeare had used and imitating the language with which Shakespeare treated it, he produced a play which many critics pronounce his greatest.

Critical comparisons between plays by different dramatists of different periods are futile, where no real basis of comparison exists. However, since Dryden avowedly set out to rival Shakespeare by improved treatment of similar material, a comparison between All For Love and Antony and Cleopatra can

be significant. Such a comparison ought to show how Dryden succeeded in emulating Shakespeare, and how he was by his own earlier standards either furthered or obstructed. Such a comparison ought also to show if Shakespeare's influence improved Dryden's drama.

Shakespeare and Dryden chose similar subjects for their plays on Antony and Cleopatra. They did not choose identical subjects, for their material differs in both scope and substance. Shakespeare's play is centered in a great issue of history, the destiny of empires, and Antony's love for Cleopatra is merely a part of the great movement of events which constitute the subject treated. Antony's excessive love for Cleopatra is the flaw which causes his catastrophe, for his will blinded by voluptuousness and infatuation marks him for tragedy. His attachment to Cleopatra places him on the losing side in the greater struggle which is the larger theme of the drama. Dryden's play is based on a much more limited subject, romantic love between two devoted lovers. The theme is an exaggeration of love against all competition from domestic and political honour and responsibility. His play is limited to this love-tragedy whereas Shakespeare's play is devoted to the great movement of events which the Ides of March began.(1)

Scott believes that Dryden's limitation of scope makes possible a superior structure. He contends that to limit the scope to Antony's tragic finish and to exclude the military engagements and political negotiations of Shakespeare's play is

more artistic, for great affairs distract from the main interest (the love interest) of the drama.(2) While Scott would be justified in objecting to Shakespeare's cursory and episodic treatment of this material in the third and fourth acts, he is not altogether right in believing that it were better excluded. Undoubtedly, it could have been more dramatically handled; but the wider scope of Shakespeare's play allows the dramatist to portray the vast, dynamic, changing whole of the imperial affairs of which the love of Antony and Cleopatra was but a part.(3) Shakespeare believed that to show the love affair as a part in the great whole of human destiny would make more effective drama, whereas Dryden decided to concentrate on the love affair and merely to mention the military and political forces associated with it. Perhaps, nothing is proven about the dramatic potentialities of these two subjects, though Shakespeare proves himself the better writer.

Dryden was confident that the neo-classical rules of construction would make his play more effective. In his Preface to All For Love, he explains the structure of the play:

> The fabric of the play is regular enough, as to the inferior parts of it; and the unities of time, place, and action, more exactly observed, than perhaps the English theatre requires. Particularly. the action is so much one that it is the only of the kind without episode, or underplot; every scene in the tragedy conducing to the main design, and every act concluding with a turn of it.(4)

Dryden's critics have reacted differently to this orderly structure. Since the regularity of All For Love was intended as an improvement over the looseness of Antony and Cleopatra, critics support one structure or the other. Scott states his preference:

> . . . . . the plan of Dryden's play must be unequivocally preferred to that of Shakespeare in point of coherence, unity, and simplicity. (5)

Other critics prefer Shakespeare's plan in point of inclusiveness, complexity, and force.

More recent critics challenge Scott's preference and contend that Dryden's plan makes his drama too artificial. Hazelton Spencer states the arguments of those critics who believe that Shakespeare's plan is superior:

> There is a unity of action, certainly, but it is of the most artificial kind. As a matter of fact the play is a series of confrontations. One scene does not grow out of another, or out of characterization; the action is essentially arbitrary with the dramatist, not spontaneous with the characters.

Spencer continues:

> The unity of place is likewise achieved by arbitrary measures; the poet does not even trouble to excuse his characters for appearing so promptly and so pat. (6)

Professor Lounsbury (who says that Scott is at his worst in appraising All For Love) speaks similarly of the unity of time:

> It has been preserved by the studious suppression of all reference whatever to its passage. (7)

It is reasonable to suppose, then, that the structure of All For Love is neither altogether superior nor altogether inferior to that of Antony and Cleopatra. The obvious fault of Dryden's planning is that his "well unified" action is not sufficiently dependent on characterization. A dynamic personality who makes decisions and determines the course of events is lacking. The unity of time is observed (at least in the fashion that Lounsbury has described) and the reader or spectator is bewildered that so many important confrontations occur in such a short and compact period. The unity of place, which Dryden always unduly emphasized, despite his attempts to appear liberal, obstructs dramatic action. The whole play, therefore, seems mechanical.

Dryden's plan, however, has advantages. His regular play is easy to follow. The unified action is maintained at a steady intensity. Even though it is never vigorously dramatic, it is never really dull. One may argue that vicissitudes are necessary to vital drama. Still, a play with action at the same pitch throughout is more readily grasped and appreciated as a whole than a play with certain parts lacking movement. Another virtue of Dryden's plan is that the ending is very theatrical.

Where one dramatist does best, the other flags. Antony and Cleopatra is so episodic in the third and fourth acts

as to risk confusing the spectator. Action lags during the first three acts, except for an occasional scene in which Cleopatra entertains by her amazing antics. Still, the virtues of Shakespeare's plan and his handling of it far excel Dryden's. In Shakespeare's play action invariably depends on character. In the last two acts, it rises to far greater heights, is far more moving, than any part of the action in All For Love. The fifth act of Antony and Cleopatra in which Cleopatra alone maintains the action is much more effective than the whole of All For Love. Scott recognizes that Shakespeare's ending is more powerful than Dryden's admittedly dramatic ending, but he believes that Dryden's is "better adapted to theatrical effect".(8) Yet, what could be more theatrical than a dominant, independent, acutely intelligent woman deliberately and rationally deciding between life and death? Thus, whereas Dryden's plan has no grave faults, Shakespeare's less coherent construction is bolstered by better handling of dramatic issues.

Difference in dramatic purpose is the most fundamental difference between the two plays. Shakespeare's primary purpose is to show the inevitable order of the world in which evil is expelled only with a waste of good.(9) His secondary purpose is to show the struggle in the soul of a great man with a tragic flaw.

Dryden's dramatic purpose is nothing like Shakespeare's. It is merely the purpose of the heroic play: to show the omni-

potence of love. It is difficult to understand Professor Saintsbury's reason for minimizing the heroic elements in All For Love:

> The influence of Shakespeare, returning to the height of flood which it had marked in the Essay of Dramatic Poesy, has swept away almost all the Heroic rubbish and rococo. (10)

This statement is not justified, for though All For Love is not a representative heroic play, its theme of male subservience to all-important, all-powerful love is part of the "heroic" formula. Rococo may be absent, but "heroic" stylization is an internal part of the play. Dryden's purpose was, therefore, to show a lofty, romantic love which makes unimportant everything opposed to it. If there is a real struggle, Dryden's genius was not adequate to a clear dramatic revelation of it.

The difference between the characterizations of Antony and Cleopatra and those of All For Love is a direct gauge to the dramatic effectiveness of the two plays. In insight into human nature, Shakespeare far excels Dryden. It is regrettable that in writing All For Love, Dryden had not been enlightened by Shakespeare's power of characterization. It is Shakespeare's great merit that his characters reveal their nature by everything that they say. Thus, a Shakespearian character reveals himself in a natural, indirect manner. Dryden's characters, to the contrary, treat themselves as machinery and reveal themselves by laboured self-analysis. Or, a close associate describes them

in the same deliberate, mechanical way. Not only is Dryden's method of revealing character less engaging than Shakespeare's, but his characters are less interesting because they have less to reveal. A comparison of characters will show how Dryden failed to reach the goal which he set for himself.

Shakespeare's Antony is marked by a greatness of spirit which is found in many other Shakespearian heroes such as Othello, Banquo, and even Timon. Such a nature is ingenuous and magnanimous. Antony acts like a typical soldier in relying not on intrigue but on direct action. That his easily moved rage is quickly overcome by warm, noble generosity proves him magnanimous. He is as brave and virile as Coriolanus, but is easily urged to foolhardiness. Like many another soldier, he is pleasure-loving. He cannot dwell for a moment on a purely imaginery victory without further imagining the subsequent celebration. This tendency arises from his tragic defect, a voluptuous, emotional nature which thwarts purposefulness. Because of his passionate nature, Antony is readily managed by women: first by Fulvia, then by Cleopatra.

Yet Shakespeare's Antony does not accept feminine control passively. He resents male bondage to woman's subtlety. He does have a conflict which he expresses frankly and forcibly:

> These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,
> Or lose myself in dotage. (11)

He does not break his "Egyptian fetters," and with his eyes wide open, marches to his ruin. He cannot compromise.(12) After Antony's death, the soldier Agrippa summarily praises him and expounds the mediaeval (and Elizabethan) conception of tragedy:

> A rarer spirit never
> Did steer humanity; but you gods will give us
> Some faults to make us men. (13)

Dryden's Antony is easy to analyze. A simple being, he has neither the interesting personality nor the grandeur of Shakespeare's Antony. He is typical of the heroes of Dryden's heroic plays in being dominated by a mystical, romantic attachment to his mistress. Yet, he differs from Montezuma and Almanzor in lacking their superiority over objective circumstances and other people. Dryden shows Antony in the last stage of his catastrophe. Shakespeare's Antony, or even one of Dryden's own supermen, would have tried to extricate himself. Dryden's Antony does not temper his effeminacy by any action or even bravado. He is paralyzed by love and melancholy.

