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DONALD E. MORTLAND

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A CRITICAL STUDY OF HUDIBRASTIC SATIRE IN AMERICA, 1708-1806

APPROVED BY

Bruce Granger

R. C. Bambas

Gregory Marshall

[illegible]

Robert M. Davis

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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PREFACE

The first significant American Hudibrastic satire, Ebenezer Cook's The Sot-Weed Factor, was published in London in 1708, and the last major American Hudibrastic work, Thomas Green Fessenden's second American edition of Terrible Tractoration, appeared in Philadelphia in 1806. (Later revised editions of Terrible Tractoration were issued in 1836 and 1837, but the essential framework was the same and their critical reception poor, interest in Hudibrastic works having long since died.) Between 1708 and 1806 American authors produced a substantial corpus of Hudibrastic satires. Most of these were crude works, lacking in artistic polish and dealing with ephemeral issues of their day. However, several American writers produced Hudibrastic works of some literary value, works which unfortunately have not received the recognition they deserve, either in their own time or in ours. The eighteenth-century American belief that satire was an inferior species of literature prevented critics of that period from evaluating them objectively; in our own time they have all too often been considered as historical documents rather than as serious literary creations and

have been judged by historical rather than by literary criteria.

The main purpose of this dissertation shall be to examine the Hudibrastic poems of two authors, Ebenezer Cook and John Trumbull, in terms of their value as literary works. While the poems will be examined in light of the overall standards of conception and design applicable to any artistic creation, special attention will be devoted to the relationship between these standards and the techniques and purposes unique to both satire in general and Hudibrastic satire in particular. Even otherwise sensitive analyses of these works have often failed to give sufficient consideration to the nature of the literary type and, as a result, have construed as defects those aspects of the poems which, when seen in the proper perspective, contribute meaningfully to the whole. A secondary purpose of this dissertation shall be to provide a brief survey of the Hudibrastic tradition in America. This survey should help to place the satires of Cook and Trumbull in their literary context as well as to indicate the variety and quality of Hudibrastic works produced in eighteenth-century America.

A CRITICAL STUDY OF HUDIBRASTIC SATIRE IN AMERICA, 1708-1806

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although apparently not published in an American edition until 1806, Samuel Butler's Hudibras was both well known and widely imitated in eighteenth-century America.[1] It frequently appears in catalogues of eighteenth-century libraries along with the works of such other English authors as Dryden, Pope, Swift, Addison and Steele. For example, it is listed in the library of the New England Courant as of July 2, 1722; in Robert Beverly's estate inventory of 1734; and in the 1741 catalogue of Franklin's Library Company, just to mention a few of the earlier references.[2] Colonial and early American newspapers and magazines

[1]The first American edition of Hudibras was published by Wright, Goodenow and Stockwell of Troy, New York, in 1806. See Ralph R. Shaw and Richard H. Shoemaker, American Bibliography, 1806 (New York: The Scarecrow Press, 1961), Entry No. 10078. References to Hudibras in this dissertation will be to the edition edited by John Wilders (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

[2]See Elizabeth Christine Cook, Literary Influences in Colonial Newspapers, 1704-1750 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912), pp. 20, 105 and 180.

contain numerous works in both prose and poetry that are prefaced by a few lines from Hudibras, as well as original satiric poems that reflect an attempt to employ elements of the Hudibrastic manner. In fact, native satiric verse during the century was probably more often influenced by Hudibras than by any other single work; while the heroic couplet in the manner of Pope was the vehicle of compliment, the octosyllabic couplet and comic rhymes of Butler was the most favoured vehicle for attack.

As might be expected, Hudibrastic poetry flourished best in times of social, political or religious controversy and appeared most often in partisan publications. Sometimes personal feuds provided the impetus for brief Hudibrastic "wars," as in the numerous hostilities between rival newspaper editors that occurred throughout the century. At other times a particularly controversial local issue, such as George Whitefield's evangelical tour of South Carolina during 1740, sparked an exchange of Hudibrastic verse. But the most prolific periods for such satires were those during which the larger issues involving the birth and destiny of the new nation were being debated. Many of the satiric jibes between loyalists and revolutionaries in the years 1763-1783 took the form of Hudibrastic satires. And the conflicts between Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans over the course the new nation was to pursue produced a similar outburst of Hudibrastic

verse during the last decade of the eighteenth and the first of the nineteenth centuries.

Most of the Hudibrastic satires written during the eighteenth century have passed into oblivion along with the periodicals in which they appeared. A number of the longer ones were privately printed in pamphlets or booklets, particularly near the end of the century, but even many of these have been either lost or survive only as aging and fragile copies in rare book sections of the larger libraries or in the musty collections of the various historical societies.[3] Few writers produced a large enough quantity of Hudibrastic verse to have merited publication in book form--Ebenezer Cook, John Trumbull and Thomas Green Fessenden are, of course, notable exceptions--and even had they done so the lack of an adequate market for native works would have made such a project unfeasible. Anthologies might have provided a means of salvaging some of the better Hudibrastic poems for posterity, but no anthology devoted exclusively to American productions appeared until Elihu Hubbard Smith's 1793 edition of American Poems.[4] This and

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[3]Fortunately many of these works have recently become more accessible through microcards produced by Readex Microprint Corp. (5 Union Square, N.Y., N.Y.) from the texts listed in Charles Evans' American Bibliography, 1639-1820, 13 vols. (Chicago, 1903-1955) and Shaw and Shoemaker's American Bibliography.

[4](Litchfield, Conn.: Collier and Buel, 1793). This work is available in a facsimile reproduction with an Introduction, notes and index by William K. Bottorff (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1966).

subsequent anthologies, while admitting a few humorous and satiric poems, concentrate mainly on serious moral and laudatory works. William K. Bottorff, in his introduction to the facsimile edition of American Poems, has indicated that although a Federalist bias predominates in the selections, the work is also characterized by an attitude that is "expansive, hopeful, even self-assured as to the prospective greatness of the new United States."[5] Such an attitude is typical of early American anthologies, and satire with its basically critical and destructive inclination had trouble gaining admittance to works in which this optimistic tone was a desideratum.

However, even had the vehicles of publication been more suitable to the preservation of Hudibrastic satires, it is doubtful that many of them would have survived until today. The ephemeral nature of the issues with which most of the poems deal and their lack of artistic polish make them unworthy of preservation as literature. The personal animosities that inspired many of the attacks have long been forgotten and the poems that embodied them--unlike such great satires as "Absalom and Achitophel" and "The Rape of the Lock"--more often than not never go beyond the level of vicious invective. Even works that dealt with issues having universal implications were frequently written

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[5]"Introduction," p. XVI.

by individuals of little literary talent who regarded the octosyllabic couplet and comic rhymes as nothing more than a "clever" way of debunking the opposition. Such poems may have some value to the historian, but they merit little consideration as literature.

A few of the poems, though, were written with a serious literary intent and deserve a better fate than they have received, both in their own time and ours. Throughout the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth, Americans regarded satire as a somewhat inferior literary type. Writing in about 1783, John Trumbull states that the "...Graver Part of mankind usually consider humour, & Ridicule as unworthy of a serious character & rank all witty & satirical expressions among those idle words for which we are hereafter to be brought into Judgment."[6] The poet then goes on to vindicate satire by reference to numerous satirical passages in sacred scriptures. And, as Max F. Schultz has pointed out, during the last twenty years of his life Trumbull was much concerned with establishing satire as a legitimate literary genre.[7] If satire as a whole was so little valued as to need such a defense, the plight of that branch of it known as burlesque was even worse. As late as 1829, Samuel Kettell, writing of

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[6]"Critical Reflections," Cornell MSS.

[7]"John Trumbull and Satirical Criticism of Literature," MLN, 73(1958), 85-90.

John Trumbull in his Specimens of American Poetry, speaks of the inferior nature of burlesque poetry; the passage is such an eloquent and revealing expression of the attitude of his and previous generations toward burlesque works that it bears repeating in its entirety:

> Burlesque poetry is but an inferior species of composition, and the masters of it can claim but a second place in the temple of the muses. We may admit with Johnson that Hudibras has made Butler immortal, but we wish with Dryden, that he had written a different work. We feel it to be in some sense a prostitution of poetry, to busy it with the faults and follies of men. The free and chosen haunts of the muse are in the lofty mountains, along the margin of the silver rivulet, through silent valleys, in solitary woods, on the sea-shore, in the blue sky, on the sailing cloud. Here she communes with nature, and discourses of loveliness and beauty. It is not willingly, but by compulsion, that she leaves these scenes for the crowded haunts of men, to deal with vice and deformity. The change is almost fatal to her charms. In the narrow streets of the city we hardly recognize the enchantress. Her white wing becomes soiled and drooping; her brow furrowed with indignation; her lip curled in scorn; a quiver of poisoned arrows is at her back; a whip of scorpions in her hand. The silver music of her voice is gone; her inspired language is exchanged for the vulgar speech of men; her fancy is filled with images of deformity! Who that has been her companion in the lone mountain, by the wild waterfall, and in the trackless wood; when weary, has reposed on beds of wild roses, when thirsty, has kissed the lip of a virgin fountain, that ever before has flowed untouched in its secret bower--who, that has lived and communed with her thus, would wish to see her degraded to the business of a satirist and scourge?[8]

While seldom expressed with such rhetorical flourish, this attitude toward burlesque poetry is nevertheless typical of that held by many during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The belief that the nature of the subject

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[8](Boston: S. G. Goodrich and Co., 1829), I, 182-183.

matter and the intent of the writer placed certain limitations on the artistic heights to which an author could aspire was a pervasive one and did to a large extent determine the kind of reception a burlesque work was likely to receive. Moreover, not only did the second-class status to which such poems were automatically relegated tend to discourage promising talent from attempting them, but also those who did so probably were not inclined to labor long in an effort to make them works of art. Thus the attitude that the burlesque was not a respectable literary type must certainly have resulted in a self-fulfilling prophecy in which a situation defined as real became real in its consequences.

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Any definition of the term "Hudibrastic" must be both inclusive enough to encompass those works in which the author was substantially influenced by Butler's Hudibras and exclusive enough to eliminate from consideration those which have thematic, structural or stylistic parallels with the work but which at the same time reveal no conscious desire on the part of the artist to imitate any important aspect of it. Edward Ames Richards in his Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition discusses the problem of defining this term:

> Apparently the term has meaning only in the field of satire. It may refer to the nature of the thing attacked, to the content of the story or fable, to the point of view of the satirist, to the form of the verse, or to a mixture of two or more of these elements.

> Although "hudibrastic" is applied almost universally to poems written in the verse form of Hudibras, without respect to the other qualities of the poem to which it may be applied, and without respect to the other early satirists in this form, it will not be possible to confine the inquiry to such simple limits in discussing the imitators of Butler.[9]

A preliminary condition for a Hudibrastic poem must certainly be that it have a satiric purpose. Although readers may differ over the specific object, or objects, of Butler's attack, the satiric element in Hudibras is pervasive and at the very essence of the work. A poem that is not satiric can have little spiritual affinity with Butler's work, regardless of how many of its techniques the writer may employ.

But a similar argument can be advanced for the form of Butler's verse as a prerequisite for defining a work as Hudibrastic. While many works employing Butler's octosyllabic couplets and comic rhymes have, as Richards suggests, little else in common with Hudibras, so fundamental is this aspect of his versification to his overall burlesque method that the adoption of this technique must be a necessary condition for calling a work Hudibrastic. This is not to say that works written in other verse forms have not been influenced to some degree by Butler and his imitators; it is not unusual, for instance, to find satires in heroic couplets prefaced with a few lines from Hudibras. But

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[9](New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1937), p. 31.

whereas the authors of these works _may_ have been influenced by Butler and his followers and certain aspects of these later poems parallel those of the earlier ones, so closely is the octosyllabic couplet in conjunction with comic rhymes identified with _Hudibras_ that, however far a work employing these may deviate in other respects from Butler's, it is difficult to imagine that the writer could have been unaware of or unconcerned with this identification. In speaking of imitators who adopt "the superficial symbols of style," Richards indicates that "...people so diverse as Matthew Prior, the diplomatic errand boy, and Thomas Fessenden, the New-England editor and Jack-of-all-trades, both claim to write, and do write, hudibrastic verse, though underneath this common claim is a world of diversity."[10] It is, though, this "common claim," this constant within a variable context, that provides the thread which unites diverse works and helps to identify a literary tradition.

A satiric purpose and Butler's verse form shall then be the only prerequisites for considering a work Hudibrastic. However, most of the Hudibrastic satires that possess some literary value have much more than these two elements in common with Butler's work. First of all, and above all, they transform attack into art, provide a rhetorical mould which rearranges the raw materials of dissatisfaction into

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[10] _Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition_, pp. 31-32.

an aesthetic experience. Also, their essential method is that of low burlesque; they create a contrast between a somewhat dignified subject matter and an undignified manner of presentation. And, finally, they employ as elements of this low burlesque manner a number of techniques, in addition to the verse form, utilized in Hudibras, among which are: high and low burlesque similes; complex and frequent allusions; realistic, and sometimes gruesome details; fantastic plots or fables; and colloquial, even at times obscene, language.

For purposes of this dissertation a work will be considered satiric if it quite obviously holds someone or something up to ridicule, or if the author indicates that such was his desire. Often satire is associated with rhetoric. James Sutherland indicates that it is "an art of persuasion" and that "persuasion is the chief function of rhetoric,"[11] while Merrill Heiser calls satire "the product of conviction and opposition, given rhetorical form."[12] This relationship between rhetoric and satire can be a meaningful one, particularly in helping to differentiate between satire and comedy. If, as David Worcester

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[11] English Satire (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1958), p. 5.

[12] "Representative Early American Satirists," Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin, 1947, p. 561.

suggests,[13] satire can be distinguished from pure comedy by the fact that it is more derisive and creates a sense of unity by clearly pursuing a specific object or a group of related objects, the aggregate of the devices used to maintain this focus may be called the satire's rhetorical form. However, the term "rhetoric" often has pragmatic connotations that link it more closely with oratory than with art and which place, perhaps, undue emphasis on the persuasive purpose of satire.[14] A satire that aspires to art is a fiction embodying an argument, but it is the aesthetic effect of the fiction considered in its entirety that makes it art and not the persuasiveness of the argument.

Too often a satiric work is evaluated in terms of some moral purpose rather than in light of its overall effect as an independent imaginative creation. As W.O.S. Sutherland, Jr. has indicated, the "...constantly reiterated statement that the purpose of satire is reform is one of the great unexamined shibboleths of English

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[13] The Art of Satire (New York: W.W. Norton, 1940), p. 37.

[14] An interesting discussion of the relationship between rhetoric and poetry in early America is Gordon E. Bigelow's Rhetoric and American Poetry of the Early National Period (Gainesville, Florida: Univ. of Florida Press, 1960). According to Bigelow, "Rhetoric may propose both to please and to persuade, but the emphasis is on persuasion; poetry may also propose both to please and to persuade, but the emphasis is on pleasure." p. 7.

literature."[15] Most of the great satires have endured not because of reforms they produced or opinions they changed but because they have represented a pleasing expression of either existing attitudes and values held by their readers or ones that they could, through a willing suspension of disbelief, temporarily accept. The reader may not have thought of relating these values and attitudes--which are often implied rather than explicitly stated--to the specific object the satirist is attacking, but he is nevertheless willing to accept them and derives enjoyment from the imaginative way in which the author brings them to bear on the object. Of course, the values may be so inimical to a particular reader that he is unable to enjoy the work, just as some readers of Paradise Lost are unable to see Milton's art because of his theological framework; but any artistic production, however great, runs the risk of crossing firmly entrenched convictions. This is not to say that the aesthetic is the only effect characteristic of satire; it is probably true that satire, as Maynard Mack indicates, "asserts the validity and necessity of norms, systematic values, and meanings that are contained by recognizable codes"[16] and that, as suggested by Patricia Meyer Spacks,

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[15] The Art of the Satirist (Austin, Texas: Univ. of Texas Press, 1965), p. 17.

[16] "The Muse of Satire," Yale Review, 41(1951), 80.

it often creates the feeling of "uneasiness" about "a universe full of unresolved problems."[17] But while these characteristics may help to differentiate the satiric from other literary types, the ultimate survival of a particular satire will depend less on the extent to which it produces these results than on its overall aesthetic effect.

Whether or not a satire has value as a work of art is determined by essentially the same criteria applied to other literary endeavors. After lamenting the treatment that satire frequently receives from biographical and historical methods of criticism, Alvin P. Kernan urges that we

> ...approach satire in the way we do other poetry--as an art; that is, not a direct report of the poet's feelings and the literal incidents which aroused those feelings, but a construct of symbols--situations, scenes, characters, language--put together to express some particular vision of the world. The individual parts must be seen in terms of their function in the total poem and not judged by reference to things outside the poem such as the medical history of the author or the social scene in which he wrote.[18]

Of course the "things outside the poem" must at times be utilized in order for the individual parts to be intelligible; allusions, which often play an important part in Hudibrastic poems, must first be understood by reference to

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[17]"Some Reflections on Satire," Genre, 1(1968), rpt. in Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Ronald Paulson (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 364.

[18]The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1959), pp. 4-5.

"things outside the poem" before their function in the total context can be appreciated. But once these parts are defined the ultimate success of the poem will depend upon the way in which they work harmoniously toward delineating a central vision or experience and not upon the fidelity of either the parts or the whole to some external context.

Another criterion of a successful satire is the extent to which it possesses the quality of indirection, whether the reader is told of the inadequacy or foolishness of the satiric object or is led to discover it for himself. Many Hudibrastic satires are, of course, simply invectives in which the object is directly attacked and the satirist openly reveals his rage. However, preaching and art are seldom comfortable companions, and this seems particularly true of satire. But the problem of reader involvement in the experience of a satiric production is often complicated by the peculiar relationship of the satirist to his object. The satirist can more effectively demolish the object of his attack if he views it from a position of moral or intellectual superiority. In order to maintain this stance he must not reveal too much indignation or passion; he therefore detaches himself from emotional involvement with the object and stands aloof while "objectively" presenting things in their true light. Artistically, the satirist's pose of detachment, his assumption that the satiric object is so far beneath him that it doesn't merit his emotional

involvement, becomes another instrument of attack and as such functions along with all of the other devices to establish the central vision or experience of the work. Ideally, if the satire achieves its ends, the reader will be willing to accept as his own both the satirist's evaluation of the object and his detached and superior attitude toward it. But through discouraging an emotional response on the part of the reader, the satirist has at the same time blocked one of the main avenues of participation in a literary work. If it may be assumed that successful literature requires some sort of reader involvement in the experience, it is obvious that this involvement in much satire must, by virtue of the satirist's technique, be more intellectual than emotional. Therefore if the satirist makes his attack direct, if all is obvious and explicitly stated, the reader is left with little upon which to exercise his own faculties. Such a work might pass as an artfully constructed treatise, but it will not have much to recommend it as imaginative literature.

An attribute often found in satires that aspire to reach an audience beyond their own time and place is their ability to raise the satiric object to the level of a symbol. _Hudibras_ is an attack on many things--Presbyterians, Independents, romance conventions, astrologers, just to mention a few--but these are merely products of a more fundamental problem: the misuse of the human mind. If

Butler's work were merely an attack on, for instance, Presbyterians and Independents, later ages might appreciate the way in which the poet managed the techniques at his disposal so as to create a unified work of art; it would be literature, and possibly very good literature. However, it seems to be a requirement of enduring art that it not only provide us with an aesthetic experience, but also with one embodying some human concern, one not limited to the time and place in which the artist wrote. It must, in short, transform the particular of time and place into a symbol having relevance to all times and all places. This Butler has done by transcending the issues of his day and indicating that the moral and intellectual shortcomings of his characters are not unique to them or to their historical context but rather a reflection of a universal weakness in the human mind itself. Much the same could be said of such a work as Pope's "The Rape of the Lock." It can be appreciated as an artistic presentation of a specific event, but what makes it a great work is the poet's skill in raising the particular events to the level of a symbol having universal implications, namely man's inability to distinguish the trivial from the really significant in human affairs. Few Hudibrastic poets attempt to raise the object to the level of a symbol, and those who try meet with varying degrees of success; nevertheless, the extent to which they do transcend the poet's own time and place is one very

important factor determining their appeal to later ages.

Even though a particular Hudibrastic satire might possess artistic unity, involve the reader through the indirection of the attack and raise the object to the level of a symbol, a full appreciation of these qualities often is dependent on an understanding of some techniques commonly employed in this specific literary type. Certain aspects of a Hudibrastic satire that might appear as merely bad poetry--a monotonous and jogging rhythm, imperfect rhymes, clumsy similes, inaccurate diction, etc.--when seen in the broader context of the burlesque mode become functional and indispensable instruments in the poet's attack.

One of the best studies of burlesque poetry is Richmond P. Bond's English Burlesque Poetry, 1700-1750.[19] Bond begins his work with an explanation of the nature of burlesque:

> The essence of humor lies in incongruity, and when imitation is added, burlesque is the result. Burlesque consists, then, in the use or imitation of serious matter or manner, made amusing by the creation of an incongruity between style and subject. This inconsistency between form and content, this opposition between what is said and the way it is said, is the necessary qualification of burlesque. As a species of indirect satire burlesque achieves its end by creating a sense of the absurd because by serious standards the form does not fit the theme, because the flesh and the spirit are not one.[20]

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[19] (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1932).