That Dryden's Antony cannot break from Cleopatra, his reactions to the arguments and activities of Ventidius, Octavia and Dolabella prove. Ventidius does not arouse Antony by warning him of Caesar's might. He moves him temporarily by defaming Cleopatra. Octavia causes embarrassment, not struggle. She "puts Antony on the spot," but soon enough, he forgets her arguments for returning to her, and follows his inclinations. As he is being ruined, he is jealous of Dolabella, rather than

fearful of Caesar.(14) The only problem that Dryden's self-commiserating hero ever had is his uncertainty about his mistress' love.

Shakespeare's Cleopatra and Dryden's also differ greatly. Typical of Shakespeare's great creations, his Cleopatra reveals herself dramatically by everything that she says. She is intelligent; an energetic executive and a shrewd bargainer. She is a discerning judge of human nature and is clever in handling other people. She can practice mental reserve, even though she has difficulty in controlling her violent temper. Her fine intellect is not used openly. She is the spirit of intrigue; taunting, dissembling, cunning, and insidious. She manipulates everyone, particularly Antony, to her future advantage. Emotionally, she is as complex as intellectually; sensitive enough to wonder if her death will disturb Antony as little as did Fulvia's. Yet, her vehement nature overwhelms her capacity for sympathy, as she orders the messenger of ill-tidings (Act II, scene v.) to be whipped. She passionately loves Antony and sensuously conjures images of love. She is as fiery as any shrew, though a majestic queen. At her death, she describes herself accurately:

> I am fire and air; my other elements
> I give to baser life. (15)

Whereas Shakespeare's Cleopatra is a portrait of a great woman, Dryden's is a typical product of period psychology and taste. His Cleopatra has none of the personal qualities which give force to drama. She is the stereotyped heroine of

the heroic play: too constant to cause serious complications, too naive to conceal her emotions, and too honest to use intrigue. She differs from the stock type in lacking Almahide's self-righteous composure. Rather, she is easily ruffled.

Dryden's Cleopatra lacks feminine magnetism. She never could have held Shakespeare's Antony. Only an audience which delighted in romance heroines could have been satisfied with this simplified Cleopatra, who proves herself unfit for drama when she says:

> Nature meant me
> A wife, a silly, harmless, household dove . . (16)

Scott thought that Dryden's secondary characters were more vital than Shakespeare's. (17) Although Dryden did well to simplify the dramatis personae, Scott's opinion is not justified. Only here and there does a secondary character in Dryden's play excel in dramatic interest its counterpart in Shakespeare's, Otherwise, Shakespeare is supreme in vivid characterization.

The most notable exception to Scott's decision is Enobarbus. This character excels Dryden's Ventidius who plays nearly the same role. Enorbarbus, though an individual commentator, functions as a chorus. A cynic and a misogynist, he utters sententious remarks. Since he is living in a perfidious world, his cynical quips serve as realism. He sets the mood of the play up to the tragic ending.

Ventidius also is a commentator. His remarks, how-

ever, are not caustic witticisms and occasionally approach bathos. With his soldierly and fatherly advice, he is just one of the influences (or more accurately, irritations) on Antony.

Shakespeare made an interesting study of Octavius Caesar. Although Octavius is often unappealing because he is more intellectual than emotional, he is a good portrayal of the man who knows the way to success.

Dryden does not include Octavius in his dramatis personae. His part in the play is entirely indirect, through description by Antony and Ventidius. Though having the "cold youth" hovering in the background as a force of destiny is dramatically effective, Shakespeare's result is superior because of great characterization.

Dryden excelled Shakespeare's Octavia who is merely a virtuous lady intended as a contrast to Cleopatra.(18) This Octavia is more decent than Cleopatra, but much less positive.

Dryden's Octavia is more stalwart. Dryden feared that he had used poor judgment in taking her to Alexandria, since she draws sympathy away from the lovers.(19) Her cause does not prove that the love-affair is immoral, but her rôle is not a mistake. Her generosity to Antony, her willingness to call off her brother and then be deserted at Athens, and her self-control furnish a picture of Roman strength in contrast to sentimental weakness in the main characters. Her offers of reconciliation serve to show how advantageous would be Antony's position if he

would return to his sense of duty. The sympathy of Dryden and his contemporaries, however, was with love rather than with honour; he wished to show that Antony's world was "well lost".

Two obscure characters in Shakespeare's play, Alexas and Mardian, evidently suggested to Dryden his own Alexas. This character is not only the most striking portrayal in All For Love, but he excels all secondary characters in Antony and Cleopatra, except Enobarbus. Alexas has such a vital personality that much dramatic interest centers in him. Characteristics of the traditional Cleopatra, her intelligence, her shrewdness, her adeptness in intrigue (all of which Dryden considered unworthy of his "idealistic" heroine), he has transferred to Alexas.

Alexas is the subtle courtier who believes in trickery rather than force. He alone opposes Ventidius, thereby giving the play what vicissitudes of drama it has. He is cowardly in facing death and the other characters consider him a traitor. However, he is not an unsympathetic character, for he is the only member of Cleopatra's household who understands the dangers confronting Egypt and tries to save his country and queen.

Of the remaining characters, some are better in the earlier play; others, in the later. Dolabella is more interesting as a hero's friend than Eros. Cleopatra's maids are about equal in the two plays. Dryden presents no military character, not even Ventidius, who equals as a study of the professional

soldier Shakespeare's briefly appearing Dercetas. This character proves as clearly as Shakespeare's grander creations that his author was a portrait-painter of human nature. For his purposes, however, Dryden did well not to include incidental rôles of short duration. The simplified tableau conformed to the classical tenets of his art.

Upon a different foundation, Dryden emulated Shakespeare. His direct imitation on a parallel, but separate basis divides into three categories, which are not exclusive of one another. First, there is an imitation of Shakespeare's style, which appears in incidental passages throughout the play. Second, there is a parallel treatment of Cleopatra's voyage down the Cydnus. Third, Druden has constructed a scene between Antony and Ventidius which resembles Shakespeare's tent quarrel episode (Julius Caesar, Act IV, scene iii) between Brutus and Cassius. Dryden liked this scene and imitated it in several of his later plays.

In the Preface of All For Love, Dryden declares that he is imitating Shakespeare's style:

> In my style, I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare; which that I might perform more freely, I have disencumbered myself from rhyme. (20)

Although his use of blank verse allows Dryden to imitate, it does not help him to rival Shakespeare. Besides difference in their abilities, the two dramatists could never use the same vocabulary. The English language of Dryden's day had been

refined, though otherwise, not improved. His contemporaries had impoverished the resources of the language. His ear had been accustomed to the stricter pattern of the heroic couplet. He was therefore unable to cultivate the free-flowing movement of Elizabethan blank verse. Then, abilities differed greatly. Shakespeare could use his verse for expressing every shade of character and variation of mood. Dryden is always the same, though where Shakespeare's thought and verse influence him, he rises above himself.

Where Dryden succeeded and where he failed to capture Shakespearian excellence, a brief examination of great passages in All For Love reveals. Early in the play, he imitates the tantrum staged by Shakespeare's Antony in which he bids "Rome in Tiber melt". Says Dryden's Antony:

> Die! rather let me perish: loosened nature
> Leap from its hinges! Sink the props of heav'n,
> And fall the skies to crush the nether world!
> My eyes, my soul, my all! (21)

Although the allusions to forces of nature are Shakespearian, this passage is an unsuccessful imitation. The wild extravagancy of the images echoes the bombast of the heroic play. It lacks the dignity of Antony's simple, direct statement at a corresponding point in Shakespeare's play:

> This is my place.

Other passages, however, reach Shakespeare's heights and

rival the beauty of his similes:

> I must be silent, for my soul is busy
> About a nobler work: she's new come home,
> Like a long-absent man, and wanders o'er
> Each room, a stranger to her own, to look
> If all be safe. (22)

At times Dryden equals Shakespeare in the poetic treatment of nature:

> Her eyes have pow'r beyond thessalian charms
> To draw the moon from heav'n; for eloquence,
> The sea-green Sirens taught her voice their flatt'ry;
> And, while she speaks, night steals upon the day,
> Unmarked of those that hear. (23)

He also tried to express Shakespeare's philosophy. The following passage is a clever imitation of Portia's views on justice and mercy:

> Heav'n has but
> Our sorrow for our sins; and then delights
> To pardon erring man: sweet mercy seems
> Its darling attribute, which limits justice;
> As if there were degrees to infinite,
> And infinite would rather want perfection
> Than punish to extent. (24)

The last three lines are less Shakespearian than the first. They leave exposed the gears of Dryden's mechanical mind. It is the lyrical beauty of such passages that has won critical esteem for <u>All For Love</u>.