[20] English Burlesque Poetry, p. 3.

Unfortunately Bond's definition is at least partially obscured by the number and variety of contrasting terms he employs: "style and subject," "form and content," and "form" and "theme" are not necessarily synonymous pairs. Possibly the complex interrelationship between "what is said and the way it is said" makes it impossible for Bond in all cases to find a single pair of terms adequate to encompass the contrast he sees. Of course the contrast is often a fairly simple one. If we construe style to refer to only such mechanical elements of versification as meter, rhyme and diction and the subject to character, plot and setting, the sometimes tortuous, sometimes rollicking movement of the octosyllabic couplets, the comic rhymes and the low level of diction combine in a Hudibrastic satire to create a ludicrous effect that diminishes whatever pretensions to dignity the subject matter may possess. A similar effect, although operating quite differently, occurs when a rather sordid and ridiculous battle is described in heroic terms and with traditional epic machinery (if we extend our definition of style to include such devices); the style or manner used to present the situation contrasts with the subject matter, thus creating an incongruity between the two which tends to diminish even further the latter.

But while the contrast between style and subject so defined forms the essence of the burlesque technique in

some Hudibrastic satires, it fails to encompass that employed in such complex works as Hudibras and Trumbull's M'Fingal. In these poems character, plot and setting are distorted to begin with, and the style becomes merely another element to reinforce the already existing distortion. Sir Hudibras is a ridiculous knight, but he is made so not only by the nature of the verse in which he is presented but also by his physical description and what he says and does; in other words, "what is said" and "the way it is said" complement rather than contrast with each other. In the mock heroic battle mentioned above there is a contrast between style and subject, but the battle itself is usually a product of a distortion in plot, which in turn allows for a greater contrast between style and subject. Thus much of the effect of the style-subject conflict is dependent upon this previous distortion, one which has nothing to do with style.

Rather than limit the contrast endemic to burlesque to one between subject and style, form and content or form and theme, it would be better to see it as existing between the reader's own sense of the way things should be or usually are and the way they appear in the satire. Reader and satirist tacitly agree upon what is appropriate in a given situation, and the satirist then distorts matters in such a way as to create a ludicrous contrast between the acceptable or expected and the world of his satire. This

contrast may exist between the style normally appropriate to the subject matter and the style actually employed, between what we expect of a character--for example, a knight--and how he is presented, or between any of the elements of plot and setting in the poem and our sense of their fitness in relationship to some larger context. Burlesque is, then, as David Worcester has indicated, a kind of extended simile in which the reader is urged to compare a "mirrored image" with an original, the latter being his and the author's sense of what should be and the former the presentation in the poem.[21] Not only does the contrast between image and original reflect the shortcomings of the satiric object, but it does so indirectly, thus enabling the reader to participate by "discovering" the discrepancy for himself. The picture that the satirist presents is, of course, exaggerated; he doesn't present the object as it is in reality and then ask the reader to compare this picture with the object as it should be. Rather, his mirror is so constructed as to reflect certain aspects of the object as larger or more absurd than they really are; he, in effect, merely uses the distortion to call to the reader's attention the places at which deviations from the norm may be found, relying upon the reader to make the necessary corrections between reality and distorted image

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[21] The Art of Satire, p. 42.

by himself. And herein lies a danger in the burlesque method: the image in the work must not be so distorted that the reader is unable to recognize the original; it must contain a "seed of truth," bear a close enough resemblance to the thing being mirrored to enable the reader to make the proper comparisons. If the original isn't discernible, the work may still be comic in its effect, but it will lack focus on a specific object or a group of related objects and will fail to involve the reader in a process of discovery, both of which qualities are prerequisites of successful satire.

It is customary to divide burlesque into two forms, low and high, depending on the direction the distortion takes. If the exaggeration presents the object as somehow meaner or belonging to a lower order of being than in reality is the case, the method is low burlesque; conversely, if the object is exaggerated so as to appear more noble or of a higher level of being, then it is high burlesque. Both methods require that the reader identify clearly the object of the distortion and be willing to interpret the discrepancy between object and reflected image as a satiric attack on the former. The low burlesque achieves its effects by comparison, by implying <u>similarities</u> between the object and something or someone that is base or ignoble, while the high burlesque achieves similar effects by contrast, by suggesting <u>differences</u> between the object

and that which is in some way superior to it. If the object of attack is a person who frequently is said to possess qualities of certain animals, no matter how commendable these qualities may be when associated with the animals, the effect will most likely be to imply that he is animal-like, or at least that he has the other perhaps less desirable qualities which also are identified with these beasts; this is the low burlesque method. On the other hand, the same person may be compared, in the process of performing some mean action, with one of the heroes of antiquity, the effect of which will be to suggest by contrast how far from what is truly noble the person's actions are; such a technique is representative of high burlesque.

By virtue of its versification, if for no other reason, Hudibrastic satire is of the low burlesque species. While the octosyllabic couplet and comic rhymes might in the hands of a Butler be handled with a great deal of finesse, they give the _appearance_ of slovenly poetry and tend to contaminate, by comparison, the subject matter of which they treat. So pervasive is the influence of the versification that it functions as a major means of degradation in any Hudibrastic satire. However, most Hudibrastic works of some length also employ high burlesque elements, among the most typical of which are mock heroic passages and classical allusions. Artistically, a mixture of high and low burlesque techniques in a single work does not seem

to create any problems, providing they do not work at cross purposes with each other. Both methods when handled with skill become tools for creating the artist's distortion and thereby holding the object up to ridicule. In fact, high burlesque elements periodically employed in a Hudibrastic work can help to overcome the monotony which, although often functional, tends to be a weakness endemic to long satires using low burlesque techniques.

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Although the kind and frequency of techniques employed will vary with the particular author, an examination of some of the more dominant ones in <u>Hudibras</u> should provide an idea of the options available to a writer of Hudibrastic satire and at the same time supply a frame of reference by which to measure a specific satirist's indebtedness to Butler's work. Of course no follower of Butler, either in England or America, has created a work that employs such a wide range of techniques and so successfully moulds them into an artistic whole as has Butler in <u>Hudibras</u>. In the following discussion no attempt will be made to deal with all of these techniques; instead, only those which either make a major contribution to the texture of the work or were frequently imitated by his followers will be considered.

No single passage can adequately reflect all of the qualities of Butler's versification. Usually the movement

of his couplets is related to the nature of the subject matter which they embody. In argumentative passages the meter is uneven and the couplets move at a tortuous pace as the characters labor to make a point. Hudibras, in one of his many arguments with Ralph, attempts to explain the nature of freedom:

> Quoth he, Th' one half of man, his mind,
> Is, Sui juris, unconfin'd,
> And cannot be laid by the heels,
> Whate'er the other moiety feels.
> Tis not Restraint or Liberty
> That makes men prisoners or free;
> But perturbations that possess
> The Mind or Aequanimities.
> The whole world was not half so wide
> To Alexander, when he cri'd
> Because he had but one to subdue,
> As was a paultrie narrow tub to
> Diogenes, who is not sed
> (For aught that ever I could read)
> To whine, put finger i' th' eye, and sob,
> Because h' had ne're another tub. (I, iii, 1013-1028)

The numerous qualifications, appositives and parenthetical comments tend to slow down the pace at which the above passage can be read, and while the movement is quickened somewhat by the enjambment occurring between lines 1024 and 1027, the latter has the effect of breaking the metrical pattern within these couplets. The rhythm is also affected by the addition of extra syllables within the lines, as, for instance, in 1027 and 1028; the elision here--a common Butlerian practice--makes the ten syllable lines seem closer to eight, but it at the same time creates metrical irregularity which slows down their movement, particularly in

line 1027 in which the elided words are placed side by side. Spondees retard the movement of other lines, for example 1015 and 1021; the former is made even more awkward by the alliteration of the explosive "b's" in "be" and "by," an alliteration which, with one half of it on a preposition, seems to serve no meaningful function other than to clog the movement of the line. The rapidity with which the passage may be assimilated is also lessened by the condensed presentation of the allusions to Alexander and Diogenes. Frequently in Butler's poem, and especially in argumentative passages, allusions, similes, metaphors and personifications follow each other in quick succession and are often so compressed and interrelated in such complex ways that the reader must proceed slowly if he is to receive the full import of the passage.

At other times the couplets possess a metrical regularity that enables them to flow more smoothly, particularly in descriptive passages. The author describes the procession of the Amazon and her troops before her battle with Hudibras:

> Next *Pans*, and *Kettles* of all keys,
> From *Trebles* down to *double-Bass*,
> And after them upon a *Nag*,
> That might pass for a forehand Stag,
> A *Cornet* rod, and on his Staff,
> A *Smock* display'd, did proudly wave.
> Then *Bagpipes* of the lowdest Drones,
> With snuffling broken winded tones;
> Whose blasts of air in pockets shut,
> Sound filthier then from the Gut,
> And make a viler noyse then *Swine*
> In windy weather, when they *whine*. (II, ii, 615-626)

Except for line 618, the iambic tetrameter is strictly maintained throughout the passage, and the alliterative "w" sounds in the last line echo the sense without impeding the movement. The passage is not, however, in spite of the regularity of the meter, lyrical or lilting; hard consonants and harsh vowel sounds prevent too much smoothness. In fact, it is difficult to find in Hudibras passages in which the movement is swift and lyrical. Butler's versification is a major element in the degradation of his subject matter and any attempt to beautify or ennoble this subject matter through versification would be inconsistent with his overall aims.

Even in dramatic or narrative passages the couplets seldom move with a rapidity which would hasten the tempo of the action and involve the reader emotionally in the progress of events. A dramatic moment occurs when Hudibras is lecturing the Amazon's troop:

> And do they not as Tryers sit,
> To judg what Officers are fit?
> Have they--? At that an Egg, let fly,
> Hit him directly o're the eye,
> And running down his Cheek, besmear'd
> With Orenge-Tawny-slime, his Beard;
> But Beard, and slime being of one Hue,
> The wound the less appear'd in view.
> Then he that on the Panniers rod,
> Let fly on th' other side a load;
> And quickly charg'd again, gave fully
> In Ralpho's face, another Volley.
> The Knight was startled with the smell,
> And for his sword began to feel:
> And Ralpho smoother'd with the stink,
> Grasp'd his; when one that bore a Link,

'Oth' sudden, clap'd his flaming Cudgel,
Like linstock to the Horse's touch-hole;
And streight another with his Flambeux
Gave Ralpho's, o're the eye, a damn'd blow....(II, ii, 813-832)

The addition of a ninth unaccented syllable in three of the above couplets and the preponderance of soft initial consonants quickens the movement of the passage. Still the pace is, considering the farcical action involved, restrained; the strong caesura in line 828, the pauses which frequently occur at the end of the first line of a couplet and the jarring of the rhymes prevent a brisk narrative flow.

Although any attempt to establish a classification system that would account for all of the rhyming possibilities in Hudibrastic satire would have to be so extensive as to negate the value of such classifying, the majority of the comic rhymes can be roughly labeled as either broken or imperfect. (The examples which follow are all drawn from Part I, Canto 1 of Hudibras.) Broken rhyme is usually achieved by composing half of the rhyme of two or three words: "swear for . . . wherefore" (lines 7-8), "at a rate . . . adaequate" (865-866). Rarely, half of the rhyme is composed from the first part of the word, the remainder carrying over to the next line: "upper- [Hand] . . . "Crupper" (291-292). Imperfect rhyme is achieved by shifting the accent and treating vowel and consonant quality casually: "Ecclesiastick . . . a stick" (11-12), "Navel

malleable" (179-180), "Philosopher . . . Irish are" (531-532). The effect of the comic rhymes is both general and specific; in the aggregate they contribute to the overall burlesque manner, and in the passages in which they are used they function as satirical jibes at specific men, institutions or ideas, as when "Hudibras" is rhymed with "but an Ass" (39-40).

The diction in _Hudibras_ also contributes to the low burlesque manner. Butler borrows from many languages, both classical and modern, and he makes use of all levels of English, from highly formal and sophisticated words to coarse four-letter obscenities. By and large, though, the diction has a strong colloquial flavor, and the low level of this diction becomes another element for debasing the object of his satire. Serious subject matter is often indirectly ridiculed by means of the language with which it is treated, as at the beginning of the poem when the narrator speaks of the time

> When _civil_ Fury first grew high,
> And men fell out they knew not why;
> When hard words, _Jealousies_ and _Fears_,
> Set Folks together by the ears,
> And made them fight, like mad or drunk,
> For Dame _Religion_ as for Punk....(I,i,1-6)

The colloquial idiom in the fourth line here creates an incongruity between the serious subject matter--the English Civil Wars--and the manner in which it is presented. A little later in the same canto, the narrator considers the necessity of invoking a muse:

> But ere we venture to unfold
> Atchievements so resolv'd and bold,
> We should, as learned Poets use,
> Invoke th' assistance of some Muse;
> However Criticks count it sillier
> Then Juglers talking t' a Familiar.
> We think 'tis no great matter which:
> They'r all alike: yet we shall pitch
> On one that fits our purpose most,
> Whom therefore thus do we accost. (I,i,629-638)

The idiomatic "...we shall pitch/On one..." and the word "accost" in connection with the solicitation of the muse contributes to the flippant treatment which the convention receives at Butler's hands. As with the rhyme, the low level of the diction used throughout Hudibras is an element in the overall low burlesque manner and at the same time functions as satiric thrusts at particular men, institutions or ideas.

A major element in the ridicule of Hudibras himself is the diction he uses. Before we meet him, the narrator indicates what to expect:

> His ordinary Rate of Speech
> In loftiness of sound was rich,
> A Babylonish dialect,
> Which learned Pedants much affect.
> It was a particolour'd dress
> Of patch'd and pyball'd Languages:
> 'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin,
> Like Fustian heretofore on Sattin. (I,i,91-98)

Characteristically Hudibras' diction is a mixture of learned, abstract words, foreign phrases, colloquial idioms and four-letter obscenities. The Knight is arguing with Ralph over the morality of bear-gardens:

> Quoth *Hudibras*, I smell a *Rat*;
> *Ralpho*, thou dost prevaricate.
> For though the *Thesis* which thou lay'st
> Be true *ad amussim* as thou say'st:
> (For that *Bear-baiting* should appear
> *Jure Divino* lawfuller
> Then *Synods* are, thou dost deny,
> *Totidem verbis* so do I)
> Yet there's a fallacy in this:
> For if by sly *Homoeosis*,
> Thou wouldst Sophistically imply
> Both are unlawfull, I deny. (I,i,815-826)

The colloquial "smell a *Rat*" contrasts with the formal "prevaricate" with which it rhymes, and the humor of the passage is further increased by the piling on of Latin and Greek phrases, the excessive use of which reveals Hudibras' pompous display of knowledge and becomes a part of the general satire on the misuse of the mind which permeates Butler's poem.

Often abstractions are made to appear absurd by Butler's reducing them to a sensual level or by otherwise associating them with coarse and vulgar objects or bodily functions. Ralph discourses on honor:

> Quoth *Ralpho*, Honor's but a Word
> To swear by only, in a *Lord*:
> In other men 'tis but a *Huff*,
> To vapour with, instead of proof,
> That like a *Wen*, looks big, and swels,
> Is senseless, and just nothing else. (II,ii,389-394)

The comparison of honor to a wen reveals it as something grotesque and unseemly and does as much damage to the abstraction as Falstaff's longer speech near the end of *King Henry IV, Part I*. As Ralph explains the effect Hudibras' virtues are likely to have on the Widow, valor and wit are

reduced to mechanical devices for trapping love:

> But thou bring'st Valour too and wit,
> Two things that seldome fail to hit.
> Valour's a mouse-trap, wit a gin,
> Which women oft are taken in. (I,iii,389-392)

Love is something that causes Hudibras' soul to burn in his "belly like a coal" (I,iii,322) or produces "amorous longings" which make "his mouth to water" (I,iii,379). In another passage the power of Hudibras' love is equated with bodily functions over which he has no control:

> Quoth he, to bid me not to <u>love</u>,
> Is to forbid my <u>Pulse</u> to move,
> My <u>Beard</u> to grow, my <u>Ears</u> to prick up,
> Or (when I'm in a fit) to hickup;
> Command me to piss out the Moon,
> And 'twill as easily be done.
> <u>Loves</u> power's too great to be withstood,
> By feeble humane <u>flesh</u> and <u>blood</u>. (II,i,343-350)

While the comparisons stress the power of love, their nature is such as to associate this power with uncontrollable physiological functions, an association which places love on a purely biological or instinctual plane divorced from all mental activity. This reduction of the abstract or ideal to the level of the sensual, the concrete or the instinctual is a major factor in Butler's satire on the frailty of the human mind.

The language in <u>Hudibras</u> is highly figurative. Often metaphors are extended over a long passage, as when in Part I, Canto III synods are compared by Ralph to "mystical <u>Bear-gardens</u>" (1095ff.). More characteristic of Butler, though, is the accumulation of a number of metaphors

or similes to describe a single phenomenon. Sometimes each figure adds a new dimension and at other times the variations merely reinforce by repetition a single conception. An example of the former is provided by the narrator's description of the "New Light" of Ralph's religion:

> 'Tis a *dark-Lanthorn* of the Spirit,
> Which none see by but those that bear it:
> A Light that falls down from on high,
> For Spiritual Trades to cousen by:
> An *Ignis Fatuus*, that bewitches,
> And leads men into Pools and Ditches,
> To make them *dip* themselves, and sound
> For Christendome in Dirty pond;
> To dive like Wild-foul for Salvation,
> And fish to catch Regeneration. (I,i,499-508)

W.O.S. Sutherland, Jr. explains the complexities of this passage:

> The three brilliant figures of light give an impression almost of improvisation. But they are not random. The first figure--"*Dark-Lanthorn*"--carries the implication of theft, the second--"to couzen by"--a direct statement of knavery following an ironic reference to the self-designated saints. The third reference--to false fire--ties the falseness and knavery to the Anabaptists' religious practices, at the same time making an ironic reference to the sectarians as fishers, though instead of fishers of men Butler calls them *Wild-foul*. Seen as a pun, this term fits physically and morally as a description of men who have been led into pools and ditches.[22]

The embodiment of an abstract theological concept in a series of concrete metaphors and the application of this concept in a specific example--the practice of baptism--is characteristic of the way in which Butler continually exposes the

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[22] *The Art of the Satirist*, p. 60.

results of man's tendency to become embroiled in the abstractions he creates.

An example of an accumulation of figures to reinforce a single conception appears when the narrator explains Hudibras' predicament in regard to the Widow, who "...could have none but onely such/As scorn'd and hated her as much":

> He loves, but dares not make the motion;
> Her <u>ignorance</u> is his <u>devotion</u>.
> Like Caitiff vile, that for misdeed
> Rides with his face to rump of Steed,
> Or rowing Scull, he's fain to love,
> Look one way, and another move;
> Or like a Tumbler that does play
> His game, and look another way,
> Until he seize upon the Coney:
> Just so does he by Matrimony. (I,iii,347-356)

The first and third figures here taint the Knight's situation with a suggestion of knavery, but the initial conception, that of a knave appearing to move in one direction while actually going in the opposite one, is reinforced rather than given new dimensions by the accumulation of additional similes.

The first and third figures above are also examples of a device frequently employed by Butler and widely imitated by his followers: the low burlesque simile. In such a simile the vehicle on one hand serves as a straightforward illustration of the tenor, while on the other it carries with it associations ultimately degrading to that which it is illustrating. The matter of moving in one direction while facing the opposite one is adequately

illustrated by the rider facing the rump of his horse, but the fact that the rider is a "Caitiff vile" and the ignominy of his predicament tend, by association, to pass a moral judgment upon the nature of Hudibras' action. Often the baser sort of animals or insects provide the vehicles for these low burlesque similes. The narrator speaks of Hudibras' skill as both a Justice of the Peace and a soldier:

> Mighty he was at both of these,
> And styl'd of War as well as Peace.
> (So some Rats of amphibious nature,
> Are either for the Land or Water.) (I,i,25-28)

The Knight's pursuit of the Widow is compared to an owl chasing a mouse:

> And as an Owl, that in a Barn
> Sees a Mouse creeping in the Corn,
> Sits still, and shuts his round blew eyes,
> As if he slept, until he spies
> The little beast within his reach,
> Then starts, and seizes on the wretch:
> So from his Couch the Knight did start,
> To seize upon the Widow's heart.... (I,iii,403-410)

And when Hudibras is stunned by a stone thrown by Colon, his act of accidently discharging his pistol is compared to that of a goose:

> ...And as a Goose
> In death contracts his talons close;
> So did the Knight, and with one claw
> The tricker of his Pistol draw. (I,iii,525-528)

In all of these passages the comparison of Hudibras to some low form of animal is an indirect means of passing judgment upon the quality of the man and his actions. The mode is

that of low burlesque in that the subject is held up to ridicule by presenting similarities between him and some lower form of life.