Besides emulating Shakespearian imagery, Dryden used various mechanical tricks to make his blank verse resemble Shakespeare's. One example will serve for many: the Shakespearian echo phrase:

Millions of blessings wait you to the wars;
Millions of sighs and tears she sends you too . . .(25)

- - - - - - - - - - -

Who made him cheap at Rome, but Cleopatra?
Who made him scorned abroad, but Cleopatra? (26)

Dryden parallels Shakespeare's account of Cleopatra's trip down the Cydnus. Whereas Scott prefers Dryden's version, other critics consider him reckless for inviting a direct comparison with Shakespeare, though he does compare favourably. Shakespeare's voyage is a greater work of art, but according to Restoration standards, Dryden has wrought improvements.

His version shows that he is unable to escape from the classical regularity to which the heroic couplet has accustomed him:

Her galley down the silver Cydnos rowed
The tackling silk, the streamers waved with gold. (27)

Although both versions of the Cydnus trip are full of run-on lines, Dryden's is blocked out into neat, well-measured phrases, whereas Shakespeare's is an evenly flowing stream of imagery. Shakespeare, therefore, is more uniformly lyrical, whereas Dryden distracts his reader or hearer by making him admire classical niceness.

Dryden has omitted fragrance which adds delight to Shakespeare's "voyage". Furthermore, his appeals to sight and sound are limited by a classicist's discretion. Shakespeare's "voyage poem," to the contrary, is as fanciful as he can make

it. There is a self-conscious preciseness, a sense of artificial balance and enumeration, in Dryden's lines:

> The silver oars kept time; and while they played,
> The hearing gave new pleasure to the sight,
> And both to thought. (28)

Shakespeare is not as openly analytical. His "voyage poem" relies solely on poetic fancy.

As Dryden admitted in the Preface to All For Love, he was proud of the scene between Antony and Ventidius in the first act. This scene resembles Shakespeare's Brutus-and-Cassius tent quarrel (Julius Caesar, Act IV, scene iii). Each is a scene in which two Roman soldiers quarrel, though these episodes differ greatly in dramatic and literary value. Dryden here parallels Shakespeare, but does not rival him. (Evidence that Dryden was conscious of the Brutus-and-Cassius quarrel appears in the already quoted Prologue to Aureng-Zebe.)

The personalities of Brutus and Cassius make their quarrel more dramatic than that between Antony and Ventidius. Brutus and Cassius are both great men; full-spirited and virile. Ventidius is a capable and loyal soldier, but he is quarreling with an amorous weakling. Whereas Brutus and Cassius were arguing about their relationship as active co-leaders, Ventidius is merely trying to save Antony who would rather evade rescue than submit to it. The scene between Brutus and Cassius portrays stalwart Roman stoicism. Dryden's scene, to the contrary, has

stage directions for weeping and embracing. In harmony with great character, the language of the Brutus-and-Cassius scene is vigorous throughout. In contrast, the language of Dryden's scene is that of bickering and childish petulance, tempered only by Ventidius' outbursts of loyalty and Antony's demonstrative filial devotion.

The Restoration courtiers preferred a simpler, softer, less masculine world. The audience liked the emotional lover, not the stoic Roman soldier. Their favourite theme was the chimera of romantic love. Great character, therefore, was impossible in this play. Where there is neither great character nor important issue, great dialogue is rare. Hence, Dryden in this scene did not come up to the Shakespearian standard.

Dryden's emulation aided him only in poetry. Certain passages (not the whole) approach Shakespeare's average. Shakespeare's deeper conception of tragedy did not influence him. Greater characterization did not inspire him with force to rise above being best writer of heroic plays. He has emulated, but not matched Shakespeare.

V. TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

The story of Troilus and Cressida which had an intricate and fascinating development in the Middle Ages was well known in Elizabethan England and well liked by verse-writers and prose-romancers. That the love-story was an accretion to the Illiad, of much later date, and that Troilus was a Homeric hero was forgotten. The romance was valued for its emotional content and relevance to human nature. By the time that Shakespeare availed himself of this material, which had received highly developed artistic handling from Chaucer and others, the characters of the story had become well established. Troilus was a symbol for constancy; Cressida, for unfaithfulness. Time had degraded Pandarus until his name was a symbol for the go-between. Incidents in the love-story had likewise become traditional. To assume, however, that Shakespeare had his hands tied by tradition is a mistake. Upon the basic foundation of the type Shakespeare could erect a complex character and within the limits of any plot could achieve the effect which he desired.

Shakespeare's Troilus And Cressida is a forcibly realistic drama based upon the traditional story. Most critics who have analyzed this play have expressed distaste for it. Their objections are: that the characters are unappealing; that the attitudes expressed by several of the prominent characters are unelevating; that no idealism counter-balances the illicit love affair; that the inconclusive ending leaves the reader or

beholder unsatisfied. The tone or mood of the whole is therefore held to be unwholesome. The characters, as they are the vehicle for the attitudes and philosophy set forth, are the primary cause of adverse criticism.

Troilus is the chief character, for it is his disappointment which gives the play most of its emotional content. Although he is not built on a grand scale, he has traits which appear in many of Shakespeare's heroes. He is ingenuous and noble; sincere and deadly earnest. Yet, he is an inexperienced youngster, a type that Shakespeare rarely treated seriously. He is a young man feeling the joys and pains of love for the first time. Circumstances have never before required him to control his heart. His emotional nature sustains a shock for which it is not prepared. His expression of this shock is the most poignant part of the drama. Yet, despite Shakespeare's understanding treatment of Troilus, critics of the play have condemned the young warrior-lover. They believe that it is to Troilus' discredit that he is sensual. His warm-bloodedness is proven by his soliloquizing as Pandarus goes off to fetch Cressida. Professor Tatlock expresses the usual reaction to this sensuality when he says of him, "....only as a lover is he abased." (1) That he is not abased as a lover is revealed by comparing his attitude toward love with that of Thersites, or such sensual cynics Iago and Enobarbus. Troilus does cherish constancy as an ideal, though he is otherwise little more than a lustful boy.

Though not abased, he is not a great character.

Shakespeare failed to take advantage of Chaucer's subtle and sympathetic treatment of Cressida, who had become a by-word for the wanton. It had become the fashion to debunk the Homeric world. The characters had been denigrated as the world had been debased. Shakespeare portrays the degenerate world with its unheroic characters. His Cressida fits into the scheme. Neither her nature nor her upbringing is auspicious to fidelity. Her father is a traitor and the unprincipled Pandarus is her guide. In her world, lives are being wasted over a perfidious harlot in a war between a cuckold and a cuckold-maker. It is little wonder that she was not strong enough to uphold her pledge to Troilus. Her tragedy is that despite an initial desire to be faithful, she is dragged down by perverse elements in her nature and surroundings. However, her weakness detracts from the love-affair. Troilus' love is not ideal, for its object is a wanton.

Shakespeare employed the stereotyped Pandarus. Indeed, his go-between is a poor thing beside Chaucer's complex blend of humour, worldliness, sympathy and good will. From the time of Chaucer to that of Shakespeare, Pandarus had degenerated greatly. To Shakespeare, he was primarily a pimp.

Owing to the myth that European nations were descended from Aeneas, writers customarily debased the Greek

warriors and exalted the Trojans. Shakespeare remains free from this tradition. Or Rather, he abides by it only when he chooses. He treats the Greek chieftains, Agamemnon, Nestor, and Ulysses sympathetically; making them, particularly Ulysses, interpreters of social philosophy. They give the play most of its reflective content. The wily Ulysses also serves as a shrewd analyst of human nature. He describes the hero and heroine objectively and discerningly. Achilles and Ajax, Shakespeare presents as tradition had shaped them. Achilles is hopelessly lost in self-love, and recognizes no authority or ideal. His insubordination and sloth make him a foil to Ulysses. The great speeches on the "Specialty of Rule" and the necessity for activity (both made by Ulysses) are occasioned by Achilles' behaviour. Ajax had long been typed as a plethoric lout; proud, insolent, jealous, and as selfish as Achilles. His ignoble behavious in the tournament scene makes him a foil to the chivalrous.Hector. Diomedes is a caddish, unprincipled soldier who along with Achilles, Ajax, and Thersites, shows that the Greek side lacks moral purpose.

Thersites, the commentator, is a privileged venom-thrower. Although he is nominally a Greek, the other Greeks do not expect him to be loyal to their cause. He functions as a detached one-man chorus who described the situation, interprets the actions of others and helps to establish the mood. He tells us plainly how futile is this war that is being fought over an unfaithful woman who is not worth the

bother. He is a scurrilous character, and a world interpreted by Thersites cannot represent Shakespeare at his best.

Hector is presented as the traditional Trojan hero. Shakespeare also makes him a vehicle for cogent moral philosophizing. In discussing the proposed return of Helen, Hector shows that he knows the Trojan cause to be wrong. This adds to the sense of futility.

The inconclusive ending to the love-story disturbs most readers as much as the bitter cynicism expressed by certain characters. Many critics maintain that Shakespeare did not write Act V, scenes iv-x. They find these scenes inferior in action, characterization and verse. It disturbs them that the betrayal of Troilus' love is not revenged by Cressida's punishment. The fifth act is not, however, unworthy of Shakespeare. Frustrated love always leaves its victim with a feeling of incompleteness. That Cressida should be left unpunished with Troilus forced to reconcile himself to his loss as best he can is robust realism. (Dryden in revising this play assumed the whole to be Shakespeare's).

The mood is that of futility. The reader is left disillusioned about human nature. Achilles' and Ajax' egoism and cynical attitude towards honour, Thersites' animalistic interpretations of love, Pandarus' pimping, and the unideal nature of the love-affair are not counter-balanced by the nobility and wisdom of the Greek leaders and Hector. Still,

bitter cynicism towards love and honour often appears in Shakespeare's plays, though idealism usually outweighs it.(2)

Troilus And Cressida, like Antony And Cleopatra, includes military and political affairs. According to neo-classical standards, such breadth of scope lessens dramatic effectiveness. However, even if this miscellaneity weakens unity of action, it has some worth. If the play were limited to the love-story, it would lack its reflections on social order, moral obligation, and value.

Dryden re-organized and re-wrote Shakespeare's Troilus And Cressida in 1679. Prefixed to this Shakespeare-adaptation was The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy. In this essay, Dryden outlines the principles for playwriting which he has taken from Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus. He also explains the changes which he has made in the play. These should conform to the tenets expounded. This is his most significant critical pronouncement since the Essay of Dramatic Poesy.

Dryden begins his analysis of drama by a classical reference:

> Tragedy is thus defined by Aristotle (omitting what I thought unnecessary in his definition). It is am imitation of one entire, great, and probable action; not told, but represented; which, by moving in us fear and pity, is conducive to the purging of those two passions in our minds. (3)

He then emphasizes unity of action. Two actions cause

distraction. If a comic is coupled with a tragic, the dramatic purpose of the latter is obstructed.

Dryden next defines the moral purpose of tragedy. First, he states the Neo-Stoical view of the seventeenth century:

> To purge the passions by example is..... the particular instruction which belongs to tragedy. (4)

According to this theory, the spectator is purged of unwholesome passions by seeing an exalted man ruined by passionate action. Dryden was, however, influenced more by Rapin's theory of the sentimental function of tragedy. Rapin emphasizes pity. The spectator becomes a happier and more moral man if he experiences whole-hearted commiseration for someone else. Dryden asserts that characters who are thus to be pitied must be virtuous. Agreeing with his authorities that a perfect character would lack verisimilitude and dramatic value, he insists only that the good outweigh the bad. Pity must be properly centred. It must not be dissipated upon more than one or two characters.

Dryden presents his formula for characterization. He reduces character to "manners":

> The manners, in a poem, are understood to be those inclinations, whether natural or acquired, which move and carry us to actions, good, bad, or indifferent in a play; or which incline the persons to such or such actions. (5)

Manners must conform to four basic rules; (1) They must be apparent. (2) They must be suitable to the age, sex, and dignity of the person represented. (3) "The third property of manners is resemblance; and this is founded upon the particular characters of men, as we have them delivered to us by relation or history; that is, when a poet has the known character of this or that man before him, he is bound to represent him such, at least not contrary to that which fame has reported him to have been." (Dryden violates this rule by making Cressida faithful). (4) "The last property of manners is, that they be constant and equal, that is, maintained the same through the whole design." (6) Character then is derived from manners. It is that "which distinguishes one man from another." (The modern term is "personality".)

After praising Shakespeare's skill in portraying manners, Dryden discusses the passions: anger, hatred, love, ambition, jealousy and revenge. He advises restraint:

> No man should pretend to write, who cannot temper his fancy with his judgment: nothing is more dangerous to a raw horseman, than a hot-mouthed jade without a curb. (7)

He next asserts that when the poet is developing a passion, he should exclude anything which might distract the audience. He cites a frequent blunder of his own for which he was ridiculed in The Rehearsal: the practice of having a character make a simile when in distress.

Guided by classical principles and the outlook of his age, Dryden re-modelled Troilus And Cressida. In the preface, he expresses his objections to Shakespeare's play and outlines his changes. He believes that Shakespeare's energy flags in portraying Pandarus and Thersites; that Hector and Troilus are unfinished characters; that the final portion of the play is a confused medley of cursory, riotous scenes. His main objection is, however, that "Cressida is false, and is not punished." It was chiefly this that prompted him to revise the play, for it was generally agreed in Dryden's period that neither the hero nor the heroine should be a villain.

As Dryden explains his changes, he has "new-modelled the plot"; rejected many unnecessary persons; finished those characters which he believed to be "unfinished"; and made Andromache prominent. He has re-arranged the scenes so that they all contribute to one action. Comic scenes are divided from tragic. He has added scenes, including a whole fifth act which in both plot and verse is original. He has simplified the language where he follows Shakespeare's dialogue.

Dryden's Troilus And Cressida has more prominent "heroic" elements than All For Love. Although his preface does not indicate that he has reverted to his old dramatic purpose, he has made "heroic" characters, scenes, and dialogue. This tone does not, however, dominate the play. The comic scenes detract from it heavily. Their coarse buffoonery and

unelevating ribaldry are incongruous with a story of idealistic love. Dryden further obscures his purpose by references to religion and contemporary politics. The play abounds in anti-clericalism and anti-Whiggism. The reader may wonder: Is it Dryden's purpose to dramatize a love-story, to present farcical vulgarity, or to ridicule priests and political adversaries?

The heroic tone of the play depends upon the chief characters. Dryden's Troilus is a composite of Shakespeare's boy-lover and "Drawcansir". In Act II, scene ii, while bickering with Pandarus, he reveals his ingenuous nature in almost the exact words of Shakespeare. Towards the end of the same scene, however, his protestations of anxiety sound more theatrical than sincere:

> Still thou flatter'st me; but pr'y thee
> flatter still; for I would hope; I
> would not wake out of my pleasing
> dream. O Hope, how sweet thou art!
> but to hope always, and have
> no effect of what we hope. (8)

In Act IV, scene ii, his agony over Diomedes' meeting with Cressida is much less moving than in Shakespeare's play. Later in the same scene, he battles verbally with his rival. He answers Diomedes with theatrical bravado which recalls the heroic play. As Cressida dies, he rants like Maximin and Almanzor:

> May all my curses, and ten thousand more,
> Heavier than they, fall back upon my head;
> Pelion and Ossa, from the giants' graves
> Be torn by some avenging deity,
> And hurled at me, a bolder wretch than they, (9)
> Who durst invade the skies!

In the fifth Act, Troilus is more "Drawcansir" than a deeply hurt lover.

Cressida is typical of Dryden's heroines. She borrows nothing from the traditional wanton. Whereas Shakespeare gave us a complex woman, Dryden has given us another of his "good girls". She shares the same character with Almahide and the Cleopatra of All For Love. She has femininity unhardened by sophistication; sheer simplicity unaltered by experience or intelligence. She moralizes tritely. Despite the melodramatic confrontation scenes by which Dryden tries to invigorate his play, the heroine makes dramatic tension impossible. Her remarks weaken the play with bathos. (This type was actually approved as "heroic" by the Restoration audience). Whereas Shakespeare's Cressida answers her uncle with pointed, witty sarcasm, Dryden's heroine employs straightforward, humourless moralizing;

> For these good procuring offices
> you'll be damned one day, (10)
> uncle.

In Act III, scene ii, she makes a much shortened vow of fidelity. In view of the denouement, this speech has lost its ironic significance. In Act IV, scene ii, Cressida in sending away Diomedes makes dramatic tension impossible when she says:

> Not a word more, good night___I hope forever:
> Thus to deceive deceivers is no fraud. Aside (11)

The effect would be the same if the actress were to turn to the audience and say, "Don't worry, folks, I'm still a good girl." She descends to lowest bathos in venting her indignation over Diomedes' claim to her love. She is the self-righteous virgin of the heroic play, when she remonstrates preachingly:

> O unexampled, frontless impudence! (12)

As she dies, she becomes mawkish:

> Stand off, and touch me not, thou traitor Diomede;-
> But you, my only Troilus, come near. (13)

She expresses nothing as dramatic as the qualms of conscience which torment Shakespeare's Cressida.