Butler also employs high burlesque techniques, those in which differences between the satiric object and some more noble subject or action are stressed. Even in the foregoing passages the form in which the low burlesque similes are cast introduces a high burlesque element; the "as. . .so" constructions echo those of the similes in the great epics and invite a contrast between the low actions here depicted and the heroic ones in these works. However, high burlesque techniques often operate in more complex ways than the low burlesque ones. While allusions to classical works, characters and events provide an ideal against which to measure the meanness of the satiric object, more often than not the content of the allusions themselves is degraded by the context in which they are placed and the manner of presentation. The battles in Hudibras are mock heroic in their general character in that many of the devices and events are similar to those found in the classical epics and romances: the gods are active participants; the battle in Part I, Canto II is preceded by a lengthy description of the warriors, their ancestry and their weapons; such devices as epic similes and apostrophe occur; and much of the phraseology parallels that in the classical works. But the irreverent way in which the romantic and

heroic worlds are treated prevents our taking them seriously. The opening lines of Part I, Canto II set the tone for the treatment of these worlds in the remainder of the canto:

> There was an ancient sage *Philosopher*,
> That had read *Alexander Ross* over,
> And swore the world, as he could prove,
> Was made of *Fighting* and of *Love*:
> Just so *Romances* are, for what else
> Is in them all, but *Love* and *Battels*? (I,ii,1-6)

The narrator goes on to indicate that authors of romances, in setting "A Pattern fit for modern Knights," do not

> ...care how many others
> They kill, without regard of mothers,
> Or wives, or children, so they can
> Make up some fierce, dead-doing man....(I,ii,17-20)

The attack here is pretty direct, but in other places the allusion is indirectly ridiculed by the manner of the presentation. Hudibras and Ralph were about to come to blows with the enemy,

> When *Orsin* first let flie a stone
> At *Ralpho*; not so huge a one
> As that which *Diomed* did maul
> *Aeneas* on the Bum withall.... (I,iii,491-494)

The heroic incident is degraded by the base nature of the conflict with which it is associated and the diction used to describe it ("maul," "Bum"). As W.O.S. Sutherland, Jr. has indicated, for the most part Hudibras "retains his own heroic outlook and the irony lies in the discrepancies between his point of view and the poet's."[23] After being

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[23]*The Art of the Satirist*, p. 62.

vanquished by Trulla, the Knight pleads for mercy from her scathing words:

> The ancient Hero's were illustrious
> For b'ing benigne, and not blustrous,
> Against a vanquisht foe: their swords
> Were sharp and trencheant, not their words;
> And did in fight but cut work out
> T' employ their Courtesies about. (I,iii,879-884)

Hudibras is, of course, unaware of the deeper implications of his words, but the reader recognizes that the passage is an indirect attack on the values of the heroic world.

Such treatment of the worlds of the great romances and epics in Hudibras has a twofold effect. In the first place, it establishes, in the manner of the high burlesque mode, an ideal against which to contrast the sordid activities of Butler's characters. The perceptive reader recognizes how far the actions of the characters deviate from the ideal implicit in classical works. But this ideal is shown to be little more than an illusion, a huge abstraction which is the result of viewing the heroic actions from a single perspective, of ignoring the base realities that must also be implicit in such actions. Butler degrades the material of the classical allusions by introducing other perspectives, the effect of which is to place the motives and activities of the classical heroes on a plane with those of his characters. The heroic ideal thus becomes both a background against which to measure the contemptible acts of men, both ancient and contemporary, and an illustration

of the way in which man's imperfect mind creates abstractions which have little basis in reality and which in fact prevent him from perceiving the true nature of the human condition.

Another technique used in *Hudibras* is the pseudo-erudite footnote. Often these contribute to the ridicule of the heroic allusion; the author elaborates in a footnote upon the subtlety of Dido, the "*Tyrian* Queen" (I,i,461),

> ...who bought as much Land as she could compass with an Oxes Hide, which she cut into small Thongs, and cheated the owner of so much ground, as serv'd her to build *Carthage* upon.

Contemporary tastes in heroic poetry are also treated satirically in the footnotes. At the beginning of Part II, Canto I, the poet states that the passage was purposely written in imitation of the opening of Book IV of the *Aeneid* in order "...to satisfy the curiosity of those who believe that Invention and Fancy ought to be measur'd (like Cases in Law) by Precedents, or else they are in the power of the Critique." In another footnote, he justifies Hudibras' use of the word "*Catasta*" (II,i,259) by indicating that "...Heroical Poetry must not admit of any vulgar word (especially of paultry signification) and therefore some of our modern authors are fain to import forrain words from abroad, that were never before heard in our Language." Hudibras' love of sophisticated words is also ridiculed, as in the footnote to the word "Sarcasmous" (I,ii,578):

"Abusive, or insulting had been better, but our Knight believ'd the Learned Languages, more convenient to understand in, then his own Mother-tongue." Contemporary allusions are frequently elaborated upon at length in footnotes, often making more explicit the vaguer satiric thrusts in the text. The "Gallant _Bruin_" is said to have travelled farther than "_Le Blanc_ the Traveller" (I,ii,281-282), and in a footnote this attack on travel books is strengthened by indicating that if authors of such books "...should write nothing but what is possible, or probable, they might appear to have lost their labor, and observed nothing, but what they might have done as well at home." Many of the footnotes, of course, merely mock themselves by their own excess, by elaborate documentation of trivial points from esoteric or obscure works. As such they contribute to the general ridicule of man's tendency to misuse his mind by applying it to fruitless endeavors.

Hudibras is himself one of Butler's main satiric devices. In thought, action and physical appearance he is a caricature of the ideal knight and thus a functional part of the satire on romances. At the same time he is on a broader level a part of Butler's satire on the misuse of the human mind. Although well versed in ancient languages, mathematics, rhetoric, logic and scholastic philosophy, these intellectual achievements are misapplied and ultimately worthless. His knowledge of mathematics enables him by

"geometrick scale" to measure pots of ale and he can by logic prove whether or not the devil had cloven feet. But when confronted with an important question he often becomes so entangled in his own learning that he is unable to see that which should be apparent to common sense. At times the issue is lost sight of altogether and at other times Hudibras weakens his own position in trying to defend it. Usually, though, Butler's hero is motivated by self-interest and uses his learning as only a screen behind which to hide (sometimes rather well) his desire for baser things, or as a weapon with which to attain them; what, according to Hudibras, "makes all Doctrines Plain and Clear" is "About two Hundred Pounds a Year" (III,i,1277-1278). And since to Hudibras learning is often no more than a tool to achieve practical ends, when it fails to perform the desired function he is quick to abandon it for other means, usually either outright deception or physical violence. The arguments in Hudibras frequently end in blows, or the threat of blows, not because Hudibras and the other characters become passionate over the pursuit of truth but because either the arguments crumble and reveal the base motives for which they were merely a facade or, what is much the same, their pride is wounded by the destruction of abstract philosophies and systems of their own creation.

One final item of technique which deserves mention is the fable or plot in Hudibras. The adventures of the

Knight and his Squire amount to a parody of the typical romance without detracting from Butler's larger satiric aims. It does, in fact, provide a thread upon which to hang the rest of the satire. And the attack on romances which is embodied in the distorted plot--for example, unlike the typical romance situation, Hudibras wins the first battle and loses the second--is easily incorporated into the more general satire on the nature of man. Thus the plot serves both a structural and a thematic function.

Viewed in its entirety, Hudibras possesses both the indirection and the sustained focus essential to a successful satire. The above techniques for the most part contribute to the indirect nature of the work; the reader is left on his own to discover the implications of the awkward couplets, comic rhymes, inappropriate diction, burlesque similes, humorous allusions and pseudo-erudite footnotes. And while many different men, institutions and ideas are attacked in Hudibras, each inadequacy revealed is only a part of a much larger problem, a problem which is kept before the reader throughout the poem: man's tendency to misuse his mind, to become inextricably entangled in and morally corrupted by the ingenuity of his own mental processes. It may be, as James Sutherland has suggested, that Butler "...is so set on bethumping his victims that we are conscious of little else than the dust and the clatter,"

thus making positive values hard to discover.[24] But all of this dust and clatter coalesces in a single vision which is aesthetically satisfying, a feat accomplished by few of his imitators.

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As early as 1663, with the publication of the spurious Hudibras, the Second Part, imitators began to capitalize on the popularity of Butler's work. Edward Ames Richards, whose Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition (1937) remains the most comprehensive survey of the tradition Butler originated, distinguishes between the several types of authors writing under the influence of Hudibras:

> First, there were those who were amused by the verse form and who experimented with it themselves, often, apparently, on the assumption that the form was easy to handle or that it would be effective even though mishandled. The second class took over the verse form, more or less of the hudibrastic machinery, and also what they conceived to be Butler's political point of view. A third class were interested not so much in the obvious marks of hudibrastic verse, or in the fable, or in the politics of Butler, as they were in the subtler qualities of his mind, such as his precision, his polish, his playfulness, and his witty and agnostic movement through the field of familiar notions.[25]

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[24] English Satire, p. 42.

[25] Richards, p. 33. Richards includes in pages 171-180 of this work an extensive bibliography of Hudibrastic works published between 1662 and 1830 in England and America. Hudibrastic works published between 1700 and 1750 in England are included in Richmond P. Bond's "Register of Burlesque Poems" in his English Burlesque Poetry, 1700-1750, pp. 237-453. While not as extensive a bibliography as Richard's,

No doubt the least successful of the imitations were written by authors of the first type who equated Butler's verse form with poetry so poorly constructed as to be comical in its effect. Many of these authors seemed to feel that merely to defy grammatical rules, split words in two at ends of lines, clip syllables, wrench pronunciation for rhyme, exhibit vulgarity in thought and expression and, in general, ignore all decorum, poetic and social, would be to accomplish the same ends as Butler. Their verse is at times humorous, but it is seldom witty; more often, though, it ranges along a spectrum from bland to distasteful to positively pathetic. Although Hudibras, The Second Part is, according to Richards, a long way from the worst of the imitations, the following passage reflects the sort of blandness and turgidity that characterizes the versification of many of Butler's followers. Sir Hudibras is dining with a brother knight who

> ...did command the Cheshire forces,
> And had a face as round as horses;
> His teeth were grown to the same length,
> And wanted nothing but in strength
> To pass for one, beasts know not theirs,
> And he was robb'd of his by fears;

Bond provides brief summaries of the works and sometimes excerpts from critical reviews. A brief bibliography of some of the more direct imitations appears in "Imitations of Hudibras," The Retrospective Review, 3, Pt. 2(1821), 317-335. A number of the imitations are discussed in this article, although the anonymous author is more concerned with derision than with objective presentation.

His name did rumble like to thun-
Der, Gulielmo Knight Sir B-ton.[26]

It is difficult to tell whether the grammatical jumble or the straining for cleverness is most responsible for the sophomoric quality of this passage.

Those imitators who adopted what they conceived to be Butler's politics as well as much of the Hudibrastic machinery seldom captured either the spirit or tone of Hudibras. In the first place, most were satirizing contemporary affairs, whereas Butler's view was largely retrospective. Seldom did they achieve the detached attitude, the view from Olympus, of their mentor. While for the most part they attacked the enemies of the established order--Presbyterianism, Dissent, Catholicism, etc.--just as Butler had, the dominant tone of many of their works was one of fear, as opposed to the stoic skepticism of Butler. In the second place, their attacks were primarily partisan, while Butler's was only superficially so. They ridiculed the follies of their enemies but seldom probed beneath these follies to expose the more universal human weaknesses which have nothing to do with party allegiance. As Richards has indicated, Butler satirized "...Dissent and Presbyterianism as the extreme madness of a normally mad existence; his immediate followers took the hint by satirizing their opponents as the insane members of a normally sane

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[26] Quoted in "Imitations of Hudibras," The Retrospective Review, 320.

society."[27] Not only did their satires usually lack the universality of Butler's, but frequently they degenerated into direct attacks on the object; in their zeal to demolish their opponents these satirists often laid aside the fable and other rhetorical devices and descended to unadorned personal invective, thus leaving the reader little upon which to exercise his own imagination.

Some of the more enduring imitations were written by those who were less interested in Butler's politics or in duplicating his specific techniques than in capturing the subtler qualities of his mind. Although such poets as Mathew Prior and Charles Churchill lacked Butler's learning and intellectual powers, their analysis of ideas and concern with man's misapplication of his mental capacities tend, on the one hand, to give their works a spiritual affinity with _Hudibras_ not possessed by those in which merely the more obvious Hudibrastic techniques are imitated. On the other hand, though, the abandonment of the fable and a desire for a greater elegance and polish in expression resulted in a tone quite different from that of Butler's work.

As Richards has pointed out, Hudibrastic satires, whatever the intentions of their authors, developed in two main directions after Butler: "narrative burlesques" embodying a strong fable and focussing on the descriptive

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[27]_Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition_, p. 57.

and active, and "intellectual burlesques" containing little or no fable and leaning toward the more elegant, abstract and witty.[28] Butler had, of course, incorporated elements of both of these in Hudibras, but no later writer was able to combine them so well. Nevertheless, each type had practitioners who produced works of some literary value.

Among the more outstanding narrative burlesques in the Hudibrastic manner are Hudibras, The Second Part, and certain poems by Thomas D'Urfey and Edward Ward. The clumsy versification in parts of Hudibras, The Second Part is partly compensated for by some vivid descriptive passages and a fast-paced narrative which finds Hudibras and fellow knights venting their reforming spirit on people attending Maypole celebrations and fairs. Aside from the octosyllabic couplets and comic rhymes and the similarity of character and incident, the poem bears little resemblance to Hudibras. It exists for the action and description alone and has little of the atmosphere or intellectual play of Butler's work.

D'Urfey's two Hudibrastic works are Butler's Ghost, or Hudibras the Fourth Part (1682) and Collin's Walk through London and Westminster (1690), both of which are well structured and otherwise admirable literary performances in their own right. Butler's Ghost is a satire on the Whig

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[28] Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition, p. 134.

leaders, with specific characters in the poem representing Monmouth, Shaftesbury, Sunderland, Pilkington, Shute, Slingsby Bethel and Titus Oates. The poem opens with Hudibras about to commit suicide because his lady has rejected him. Ralph dissuades him by indicating that he has failed because he hasn't used the right approach, whereupon the knight transforms himself into what Richards calls a "calculating Restoration beau."[29] Canto I concludes with Hudibras winning the hand of the woman, although he is unaware at the time that she is pregnant by one of two other men. Much of Canto II is devoted to the wedding feast, at which a fight with food erupts between Tories and Whigs. While the fight is going on Ralph tells Hudibras that one of his friends is making love to his bride in another room. Hudibras refuses at first to believe this, but when he is finally convinced he and Ralph fight the lovers. His new wife vanquishes him with a broom and the poem concludes with Hudibras on his way to get a divorce.

Butler's Ghost is undoubtedly one of the better imitations of Hudibras. Although D'Urfey doesn't dazzle the reader with the ingenuity and variety of his techniques and his strength is in the descriptive and narrative passages rather than in the manipulating of abstract ideas, he handles quite well what he sets out to do. His verse moves

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[29] Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition, p. 42.

more swiftly and is not as subtle as Butler's, but he is adept at achieving satiric effects with such Hudibrastic techniques as low burlesque similes, classical allusions and comic rhymes. Much of the satire is directed at senseless disputations, hypocrisy and the sheer stupidity of the Whigs, and he occasionally creates passages with a strong Butlerian flavor. Hudibras, on hearing of his wife's infidelity, questions whether "sight" should be trusted in matters of such importance, since

> The Sense by sleep may be corrupted,
> As 'tis by Wine, when long we have supt it,
> And th' Objects, which we seem to view,
> May be but Fancies, and not true,
> The effects of Rage and stupid Folly,
> Diseases, or of Melancholy,
> Sudden Surprises and Affrights;
> As Women, walking in dark nights,
> Charm'd by their fear, think every Post
> Or Bush, a Devil or a Ghost....
> . . . .
> The Stoicks tell us,
> (And those I think were learned fellows)
> That no one certain Matter knows,
> But onley through a grand suppose;
> As thus now--if thy passive Bones
> Were drub'd with plant, or bruis'd with stones,
> Or that opinionated scull
> Were Bastinadoed soft as wool,
> Beating you must not bluntly own,
> But only must suppose it done;
> Implying from less things to greater,
> There is no certainty in Nature:
> And this Philosophy should teach thee,
> If any occult Art can reach thee,
> Not to affirm what Objects show,
> But to suppose it may be so.[30]

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[30] Butler's Ghost: or Hudibras. The Fourth Part. With Reflections Upon These Times (London: Printed for J. Hindmarsh, 1682), pp. 155-156, 162.

Collin's Walk, a satire on Presbyterians and discontented Anglicans, is equally well executed. Again the narrative and descriptive passages predominate over the discussion of ideas, but as in Butler's Ghost the structure is firm and the versification and other Hudibrastic techniques handled with a great deal of finesse.

One of the more prolific writers of Hudibrastic verse was Edward Ward. In such poems as The Poet's Ramble after Riches (1703), Hudibras Redivivus (1708) and Vulgar Britannicus (1710) one can observe the descriptive and narrative strain of Hudibrastic satire carried to its extreme. His virtues and shortcomings are summed up by Howard William Troyer:

> Where Ward's imitation suffers most is in his attempt to repeat the long and discursive argumentative passages of his model. He had no talent, such as Butler had, for travestying the stupid inanities of religious and political debate. His attempt to do so is apt to be wearily repetitious and extraordinarily dull. He is at his best, as one would expect him to be, where he chooses rather to depict men and events. Here there is often an abundance of realistic detail, an energy of movement, and a vividness of language that must at once have entertained and intrigued his readers.[31]

His vignettes of London low life are memorable, and it is just such a passage as the following description of a coffee-house that must have entertained his contemporaries:

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[31]Ned Ward of Grubstreet: A Study of Sub-Literary London in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1946), p. 92.

> Ent'ring, I saw quite a round Table,
> An ill-look'd thin-jaw'd, Calves-head, Rabble,
> All stigmatiz'd with Looks like Jews,
> Each arm'd with half a Sheet of News:
> Some sucking Smoak from Indian Fuel,
> And others sipping Turkey Gruel;
> Still searching after something new
> In Nob, the Gazette, or Review.
> Sometimes they smil'd, as if well pleas'd,
> Then by and by look'd vex'd and teaz'd,
> Alt'ring their sublunary Looks
> According as they lik'd their Books.[32]

Ward is adept at handling comic rhymes, but his diction lacks variety; where Butler might use irony or some other rhetorical device to deprecate his characters, Ward often resorts to four-letter obscenities and scatological references. Perhaps, though, the tedium of much of Ward's work might be due, as Richards has suggested, to his attempt to sustain long passages of description in a verse form that is unsatisfactory for this purpose. The octosyllabic couplet is adequate for short descriptive passages, but it is "...not adapted to the infinite detail and flexibility which the success of the realistic manner depends upon."[33] When Hudibrastic writers attempted to provide faithful reproductions of actual life in long passages, they were

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[32]From Hudibras Redivivus. Quoted in Richards, p. 165. I have been unable to obtain this work and most of my discussion of Edward Ward's works is based upon the observations of Richards. However, I have obtained and read The Second Volume of the Writings of the Author of the London Spy (London, 1703), which includes "The Poet's Ramble after Riches." This reading has satisfied me as to the reliability of Richards' general observations on the nature of Ward's poetry.

[33]Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition, p. 166.

meddling with subject matter that could be better dealt with in prose, as well as relinquishing the possibilities inherent in the burlesque method.

Those imitators of Butler who went in the other direction, the writers of intellectual burlesque, were more interested in his manipulation of ideas, in his probing of man's reasoning processes, than in either reproducing characters and incidents from _Hudibras_ or constructing a lively tale. Whereas the object of attack for writers of narrative burlesque was usually political or social evils, the object of these authors was more likely to be some aspect of rationalism, or man's belief that he could find ultimate truth through the medium of his own mind. Philosophical systems and new theologies bear the brunt of these attacks, although these are sometimes presented as merely outward manifestations of a deeper sickness inherent in man's nature. None of the authors possessed the learning of Butler nor his ability to manipulate and analyze ideas, and more often than not the abandonment of the fable led to the creation of works with a strong element of the oratorical, the sententious or the didactic.

One work, however, towers above the other intellectual burlesques and provides an example of the distance which later Hudibrastic works could move from _Hudibras_ and at the same time retain some of the flavor of the original. Matthew Prior's _Alma: or, The Progress of the Mind_ (1718)

is supposedly a dialogue between the poet and his friend Richard Shelton over the location of the mind, the latter arguing for a central and permanent location and the former for a progression from legs to head as one grows older. The poem stops abruptly after nearly 1700 lines, leaving neither party the least convinced by the fanciful arguments of his opponent. The inconclusiveness of the argument is, of course, reminiscent of many such arguments in _Hudibras_, as is the implication that man's mind when pushed to its extremity only becomes tangled in the systems of its own creation. In addition, the poem contains a wide variety of allusions and many ingenious comparisons, which tend to give it a density of texture equaled by few other Hudibrastic works.

Yet the tone of _Alma_ is much lighter than that of _Hudibras_ and one has the feeling that for Prior the problem of knowledge was not nearly as serious a business as it was for Butler. This difference in tone is partly accounted for by the somewhat flippant attitude Prior's characters take toward the dispute and partly by the nature of the versification. Matthew responds to Dick's skepticism about his system:

> What _System_, DICK, has right averr'd
> The Cause, why Woman has no Beard;
> Or why, as Years our Frame attack,
> Our Hair grows white, our Teeth grow black?
> In Points like These We must agree,
> Our Barber knows as much as We.