Dryden exmploys the traditional Pandarus, though he has intensified the go-between's animal nature. His Pandarus, like Shakespeare's, is pre-occupied with the physical attractiveness of both sexes. Yet, Dryden's pimp expresses his reactions more vulgarly. He becomes unnecessarily erotic in describing the bed scene between Paris and Helen. Whereas Shakespeare's Pandarus limited his cynicism to love, Dryden's Pandarus becomes more loathesome by professing that oaths are merely for expedience. When the lovers have their first meeting, Pandarus' account of the bed's creaking is low buffoonery and does not belong in a drama of ideal love.

Dryden expands the role of Diomedes. He and Calchas

together enact whatever treachery is in the play, except Achilles' attack on Hector. He is the deflated egotist who spitefully seeks to ruin the lovers because Cressida has not favoured him. He caddishly tells Troilus that he and Cressida have made sport of him and to prove that she has accepted his love, he shows Troilus the ring which the latter has given as a pledge. He is a convincing villain, though it is not plausible that in the final scene Troilus should be influenced entirely by Diomedes and not at all by Cressida.

Dryden follows Shakespeare's characterization of the Greek chieftains. They are presented as illustrious men lamenting the insubordination of their army. Their reflective speeches are greatly shortened. In the fifth act (original with Dryden), the scene in which the Greek chieftains describe the progress of the battle is interesting. Here, Dryden stresses Ulysses' role as "the power behind the throne". Ulysses contrives the strategy of the Greek army. Dryden did not, however, develop Nestor and Agamemnon as well as did Shakespeare.

Dryden's Thersites differs greatly from Shakespeare's. In the earlier work, he had acted solely as a scurvy - minded commentator who re-inforced the cynical tone of the play. Dryden employs him as a commentator only part of the time. Otherwise, he is only a scurrilous buffoon. Dryden exploited every potentiality for licentious comedy that he could find in

the traditional character. Often Thersites becomes foul-mouthed, contributing nothing valuable to the play. In Act IV, scene ii, he acts as a commentator in calling Diomedes a "false-hearted rogue". In describing the subsequent scene between Diomedes and Cressida (with Troilus at the door), he expresses the sensual cynicism associated with Shakespeare's character. Here, however, his comments are inappropriate because of the "heroic" tone which Cressida, Troilus, Hector and Andromache give to the play.

Dryden does not deviate from the traditional Achilles and Ajax. Achilles again promotes inactivity in the Greek army. He is an insolent, insubordinate egotist. Dryden, however, dramatizes his wrath over the death of Patroclus, where Shakespeare did not. Dryden's Achilles in raging over his friend's catastrophe becomes as eloquent and dramatic as Ulysses. Ajax, Dryden portrays traditionally as a proud, valiant blockhead.

Dryden rates Shakespeare's Hector as "unfinished". Although he expanded him, it is upon Shakespeare's foundation that he builds. Hector in both plays is the exemplar of gallantry. In the added scene between him and Troilus, the chivalrous warrior becomes a magnanimous elder brother.

Hector's wife, Andromache, is insignificant in Shakespeare's work. Dryden has virtually added her. Unfortunately, this addition is not gainful, for Andromache

brings with her only the rhodomontade of the heroic play. She is Almanzor in the form of woman. The scene in which she displays her unnatural militancy by exhorting Hector to whom she brings her little son's challenge to the Greeks is grotesque, indeed ludicrous. Dryden transfers Cassandra's foreboding dreams to Andromache. Where she expresses her anxiety over Hector bebause of dreams and other omens, she created the exaggerated tension of the heroic play.

Dryden uses Cressida's father, Calchas, for disposing of her responsibility in the intrigue with Diomedes. Encouraging Diomedes is made Calchas' plan. He is an uninteresting character serving an undramatic purpose in the plot.

Structurally, Dryden's play is superior to Shakespeare's. The action is well unified and therefore easy to follow. Dryden has improved the play by minimising shifts of location. Although the tragic and the comic cannot be completely separated, he has grouped tragic scenes and comic scenes so that they detract very little from each other. However, despite its advantages, his structure seems artificial. The reason for this is his strict adherence to liaison des scènes, a rule for maintaining the action by inter-related encounters. If two characters are on the scene and one leaves, another enters to begin a new episode with the one remaining. Thus each scene has an inter-connectedness. This rule makes Dryden's plays a series of confrontations. Though easy to follow, his plotting does not permit an expansive view of human life. Shakespeare,

to the contrary, succeeds in portraying the whole.

Dryden shrewdly exploited a situation which Shakespeare neglected: the point where Troilus learns from Hector (Aeneas in Shakespeare's play) that Cressida must leave Troy. Dryden was rightly proud of this scene. It surpasses his Antony-and-Ventidius dispute because it lacks the background of effeminate dotage and depicts more virile men arguing more dramatically about a more respectable love-relationship. Here, Dryden penetrates more deeply into Troilus' emotional nature than elsewhere in his version. Troilus expresses his shock in powerful language. The swing back and forth of exasperation is dramatic. Troilus states the ethics of his case when he says that Helen, not Cressida, should be surrendered to the Greeks. Hector realizes the soundness of this argument and the scene ends with expressions of fraternal devotion as each brother graciously offers to yield. Dryden denies that this is an imitation of Shakespeare's Brutus-and-Cassius quarrel. He declares that he has followed Euripides' scene between Agamemnon and Menelaus in which the brothers quarrel over the sacrifice of Iphigenia. Scott and Hazelton Spencer, nevertheless, call it an imitation of the Brutus-and-Cassius dispute. It certainly is the same type of scene! In verse and content, it compares favourably with Shakespeare's great episode.

Dryden's decisive ending in which love and honour are vindicated is according to Restoration standards an

"improvement" of Shakespeare. Here, however, we are in the artificial world of the heroic play where love and honour regulate everything. If tragedy should depict the hopes and fears, frustrations and humiliations of real humanity, Dryden's artificial ending cannot be approved. His play ends as a simple Restoration heroine protests to a stubborn "Drawcansir" that she is innocent. This dénouement is effeminate beside Shakespeare's inconclusive ending which intensifies a stern picture of male frustration. Scott accurately appraises Dryden's plan:

> His plot, though more artificial, is at the same time more trite than that of Shakespeare. The device by which Troilus is led to doubt the constancy of Cressida is much less natural than that she should have been actually inconstant; her vindication by suicide is a clumsy, as well as a hackneyed expedient; and there is too much drum and trumpet in the grand finale, where both "Troilus and Diomede fight and both parties engage at the same time." (14)

Hazelton Spencer has outlined Dryden's changes in Shakespeare's language: condensations and simplifications, retro-spective corrections in grammar, modernizations in terms and single words, literalizations, and substitutions for decorum and elegance. (15) Some of these changes are unmistakably beneficial. Others cause loss in descriptive value or dramatic force as well as the desired gain in clarity or simplicity. Some beneficial changes are:

> So represents he thee, though more unlike
> Than Vulcan is to Venus. (16)

for:

That's done, as near as the extremest ends
Of parallels, as like as Vulcan and his wife. (17)

- - - - - - - - -

Let this be granted, and Achilles' horse
Is more of use than he. (18)

for:

Let this be granted, and Achilles' horse
Makes many Thetis' sons. (19)

A change to literal plainness which causes loss in suggestive imagery is:

But let the tempest once inrage that Sea (20)

for:

But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage
The gentle Thetis. (21)

Calling Achilles "The chief of all our Host" in place of "The sinew, and the fore-hand of our Hoste" lessens dramatic force in the description of an individual.

Dryden has shortened all reflective speeches. The debate over Helen which is really a study in value is greatly abridged, although each speech carries the same argument. The pithy speeches of Ulysses are shortened and "Time, my Lord, hath a wallet at his back" is absent. Such changes have dramatic value, for they accelerate the movement of the play. However, the loss in beautiful language and stimulating thought

is large.

In revising Troilus And Cressida, Dryden was not guided by Shakespeare's genius as much as could be wished. Despite his study of classical authorities and despite his boast to have finished Shakespeare's "unfinished" characters, he has produced shallow and unconvincing portraits. Who but a person habituated to heroic plays could find his naive lady more interesting than Shakespeare's fascinating strumpet? Who else could find his "Drawcansir" more moving than Shakespeare's passionate Troilus? Still, his play is easier to follow than Shakespeare's because of its well organized plot. It is more actable because of the prominenee given to theatrical confrontations. Simplicity makes the dialogue clearer. Yet, in attaining poetic heights and portraying human woes, Dryden has failed to improve or even to rival Shakespeare.