Yet still unable to explain,
We must persist the best We can;
With Care our Systems still renew,
And prove Things likely, tho' not true.[34]

This willingness to live with doubt and make a pleasant pastime of intellectual pursuits is quite different from the dogmatic seriousness with which Hudibras and Ralph conduct their arguments. Also, the smoothness of the meter and the artful parallelism in the fourth line lend the passage a grace and elegance that reinforces Matthew's casual attitude toward the problem. According to Richards, the main objection to Butler's work by eighteenth-century critics was that it was not sufficiently elevated or polite; this criticism Prior met

> ...by writing hudibrastic verse in a thoroughly polished and abstract manner, with scarcely any visual strength in it at all. To the tone of the comedy of manners he added the tone of the familiar essay and of the personal letter; for actors he chose principally himself and his friends and gave them parts to speak, but no action. He trims objective objective statement with personal whimsey. He decorates his verse with chaste antitheses and gives the burlesque parenthesis the air of a dramatic aside. He pens in his carefully studied informality of tone and phrase with precise fences of classical epigrammatic style. And all is done with the careful ease of the man of society. No mark of strain or labor must show. There must be no hint of ruggedness, of burliness in thought or form.[35]

Richards goes on to suggest that Prior probably ended the influence of Hudibras as a literary force and that

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[34] The Literary Works of Matthew Prior, ed. H. Bunker Wright and Monroe K. Spears, I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 510.

[35] Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition, p. 145.

"...hudibrastic verse as a polished instrument was generally recognized in the eighteenth century as the work of Prior rather than as the achievement of Butler."

The last major English writer of Hudibrastic verse was Charles Churchill, and his most important work The Ghost (1762-63). This work carries to an extreme many of the tendencies of intellectual burlesque observable in Alma and reflects the striking transformation Hudibrastic satires had undergone in the hundred years since the publication of the first part of Hudibras. Utilizing a contemporary event involving the "Cock Lane Ghost" as a narrative, the author rambles far and wide in search of objects for his satire, virtually forgetting the story which manages to surface only briefly from time to time. Digression is piled on digression in the manner of Tristram Shandy and no one single satiric object emerges, although contemporary literary tastes come in for a fair share of the abuse. The tone is inconsistent, ranging from the indignant to the whimsical and nostalgic, and Book IV, involving the coronation of George III, is extremely opaque. Abstractions are continually personified and the poem is almost wholly lacking in visual detail. The versification is elegant and polished: his diction is for the most part refined and the individual couplets often artfully constructed, frequently embodying parallelism, balance and antithesis. For example:

> This Sage deceas'd, for all must die,
> And CAMPBELL'S no more safe than I,
> No more than I can guard the heart,
> When Death shall hurl the fatal dart,
> Succeeded ripe in art and years,
> _Another_ fav'rite of the spheres,
> _Another_ and _Another_ came,
> Of equal skill, and equal fame;
> As white each wand, as black each gown,
> As long each beard, as wise each frown,
> In ev'ry thing so like, you'd swear,
> CAMPBELL himself was sitting there.
> . . . .
> By TRUTH inspir'd, we numbers see
> Of each Profession and Degree,
> Gentle and Simple, Lord and Cit,
> Wit without wealth, wealth without wit....[36]

While _The Ghost_ bears little resemblance to _Hudibras_ in tone, satiric effect or versification technique, it is in many ways a satisfactory performance. In spite of the loose structure and blurred focus which mars its overall aesthetic effect, many of the individual passages--e.g., those on heroes, the muses, or fancy--possess wit, grace and a tonal consistency that at least partly compensate for the inadequacy of the whole. Although Churchill lacked the philosophical seriousness and dark vision of Butler, he possessed a vivid imagination and a mind quick to detect hypocrisy and other types of human folly. He does not deal with ideas in depth nor does he utilize much of the potential of the burlesque method, but his skillful handling of the octosyllabic couplet and his manipulation of tone

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[36] _The Poetical Works of Charles Churchill_, ed. Douglas Grant (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 69 and 86.

frequently elicit a nostalgic yearning for an ideal never to be attained that is unique to poems written in the Hudibrastic manner. But while this emotional dimension in The Ghost probably saves it from the oblivion of many other variations on Hudibras, it at the same time reveals how far removed in kind The Ghost is from the cold intellectuality of Butler's work.

The division of Hudibrastic satires into narrative and intellectual burlesque does not, of course, account for the many varieties that fall somewhere in between. Nevertheless, Richards' classification isolates the two main directions, and it is possible to see many of the variatiins as extensions of certain tendencies inherent in one or the other of the two. Narrative burlesque, with its emphasis on a lively plot and vivid and realistic descriptions, had a tendency to move toward direct satire; the satirist often was content to draw realistic pictures, in the course of which he would relinquish the indirection of the burlesque method altogether. Intellectual burlesque in its abandonment of the story or fable also relinquished one of the main instruments for achieving the distortion so necessary for the burlesque effect. In addition, the absence of a narrative line increased the chances that the work would be without a firm structure and an adequate focus. Without the kind of control and objectivity a narrative could provide, there was a tendency for intellectual

burlesques to evolve into informal chit-chat or works possessing a strong didactic or moral bent. The refined and polished versification of many of the intellectual burlesques created further problems. In *Hudibras* the rough rhythms, comic rhymes and low or incongruous diction all worked in harmony to debase the satiric object. When later writers refined one or more of these elements, they failed to avail themselves of one of Butler's main satiric devices, or, even worse, created a dissonance between the elements themselves. In some cases the refined versification tended to become almost an end in itself and satiric purpose was subordinated to elegance of expression, creating what in effect was merely light verse.

CHAPTER II

HUDIBRAS IN AMERICA

In America the Hudibrastic manner was widely imitated. Unfortunately, though, most of the imitators were more interested in vilifying their satiric object than in producing substantial literary works, and as a result the total number of satires of any value is not large. Only a few Americans--notably Ebenezer Cook, John Trumbull, Hugh Henry Brackenridge and Thomas Green Fessenden--created a significant corpus of Hudibrastic works, and of these only Cook and Trumbull produced poems that have retained some appeal for later ages. When eighteenth-century Americans were possessed with the urge to attack someone or something in verse, the octosyllabic couplets and comic rhymes of Butler came quickly to mind, but seldom did they incorporate any of the more subtle aspects of his work. Probably very few were capable of creating intellectual burlesques in the manner of Prior or Churchill, and while a substantial number of the productions embodied some kind of a narrative, not many of these were sustained for any length. Unlike Butler who chose his subject matter from another time, most Americans were satirizing contemporary people and

events, and one suspects that they were often writing in a white heat lest the issue lose its appeal before they could get into print. Given the contemporaneity of their subject matter and the sense of urgency with which they wrote, it is understandable that these satirists lacked both the objectivity and the time to make their attacks indirect. According to Dryden, there is a "...vast difference betwixt the slovenly Butchering of a Man and the Fineness of a Stroke that separates the Head from the Body, and leaves it standing in its Place."[1] Most American writers of Hudibrastic satires were "slovenly butchers" who hacked and smashed their victims with the bludgeon of invective, who often attempted to overwhelm by the sheer force of their own indignation.

Nevertheless, aside from the satires of Cook and Trumbull, there are a number of minor Hudibrastic productions that reveal some imagination on the part of their authors, even though these imaginations often were undisciplined and manifested only by occasional rays of light in otherwise gloomy and mediocre works. Also, when American authors were writing in the tradition of Butler and his followers, they were likely to be less imitative than when writing in the more genteel vein of Pope and other

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[1]"Dedication" to _The Satyrs of Decimus Junius Juvenalis: and of Aulus Persius Flaccus_ (London: J. Tonson, 1726), pp. LXXXIX-XC.

neoclassicists; they tended to experiment more, to be more inventive in form, versification and tone--occasionally we actually find new wine in new bottles.

But in spite of this experimentation it is difficult to see Hudibrastic satire in eighteenth-century America as a developing tradition. Recognizable patterns simply do not exist; works written at the end of the century could just as well have been written at the beginning. It is true that one finds more wit and elegance near the end of the period, a fact which could be due partly to the influence of Churchill and other more polished English satirists and partly to the greater number of literary people in America at this time. However, one cannot help but feel that the Hudibrastic satires written near the turn of the century by Brackenridge and Fessenden could well have been written by early contributors to the New-England Courant or the Pennsylvania Gazette.

An examination of a number of these American Hudibrastic satires should give some idea of the experimentation in technique that was taking place, as well as indicate the broad range of subject matter that the satirists were exploiting. No attempt will be made to examine the works extensively, but rather each will be discussed primarily in terms of its relationship to the tradition in America. The satires selected for examination will for the most part be superior in literary quality to the average Hudibrastic

work of the period; however, since the main purpose of this chapter is to give a broad cross-section of American Hudibrastic activity, some inferior works will be included.

One form that Hudibrastic satires sometimes take is that of a brief exposition followed by a narrative which is, in effect, a parable. While the parable which carries the weight of the satiric thrust results in a certain amount of indirection in the attack, often this indirection serves practical as well as aesthetic ends. Such occurs when in the September 17, 1722, issue of the New-England Courant James Franklin is able to satirize with impunity the Council which had imprisoned him by publishing a Hudibrastic poem of 107 lines signed "Dic Burlesque." After a brief discussion of the colonizing of the country, the poet states how the rulers

> ...always us'd (to blind the People)
> To join the State unto the Steeple;
> And those who left the State i'th' Lurch,
> Wou'd cry, The Danger of the Church!
> Till some o'th' Clergy and the College,
> Declar'd against the Sin of Knowledge:
> And truly 'tis a fatal Omen,
> When Knowledge, which belongs to no Men
> But to the Clergy and the Judges,
> Gets in the Heads of common Drudges.

But time at last

> ...brought to Light
> A Painter, who in Black and White,
> Wou'd ev'ry roguish Face discover,
> And send them all the Country over;
> And ev'ry Face in ev'ry Town,
> Had Scores of Knaves to call't his own....

However, this painter's troubles began when

> ...once (where e'er it was he aim'd)
> He drew a Face th' whole Senate claim'd;
> But tho' they knew the Face was true,
> They storm'd to see't expos'd to View.

The painter is sent for, and while the senators admit the draught does "truly represent" them, they wish to know who sat for the copy. According to the painter, it doesn't really matter who the original was as long as they admit the picture is true, unless of course some crime

> You are afraid should thus be shown,
> And to your injur'd Country known.
> You own yourselves the Draught is true,
> And yet can blame the Painter too.
> So homely Dames with ragged Faces,
> Lay all the Fault upon their Glasses.

The senators become furious with the painter and the poem concludes with the sentence they pass upon him:

> I'th Senate, in the Month of--. WHEREAS,
> Of late appear'd among us there has
> A Painter, who in factious Pieces,
> Does represent our sacred Faces:
> And tho' his vile seditious Practice,
> We own but too too often Fact is,
> His Crime has on Rebellion border'd;
> And therefore by our selves 'tis ORDER'D,
> That Bumbo shall forthwith with him go,
> And put him close into the Limbo,
> There to remain for his Transgression,
> Until the ending of this -----

One need only substitute "printer" for "painter" to strip away the thinly veiled allegory and see the poem as Franklin's response--whether or not he actually composed it--to his treatment at the hands of public officials. The poem has little except the octosyllabic couplets, comic rhymes, elisions and colloquial diction to link it to Hudibras. Nevertheless, it does relfect some skill in

handling the octosyllabic couplet and avoids the sort of direct vilification and invective characteristic of much newspaper verse in imitation of Butler.

A more direct attack in Hudibrastic verse is that on the Methodist preacher George Whitefield in the May 24, 1740, issue of the South Carolina Gazette. Whitefield's activities in the South, including his founding of an orphan home in Georgia, stirred up bitter religious controversies, some of which were aired in Hudibrastic verse in various issues of the Gazette between 1740 and 1744.[2] The anonymous poet begins this particular poem as follows:

St. Anthony had but one Pig,
N'er cogg'd a Dye, nor frisked a Jig;
Tho' gifted in obsequious Latin,
To chant Response at Mass or Mattin:
But this Apostle, don't you twitter,
Has got a pretty num'rous Litter,
Who squeak at cards, & scream & tremble
To see our Beaux and Belles assemble.
And if a Sob or sad Grimace
You can't admit as Proof of Grace;
Doubt you their Spirit, or infer
Their Conduct or their Creed may err;
Spight all Reasons you can offer
You're a Polite, a Devil, a Scoffer.

The rigidity of Whitefield's theology is linked to Catholicism; in fact, if we believe that "Such Teachers won't, or can't deceive," we may well

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[2]Hennig Cohen discusses this controversy in The South Carolina Gazette, 1732-1775 (Columbia, S.C.: Univ. of S. Carolina Press, 1953), pp. 196-198.

...find ourselves in fine Possession
Of Penance, Convents and Confession....

The intolerance of Whitefield and his followers is stressed:

Nor is a book, not theirs, forgiv'n,
That dares advise the Road to Heav'n;
Which these Infallibles inclose all,
As they had got the sole Disposal;
Nor one can bear to pass the Wicket,
Who has not their peculiar Ticket.

The poet suggests that if Whitefield really wishes to be a martyr, he should learn to speak in Spanish and go where "...the Inquisition/Will quickly grant him his Petition." Such a fate is not, however, for him:

But to a Martyr's future Crown
His Zeal prefers our Penny down,
According it a fruitless Magot
From turning Souls to turn a Fagot.

In one of the more devastating passages of the poem, the poet in a condescending tone stresses his own magnanimity:

Yet as 'tis hard to hit the Mean,
And gladly to the Right I'd lean;
Till further fruits have more display'd it,
Leaving the Heart to him that made it;
Let our Humanity infer,
Himself's deceiv'd, or he may err,
From dreaming Pride or young Temerity
(For error's self may be sincerity)
If more severely others speak,
My Charity wou'd hope him weak.

Nevertheless we must remember that

...Pride and Errors still ridiculous,
Howe'er the voice or gesture tickle us:
While vain inflaming turbid Strains
Inchant our Ears, for want of Brains....

While Whitefield's "humility" might cause him to forgo the divine punishment which he is capable of calling forth on

one who so condemns him, the poem concludes with the poet's recognition of how the evangelist might still relish the punishment of excommunication:

> How would he glow with zealous Ire!
> How wou'd his Charity aspire
> To excommunicate us all!
> The Gift he chiefly envies Paul.

The identification of the satiric object with a low form of animal, in this case Whitefield and his followers with a pig and its litter, is a typical Hudibrastic device. In places the couplets and comic rhymes are handled with some dexterity, but at times the jumbled syntax and vague diction create unnecessary confusion. Also, the poem lacks a firm structure and orderly development of ideas, a weakness often found in Hudibrastic satires lacking a narrative. Although the attack is for the most part direct, it avoids invective and the more poignant thrusts are couched in ironical statements. All in all the detached and superior tone coupled with the indirection arising from the frequent use of irony reveal a poet with some skill in the satiric mode.

One of the more capable of the minor American Hudibrastic satirists was Joseph Green (1706-1780). Graduating from Harvard in 1726, Green became a successful merchant and a well known personality in Boston society. In 1774 he identified himself with the Tories, and in 1775 took refuge in London, where he spent the rest of his life. Green wrote

much that cannot now be identified, but what we do have is mostly in a satirical vein. His two Hudibrastic satires, Entertainment for a Winter's Evening and The Grand Arcanum Detected, were privately printed in 1750 and 1755 respectively.[3] Both are satires on the Masons, Entertainment giving an account of a Masonic meeting as it moves from tavern to church and back to tavern and Grand Arcanum describing the feast and other business that takes place when they return to the tavern, and both rely heavily on caricature and mock heroic elements for satiric effect. After the description of the feast, Grand Arcanum deals with the election of a "Master," an election decided on the basis of the candidates' ability to endure a degrading kind of physical punishment. Although the poem contains some good farcical scenes reminiscent of the battles in Hudibras and the feast in D'Urfey's Butler's Ghost, Entertainment seems to me a more carefully constructed work, and will, therefore, be discussed here.

Entertainment begins with the poet asking Clio to

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[3]The texts I have used with their full titles and author's pseudonyms are as follows: "Entertainment for a Winter's Evening: Being a Full and True Account of a very Strange and Wonderful Sight Seen in Boston on the Twenty-seventh of December, 1749. At Noon-Day. The Truth of which can be attested by a Great Number of People, who actually saw the same with their own Eyes. By Me, the Hon'ble B.B. Esq; The Second Edition Corrected." (Boston: G. Rogers, 1750); "The Grand Arcanum Detected: or, A Wonderful Phenomenon Explained, Which has baffled the Scrutiny of many Ages. By Me, Phil. Arcanos, Gent. Student in Astrology." (Boston, 1755).

leave her "airy dwelling" and entertain those assembled around the hearth with a "diverting christmas tale":

> O come, and in thy verse declare
> Who were the men, and what they were,
> And what their names, and what their fame,
> And what the cause for which they came
> To house of God from house of ale,
> And how the parson told his tale:
> How they return'd, in manner odd,
> To house of ale from house of God. (5-6)

The occasion of the Masons' celebration is the "day of _Saint John's_ feast," a day "Fixed by the holy _Roman_ priest." Since Saint John is one of their patron saints, it is only fitting that they "order store of belly-timber" in his honor. The morning of the feast arrives in "scarlet apron dressed" and they proceed to the church where the parson is to deliver a sermon on the brotherhood of Masonry. The poet is struck with the incongruity of the scene:

> MASONS at church! strange auditory!
> And yet we have as strange in story.
> For saints, as history attests,
> Have preach'd to fishes, birds and beasts;
> Yea stones so hard, tho' strange, 'tis true,
> Have sometimes been their hearers too. (7)

The poet documents this observation with two low burlesque similes in which the Masons' situation is compared to Saint Francis' sermon to the "braying race" and Wereburga's harangue to the geese, to which are appended scholarly footnotes giving the source of his information. In a mixture of elevated and low diction worthy of _Hudibras_, he next sets the scene for the parson's sermon:

The crowds attending gaze around,
And awful silence reigns profound.
Till from the seat which he'd sat arse on
Uprose and thus began the parson. (8)

The next four pages are devoted to the parson's sermon in the church. He tells the

...folk as never did appear
So overfond of coming there... (8)

that they "by Love cemented stand" and indicates the inclusiveness of the Masonic order by cataloguing the various vocations represented, as well as the patron saint of each. Mention of the rope-makers, whose cauldrons "smoke with juice of Pine," leads him into a lyrical digression in praise of pine, which he views as a healing agent:

My heart tho' grateful, weak my strain,
To show thy worth I strive in vain.
Could THRACIAN ORPHEUS but impart
His tuneful lyre and matchless art;
And would propitious fates decree
Old NESTOR'S length of days to me,
That lyre, that art, that length of days
I'd spend in singing forth thy praise. (10)

Returning to his subject, the parson is interrupted by one who questions the existence of this love among the brethren:

"Did there not (for the SECRET'S out)
"In the last LODGE arise a rout?
"M------ with a fist of brass
"Laid T-----s nose level with his face,
"And scarcely had he let his hand go
"When he receiv'd from T----- a d----d blow.
"Now, parson, when a nose is broken,
"Pray, is it friendly sign or token? (11)

Like Hudibras, the parson is not one to be deterred by seemingly incontrovertible facts, and after stating that "Humanum enim est errare" he further reveals his likeness

to Butler's hero by weakening his own position while attempting to defend it:

> 'Tis Love, pure Love cements the whole,
> Love ----- of the BOTTLE and the BOWL. (11)

As is often the case in Hudibrastic satires, abstract concepts are no match for the concrete realities of sensual pleasures:

> For eating solid sense affords,
> While nonsense lurks in many words.
> Doubting does oft arise from thinking,
> But truth is only found in drinking.
> This having said, the reverend vicar
> Dismiss'd them to their food and liquor. (11)

The procession back to the tavern with its combination of high and low burlesque elements is the highlight of the poem. The parson, like Achilles who "tarry'd in his tent" rather than draw his "Conquering sword in harlot's cause," wisely chooses to remain behind. The description of the others is in the mock heroic vein; extended similes, inflated diction, classical allusions and epic phraseology abound:

> WHO'S he comes next? --- 'Tis P---e by name,
> P---e by his nose well known to fame;
> This, when the generous juice recruits,
> Around a brighter radiance shoots.
> So, on some promontory's height,
> For NEPTUNE'S son's the signal light
> Shines fair, and fed by unctuous stream,
> Sends off to sea a livelier beam. (13)

At times the overall form of the description is mock heroic but the individual similes invite the kind of comparison characteristic of the low burlesque:

See B-----k before the apron'd throng
Marches with sword and book along;
The stately ram with courage bold,
So stalks before the fleecy fold,
And so the gander, on the brink
Of river, leads his geese to drink,
And so the geese descend, from gab'ling
On the dry land, in stream to dab'ling. (12)

The description of the participants concluded, the poet, in a passage in which sound reflects sense, compares the mob the Masons have attracted to another low scene:

WHENE'ER, for aiding nature frail,
Poor bawd must follow the cart's-tail,
As through fair LONDON'S streets she goes,
The mob, like fame, by moving grows,
They should'ring close, press, stink and shove,
Scarcely can the _procession_ move.
Just such a street-collected throng
Guarded the _brotherhood_ along.... (14-15)

With the brethren safely ensconced in the tavern, the poet confesses his inability, even had he the "force of STENTOR'S lungs," to reveal what occurred inside. Clio, however, could do so, and in a foreshadowing of the _Grand Arcanum_ he concludes the poem by indicating that perhaps she

...with descendent wing,
Shall downward fly again and sing. (15)

Entertainment for a Winter's Evening probably contains more Hudibrastic elements than any other American poem of comparable length. The Masons are effectively caricatured and low and high burlesque similes, contrasting levels of diction, pseudo-erudite footnotes, comic digressions and classical allusions are manipulated with some skill. The versification is more polished and artful than that in

Hudibras--for instance, the balance and parallelism employed in the digression on pine above--and the tone much more genial. Also, the poem is basically of the narrative and descriptive type and does not deal with ideas in any depth. But unlike many narrative and descriptive Hudibrastic works Entertainment does not become either direct attack or purely realistic description. Green utilizes the various Hudibrastic techniques to create the distortion of burlesque and the absurdity of the Masons is implied rather than explicitly stated. While not a great work, Entertainment for a Winter's Evening is superior to most colonial American satires and deserves to be anthologized more often than it has been.