VI. FINAL DRAMA

The Spanish Friar appeared in 1681. Although this play has little artistic worth, it shows that Dryden had adopted many of Shakespeare's practices. As in Troilus And Cressida, serious and comic scenes are combined. In the former play, however, Dryden could not easily have separated the tragic from the comic. In the latter, he was not influenced by any well-established material to make the combination. He made it at his own discretion. Unfortunately, the result is not artistic, for the tragic and comic elements have practically no relationship. The dialogue is in blank verse for serious scenes; in prose for comic. Dryden follows the minor Elizabethan practice of ending his scenes with one or two tags of rhyme. The unity of place is observed. That of time is not. As the serious and comic plots are not properly integrated, the unity of action is neglected.

The Spanish Friar owed its popularity to its caricature of a Roman Catholic priest. Sir Walter Scott dares to compare Dominic (the priest) to Falstaff:

> He is, like Falstaff, a compound of sensuality and talent, finely varied by the professional traits with which it suited the author's purpose to adorn his character. (1)

What Scott does not mention is that Dominic, unlike Falstaff, is a degraded go-between who has not even one of the few virtues

which redeem Shakespeare's Pandarus. Lorenzo, the rounder, and Elvira, the harlot, are typical of the promiscuous adventurers that delighted the Restoration. The characters in the serious part, which is written in the Beaumont and Fletcher tradition, are as colourless as any that Dryden ever created.

As William Strunk, Jr. has shown in his Introduction to the Belles-Lettres Series edition of The Spanish Friar, Dryden took suggestions from Shakespeare for certain passages. None is a close imitation in style, even though it may be in blank verse. Similarity of subject is here the main reason for assuming that Shakespeare influenced Dryden:

> Love, almighty love; that which turn'd
> Jupiter into a town-bull has
> transformed me into a friar. (2)

This is a prose condensation of Shakespeare's longer poetic passage:

> The Gods themselves
> Humbling their deities to love, have taken
> The shapes of beasts upon them. Jupiter
> Became a bull and bellow'd; the green Neptune
> A ram and bleated; and the fire-rob'd god,
> Golden Apollo, a poor humble swain,
> As I seem now. (3)

The usurping queen's lament over the death of the rightful king has a parallel in Shakespeare. Dryden's passage reads:

> His body shall be royally interr'd,
> And the last funeral pomps adorn his hearse;
> I will my self (as I have cause too just),

> Be the chief mourner at his obsequies;
> And yearly fix on the revolving day
> The solemn marks of mourning, to atone
> And expiate my offences. (4)

Shakespeare's:

> One grave shall be for both; upon them shall
> The causes of their death appear, unto
> Our shame perpetual. Once a day I'll visit
> The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there
> Shall be my recreation. So long as nature
> Will bear up with this exercise, so long
> I daily vow to use it. (5)

The obvious difference is that Dryden uses pedantic abstractions, whereas Shakespeare's words are simple and concrete.

Dryden paraphrases Shylock's cry of despair:

> O my gold! my wife! my wife my gold! (6)

Dryden took a suggestion from Shakespeare's King John. Dryden's passage reads:

> The doors are all shut up; the wealthier sort,
> With arms a-cross, and hats upon their eyes,
> Walk to and fro before their silent shops;
> Whole droves of lenders crowd the banquers doors
> To call in money; those who have none, mark
> Where money goes, for when they rise 'tis plunder;
> The rabble gather round the man of news,
> And listen with their mouths;
> Some tell, some hear, some judge of news, some make it;
> And he who lies most loud, is most believ'd. (7)

Shakespeare's:

> Old men and beldams in the streets
> Do prophesy upon it dangerously.
> Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths;

> And When they talk of him they shake their heads
> And whisper one another in the ear;
> And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist,
> Whilst he that hears makes fearful action
> With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.
> I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus
> The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,
> With open mouth swallowing a Tailor's news;
> Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,
> Standing on slippers, which his nimble haste
> Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,
> Told of a many thousand warlike French
> That were embattailed and ranked in Kent.
> Another lean unwash'd artificer
> Cuts off his tale and talks of Arthur's death. (8)

The situations are almost the same. Yet, Shakespeare's description is much more vivid because he uses concrete, masculine terms: "hammer," "iron," "anvil," "shears and measure," and the picturesque "lean unwash'd artificer".

Dryden's queen in <u>The Spanish Friar</u> expresses the same mood to her maid as Desdemona to Emilia:

> My heavy heart, the prophetess of woes,
> Forboads some ill at hand; to sooth my sadness,
> Sing me the song which poor Olympia made,
> When false Bireno left her. (9)

However, Desdemona reveals it much more dramatically:

> My mother had a maid call'd Barbary;
> She was in love, and he she lov'd prov'd mad
> And did forsake her. She had a song of "Willow";
> An old thing 'twas, but it expressed her fortune,
> And she died singing it. That song to-night
> Will not go from my mind; I have much to do
> But to go hang my head all at one side
> And sing it like poor Barbary. (10)

<u>The Duke of Guise</u> was first acted in 1682 and first

printed in 1683. It is a political parallel in which Dryden collaborated with Lee. Dryden contributed the first scene, the fourth act and first part of the fifth. Since the play was a joint-work, it is difficult to determine which author was more responsible for the characterization. Each must have written his share according to principles agreed on by both. Dryden's part shows no improvement in characterization. The authors did not restrict themselves by the unities of time and place. The action is well unified. Dryden, like Shakespeare, employs both blank verse and prose. Each character speaks in the form appropriate to his station in life or nature. (Patrician characters, if ethical, speak in blank verse. Plebeians always speak in prose.)

The verse in the opening scene of The Duke of Guise shows how Dryden's prosody had changed since his rhymed-couplet melodramas. Indeed, it had changed noticeably since All For Love in which blank verse often conforms to the rigidity of the heroic couplet. The verse in The Duke of Guise is readily adaptable to both rhetorical speech and ordinary discourse. It is loose in structure, abounding in run-on lines. In form, at least, it resembles Shakespeare's average blank verse. The following is a fair specimen:

> All that are here, my friends, shall share my fortunes:
> There's spoil, preferments, wealth enough in France;
> 'Tis but deserve, and have. The Spanish king
> Consigns me fifty thousand crowns a week
> To raise, and to foment a civil war.
> 'Tis true, a pension, from a foreign prince,
> Sounds treason in the letter of the law,
> But good intentions justify the deed. (11)

Shakespeare influenced Dryden's imagery. From his models, Dryden learnt how to make forcible metaphors out of simple, concrete, common objects. Of Shakespeare's practice, Quiller-Couch writes:

> Or take Shakespeare. I wager you that no writer of English so constantly chooses the concrete word, in phrase after phrase forcing you to touch and see. No writer so insistently teaches the general through the particular.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> But you cannot help noting that whereas Marlowe steadily deals in abstract, nebulous terms, Shakespeare constantly uses concrete ones, which later he learned to pack into verse, such as:-
>
> Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care. (12)

In heroic drama, Dryden did not use homely imagery. Influenced by Shakespeare, he did use it in his later plays, as the following metaphor from The Duke of Guise shows:

> Why, then the noble is fit for birth;
> And labouring France cries out for midwife hands. (13)

Don Sebastian, which may consider Dryden's greatest drama, appeared in 1690. It is full of beautiful language and penetrating characterization. Its lively episodes are more acceptable to a masculine mind than the shilly-shallying confrontations of All For Love.

Although the verse includes some of Dryden's best, it is in characterization that Don Sebastian marks an advance. Even Sebastian, whom Saintsbury rates as an incomplete character, is

much more real than Dryden's previous heroes. His greatness as a man and king is genuine whereas Almanzor's was fantastic. Dryden intends Sebastian as a hero-king and provides instances to prove him of highest regal stature. Sebastian is noble, generous, and brave. His only fault (if it can be called a fault) is one of those sympathetic flaws which Dryden often gave to his heroes: he is strong-willed, indeed, stubborn. Occasionally, he defies his captors in a rant.

The heroine, Almeyda, resembles the hero; for, as Dryden explains in his preface, he gave them the same character so as to accentuate their relationship. Like Sebastian, Almeyda is strong-willed. She answers her tyrannical captor with a vigorous rant.

Neither hero nor heroine is Dryden's best character study in Don Sebastian. The most vital is Dorax, a complete man torn by a real conflict. Despite efforts to be consistent, Dorax is deeply loyal to the monarch against whom he has rebelled. He revolted because he believed himself abused where he should have been rewarded. The flaw in his nature is an overweening and self-conscious desire to acquire merit. His love of virtue is tempered by ambition. to distinguish himself in it. When his valorous service to his king is not rewarded as he believes it fitting, his proud heart can only rebel. His dignity is much more real than the honour of the heroic play. Honour, as he understands it, is a reciprocal relationship between sovereign

and subject in which the subject is loyal to the sovereign who properly rewards and protects his vassal. Dorax, who believes that his merit has been slighted, alternately respects, loves, and hates Sebastian. Trying to be a Mussulman, he cannot forget that he is a chivalrous European Christian. When Almeyda is carried away to be ravished by the Moslem king, Dorax represses his desire to rescue her by telling himself that he ought to right his own wrongs first. From being a renegade, he proceeds through great internal struggle to a reconciliation with Sebastian.