A Hudibrastic poem slightly longer than Green's but of less literary value is Nicholas Scull's Kawanio Che Keeteru (1756).[4] Ostensibly the work is a satire on the hypocrisy of Quakers who refused to support the Anglo-American war against the French and Indians, although a somewhat blurred focus makes the satiric object difficult to delineate with certainty. The narrator begins by establishing an allegorical framework in which a conflict between George (George II) and Lewis (Louis XV) represents

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[4]The full title of this work is "Kawanio Che Keeteru: A True Relation of a Bloody Battle Fought between George and Lewis, in the Year 1755." (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1756).

the larger one between the British and the French. George is portrayed as an honest, patriotic, kind and bold man whose lands are unlawfully seized by Lewis and who

> ...tho' averse to War,
> Could not this daring Insult bear,
> But soon resolv'd his Foe to fight,
> And by the Sword regain his Right. (3)

Lewis adds insult to injury by stealing George's sword, whereupon the latter appeals to his neighbor Simon for cash with which to buy another. Simon is a reasonable man:

> He wanted not his Share of Sense,
> Nor was averse to Self-Defense;
> But durst not own it to the Church,
> For fear of eccles'astick Birch. (5)

After delivering a half-hearted lecture to George on the evils of force and the advantages of trusting in "Heav'ns paternal Care," Simon loans him the money, indicating that the use to which he puts it is no concern of his. George, however, recognizes that Simon "...us'd all his Art/To hide the Language of his Heart." George buys a sword, tries unsuccessfully to persuade Lewis to settle the dispute peaceably, and finally agrees to meet him in a pitched battle. The battle is compared to that of Hector and Achilles and a few epic phrases are employed, but it contains little else of a mock heroic nature and is, in fact, one of the more tedious parts of the poem. The conclusion of the battle is an unconvincing piece of melodrama as George stabs Lewis in the heart and the latter remarks before he dies that his "Punishment is Just," after which George,

"now all Tenderness" and unable to "stop the flowing Tears," delivers a lecture on the necessity of using force to preserve "Freedom, Life and Treasure."

Simon hears of the victory and indicates he is glad George has been "to Wickedness a Scourge." One Nathan, a pious Quaker who would lose liberty and life, but not his property, before using force, overhears Simon praising George's actions and runs to tell the church elders, who commission him to interrogate Simon on their behalf. The description of Simon embarking on this mission is psychologically convincing and probably the highlight of the poem:

> NATHAN with this was so elate,
> That he set off without his Hat,
> Which gave the pious Man the Pain,
> And Shame, of twining back again.
> His Hat regain'd, away he stretcht,
> Till SIMON'S Mansion House he retcht:
> Then stood a while to fetch his Breath,
> With Countenance as pale as Death,
> And putting on a serious Face,
> Such as becomes a Child of Grace;
> A Sigh he gave, and then a Groan,
> And thus began with dismal Tone. (11)

The balance of the poem is in the form of a dialogue between Simon and Nathan. Simon claims that he did warn George against the use of force and that he was not responsible for the use to which George put the money. Nathan says that it is an "affront to common Sense" for Simon to claim he didn't know that George was going to buy a sword, to which Simon replies that the church elders set him an example when they, in order

> ...to secure themselves their Places,
> Begin to put on Martial Faces,
> And voted Sixty Thousand Pound,
> Their Enemies to kill and wound.... (13)[5]

To Simon's charge that "Faith changes with Conveniency," Nathan replies that while the saints are "bid be harmless" they are also told to be "as wise as Serpents too." Simon indicates that had the elders been honest men and not loved power so much, they would have given up their seats to those who would vote appropriations for the war, thus averting both hypocrisy and the unhappy consequences of the war:

> Nor should we at this Day have seen,
> An Indian Foe, or Fort Duquesne;
> Nor would great BRADDOCK, once so brave,
> Have at the Meadows fill'd a Grave. (15)

The poem concludes with the argument unresolved as Nathan accuses Simon of being in a "carnal State" and Simon angrily sends him to the door with his message to the elders.

One of the main problems with *Kawanio Che Keeteru* is its lack of a clear focus. If it is supposed to be a satire on Quaker hypocrisy, the long section involving the contest between George and Lewis seems unnecessary. Moreover, the contest itself embodies too much sentimentality

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[5]The poem is, of course, based upon the very real conflict that occurred in Pennsylvania during the French and Indian War. For a discussion of this conflict see Robert L. D. Davidson, *War Comes to Quaker Pennsylvania, 1682-1756* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1957); the sixty thousand pound appropriation is discussed on pages 133-161.

and didacticism; George is neither a caricature nor a realistic person, and his self-righteousness and his obvious plea for sympathy tend to weaken the appeal of the cause for which he stands. Nor does the focus sharpen during the debate between Simon and Nathan. While Simon ultimately gets the better of Nathan, his function as a proper norm for Quaker behavior is somewhat undermined by the weakness of his arguments: Nathan is right when he indicates that Simon's statement that he didn't know the purpose to which the money was to be put is an "affront to common Sense," and Simon's attempt to justify his actions by reference to those of his elders is both poor as argument and contradictory to the high ideals he finally professes. In addition, the versification is bland--quite a few lines seem padded for rhyme--and, with only a couple of exceptions, the poem lacks both wit and imaginative use of language. Aside from octosyllabic couplets and comic rhymes, it possesses few Hudibrastic qualities. The work does, however, embody two forms frequently found in American Hudibrastic satires: the allegorical and the dialogue between two characters. Unfortunately _Kawanio Che Keeteru_ also illustrates some of the dangers inherent in these forms: the allegorical tends to gravitate into the didactic and the reliance on dialogue without a controlling narrator frequently results in a confused focus. Butler could, of course, develop much of _Hudibras_ with dialogue, but the

reader is not confused as to the extent to which the characters are diverting from certain implied norms; in Scull's work, though, the norms that Simon is apparently supposed to embody are somewhat blurred by inconsistencies in his arguments.

Another Hudibrastic satire written about the same time as Kawanio Che Keeteru and employing dialogue exclusively is a 359-line poem belonging to the "Dinwiddianae" group, a series of satires written by an anonymous author and directed at Robert Dinwiddie, Lieutenant Governor of the Virginia Colony between 1751 and 1758.[6] Written in 1757, this particular poem presents a conversation between Robin, the Deputy Viceroy (Dinwiddie), and Sanders, one of his ministers. After some preliminary sparring in regard to Sander's neglect of Robin and an attack by the latter on the Anglicans, Robin asks him to

> ...tell me true
> how stand I in the peoples view?
> what do they say of all that's past?
> or what do they expect at last?
> all I can hear, is that I do well. (49-53)

Sanders promises to tell him the truth, and the next 117 lines, containing numerous allusions to contemporary affairs,

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[6] These "Dinwiddianae" poems together with an Introduction and critical notes may be found in "The Colonial Virginia Satirist," ed. Richard Beale Davis, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series, 57, Pt. 1 (1967). The Hudibrastic poem is on pages 22-27 of this edition; numbers in parentheses following quotations refer to line numbers.

are devoted to the minister's presentation of Robin's villainy as seen by his constituents. The concluding lines of Sanders' speech capture the spirit of the whole:

> Your keeping them like sheep in fold,
> untill the wild one break their hold.
> leaving you t'other trusty votes,
> to cram what you please, down their throats.
> by which means you're become Dictator
> (Amaz'd mankind is Spectator.)
> and now may castrate, fleece, or kill
> Unresisted when you will.
> Their sudden call & dissolution
> shakes the very Constitution
> & your late treach'rous Accusation
> declare your present ruling passion,
> which must in their destruction end,
> if gracious heaven is not their friend.
> For only Heaven can Hell controle. (157-171)

Robin, however, doesn't give a fig for his constituents' opinion as long as he can control them:

> Mankind! I bid Mankind defyance,
> I'll force mankind into complyance.
> Tho' I can't say all men adore me.
> by reasons sweetly lucrative,
> some shall be led, the rest I'll drive.... (187-192)

Most of the balance of the poem is devoted to Robin's elucidation of the Machiavellian tactics he will use to control the populace. In a passage rich in metaphors, he indicates how he will make them "worry one another":

> Neighbour crush Neighbour, Brother Brother
> distraining shall be their employment.
> to be distressed their Enjoyment.
> like ship boys fastned round a hoop,
> they shall flog on from stem to poop.
> if once they offer to lie by.
> the primum Mobile am I.
> Imprisonment and fineing steals
> of course upon each others heels,
> & this shall seem of their own doing,
> by Wormwood laws, which I've been brewing.

> Laws contriv'd to plague & puzzle them
> to bridle saddle & to muzzle 'em
> Yielding gall instead of honey,
> thining the land of men & money. (248-262)

In an allusion to the author of this satire, a "witless wit," Robin indicates that he has been "DINWIDDIED" and "maul'd." He does not despair, though, for he has "Clergy, Senates, all combining" who will keep his "name for ever shining." But Sanders says that this purchased praise might do more harm than good, a point which he illustrates with an extended simile in a passage much more metrically smooth than most of the poem:

> Thus, when some unbred Vulgar Jade,
> Awkward at best--by time decay'd,
> Renders her scant of beauty less,
> with ill plac'd finery & dress,
> her parched, rivell'd, sallow skin:
> peeping thro' the rich Mechlin:
> her frowzy Locks grown grey & wiery,
> with Diamonds deck'd provoke th' Enquiry,
> & draw the gazeing laughing crowd
> to roar her want of shame aloud. (342-351)

The poem concludes with Robin indicating that he has the "pens of ready writers" at his service, a fact which doesn't impress Sanders who for such writers

> ...wad na gie two turds,
> Since all ADDRESSES are but Words--- (358-359)

This satire is in a number of ways a crude performance. There is, of course, no subtlety in the argument; Robin is a scoundrel and freely admits as much, making no attempt to justify his actions by any standards other than self-interest. The poem does not contain a narrative nor

is a meaningful structure supplied by the development of an idea; most of it is concerned with the random machinations of Robin. The versification has little to commend it. The dialect does lend a certain crudity to these high government officials and the imperfect rhymes also tend to debase the subject matter, although really comic rhymes are seldom employed. But except for isolated passages the poem contains little metrical subtlety; most of it reads like prose that has merely been forced onto a procrustean bed of rhyming couplets. In spite of these weaknesses, though, the poem possesses two virtues, one of which is the contribution made by the often long and elaborate footnotes of one calling himself Benjamin Browncoat. Browncoat is an ingenue who under the guise of explaining points in the text actually manages to enhance or broaden their satiric impact. When, for instance, Robin says that he wishes to see "the Commons and the Peers," whose interests are the same, "Go together by the Ears" (271-273), Browncoat appends the following footnote: "This passage is Exceedingly dark & perplexed, we having regularly neither of these orders amongst us. it is therefore left to the keener Enquiry of a more learned Commentator then B. Brown Coat." The other virtue of the poem and one linking it closely to Hudibras is the metaphoric complexity of many of the passages. Occasionally a figure is introduced and developed from a number of different aspects throughout the poem--

e.g., the metaphor of Robin as a shepherd. More often, though, the poet accumulates a series of different metaphors in a single passage--e.g., lines 248-262 quoted above --each adding a new dimension and coming so hard on the heels of the preceding one that the reader must be alert to follow the sense. Such a metaphoric complexity gives the poem a density of texture similar to that in Hudibras; in fact, this texture tends to compensate for many of the inadequacies of the work and actually brings the "Dinwiddie" poem closer in spirit to Butler's masterpiece than some works employing many more Hudibrastic techniques.

As Bruce Ingham Granger points out in his article "Hudibras in the American Revolution," Hudibrastic satire flourished for a time between 1765 and 1783.[7] Although what is no doubt the best of all American Hudibrastic works, John Trumbull's M'Fingal, belongs to the period, most of them were written by men who possessed more passion than artistic control and detachment, and are therefore of greater value as historical than as literary documents. However, an examination of several of these satires will reveal some interesting variations on Butler's work.

One of the more frequent types of Hudibrastic satire during the Revolution was the travesty of a proclamation.

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[7] American Literature, 27, No. 4 (January, 1956), 499-508. Granger also discusses a number of these Hudibrastic satires in his Political Satire in the American Revolution, 1763-1783 (New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1960).

These usually appeared in newspapers shortly after the original was published and relied heavily on comic rhymes, exaggeration and reducto ad absurdum for satiric effect. On November 22, 1775, Sir Guy Carleton, Governor of the Province of Quebec, issued a proclamation ordering all those who would not bear arms against an anticipated American assault to leave Quebec within four days. On February 3, 1776, this document was travestied by an anonymous author:

> Whereas I'm chas'd from place to place,
> By rebels, void of sense and grace;
> Crown-Point, Montreal and Chamblee,
> By Arnold and Montgomery,
> From GEORGE and PETER are set free,
> In spite of Indians, D---l and me;
> In arms, before our walls, they reckon
> With bombs and shells to fall Quebec on,
> To burn our Saints, and hang our Bishop,
> And spoil all business done at his shop:
> Whereas also (c--se on such Catho-
> Lics as those, they stir my wrath so)
> Some wont, and some who did inlist,
> And carry arms, of late desist....
> . . . .
> Each one who wont swear he's a tory,
> I sw--r shall go to Purga-tory
> There to reform in limbo patrum,
> And those who blame me may go a'ter 'em.
> . . . .
> Given at St. Lewis Castle, in
> Quebec, the year of GEORGE sixteen
> Of Britain, France and Ireland King,
> (Of Rome) the faith's defender being,
> And so forth--by me GUY CARLETON,
> Kennell'd and toothless, yet I snarl on.[8]

While the poet occasionally introduces a witty play on words--"Guy" was a common name for a dog, hence the appropriateness of the last line above--the main satiric technique

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[8] Providence Gazette, February 3, 1776.

here is the comic rhymes, which are heavier than in almost any passage of a comparable length in Hudibras. He also gets the most out of these rhymes by associating the more comic ones with that which he particularly wishes to degrade: Bishop-his shop; Catho-wrath so; CARLETON-snarl on. All in all, though, the poem is executed in a heavy-handed manner and has little literary value.

A more sophisticated travesty is that of General Burgoyne's late June, 1777, proclamation. Burgoyne, a minor literary figure and dandy in England, was the target of much satire during the Revolution, most of which he brought on himself with his pompous proclamations and speeches. William L. Stone discusses the original of this particular travesty:

> ...Burgoyne issued from Crown Point, on Lake Champlain, a pompous, grandiloquent, and haughty-minded proclamation, in which, after reciting a number of his own titles, eked out with a string of et ceteras, to indicate the rest, he made a magnificent parade of the number and strength of his army, and displayed in formidable view the body of savages by which he announced he was going to accomplish great things; at the same time commanding the Americans to lay down their arms and return to their duty, and promising them mercy upon their speedy submission, but threatening them with the most terrible vengeance if they persisted in their rebellion.[9]

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[9] Ballads and Poems Relating to the Burgoyne Campaign, ed. William L. Stone (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1893), pp. 7-8. The travesty of Burgoyne's June, 1777 proclamation was originally printed in the September 8, 1777, New York Journal (Kingston). Stone reprints this work on pages 7-15 of his anthology.

The travesty, published on September 8, 1777, was probably written by Governor Livingston of New Jersey, although Francis Hopkinson has also been suggested as the author.

The satire begins with the speaker pretentiously listing his titles and responsibilities, after which he indicates that the troops at his command have come to show "What Britain's justice would be after":

> ...what at first she meant to gain
> By requisitions and chicane,
> She's now determined to acquire
> By kingly reason; sword and fire.
> I can appeal to all your senses,
> Your judgments, feelings, tastes and fancies;
> Your ears and eyes have heard and seen,
> How causeless this revolt has been;
> And what a dust your leaders kick up,
> In this rebellious civil hickup....

Burgoyne, however, "inspired with patriot love," has come to free the people of "every tyrant demagogue" who

> ...for the most romantic story,
> Claps into limbo loyal Tory,
> All hurly burly, hot and hasty,
> Without a writ to hold him fast by....

The rebels "Allegiance construe into treason" and make of religion a "stalking horse to drive the trade," vainly thinking that

> ...the Lord of all
> Regards our squabbles on this ball;
> Which would appear as droll in Britain
> As any whims that one could hit on....

Having stated the case against "tyrants," Burgoyne next issues his warning:

> By such important views they're pres't to,
> I issue this, my manifesto.
> I, the great knight of de la Mancha,
> Without Squire Carleton my sancho,
> Will tear you limb from limb asunder,
> With cannon, blunderbuss and thunder....

He will stop their feathering and tarring and his troops will "swarm like locusts o'er the land" to prevent "all kinds of depredation." But he who "loves a quiet life," will "drink success to King Pygmalion," and call "all congresses rebscallion," may have all the cider he has made and need not fear that Burgoyne will "force his wife to cut his throat." However, since the General likes a good "Sir Loin" or a mutton chop when he dines and his troops have long kept Lent, "Not for religion but for want," he warns those who hide food and other necessities from him that he will

> ...hang him as the Jews did Haman;
> And smoke his carcass for a gammon.
> I'll pay in coin for what I eat,
> Or continental counterfeit;
> But what's more likely still, I shall
> (So fare my troops) not pay at all.

After stating that he is with "Christian spirit fir'd" and speaking "as men do in a passion," he warns what will happen to those who cross him:

> I will let loose the dogs of Hell,
> Ten thousand Indians, who shall yell,
> And foam, and tear, and grin, and roar,
> And drench their moccasins in gore....

He lists some of the atrocities the Indians will commit and then concludes with a final threat:

If after all these lovely warnings,
My wishes' and my bowels' yearnings,
You shall remain as deaf as adder,
Or grow with hostile rage the madder,
I swear by George and by St. Paul
I will exterminate you all.
Subscrib'd with my manual sign
To test these presents, JOHN BURGOYNE.

As with most of the travesties of proclamations, the speaker in the process of defending his position actually weakens it, a technique used throughout Hudibras. But aside from this and the versification, the poem contains few Hudibrastic qualities. It is, however, a much more subtle work than the travesty of Carleton's proclamation, or, for that matter, than most of such travesties produced during the Revolution. Instead of exaggerating the caricature so far as to obliterate entirely that which is being caricatured, the author here, while still relying on a certain amount of distortion of the original document, has employed ironic contrasts to carry much of the weight of his satire. Burgoyne's gentility, his belief in reason, his hatred of tyrants, his Christianity--all are alluded to. However, the reader recognizes the incongruity between these attributes and his tyrannical, vicious and ultimately un-Christian attitude toward the colonists. The author has presented a devastating portrait of Burgoyne without resorting to the type of absurd exaggeration more likely to produce low comedy than effective satire.

Although probably not by an American author, A Continuation of Hudibras deals with the American Revolution

and employs a number of Hudibrastic techniques.[10] The poem begins with Sir Hudibras convening a Presbyterian meeting at which are assembled the ancestors of such prominent Americans as Franklin, Hancock, Otis and the Adamses. He urges them to repair to the colonies where "like Vandals, Goths or Huns" their children or children's sons

> May throw their long dependence off,
> And at Old England laugh and scoff,
> Pretending to forget the tye,
> They gain'd their situation by.

The type of liberty Americans are likely to insist upon will include "liberty of taking" those things which "fortune made mistake in" giving to those less worthy than themselves. Such an attitude presents possibilities for the opportunist:

> Most meaning liberty of using
> The name--all order to confuse in,
> Thus anarchy and mischief brewing,
> And rising on the realm's undoing.
> By fools they may be understood,
> To act on grounds and reasons good;
> Make them believe they have a reason,
> That war against the king's no treason.

When rebellion occurs in America tradesmen will become Members of Congress, ruined men will live by "rifle barrell'd

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[10]The full title is _A Continuation of Hudibras in Two Cantoes, written in the time of the Unhappy Contest between Great Britain and America, in 1777 and 1778_ (London, 1778). A copy of this work is available in microfilm at the New York Public Library. Granger, in _Political Satire_, pp. 129-133, discusses this work and suggests that it was probably authored by Joseph Peart, an English solicitor. A portion of the travesty on the Declaration of Independence which concludes the poem may be found in _Cyclopaedia of American Literature_, ed. Evert A. and George L. Duyckinck (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855), I, 448.

guns," generals will "rise from brothers of the quill" and lawyers instead of worrying about briefs and deeds will be concerned with such things as "...gun-powder and cannon shot,/To send poor Englishmen to pot." Concluding his speech, Hudibras urges the group to prepare for the future:

> Train up your sons in detestation,
> And hate unchang'd of th' English nation.
> Prepare them by dissembling well,
> To hope the days which I foretell.

The company concur with Hudibras' views and depart for various parts of the colonies, leaving behind a few to "watch the guiders of the helm."

Hudibras now fades into the background and the balance of the first canto is devoted to the narrator's lecture on the ingratitude of the colonists. England spent millions to defend them from the French and Indians, but the colonists are unappreciative; they behave like the viper that rose up to bite the farmer who had taken pity on him and sheltered him during the winter. The mother-child analogy so frequently used by both rebels and loyalists during the Revolution is introduced. The "little tender-hearted sparrow" hatches the hawk's eggs and brings up the baby hawks together with her own only to be devoured by the hawks she has raised. The rebels, however, are worse than the hawks, for they killed only a foster mother whereas the rebels wound "many a brother." Besides, unlike hawks, the Americans should have "affections, feelings, sense" to

guard themselves "from a false pretence."

The second canto begins with an invocation:

> Shall I presume to write of battles?
> Rebellion--and the lord knows what else?
> Without first praying for the aid
> Of some unseen celestial maid?

The goddess Discord visits her son, an arch-patriot, who is "Penning false items" for the morrow's news, and encourages him to continue fomenting mischief among the western colonies, where her "most tempting prospect lies." According to the narrator, rebellious Englishmen encourage the colonists,

> 'Till in the sequel they determine,
> To pack off all the loyal vermin,
> And then (for liberty recov'ring)
> Wage actual war 'gainst the sov'reign....

Finally the "...thirteen Delegates well suited,/To be by factious friends deputed..." meet and

> By one ill judg'd ungrateful act,
> The sinews of the state were crackt....

Most of the balance of the poem is devoted to a travesty of the Declaration of Independence, which begins as follows:

> When in the course of human things,
> All subjects may desert their kings,
> And thus becoming disaffected,
> Break bonds by which they were connected....

The natural rights philosophy is set forth:

> First, let this downright maxim strike,
> That all men are born free alike,
> And are undoubtedly allow'd,
> By Providence to be endow'd
> (As many a learned author writes)
> With some unalienable rights;

'Mong these we lay the greatest stress,
On life, pursuit of happiness,
And (what is best of all the three)
Of uncontrouled liberty.

After elaborating upon man's right to life and to freedom, the Declaration comments upon the pursuit of happiness:

Neither can any one entrap ye,
From the just right of being happy
(Tho' your chief happiness in life,
Should be to kiss your neighbour's wife).

When they afterwards become tired of a government

The people have a right t' abolish,
Alter, relinquish, and demolish,
By methods novel and surprising,
New states and powers organizing,
In such a form and figure drest,
As the wise authors shall think best.

After a list of grievances against George III, the poet begins the Declaration proper:

We therefore jointly acquiesce,
(As it is plain we cant do less)
To separate ourselves by force,
Pronouncing sentence of divorce....

And the Declaration concludes by indicating that the Delegates acting for all of the colonies do

Solemnly publish and declare,
That these same Colonies now are,
And from henceforth of right shall be,
States Independent Great and Free.

One of the bright spots in the poem is the parallel between Sir Hudibras' meeting with his company and the meeting between Milton's Satan and his cohorts in hell. Also, low burlesque similes occasionally heighten the satiric effect, and the versification reveals some skill

in handling octosyllabic couplets, particularly in the Declaration. While Sir Hudibras has some of the bluster of his namesake in Butler's poem, he is not nearly so well developed as a character. In addition, the disappearance of the hero midway through the first canto is aesthetically unsatisfying, and the didacticism that occurs when the narrator addresses his audience directly weakens the satire. In short, while the poem contains some well executed passages, it is weak in overall conception.

Frequently military incidents were satirized in Hudibrastic verse. Many of these satires rely heavily on mock heroic elements to ridicule the opposition, and their overall technique is closer to high than to low burlesque. One such work is "The Reduction of Fort Sand," a 168-line poem appearing in the January 18, 1780, issue of the _Charleston Gazette_. The occasion of the satire was a report that the British at Sunbury, a garrisoned town south of Savannah, had captured a fort erected by a band of eight and nine year old children who had organized themselves into a "rebel company."

After some preliminary remarks in which the author complains that the many descriptions of glorious English victories in Gazettes "_published by Authority_" have caused the topic to grow "stale and old" and promises to offer one of his own "Surmounting all upon Record," he launches into his invocation:

Oh! Pungency extol my Lays!
And to pathetic Rapture raise
My nervous style, and string my hand
To write the glory of FORT-SAND,
Who brav'd the foe, despising death,
Immortaliz'd to latest Breath.

Employing elevated diction and elaborate military terms, the poet indicates the threat posed by the children and describes their fort:

This *young ambitious growing Corps*
Most nice observance 'scap'd *before*;
And midst their Triumph, proud, elate,
Struck Terror thro' the B----sh State:
And form'd themselves a fortress strong,
Defended well by Trenches Long.
Sharp picquets, curtains, covert way,
With scarps and countescarps had they;
Aspiring towers square, whose roof,
And Citadels were all Bomb proof.
. . . .
An huge, unmoved magazine,
Stood threat'ning 'midst the awful scene;
Whose pregnant, and capacious womb,
Bore deathful stores, for years to come,
Of oyster-shells, long pikes and grubs,
Promiscuous heap'd with staves and clubs....

The British commander, Kakifogo, hears of the "*formidable force*" and orders a "great Consult" to decide what can be done about it. In a scene reminiscent of the debate of the fallen angels in Milton's hell, the first to speak rises with "fiery, flashing eyes" and advocates that they give "dread terrific engines scope" and

...thunder down, with cannon loud,
This *rising rebel fortress proud*:
So shall the 'empyaeran /sic/ seat of Jove,
With all the Thrones of gods above;
The far remote celestial world
Be shook, in wild confusion hurl'd....

As in Milton, however, calmer minds prevail and the company

agrees with the next speaker that it is best "a guileful war to wage." They decide to "spike" the guns--which are in reality "old dead bones"--electing a sergeant and his squad to fulfill the mission:

> The Sergeant, then at dead of night
> Each conscious orb had hid its light,
> At head of 'squad, with caution creeps
> And as predicted--fortress sleeps,
> The bones are spik'd--the file returns--
> And chief with expectation burns.

In the morning the children are commanded to surrender, but they, with "supercilious scorn and pride," decline and fly with "martial ire" to their posts, where they discover the subterfuge:

> But how shall I, in diction, dress
> The pale confusion and distress--
> And how their noble purpose fail'd.
> When gunner cry'd the touch hole's nail'd
> Loud tremor siez'd then souls with fright,
> And, o'er the walls, they leap in flight!

The children have fled, but in order to "add unsullied fame" to Kaky's name and "emblaze the illustrious deed," the sergeant with his "immortal squad" is sent back to the fort,

> With baynets fix't to urge again,
> And strike decisive cope de main.
> The squad, in all the pomp and pride
> Mov'd to the fife with Martial stride;
> Demolish'd all the works of fort--
> To spite the little childrens sport.

"The Reduction of Fort Sand" is typical of the way in which high and low burlesque elements are frequently mixed in a single poem. The octosyllabic couplets and comic rhymes are undignified and tend to deflate any

pretensions to nobility the subject may possess. Occasionally bathetic elements, such as the poet in his invocation indicating that he is going to string his "hand" (instead of his lyre) also create a low burlesque effect. But the weight of the ridicule in this poem comes from high burlesque techniques, from the contrast between the heroic world suggested in the diction, syntax and allusions and the meanness of the actual situation being described. Like so much newspaper verse, the poem is, though, rather crudely executed. Although the poet handles both low and high burlesque techniques with skill in places, the mock heroic elements seem at times to be applied too heavily and the situation exaggerated to absurdity. In addition, some passages in the poem are unnecessarily obscure, mainly due to confused syntax and vague diction.

When the Revolutionary War ended, so did a fertile field for Hudibrastic satire. However, it would be some time yet before such satires would cease to appear in the newspapers and magazines of the new nation. The increase in literary activity in the early national period led to a number of Hudibrastic satires on literary topics, and the debates over such issues as paper currency and the political influence of the legal profession often found their way into Hudibrastic verse.[11] During the last decade of the

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[11]A number of Hudibrastic satires from the early national period are discussed in Louie M. Miner, Our Rude Forefathers: American Political Verse, 1783-1788 (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1937).

eighteenth and the first of the nineteenth centuries, the conflict between Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans over the nature of the new government, and particularly the extent of the "rights" won by the common man in the war and his relationship to this government, produced a brief flurry of Hudibrastic activity.

Although it possesses few Hudibrastic qualities, Timothy Dwight's "The Critics" merits attention both for the quality of its versification and for the employment of an animal fable, a form in which American Hudibrastic satires were frequently cast. Written in 1785 but not published until 1791, the poem was Dwight's response to the critical reception accorded his epic, The Conquest of Canaan (1785).[12] It begins with an observation on dogs:

> 'Tis said of every dog that's found,
> Of mongrel, spaniel, cur, and hound;
> That each sustains a doggish mind,
> And hates the new, sublime, refin'd.

After indicating that they also will bite every "nobler brute" and "hunt the stranger-dog with spite," the poet draws an analogy between these dogs and critics:

> 'Tis also said, the currish soul
> The critic race possesses whole;
> As near they come, in tho'ts and natures,
> As two legg'd can, to four legg'd creatures;
> Alike the things they love and blame,
> Their voice, and language, much the same.

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[12]See Leon Howard, The Connecticut Wits (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1943), p. 103. The poem first appeared in the July 13, 1791, issue of The Gazette of the United States, and was later reprinted in Elihu Hubbard Smith's American Poems (1793), pp. 70-75.

The tale proper is in the form of a dream-vision related by the poet's muse, and begins as follows:

> In Greece Cynethe's village lay,
> Well known to all, who went that way,
> For dogs of every kindred famed,
> And from true doggish manners named.
> One morn, a greyhound pass'd the street;
> At once the foul-mouth'd conclave met,
> Huddling around the stranger ran,
> And thus their smart review began.

There follows a procession of dogs, each finding offensive something different about the greyhound: the Welch cur is "better born" and objects to his smooth coat and slender ear; the blood-hound feels that his ears should hang down and that he carries his nose too high; the shaggy spaniel ridicules his thin coat, wondering where he lives in winter and how he can endure kicks and whippings; and the lap-dog considers him a "mere barbarian" who has never "...learn'd to fatten/On kisses sweet, and softest petting." Unable to contain their hatred, the dogs, with the exception of the wolf-dog and the mastiff, rise up in a fury against the greyhound and determine to "sacrifice him to ill-nature," whereupon he decides it best to "shun their teeth" and easily makes his escape.

Juno, the "genuine notre-dame of scolding," has in the meantime been watching, and, impressed with the dogs' hatred of "all that's good, and fair, and new," decides to be a goddess to them. She then proceeds to enumerate the "fruits of JUNO'S love":

> Your souls, from forms, that creep all four on,
> I'll raise, by system Pythagorean,
> To animate the human frame,
> And gain my favorite tribe a name.
> Be ye henceforth (so I ordain)
> Critics, the genuine curs of men.

As critics they should attack

> Whate'er is great, or just, in nature,
> Of graceful form, or lovely feature;
> Whate'er adorns the ennobled mind,
> Sublime, inventive, and refin'd;
> . . . .
> All things of noblest kind and use,
> To your own standard vile reduce,
> And all in wild confusion blend,
> Nor *heed* the *subject*, *scope*, or *end*.

In what must be a reference to Dwight's own youthful experience with *The Conquest of Canaan*, Juno instructs the dogs to be particularly harsh on "...*modest young beginners*,/'Gainst *critics laws*, by *nature* sinners." She gives the dogs her blessing, and the balance of the poem traces the consequences of Juno's actions:

> Each doggish mind, tho' grown no bigger,
> Henceforth assumed the human figure,
> The body walk'd on two; the mind
> To four, still chose to be confin'd;
> Still creeps on earth, still scents out foes,
> Is still led onward by the nose;
> Hates all the good, it used to hate,
> The lofty, beauteous, new, and great;
> The stranger hunts with spite quintessent,
> And snarls, from that day to the present.

The concluding passage above reveals something of the quality of Dwight's prosody. The parallelism in the fifth line and the rhetorical repetition of "still" in lines five and six as well as the smoothness of the rhythm reflect the kind of sophistication that increasingly appears

in the octosyllabic couplet during the last quarter of the century, particularly in the verse of the Connecticut Wits. Dwight does not, however, let the elegance of his verse become an end in itself; in the third and fourth lines above his use of a strong caesura and enjambment create a sluggish movement that reflects the quality of the minds he is discussing.

One question that arises in connection with "The Critics" is whether or not it should be considered a Hudibrastic satire. It is a satire, it employs octosyllabic couplets and some comic rhymes, and the association of the critics with dogs is essentially a low burlesque technique. However, while the fable contains a fantastic element, no specific human caricatures appear and the attack is fairly direct, actually rising little above invective in its overall effect. As indicated, the versification is much more elegant than Butler's. Comic rhymes appear but with hardly any greater frequency or intensity than in many of the works of Swift. While colloquial diction is employed, it does not either by itself or in combination with other levels become a major instrument of the satire. In the final analysis, "The Critics" is representative of a fairly large body of American satire that is difficult to classify as Hudibrastic or not. Dwight and others like him no doubt believed they were using Butler's verse form, but they were probably not inclined to carry their imitation further than that.

An example of a personal controversy carried on in Hudibrastic verse is provided by Mathew Carey's The Plagi-Scurriliad (1786).[13] Carey, who at the time was publishing the Pennsylvania Herald, became involved in a feud with one Colonel Oswald, editor of the Independent Gazetteer. One result of this feud was a duel in which Oswald wounded Carey in the leg, and another was The Plagi-Scurriliad, a satire of some thirty pages in which Carey accused Oswald, in both prose and verse, of plagiarism and scurrility.

The work begins with a preface in which Carey explains the background of his dispute with Oswald, complaining that it reached its culmination on December 5, 1785, when Oswald published a "crude undigested piece" that had "...every characteristic mark of the ravings of a lunatic, and the abuse of a Billingsgate fishwoman." Carey goes on to indicate that he chose rhymes "merely as a more striking vehicle, to convey the subject to the reader" and that only two weeks elapsed between conception and completion of the work. There follows eleven pages of introductory matter in prose, including a Dedication, a biography of Oswald and

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[13] The Plagi-Scurriliad: A Hudibrastic Poem. Dedicated to Colonel Eleazer Oswald (Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1786). Carey is also the author of another Hudibrastic poem, The Porcupiniad: A Hudibrastic Poem (Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1799). This work, a satire in three cantos on William Cobbett, editor of Porcupine's Gazette, also utilizes long pseudo-erudite footnotes. In general, The Porcupiniad is not as well executed as The Plagi-Scurriliad, partially due to a greater tendency toward pure invective.

a defense of plagiarism, all of which is ironical and satirizes Oswald by praising him and the "virtues" of plagiarism. This is in turn followed by an "Approbation": Whisper, Dirt-daub and Blockhead in the court of their majesties Detraction, Scurrility and Dullness give their approval to the Plagi-Scurriliad written in honor of their "well-beloved and long-adopted son," Colonel Oswald.

The preliminaries over and the aid of slander's muse requested, the poem proper begins:

> Whoe'er you are, that wish to shine
> An Oswald in dame Scandal's line,
> And seek him well to imitate,
> In that which does his soul inflate;
> Attend to me--I'll soon unfold
> How you may fame acquire, and gold;
> Importance, too, beyond expression,
> (Debarred from which by your profession,
> You must ha' been. As that would doom you
> To poverty and prospects gloomy)....

A footnote to the last couplet above reads as follows: "'Doom you' and 'gloomy' will appear very bad rhyme to those who do not know that Butler did not scruple to make 'Elysium' rhyme with 'dazzling room'--'flames as fierce' with 'ministers'--'purge' with 'church'--and the like." This footnote is merely playful, but much of the satire is carried out in long notes in which the immoral and naive narrator ironically condemns Oswald in the act of praising him. For instance, in one note the narrator compares a passage of Oswald's to its original in Junius, ostensibly showing the superiority of the changed version when in fact

the author is indicting Oswald both for plagiarism and for a lack of literary taste.

According to the narrator, there are three justifications for plagiarism:

> 'Tis trebly your's beyond contest,
> B'ing bought--cull'd out--and then new drest.

Elaboration on these three defenses--finding, buying and altering--comprise much of the poem. Considerable space is also devoted to specific advice for slanderers:

> But mark! a fundamental trick:
> "Throw dirt in plenty--some will stick."
> For where there's smoke, they say there's fire;
> And where abuse--all men conspire
> To b'lieve that something must be wrong,
> Which thus has loos'd detraction's tongue--
> And though they think it not so bad,
> As you've asserted--still they're glad,
> In neighbour's eye to find a mote,
> That they may on occasion quote....

If caught in devious maneuvers or unsupportable allegations, the best defence is a loud and indignant protest:

> Who will not, when you rage, suspect
> That you have never paid respect
> To candour--honor--truth--or law--
> Provided you your foes might awe;
> Or that your tales are opposite
> To truth, as darkness is to light,
> Or purest saint to foulest devil
> (A simile not very civil).

But should your calumny come to light and the charges against you be irrefutable, then

> A challenge to your 'vers'ry send,
> That duel may the contest end....

The Hudibrastic portion of the work ends with the speaker advising endless warfare should the challenge be refused:

Swear fiercely you will crack his pate,
And must have vengeance soon or late.
With flying colours thus you'll end it,
No man with you dare contend it.
Doubt not the truth of what I say--
Probatum est sapissime,
By col'nel Oswald--man of might--
So famous duels erst to fight
For libels, which--he could not write.

All in all, the prose portions of this work are superior to the poetry. The versification is bland, reflecting little imagination or wit in the use of diction, meter or rhyme. Although indirection in the attack is maintained by having an unscrupulous narrator defend that which the author is satirizing, his arguments lack subtlety and, as so often happens in Hudibrastic satires using this approach, the author's vilification of his object shows a little too clearly through the thin veil of the ironic form. The same technique is better handled in the introductory prose sections, as the arguments there are more fully and convincingly developed. While the poem lacks a narrative, it does progress logically from one point to the next, and it is clearly focussed on the twin vices of plagiarism and scurrility. But aside from the verse form and the footnotes The Plagi-Scurriliad employs few Hudibrastic techniques. It is but another instance of an American author choosing a couple of Hudibrastic elements without attempting to imitate either the larger form or the spirit of Butler's work.[14]

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[14]In fact, the lengthy introductory matter--the Preface and ironical Biography, Dedication, Approbation, etc. --has echoes of Swift's procedure in A Tale of a Tub, and it may well be that the work owes as much to him as to Butler.

One of the more prolific writers of Hudibrastic verse in America was Hugh Henry Brackenridge (1748-1816). Many of his Hudibrastic works that had been published earlier in newspapers were collected in 1806, together with other poems, essays and the play Battle of Bunkers-Hill, in a volume entitled Gazette Publications.[15] The objects of attack in these satires are varied and encompass both social and political evils. Literary critics, duelling, Indian treaties, the Order of the Cincinnati and cowardly assemblymen are subjects of individual Hudibrastic poems varying in length from three to twenty-four pages. But his longest and most interesting Hudibrastic satire is The Modern Chevalier, a poem of some thirty pages that was the genesis for Brackenridge's most important literary production, Modern Chivalry (1792-1815). Begun in 1788, the extant version of The Modern Chevalier is probably only a fraction of its original length, Brackenridge having commented in 1792 that it was two-thirds the length of Butler's Hudibras.[16] The author, however, grew discouraged with the reception accorded his Hudibrastic verse and decided to change his composition into prose, which was, according to

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[15](Carlisle, Pa.: Alexander and Phillips, 1806).

[16]See Claude Milton Newlin, The Life and Writings of Hugh Henry Brackenridge (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1932), p. 113.

him, "a more humble and might be a safer walk."[17]

The Modern Chevalier has as its main character a "knight errant" who is traveling around the country critically observing the operation of American society. He encounters a weaver whom he urges to leave his "subterranean chambers" and become involved in politics:

> Is that a loom that stands before ye
> That keeps you from the walks of glory?
> It ill befits that men whom nature,
> Hath favour'd with such parts and feature,
> Should waste the taper of existence,
> In meaner acts, when their assistance
> Is wanted both in field and council,
> To help our politics at groundsell,
> And make some new and wholesome laws.