Dorax often expresses misanthropy equal to Timon's and haughty scorn of the rabble equal to Coriolanus'. When Benducar asks him why he is out of humour, he answers:

> I have cause
> Though all mankind is cause enough for satire. (14)

Though Dryden's supermen in the heroic plays never mentioned common soldiers, Dorax condemns them in the spirit of Coriolanus' rant, "You souls of geese that bear the shapes of men". "Drawcansir," however, is also evident:

> I spitted frogs; I crushed a heap of emmets;
> A hundred of them to a single soul,
> And that but scanty weight, too. The great devil
> Scarce thanked me for my pains; he swallows vulgar
> Like whipped cream, - feels them not in going down. (15)

In the same scene Dorax again vents the misanthropy of a Timon and the pride of a Cariolanus when he says of the mob:

I would use them
Like dogs in times of plague; outlaws of nature,
Fit to be shot and brained, without a process,
To stop infection; that's their proper death. (16)

Muley-Moluch is an ordinary stage tyrant, a type common to the heroic play and the earlier Italian, French, and English romance. Occasionally, however, he rises above the mere type. He is magnanimous when he says to the hero:

Be safe; and owe thy life, not to my gift,
But to the greatness of thy mind, Sebastian. (17)

More often, he is another Maximin. In trying to force the heroine, he speaks such rhodomontade as:

Serpent, I will engender poison with thee;
Join hate with hate, add venom to the birth;
Our offspring, like the seed of dragon's teeth,
Shall issue armed, and fight themselves to death. (18)

Benducar is an excellent villain. Like Iago, he spreads dissension through calumny. He irritates Dorax's pride just as Iago arouses Othello's jealousy. After telling Dorax that Muley-Moluch has ordered him to serve Sebastian, he lies:

He screwed his face into a hardened smile
And said Sebastian knew to govern slaves. (19)

Dryden's Mufti is a burlesqued clergyman. Dryden was particularly adept at characterizing the silver-tongued hypocrite. In the fourth act, when the Mufti becomes distraught over losing "my jewels and my daughter," he is Shylock turned into a buffoon.

Antonio, like Faulconbridge, Falstaff, Mercutio, Benedict, and Enobarbus, is a love-and-honour realist. He proves this openly:

> Fear of death has gone farther with me in two minutes, than my conscience would have gone in two months. (20)
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Not very heroic; but self-preservation is a point above honour, and religion too. (21)

Dryden's characterization in Don Sebastian is better than in any of his previous plays. Much of it shows that Shakespeare influenced him. Yet, this work is not as close to humanity as a work of the first rank in literature. As Saintsbury says:

> . . . . . Don Sebastian cannot pretend to belong to the higher or Shakespearian school which exhibits men as wholes. Sebastian is anything but a complete character; he is only a very clever exponent of certain commonplaces as to heroism, love, and friendship. (22)

This appraisal is sound. Sebastian and Dorax, though above Dryden's average, are still too much akin to romance heroes to be convincingly human. Lear with his foibles (though "Every inch a king") is much closer to humanity than Dryden's regal Sebastian. Kent with his shrewd common sense is more interesting as a man and vassal than Dryden's proud Dorax.

In other elements of drama, Don Sebastian again "cannot pretend to belong to the higher or Shakespearian school". Dryden's

conception of tragedy is as inferior to Shakespeare's as his characterization, even though he has centered his tragedy in a great man of public importance. Unlike Shakespeare, he does not make his catastrophe the consequence of character. Sebastian's nature does not cause his tragedy. Through an external agency directing human affairs, he is made to suffer for the misdeeds of his father, of which he was totally innocent. As the play closes, Dorax expresses the doctrine which underlies the tragedy:

> That unrepented crimes, of parents dead,
> Are justly punished on their children's head. (23)

This aphorism states that evil has social consequences, as the sin of one man may cause the ruin of another. That the child inherits the guilt of the parent is a theological tenet which does not satisfy everyone. Dryden in order to make Sebastian suffer was forced to use the stale device of mistaken identity.

If Sebastian is really guilty of incest, it follows that Dryden has abided by poetic justice. He provides a punishment that is less than death, since the crime was committed in ignorance. In the Preface, Dryden revives his old argument that to save is more artistic than to kill. The poetically just endings to Dryden's plays are, nevertheless, artificial, despite his clever attempts to make them appear natural. He did not follow Shakespeare's substitute for poetic justice which is clearly expressed by Edgar:

> The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
> Make instruments to scourge us. (24)

In the scope of Dryden's play, the father's vices do not bring woe to the father. Instead, the punishment falls to the innocent Sebastian whose lot is mitigated by Dryden's artificial poetic justice.

The calamities of Don Sebastian are due to an unknown relationship which is not revealed until the last act. The cause of tragedy is therefore external to character. Unlike most of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, Sebastian has no prominent defect which in the earlier acts leads the hero to final disaster. Dryden does, however, employ skilfully an external cause of tragedy. He develops great dramatic tension by having an old courtier slowly and indirectly reveal the secret. When Sebastian and Almeyda become aware of their relationship, they poignantly describe their spiritual turmoil. Better than in any of his previous plays, Dryden here portrays internal conflict caused by external circumstances.

Dryden has not followed the unities. He declares that he has not kept to them exactly, but has tried to keep within their restrictive influence, has "followed them only at a distance". Actually, he has carefully observed the unity of place, but neither time nor action. The scene is always within Alcazar, in or near the Emperor's castle or in the Mufti's garden. The time compassed is two days. The unity of action is violated, for the two plots are unrelated.

In combining tragic and comic, Dryden was reverting to an Elizabethan practice which he and other Restoration dramatists had previously considered inartistic even when employed by Shakespeare; who, however, usually made the combination artistic: the comic part re-inforces the tragic. In this, Dryden did not succeed. Although the comic strand of Don Sebastian is by Restoration standards superb, it lessens the effect of the tragic element with which it is not interwoven. In Shakespeare's drama, comic characters play an active role in the serious part. Pandarus' cynicism accentuates the futility of Troilus' love. Mercutio's realism is a striking contrast to Romeo's dreaminess. Enobarbus played a tragic role in Antony's waste of empire for love. The fool in King Lear has no function other than helping the tragic effect. Dryden's Antonio amuses us, but contributes nothing to the tragedy.

The artificial love of the heroic play appears in Don Sebastian. Such love always strikes its victim suddenly and mysteriously. Recovery is impossible. Both the emperor and his favourite quickly become enamoured of the enchanting Almeyda. As in Tyrannick Love, passion gains control of the tyrant, Muley-Moluch, who is just another Maximin after he has seen Almeyda. The love between hero and heroine, however, is genuine. Dryden makes it obvious that they are attracted because of similarities in temperament and character.

Benducar, though stricken by the romance type of passion, reasons soundly on the function of love:

> To Love? not more than 'tis to live; a tax
> Imposed on all by nature, paid in kind,
> Familiar as our being. (25)

Such a realistic approach to love is not found in Dryden's heroic plays. It differs from Shakespeare's love-and-honour realism in being direct. Benvolio and Mercutio do not prove themselves realists by pedantic analysis of mating instincts. They do it by telling Romeo how to rid himself of love-sickness.

Dryden dramatizes another turbulent quarrel. Scott groups the Sebastian-and-Dorax Scene with the Antony-and-Ventidius, saying that "both are avowedly written in imitation of the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius". (26) This is inaccurate, for Dryden does not avow that the Sebastian-and-Dorax fight is an imitation of the tent quarrel in Julius Caesar. He does, however, allude to the Brutus-and-Cassius scene in the Dedication, which proves that he was conscious of it. The Sebastian-and-Dorax scene unmistakably parallels the tent quarrel, though it may or may not be an intentional replica. The plan is the same: two men, one more exalted or older than the other, begin an argument with mild reproaches. Their irritation increases until at the climax, they are recriminating violently. Suddenly, one of them yields and after a few more speeches, they are completely reconciled. In the Sebastian-and-Dorax quarrel, the latter yields first. Dryden explains in his Preface that it is only decent that the subject, not the monarch, submit first. This quarrel is a greater development of

the basic plan than the Brutus-and-Cassius episode or any of Dryden's similar scenes. Accusations are more serious; recriminations, more acrid; delivery, more vigorous. Dorax's feelings are material for great drama. He suffers from a terrible conflict. His enraged pride is insufficient to stifle his loyalty to the man whom he hates. He resents bitterly having been frustrated by Sebastian in the attainment of love and honour. He is deeply humiliated when Sebastian tells him that he was "spurned," and filled with consternation when he learns that he did not serve his king as well as he did his rival.

Sebastian's noblesse oblige lends majesty to the dispute. He tells Dorax that as a king, he is ready to hear grievances, but warns him not to be insolent. As the quarrel ends, he charitably forgives and re-instates his renegade vassal. The scene is more moving than its prototype in Julius Caesar.

In his Preface, Dryden stresses that his verse is less refined than previously:

> And I dare boldly promise for this play, that in the roughness of the numbers and cadences, (which I assure was not casual, but so designed) you will see somewhat more masterly arising to your view, than in most, if not any, of my former tragedies. (27)

How greatly did his prosody change! At the beginning of his dramatic career, he restricted himself to the regular, refined, polished couplet, and criticized Shakespeare's verse for crudeness. Now, having used blank verse for

twelve years, he deliberately seeks rough "numbers and cadences" so as to treat a lofty subject effectively.

Again, Dryden writes imaginative poetry by making metaphors out of concrete, common objects:

> Ay; these look like the workmanship of heaven;
> This is the porcelain clay of human kind,
> And therefore cast into these noble moulds. (28)

The genteel overtones carried by the word "porcelain" and the image of a figurine suggested by "cast into these noble moulds" are appropriate to the subjects described. The theme of the speech is aristocratic, for it expresses faith in patrician worth. It is Shakespearian in replying on concrete objects to form vivid, suggestive imagery. Two other stirring metaphors made from common objects are:

> "This is the living coal, that, burning in me,
> Would flame to vengeance, could it find a vent. (29)
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Mine is a flame so holy and so clear,
> That the white taper leaves no soot behind. (30)

Sebastian expresses anxiety combined with sensual pleasure. His speech does not parallel phrase for phrase Shakespeare's Troilus' speech; "I am giddy; expectation whirls me round". Both, however, describe a mind hovering between intense pleasure and pain; a being plunged in ecstacy though anxious about what will follow.

Dryden may have modelled this speech after Shakespeare's:

Not the last sounding could surprise me more,
That summons drowsy mortals to their doom,
When called in haste they fumble for their limbs,
And tremble, unprovided for their charge:
My sense has been so deeply plunged in joys,
The soul outslept her hour; and, scarce awake,
Would think too late, but cannot: but brave minds,
At worst, can dare their fate. (31)

Dryden again describes an agitated mob busily seeking news. The report is as much like Shakespeare's account of a news-seeking crowd in King John as was that in The Spanish Friar. The passage in Don Sebastian reads:

The streets are thicker in this noon of night,
Than at the midday sun; a drowsy horror
Sits on their eyes, like fear, not well awake;
All crowd in heaps, as, at a night alarm,
The bees drive out upon each other's backs,
To emboss their hives in clusters; all ask news;
Their busy captain runs the weary round,
To whisper orders; and, commanding silence,
Makes not noise cease, but deafens it to murmers. (32)

This description is inferior to Shakespeare's because it does not include picturesque individual news-seekers.

Dryden seems to have burlesqued the speech of Shakespeare's Cleopatra in which she says of herself, "I am fire and air". Antonio, seeking his mistress, asks:

What manner of woman is she? Does she not
want two of the four elements? Has she anything
about her but air and fire. (33)

Dryden, like Shakespeare and his contemporaries, uses blank verse and prose in the same play. Comic characters speak in prose, though Dryden's practice of making a buffoon

answer in prose to the blank verse of a serious figure is rare in Shakespeare. In Don Sebastian, the Restoration practice of interrupting the dialogue with a song is not observed.

Cleomenes, Dryden's last tragedy, was published in 1692. Its story was drawn from the life of a Spartan hero. It is one of Dryden's most artistically written plays, except in one way: it lacks sufficient dramatic tension to give it theatrical appeal. In the last scene, however, the action quickens, even though the hero's chance of extricating himself is still too small to arouse concernment. Unlike Shakespeare's best works, Cleomenes again has its cause of tragedy in external circumstances. The warrior-hero has no tragic flaw like the unbalanced pride of Coriolanus.

Cleomenes is tragedy unmixed with comedy. Its single action is well organized. Its setting never shifts from Alexandria, though the unity of time is not observed. This play resembles a regular French tragedy more than any other that Dryden wrote.

Dryden's characterization of Cleomenes is one of his best. The hero is a convincingly human warrior-king, much more real than any of Dryden's supermen. He has domestic affections which he reveals more readily than Coriolanus, unlike whom, he is considerate of others. Like Coriolanus, however, he disdains to ask a favour, and contemns any one who will not fight for a good cause. Cassandra, the villainess, describes him as a born-

king. He and Cleanthes (a typical hero's friend) enact one of the man-to-man debates in which Dryden excelled. This one, however, is shorter and less moving than Dryden's other such episodes. At the dénouement, Cleomenes and Cleanthes behave like Shakespeare's Antony and Eros. Each wishes to commit suicide first.

Dryden gives Cleomenes a mother and a wife whom he patterned after the family of Coriolanus. Although he does not acknowledge the imitation, the resemblances are so obvious that it is indisputable. The mother is a stern, high-spirited, aristocratic matron who exhorts her son when he is inactive and counsels him when in difficulty. She is brave, militant, and defiant as she faces death. The wife is a gentle, feminine helpmeet; an affectionate woman, who lives for her husband. She is terrified as she faces death. Cleomenes, like Coriolanus, has a warlike son, who, however, is just another pompous hero's boy like Astyanax in Dryden's Troilus and Cressida. Cassandra is the typical villainess of the heroic play.

Many conventions of the times are followed in Cleomenes. In Act II, Dryden inserts a pretty song on the throes of love. It is emotionally shallow, but analytical. Such songs were common in heroic plays and always appealed to the Restoration audience. Act III, scene ii, is a solemn Egyptian religious ceremony, filled with omens from the supernatural. In Act IV, scene i, Cleomenes and Cassandra have a rhymed debate on the etiquette of love. This convention was never absent in heroic

drama.

Much beautiful verse occurs in the dialogue. Dryden occasionally merits the complimentary epithet often applied to Shakespeare, "poet of nature":

> Despatch him, as the source of all your fears.
> Observe the mounting billows of the main,
> Blown by the winds into a raging storm;
> Brush off those winds, and the high waves return
> Into their quiet first-created calm:-
> Such is the rage of busy, blustering crowds,
> Fomented by the ambition of the great:
> Cut off the causes, and the effect will cease;
> And all the moving madness fall to peace. (34)

And:

> There's the riddle of her love.
> For, what I see, or only think I see,
> Is like a glimpse of moonshine, streaked with red, -
> A shuffled, sullen, and uncertain light,
> That dances through the clouds, and shuts again:
> Then 'ware a rising tempest on the main. (35)

As there are no comic characters in Cleomenes, the dialogue is all in verse. Some of it is rhymed. As in the love-debate, Dryden uses heroic couplets for Cassandra's aphoristic speech about the power of a mistress.(36) (Shakespeare too rhymed aphoristic speeches.) Again, scenes end with one or two tags of rhyme.

Critics never rank Cleomenes with All For Love and Don Sebastian. Scott, Arnold, and Saintsbury thought that the hero was too helpless to create dramatic tension. True, this play is not energetic drama and the hero is too stoical and

statuesque. The characterization is, nevertheless, excellent. The blank verse includes some of Dryden's best. Cleomenes, therefore, belongs among his better plays.

VII. CONCLUSION

Dryden does not belong in the first rank of English dramatists. His abilities, which were happily adjusted to the standards of his age, did not show to best advantage in the theatre. Heroic drama was not a form in which any poet could write truly great literature. Where he is influenced by Shakespeare, however, he rises above his natural level.

In All For Love, Dryden emulated Shakespeare. The experiment was advantageous, for it helped him to write more lofty poetry. He wrote a successful Neo-Classical version of the "Cydnustrip," though his quarrel between Antony and Ventidius does not compare favourably to the Brutus-and-Cassius dispute. In characterization and conception of tragedy, he did not profit by Shakespeare's better performance.

Dryden revised Shakespeare's Troilus And Cressida. Though Shakespeare's stern realism was abused by "heroic" treatment, Dryden benefitted by exercising his talents on Shakespeare's thought and verse.

Lastly, Shakespearian influence appears in his later plays. The blank verse which he first used for his imitation of Shakespeare's style was ever improving. When he finally deliberately sought "rough numbers and cadences," his prosody was more Shakespearian than when he first criticized Shakespeare for

crudeness. Incidental passages in the later plays often have a model in Shakespeare. His characterization improved in Don Sebastian and Cleomenes, in which certain parts recall Brutus and Cassius and the family of Coriolanus. He adopted Shakespeare's practice of mingling the serious and the comic; and accordingly, he used both blank verse and prose in the same play.

Elements of the heroic play, unfortunately, appear in all of his mature drama. Don Sebastian contains too much bravado and Cleomenes; the exotic ceremonies, singing and dancing which catered to debilitated Restoration tastes. It was these elements which limited the success of Shakespeare's influence on Dryden.

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