But the weaver had once been involved in politics, an activity not appreciated by his wife who sneaks up from behind and delivers a blow to the knight's posterior. The description of this ludicrous scene is worthy of Butler:

> It was the weaver's termagant
> Who overhearing the Knight's rant
> Did snatch a cudgel, and essay'd
> A blow upon his shoulder blade,
> Not to enable him with title,
> But to give vent t' her rage a little;
> But missing upper, did alight
> Upon the postern of the Knight,
> For head in window and hat slouching
> He saw not this grey mare approaching,
> The better horse at least o' th' weaver
> And kept him in subjection ever.

Later the knight wishes to cuckold the weaver, but the wife says that he must earn the right like a true knight by

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[17]Quoted in Daniel Marder, Hugh Henry Brackenridge (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1967), p. 84.

fighting a man who insulted her husband. The knight agrees, and recognizing that

> ...words no more affect such vermin
> Then does a hypocrite, a sermon,..

he sets out to meet the enemy with "battery and actual blows." He is, however, a knight, and therefore

> ...first it might be well t' upbraid
> Before should come to break his head;
> Preserve the usual character
> Of good men when they go to war,
> That of humanity and pains
> To save the loss of blood and brains,
> Until necessity aloud
> Doth say that such way does no good:
> Then it behooves t' impress the force
> Of arm and cudgel on the curs.

But the weaver's adversary turns out to be a poet who convinces the knight that the weaver should stick to his own trade and not meddle in politics. Although the evils that knights of old combatted no longer exist, the poet indicates that a modern knight can find others with which to do battle, particularly those inherent in the democratic process:

> Yet still the populace do err
> Not choosing qualified that are;
> But giving to such men their votes
> That have as little sense as goats....

Urging the knight to action, he informs him that

> ...this day there is a rout
> Scarce on your way a mile about,
> Of people met to form a ticket
> Of those who chuse to politic it....

The knight addresses the meeting and encourages them to vote wisely, advice which they ignore when they vote for the man who had the foresight to bring them whiskey.

Men, according to the knight, should be elected on the basis of the quality of their minds, not on the formal schooling they have had or the riches they possess. Often plain and laboring men

> May have more sense than those whom riches,
> Have dignified; the sons of bitches,
> That set a value on estates,
> As being a substitute for pates....

Some of those present agree with him and others don't, and since it appears the argument will end in blows, the knight departs. He next goes to a conjurer to inquire about the "strange vagaries of the state"; but although this man can figure out many things, he is unable to say why the rabble elect the dunces they do and recommends that he consult a certain philosopher. The philosopher says that personal gain, not public good, carries the day.

> Moreover envy of the good,
> Will put the people in a mood,
> To chuse the worst, out of mere spite,
> To show you that they have a right,
> To take him up you call a fool
> Out of the election water pool:
> And of't without a thought they chuse,
> As't were by accident a goose;
> Not knowing what they are about,
> Until the tickets are drawn out.

Even if they should attempt to elect a wise man, "Stupidity has his disguise" and they are likely to elect the silent stupid man over the articulate smart one because

> ...there is nothing magical,
> Where you can comprehend it all
> But the obscure is the sublime,
> And hence the people value him,
> That has no speech at all, as gods

> Were rais'd to the supreme abodes,
> In Egypt out of cats and rats,
> And leeks and onions and all that's
> Contemptible of beasts or stork....

Besides, no one is jealous of dunces. Greatly enlightened by the philosopher's lecture, the knight takes his leave, thus concluding the poem.[18]

The main weakness of The Modern Chevalier lies in its movement toward didacticism near the end. The dramatic conflicts between the knight and the weaver's wife and the mob give way to overt moralizing in which the characters become little more than mouthpieces for stating the author's views on weaknesses in the democratic process. Moreover, the knight himself is an insubstantial character. Although like Hudibras and Don Quixote he is a wanderer moving from place to place and participating in various adventures, he lacks the self-assurance and resolution of either of these characters. From the beginning more acted upon than acting, as the work progresses he fades into merely a mechanical prop for giving a facade of dramatic action to the author's lecture.

But if the lack of indirection in Brackenridge's attack unites him with many American writers of Hudibrastic satires, there are also certain qualities evident in The Modern Chevalier and some of his other works that suggest an affinity with Butler possessed by few other American

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[18] Gazette Publications, pp. 311-341.

authors. In the first place, the versification in The Modern Chevalier is not a bad imitation of Butler's. His couplets have neither the metrical monotony that produce a lilting movement nor the obviously artful construction that frequently works at cross purposes with other aspects of the Hudibrastic manner. That Brackenridge was aware of these dangers in attempting to imitate Butler is evident from a passage in Modern Chivalry in which the author is discussing his poem "Cincinnatus," ascribed to his fictional Scotch bard, M'Comas:

> ...the versification, though careless, is spirited. The brokenness and disjointings of the verses, one line running into, and interlaced with another, carries it beyond the monotonous, though perhaps, more musical imitators of Butler: amongst whom, Trumbull, of Connecticut, easily deserves the first place; yet though in his similes, and other excellencies of his composition he may surpass the Cincinnatus of M'Comas; nevertheless I must give the Scotch bard the praise of greater variety in the structure of his verses.[19]

Unfortunately Brackenridge's theory here is better than his practice, for the "Cincinnatus" reflects the danger of going to the other extreme: virtually avoiding rhythmic movement altogether to the point where only the rhymes and arrangement into poetic lines distinguish the verse from prose. Such a passage occasionally occurs in The Modern Chevalier, as the following in which the poet is advising the knight:

> It would do service to the state
> If such a noble knight as you

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[19] Modern Chivalry, ed. Claude M. Newlin (New York: American Book Co., 1937), p. 195.

Would teach them what they ought to do,
And give them seasonable lessons
Respecting such their wide creations
That on the one hand while they pass
The ignorant though monied ass,
So on the other should avoid
The chusing such amongst the crowd
As are unqualified, though less
They may in property possess.

But by and large the prosody in The Modern Chevalier is rhythmic enough to enable the occasional metrically awkward lines to become functional elements in the satire. Contrasting levels of diction and comic rhymes are also effectively used. Slang, colloquial expressions and obscenities are dramatically employed as members of rhyming pairs, and most of the more comic rhymes are not used indiscriminately but serve to ridicule a specific satiric object, as when the author in a passage quoted above reinforces the foolishness of American electioneering by rhyming "ticket" with "politic it."

Another quality Brackenridge has in common with Butler is his ability to create a ludicrous scene in which an implicit ideal is contrasted with a character's action, in effect a high burlesque situation. When the knight is attacked by the weaver's wife, the humorous action is heightened by the incongruity between what is actually taking place and the implied ideals of knighthood and chivalric action, ideals which the author subtly reminds the reader of by alluding to her striking at his shoulder "Not to enable him with title." He also employs low burlesque

comparisons, although The Modern Chevalier is not as rich in these as some of his other Hudibrastic poems. In "The Author and the Critic," for example, a critic's ability to spot small defects in a work is paralleled to that of a flea to whose eye the smoothest skin is "deep and furrowed." In the same work, a smutty illustration is used to ridicule critics' adherence to classical rules:

> So much we hear I believe that no man's
> Tongue is still of Greeks and Romans;
> For if dispute should rise past curing,
> Which way 'tis best to make our urine,
> And each should argue stiffly his way,
> All must give up, the Greeks piss'd this way.[20]

Brackenridge is also capable of the kind of witty and ingenious comparison frequently found in Hudibras. Another Hudibrastic poem, "Apology for the Dissentients in the State Convention," contains the ironical argument that the dissentients--those opposed to adopting the Federal Constitution --keep the natural order of things; everything must have a tale as well as a head and they supply the "fag-end of their species." He concludes the work with an elaborate figure:

> But whence is it that most of these,
> Were of the western county geese?
> Because 'tis reasonable that we
> The legislative tail-tree be.
> Let Philadelphia be the head,
> And Lancaster the shoulder blade;
> And thence collecting in a clump,
> A place called Stoney-Ridge the rump,

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[20] This poem appears in Modern Chivalry, ed. Newlin, pp. 164-167. It also may be found in Gazette Publications, pp. 29-33.

> The tail will naturally stretch,
> Accross the Alleghany ridge,
> While we submit to stubborn fate,
> And be the backside of the state.[21]

In addition to these similarities in technique, Brackenridge and Butler have in common a dark and cynical attitude toward human aspirations. Of course Butler's view has much deeper philosophical roots and his satire is directed at man's tendency to misuse his mind, while Brackenridge seems to view the objects of his satire as congeries of conditioned responses and sensual drives without a mind to use. Also, Butler's vision is more inclusive, embracing all men, while Brackenridge's is applicable to only a large portion of mankind; there exist in the latter's works poets, philosophers and other "right-thinking" individuals. But Brackenridge had a great deal of skepticism in regard to the common man's ability or desire to use his mind for the general good; he, like Butler, seemed to see self-interest as the motivating force behind most human behavior.

No doubt Brackenridge did not have a mind capable of creating an American work to rival Hudibras. Nevertheless, he probably came as close to understanding both Butler's technique and his point of view as any other American, Trumbull not excepted. This being the case, it is regrettable that he did not choose to put all of his

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[21] Gazette Publications, pp. 72-76.

talents into creating a single Hudibrastic satire that would be a work of art as well as a vehicle for ridiculing the passing follies of his day.

The last American to produce a significant body of Hudibrastic works was Thomas Green Fessenden (1771-1837). In fact, he published a larger volume of such works than any other American, the 1806 editions of Terrible Tractoration and Democracy Unveiled together amounting to over 460 pages. Today these poems, as well as his minor Hudibrastic productions, are considered to be of greater value as historical than as literary documents.[22] This is probably as it should be, for Fessenden was no doubt more interested in contemporary affairs than in art. However, he handled some elements of the Hudibrastic manner with facility and his works illustrate yet another of the transformations of Hudibras in America.

Before turning to the Terrible Tractoration and Democracy Unveiled it may be well to glance at a minor work that is representative of a form taken by many Hudibrastic poems in the last quarter of the century. This is the "New Year's Ode" or "Carrier's Address" that was frequently published in one of the January numbers of the more literary newspapers and which, in the time before photographs, served

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[22]It is interesting to note that neither Terrible Tractoration nor Democracy Unveiled is mentioned in Literary History of the United States: History, ed. Robert E. Spiller et al., 3rd ed., rev. (New York: Macmillan, 1963).

as a summary of the preceding year's events. Invariably these reflect the political bias of the paper for which they were written and are usually direct attacks on the follies of the opposing party. Fessenden produced a number of such poems, one of which is his "Poetical Summary for the New Year 1800" that appeared in the Farmer's Weekly Museum for January 27, 1800.

After a playful invocation to the muses during which he asks Apollo and the "Aonian ladies" to

> Bring violins, and flutes sonorous,
> To aid the song, and swell the chorus...

he launches into his partisan attack:

> But hold, my rambling muse, so airy,
> More wild than Oberon, the fairy,
> Your ladyship, and I must stoop
> To hit the jacobinick group,
> Must dig, and delve, or take our aim,
> A thousand leagues above our game.

His first specific target is one Tony Haswell, a printer of Bennington, Vermont:

> At Bennington, a set of fellows,
> Of Tony made a pair of bellows,
> Then plied their tool, with skill amazing,
> To set sedition's coals a blazing,
> And hope, by dint of perseverance,
> To make all smoke within a year hence!
> . . . .
> E'en Virgil's Fame, with all her tongues,
> And many a hundred pair of lungs,
> And who, with ease, as poets say,
> Can forge a million lies a day,
> Now breaks her brazen trump, and sighing,
> To Tony yields the palm of lying!

Asked by an imaginary reader why he would "cannonade a fly," engage in a "duel with a flea" or use battering rams on a

"weasel's nest," the poet admits that Haswell isn't worth the trouble:

> Then, Tony, thou may'st creep along
> Unnotic'd in our future song,
> From Satire's arrows still exempt,
> Until thou risest to contempt!

After a thrust at a democratic Fourth of July celebration at Castleton, Tom McKean, governor of Pennsylvania, and the Irish are introduced, the former in a devastating association with yellow fever:

> 'Tis true, with sorrow have we seen
> The yellow fiend, and T-m M'k--n,
> By Providence let loose of late
> To punish Pennsylvania state.
> And often have we view'd affrighted,
> The ruffian Irishmen-United!
> But as to these, our hope and trust is,
> The hangman soon will do them justice.

Having concluded his American business, the poet moves to the European scene:

> Again we mount poetick nag on,
> Or hire a seat in Neptune's wagon,
> Or any other mode you please,
> To take a trip beyond the seas.

The balance of the poem is devoted to comment on the European wars, with most of the satire directed at "...those dire infernal brats,/French jacobins and democrats" who

> ...bring about their pure equality,
> By murdering men, without formality;
> For by philosophers 'tis said,
> All men are equal--when they're dead!

Back home again, the poet indicates it is time he took his "high-heel'd shoes" off and

> No longer strut poetick stilt on,
> Like Homer proud, or Mr. Milton,
> No longer flirt about and flare,
> Like jack-o'lanthorn in the air....

The poem concludes with his wish that we may meet again when he will tune his lays "an octave higher" and

> ...strut, and swell, and rant, and roar,
> As mortal never did before![23]

Although more polished than many New Year's Odes, the format is much the same: both general and specific attacks on the opposition, and a movement from the local to the international scene. The tone of Fessenden's poem is light, partly due to the almost lilting movement of the verse and partly to the playful handling of the allusions and poetic machinery. While the satire is occasionally incisive, as when Tony Haswell is associated with yellow fever, by and large the poet seems to view his subject matter with comic detachment rather than with indignation, and this in spite of the directness of the attack. Except for the obtrusiveness of the comic rhymes and occasional low burlesque comparisons, the poem reflects little desire to imitate Butler's satire, either in tone or technique.

Fessenden's first major Hudibrastic satire, Terrible Tractoration, was published in two London editions of 1803 and followed by successive American editions in 1804, 1806,

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[23] Original Poems (Philadelphia: E. Bronson, 1806), pp. 111-122.

1836, and 1837, the latter two editions being essentially the same and revised from the previous ones by the addition of pseudo-science, political and social topics more relevant to the later age.[24] In 1803 while in London Fessenden met Elisha Perkins, a doctor who had had phenomenal success selling metal "tractors," rather simple magnet-shaped instruments that when applied to an afflicted part of the body were supposed to be capable of curing a variety of illnesses. Although Doctor Perkins had the support of numerous medical authorities, a Doctor Haygarth had recently published an article claiming that the tractors were a fraud and that any cures they appeared to work were owing to the imagination of the patient. Fessenden, in need of cash, wrote Terrible Tractoration to defend Perkins' device from this kind of criticism.

The poem consists of four cantos and in the second American edition is 251 pages long. This length together with the diverse subject matter with which it deals and the absence of a narrative make the work extremely difficult to summarize. It is, as Porter Gale Perrin has indicated, "more than a defense of the Tractors, for it becomes a

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[24] For the publication history of Fessenden's works, see Porter Gale Perrin, The Life and Works of Thomas Green Fessenden, Univ. of Maine Studies, 2nd series, No. 4 (Orono, Maine: Univ. Press, 1925), pp. 178-180. I have elected to use the second American edition of this work, the full title of which is The Modern Philosopher; or Terrible Tractoration! (Philadelphia: E. Bronson, 1806).

general satire upon superficial science and upon genuine science that was spectacular, and especially upon men of science who left their experiments for theory and upon their antipodes, men of letters without wit enough to let science alone."[25] The narrator is one Christopher Caustick, a doctor whose business has been ruined by Perkins' metal tractors. Things had not always been so bad with the doctor:

> What makes my sorry case the sadder,
> I once stood high on Fortune's ladder;
> From whence contrive the fickle jilt did,
> That your petitioner should be tilted. (2)

Unable to make a living by medicine, Dr. Caustick will turn to literature:

> Necessity, though I am no wit,
> Compels me now to turn a poet;
> Not born, but made, by transmutation,
> And chymick process, call'd--starvation! (2)

The muses refuse him their aid, but all is not lost:

> What then occurs? A lucky hit--
> I've found a substitute for wit;
> On Homer's pinions mounting high,
> I'll drink Pierian puddle dry. (3)

His salvation is a bag of Dr. Beddoes' gas, which when "snuff'd the nose up, makes wit brighter" and enables him to surpass even Apollo:

> Inflated with supreme intensity,
> I fill three quarters of immensity!
> Should Phebus come this way, no doubt,
> But I could blow his candle out! (13)

This reference to Beddoes' gas provides an example of the

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[25]Perrin, pp. 52-53.

way in which Fessenden manages much of the satire on scientists and pseudo-scientists. Dr. Thomas Beddoes (1760-1808) was a physician of some merit who had become respected for his Oxford lectures on chemistry, but who had also attempted to cure various diseases by the inhalation of gas. His assistant, Humphrey Davy, imagined that he had made important discoveries while under the influence of the gas, although he was unable to remember them when consciousness returned.[26] Fessenden ridicules Dr. Beddoes' inability to distinguish between science and fancy by having Dr. Caustick actually remember the schemes that occurred to him while under the gas, schemes such as that for a wonderful magnifying glass that will enable him to cure diseases in gnats and lice. In addition, long footnotes quoting from advertisements of Dr. Beddoes' gas and Davy's experience reinforce the satire. The balance of the first canto continues in the same vein with Dr. Caustick adopting and reducing to absurdity theories proposed by other scientists and pseudo-scientists.

The second canto, entitled "Conjurations," deals exclusively with the dangers of the "Perkinean Institution." The worst danger is, of course, that the tractors will put Dr. Caustick and his colleagues out of business:

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[26] Perrin, pp. 56-57.

> Unblushing at the knavish trick,
> I fear these fellows soon will kick
> (A thing of all things most uncivil)
> One half our physick to the devil! (128)

They might then have to toil all day and tenant some old hovel,

> Or, destitute of food and lodging,
> Through dark and dirty lanes be dodging,
> Unless t' avoid such dismal lurkings,
> You put a powerful paw on PERKINS. (128)

He compares the principles of Perkinism to those of Dr. Aldini, who could by electric stimulus cause dead animals' muscles to contract. Dr. Caustick carries Aldini's experiments to absurdity when he indicates that he can make "dead people cut droll capers" and "kick and hop like dancing camels." In a footnote Dr. Caustick explains that Perkins is even more dangerous than Aldini because the latter "...begins where we leave off; that is, after the patient is dead; whereas Perkins, by his pretended easy and expeditious mode of curing those who ought to depend solely on 'death and the doctor,' is a more formidable foe to our profession" (128). The social consequences of Aldini's acquiring the tractors are awesome, for

> With powers of these Metallick Tractors,
> He can revive dead malefactors;
> And is reanimating daily,
> Rogues that were hung once, at old Bailey! (131-132)

The spirit of Radcliffe arrives from Hades to urge war against Perkinism, after which Dr. Caustick, rejuvenated, delivers an invocation to the muse from "Della Crusca's

altar." The canto closes with the Doctor's urging that someone "pop off Perkins in a DUEL," an act of which

> ...the jury
> (Provided they are made to fit him)
> Will most assuredly acquit him. (157)

The third canto, "Manifesto," is intended primarily as an answer to Dr. Haygarth's charges. In footnotes Dr. Caustick demonstrates that animals have intelligence and fancy; therefore Perkins' statement that he has cured animals is not a valid defense against Haygarth's accusation. Much of this canto is devoted to Dr. Caustick's attempt, through a kind of perverted logic, to link up his own interests with larger philosophical purposes:

> SAY NATURE THROUGH HER WORKS INTENDS
> ALL THINGS TO ANSWER SOME GREAT ENDS:
> THUS SHE FORM'D DRUGS TO PURGE AND SHAKE,
> THEN MAN, OF COURSE THOSE DRUGS TO TAKE. (167)

After all, folks ought to

> ...die just when God pleases;
> But most of all the dirty poor,
> Who make, quoth Darwin, good manure.... (177-178)

Dr. Caustick elaborates at length upon the services performed by physicians in ridding the world of the poor. But should some raise valid objections to the physicians' practices,

> To such reply you'll make no answers,
> For much I question if you can, sirs;
> But rather for retort uncivil,
> The poker take and lay them level. (191)

The canto concludes with the promise that the next canto will explain how they will "proceed from words to blows."

Canto IV, "Grand Attack," does not describe an attack, but rather the preparations for one. The doctors are urged to unite under the banner of Dr. Lettsom, a prominent London physician who had complimented Dr. Haygarth on his exposure of Perkinism. The canto is liberally supplied with mock-epic devices and elevated diction, often with bathetic effect, as in the following description of Dr. Bradley, editor of a leading medical journal:

> Thou too, fam'd KNIGHT OF HORRID FIGURE!
> With wig than bushel-basket bigger;
> Which, in its orbit vast, contains,
> At least a thimble full of brains.... (212-213)

The doctors are urged, in a low burlesque simile, to make as much noise as possible in order to frighten their adversaries:

> Just so a gang of Indian savages,
> When they set out to make great ravages,
> With war-whoop fright their foes (God help 'em)
> And then proceed to kill and scalp 'em. (228)

As Dr. Caustick projects what the attack will be like, he becomes increasingly agitated and his language more exclamatory. The weapons will be medical instruments:

> Come on! Begin the grand attack
> With aloes, squills, and ipecac;
> And then with clyster-pipe and squirt-gun,
> There will be monstrous deal of hurt done! (235)
> . . . .
> See host to host and man to man set!
> A tractor each, and each a lancet!
> Each meets his foe, so fierce attack him!
> That sure some god or demon backs him! (235)

If, however, their attack should fail, there is still an alternative left:

> No more with these our weapons dabble,
> But raise a Lord-George-Gordon rabble;
> Pour on the rogues, that they be undone,
> The whole mobocracy of London! (249-250)

Such a rabble will certainly produce "...'confusion, worse confounded'/Than e'er in Milton's hell abounded." The poem concludes with Dr. Caustick's final plea:

> Now, sirs, consent to my PETITION,
> And send these varlets to perdition;
> So for your weal and welfare, post hic,
> Will ever pray--
> CHRISTOPHER CAUSTICK. (251)

It is possible to find at one place or another in Terrible Tractoration most of the techniques employed in Hudibras. The absence of a narrative is of course an obvious difference between the works, as is Fessenden's division of his poem into quatrains. But a list of Butlerian techniques that may be found in the poem is a long one: comic rhymes, probably more frequent than in Hudibras; contrasting levels of diction, often producing a bathetic effect; mock heroic techniques, including epic similes that often mock the epics themselves; low burlesque comparisons; pseudo-erudite footnotes; understatement; twisted logic--to mention the most important. Even Fessenden's narrator, Dr. Caustick, bears some resemblance to Sir Hudibras. He is dogmatic, brash, opportunistic, prone to condemn while trying to justify and quick to resort to violence when thwarted.

But in spite of these similarities, Butler's is, even for the twentieth-century reader, an engaging poem

while Fessenden's is in many ways a tedious one. There are a number of reasons for this difference. One is the lack of a narrative. In shorter works the narrative isn't too important as a means of retaining reader interest, but in a poem the length of Fessenden's there must be other strong compensating factors if it is omitted. Terrible Tractoration is probably as close as any American came to writing intellectual burlesque; unfortunately, though, the work makes few intellectual demands upon the reader. Although Dr. Caustick's arguments are ironical and must be reversed to understand the author's position, most of them are so patently absurd that the reader after a few pages automatically makes the adjustment and need not exercise his faculties further. The topicality of the poem is also a problem. Most of the people and events alluded to have long been forgotten and the lengthy notes--which comprise over half the poem--while often humorous, seem just as often to be much ado about nothing. Fessenden, unlike Butler, has not been able to raise his satiric object to the level of a symbol. While he is undoubtedly ridiculing those who confuse genuine science with fancy, the line between the two is not clearly drawn and one fears that it ultimately lies between those who approve and those who disapprove of the tractors. In short, the work is securely tied to the transitory issues of his day and has little to say about more universal human concerns.

Furthermore, a number of Butler's techniques are applied too heavily and with too little subtlety. Fessenden is adept at handling contrasting levels of diction for comic effect, but when colloquial and learned words are blatantly contrasted in page after page much of this effect is lost. The same may be said of mock heroic elements, particularly in the last canto in which they are indiscriminately piled on one another. While the movement of Fessenden's couplets is smoother than Butler's, they do not have the lilting quality of those in the New Year's Ode discussed above. It is probably unfortunate, though, that he chose to use a four line, or two couplet, stanza form. Ideas and figures are at times developed through two or more stanzas, but more often the stanzas tend to be independent units, each containing a single figure or idea. The effect of this is, in the absence of a narrative, to give the poem a static quality, to introduce a repetitive element which becomes another factor contributing to the overall monotony.

Fessenden's second major Hudibrastic poem, Democracy Unveiled, went through three editions, two in 1805 and one in 1806.[27] In his Introduction to the 1806 edition, the author explains that his main purpose for writing the poem was to

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[27]The full title of the third edition, the one consulted, is Democracy Unveiled, or, Tyranny Stripped of the Garb of Patriotism (New York: I. Riley & Co., 1806).

> ...strip the mask from democracy, and expose in their true colours the men, who are either ignorantly or maliciously busied in prostrating the pillars of social order, and whose disorganizing efforts threaten to deliver America, bound hand and foot, to domestic usurpers or foreign tyrants.[28]

The work is divided into six cantos. Canto I, "The Tocsin," sets the general mood for the satire on the democrats that will follow; although Tom Paine and a host of democratic journalists are singled out for specific mention. The second canto, "Illuminism," deals with the origin of the democratic principles Fessenden finds so reprehensible; Rousseau, the French Encyclopedists and William Godwin are identified as some of the main villains and passages from their works are ridiculed at length in footnotes. The third canto, "Mobocracy," traces these "jacobin" ideas to America, establishing Jefferson as the chief purveyor of them, and levels some specific charges against leading democrats. Canto IV, "The Jeffersoniad," is devoted almost exclusively to Jefferson; he is charged with atheism, cowardice and immorality as well as with incompetence in office. In the fifth canto, "The Gibbet of Satire," Fessenden ridicules some lesser democrats, particularly newspaper editors. And the last canto, "Monition," suggests a course of action for Federalists to follow if the country is to be saved.

As Fessenden himself has indicated, <u>Democracy</u>

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[28] <u>Democracy Unveiled</u>, p. XVI.

Unveiled is "a sort of hornbook of Federal politics."[29] Since it sets forth in great detail, and with abundant documentation from contemporary literature, many Federalist attitudes during the Jefferson administration, it has historical value. But as a literary work its value is negligible. The couplets are probably a little more elegantly constructed than those in Terrible Tractoration; also epigrammatic statement occurs more frequently. However, most of the weaknesses of the earlier poem still exist, and some are even intensified. Although the ironical presentation by means of the narrator in Terrible Tractoration failed to move the work far from direct attack, the absence of such irony in Democracy Unveiled brings much of this work even closer to pure invective. Only in "The Jeffersoniad" canto does Fessenden attempt to make his satire indirect, and even here the irony created by the narrator who ostensibly is defending Jefferson is not sustained.

In both poems Fessenden employed quite a few of Butler's techniques and handled them effectively in places. He also seemed to possess Butler's interest in curious or esoteric information and his love of applying this information in unique ways to the matter at hand. But whatever he did he was almost certain to overdo, and this tendency together with the directness of his attack and his failure

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[29]"Introduction," Democracy Unveiled, p. XX.

to involve the reader in either a narrative or complex ideas with universal significance mar both of his major works.

Thomas Green Fessenden was the last significant writer of Hudibrastic satire in America, and *Terrible Tractoration* and *Democracy Unveiled* reflect many of the same weaknesses as the other works examined so far. His poems also reflect to a certain extent the tendency toward experimentation that characterizes many of these other satires; however far Americans may have missed the mark of good literature, most were not slavish imitators of Butler or his English followers. Further generalizations in regard to *Hudibras* in America would not, however, be meaningful without considering the works of Ebenezer Cook and John Trumbull, the former the first American to produce a major corpus of Hudibrastic works and the latter the man regarded, both in his time and in our own, as having created the best American imitation of Butler.

CHAPTER III

EBENEZER COOK

In spite of the fact that his first Hudibrastic satire was published in England and not America and that his own residence in America was rather sporadic, Ebenezer Cook must be considered the first writer of a major Hudibrastic satire this side of the Atlantic. His The Sot-Weed Factor, published in London in 1708, represents not only a conscious attempt to imitate the Hudibrastic manner, but is also a poem of some literary merit.[1] Although there remains some doubt as to whether or not the poem was actually written in America, the subject matter is thoroughly American and Cook had undoubtedly spent an extended period of time observing the customs, manners and general behavior of the people of Maryland before composing it. In addition, Cook did spend the latter part of his life in America, during which time he composed and published here two other Hudibrastic poems dealing with American subject matter:

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[1]Bernard C. Steiner, ed., Early Maryland Poetry (Baltimore, 1900), pp. 11-31. All references to The Sot-Weed Factor will, unless otherwise noted, be to this edition.

Sotweed Redivivus: or the Planters Looking-Glass[2] in 1730, and The History of Colonel Nathaniel Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia[3] in 1731. There can, then, be little doubt that Ebenezer Cook was an American author and that The Sot-Weed Factor deserves recognition as the first major American Hudibrastic poem.

Although such scholars as Lawrence C. Wroth and Joseph A. L. LeMay[4] have made an exhaustive search of colonial records in an attempt to reconstruct the facts of Cook's life, many gaps in the chronology still exist, and will probably continue to exist. It has, however, been possible by means of reasonable conjectures to flesh out this skeleton of facts into what seems to have been the general pattern of Cook's life.

The place and date of his birth are unknown, but it is likely that he was born in or near London within a few years of his father's marriage in 1665. We hear nothing of him until 1694 when he signed a petition opposing the

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[2]Steiner, pp. 39-50. All references to Sotweed Redivivus will be to this edition.

[3]Lawrence C. Wroth, ed., The Maryland Muse by Ebenezer Cooke: A Facsimile with an Introduction (Worcester, 1935), a reprint from the American Antiquarian Society Proceedings, 24 (1934), pp. 311-326. All references to Bacon's Rebellion will be to this edition.

[4]Wroth, pp. 267-308. Joseph A. L. LeMay, "A Literary History of Colonial Maryland," Diss. University of North Carolina 1964, pp. 102-132. Although much of LeMay's history is based upon Wroth, since LeMay has done some source investigation of his own and since his summary incorporates both his and Wroth's work, I shall rely primarily upon him for this brief discussion of Cook's life.

removal of the capital of Maryland from St. Mary's to Annapolis.[5] Cook was probably educated in England,[6] and it is likely that he was in Maryland in 1694 in connection with the business of his father, Andrew Cook, "a London merchant who plied the tide-water tobacco trade and who owned some land in Dorchester County, Maryland."[7] How long he stayed in Maryland we do not know, for his name does not appear again until 1708 when he published The Sot-Weed Factor in London. In January, 1712, Cook's father died, leaving Ebenezer and his sister, Anna, "Cook Point" in Dorchester County, Maryland. By 1717 Cook had returned to Maryland, and in that year sold his inherited property. A few years later he began his association with the wealthy and influential Lowe family:

> On April 26, 1721, Cook was given a commission by Henry Lowe, "Agent and Receiver Generall for the Right Honouable Charles Lord Baron of Baltimore," to be Lowe's "lawful and sufficient Deputy for me and in my behalf to occupy and exercise the said office of balif and collector of his Lordships mannor lying upon the head of Gunpowder River in Baltimore County." After the death of Henry Lowe in 1721, Cook became deputy receiver-general for his brother, Bennett Lowe. There are records of Cook renting to various people a number of Lord Baltimore's properties in 1721 and 1722.[8]

By this time Cook appears to have become a permanent resident of Maryland. In 1726 there was issued from the

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[5]LeMay, pp. 102-103.

[6]Wroth, p. 276.

[7]LeMay, p. 103.

[8]LeMay, pp. 112-113.

press of William Parks, Cook's first known poetic composition since The Sot-Weed Factor: a 49-line broadside elegy on the death of one Thomas Bordley. It was to this elegy that Cook first affixed the title of "Poet-Laureat of Maryland," although nothing is known of the circumstances surrounding this appointment.[9] In the summer of 1728 he was admitted as a lawyer in Prince George County, Maryland, and on December 24 of that year his next poetic composition, "An Elegy on the Death of the Honourable Nicholas Lowe," appeared in the Maryland Gazette.[10] In 1730 he published Sotweed Redivivus: Or the Planters Looking-Glass, and in 1731 The Maryland Muse, the latter containing The History of Nathaniel Bacon's Rebellion and a revised version of The Sot-Weed Factor. The last poem we have by Cook is his elegy on the death of William Lock,[11] a justice of Maryland who died in May, 1732. This poem was probably published in a now-lost issue of the Maryland Gazette, but fortunately a manuscript copy has survived. No record of Cook exists after the date of this elegy, and it is probable that he died not long after composing it.[12]

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[9]LeMay, pp. 113-114.

[10]LeMay, p. 114.

[11]Printed in the Maryland Historical Magazine, 14 (1919), 172-173.

[12]LeMay, p. 132.

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As far as contemporary readers are concerned, Cook's literary reputation rests almost exclusively on *The Sot-Weed Factor*. The poem has been well known to students of American literature since its 1865 publication, with an introduction by Brantz Mayer, as No. II of Shea's *Early Southern Tracts*. In 1878 Moses Coit Tyler discussed the poem at length and with some enthusiasm in his *History of American Literature, 1607-1765*,[13] and in 1900 Bernard C. Steiner published it along with two other Cook poems, *Sotweed Redivivus* and "An Elegy on the Death of the Honourable Nicholas Lowe," in his *Early Maryland Poetry*. *The Sot-Weed Factor* has been frequently reprinted in early American literature anthologies during the twentieth century; in fact, it has become, as Joseph LeMay has noted, the best known literary work of colonial Maryland.[14] It might also be added that, of all the Hudibrastic satires produced in America, only John Trumbull's *M'Fingal* has had a greater appeal over the years than Cook's poem.

The reasons for its popularity are fairly obvious. It has wit, humor and a fast-paced narrative that carries the reader from one ridiculous adventure to another. Even more important, Cook presents an array of country bumpkins

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[13] One Volume Edition (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1949), pp. 483-488.

[14] "A Literary History of Colonial Maryland," p. 102.

and scoundrels that stand in sharp contrast to the more traditional picture of our pious ancestors that has come down to us through the genteel and refined literature of much of the early eighteenth century. The well-fed and drunken planters, their vulgar wives, the ignorant and unscrupulous lawyers, doctors and judges and the hypocritical Quaker have an appeal for an age that demands a good dose of cynicism with its literature. And while most of the good Hudibrastic satires present such a cynical portrait of the human condition, The Sot-Weed Factor, unlike many of the others, has the added advantage of requiring from the reader very little knowledge of specific social and political issues; he need use only a little imagination to project contemporary human types into the cultural situation that must have existed in a new and undeveloped country in order to sympathize with the plight of Cook's hero.

Since the text of The Sot-Weed Factor is so readily available, only a very brief summary of the narrative will be given here. Cooke's first-person narrator begins the poem by indicating that he was forced by "Friends unkind, and empty Purse" to flee "Albion's Rocks" and seek his fortune in the New World, bringing with him a store of goods that would enable him to "open Store." After a stormy three-months voyage, the narrator lands at "Piscatoway" and gets his first view of the "The Sot-weed Planters," people "so strange, no God designed,/To be a part of Humane

Kind" (29-30). He takes a canoe, "fashion'd like a Trough for Swine," to the other side of the river where he encounters a planter's son who, after a seeming insult, invites him to his house to spend the night. The planter gives him a cordial welcome and shares with him his food and drink, neither of which agrees with the narrator's more delicate constitution. The strong drink goes to his head and he is finally led to his chambers by an indentured servant "who pass'd for Chamber-Maid." There follows one of the best farcical passages in the poem in which the narrator describes his futile attempt to get a night's sleep in this primitive country: he is beset by a fox chasing poultry through his room; he retires to the orchard and is there harassed by croaking frogs and a rattlesnake; finally, he attempts to sleep in a tree, only to be plagued by mosquitoes until dawn.

After a hearty breakfast of country fare, his host lends him a horse and his eldest son as a guide for the journey to "Battle-Town." On the way they meet an Indian whose "wild fantastick Air and Dress" throw the narrator into a fright until both his horse and his guide indicate by their reluctance to flee that the Indian is harmless. The narrator and his guide then engage in a long argument as to the origins of the native inhabitants, an argument which, in the best Hudibrastic tradition, leaves the participants "not more/Convinc'd or wiser than before" (373-374). They next attend a session of the court; all the

parties to the legal dispute, including judge and jury, are drunk and the court finally "adjourn'd in the usual manner,/ In Battle Blood, and fractious Clamour" (414-415). The narrator and his guide retire to an inn in an attempt to get a night's rest. However, the inn is inhabited by drunken and brawling planters and the narrator, after once again becoming intoxicated, is forced to spend the night in a "Corn-loft." Awakening in the morning to find part of his clothing stolen and his horse strayed, the narrator leaves his guide to search for the latter while he himself is taken in tow by a "Cokerouse," or a man of quality. His new host plies him with food and drink, after which the narrator has an opportunity to observe the vulgarity of the women in the New World. Unfortunately, though, his relative contentment is brought up short by contracting a fever which lasts "from March to cold December," and which is finally cured by a nurse whose care, says the narrator, "depended on my Purse."

Well again, Cook's hero attempts to sell the goods he had brought with him from England, only to be cheated out of them by a pious Quaker. He resorts to law in an attempt to recover his goods, but falls into the hands of an unscrupulous apothecary-lawyer who accepts a bribe to have the narrator paid in non-merchantable wares. Disgusted with the dishonest courts, thieving merchants and the vulgarity of the people in general, the disgruntled Englishman

leaves the country--not, however, before casting behind him a "dreadful Curse" that concludes with a wish that "Wrath Divine" may "lay those Regions wast/Where no Man's Faithful, nor a Woman Chast" (711-712).

There is no direct evidence, either internal or external, that Cook had read Hudibras and was using this work as a model for his own.[15] Nonetheless, there is every likelihood that the author, being an educated Englishman at a time when Butler's works and those of his followers were popular in England, had some familiarity with Butler's poem. In addition, Cook's versification and his use of figurative language and imagery place him squarely in the low burlesque tradition of Hudibras.

Although Cook in The Sot-Weed Factor occasionally injects a couplet composed of two ten-syllable lines and concludes his poem with a "Curse" composed of twelve such lines, the octosyllabic couplet predominates throughout the work. In general the iambic tetrameter is maintained and the lines move smoothly from one to the other, at times

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[15] Joseph LeMay, on page 107 of his dissertation, quotes lines 362-374 of The Sot-Weed Factor--the passage concluding the dispute about the origins of the American natives--as a passage that "deliberately echoes" lines 547-548 of Part III, Canto III of Hudibras ("He that complies against his Will,/Is of his own opinion still."). While the passage in The Sot-Weed Factor is certainly in the spirit of Hudibras, the assumption that it deliberately echoes this work seems unwarranted. Neither the narrator nor his guide actually complied against his will, as each retained in the face of the other the opinion he had before.

almost producing a lilting effect. Cook, of course, is interested in telling a lively story and the regularity of the meter keeps his narrative moving along at a fast pace. It is difficult to find a passage, even in the sections involving pseudo-learned commentary, in which he employs Butler's technique of utilizing a rough and irregular meter to reflect the tortuous movements of the characters' thoughts as they struggle to make a point. Occasionally, though, Cook uses the ten-syllable line to achieve a particular effect, as in the following passage in which the narrator's guide is propounding his theory in regard to the origin of the American natives:

> My Friend suppos'd _Tartarians_ wild,
> Or _Chinese_ from their Home exiled;
> Wandering thro' Mountains hid with Snow,
> And Rills did in the Vallies flow,
> Far to the South of _Mexico_:
> Broke thro' the Barrs which Nature cast,
> And wide unbeaten Regions past,
> Till near those Streams the humane deludge roll'd,
> Which sparkling shin'd with glittering Sands of Gold,
> And fetch _Pizarro_ from the Iberian Shoar,
> To Rob the Natives of their fatal Stoar. (309-319)

Besides concluding with emphasis the guide's theory, the longer lines tend to reflect the plenitude and awesomeness of the imagined scene. All in all, though, Cook's prosody lacks much of the subtlety of Butler's.

The Sot-Weed Factor contains some of the humorous rhymes characteristic of poems in the Hudibrastic tradition. Both imperfect ("Fugitive-arrive") and broken ("Waggon-brag on"; "Defendant-end on't") rhymes occasionally appear,

although they are not as frequent as in Butler's poem. Rhymes in which half of the rhyme is composed of the first part of the word, the remainder carrying over to the next line, do not occur. As in most Hudibrastic satires, the comic rhymes contribute to the overall low burlesque manner and at the same time degrade that which they are describing. When the narrator says that "The Indians call this watry Waggon/Canoo, a Vessel none can brag on" (61-62), the comic rhyme tends to reinforce the unpleasant description that the narrator presents, an effect which is further heightened by the comic contrast between the exaggerated diction ("watry Waggon") in one member of the rhyming pair and the rhyme itself.

In his diction, figurative language, and allusions, Cook follows the practice of most Hudibrastic writers. The diction is a deliberate mixture of the low and commonplace with the elegant and elevated; the similes, metaphors and allusions at times deflate the subject matter by implying differences between it and something that is lofty or noble and at other times achieve the same effect by indicating similarities between the subject matter and that which is base and sordid. Cook's skillful use of diction and allusion can perhaps best be illustrated by quoting at some length the passage in which the exhausted narrator tries to get some sleep only to be interrupted by a battle among the animals:

I threw me down expecting Rest,
To be in golden Slumbers blest:
But soon a noise disturb'd my quiet,
And plagu'd me with nocturnal Riot;
A Puss which in the ashes lay,
With grunting Pig began a Fray;
And prudent Dog, that Feuds might cease,
Most strongly bark'd to keep the Peace.
This Quarrel scarcely was decided,
By stick that ready lay provided;
But Reynard arch and cunning Loon,
Broke into my Appartment soon;
In hot pursuit of Ducks and Geese,
With fell intent the same to seize:
Their Cackling Plaints with strange surprize,
Chac'd Sleeps thick Vapours from my eyes:
Raging I jump'd upon the Floar,
And like a Drunken Saylor Swore;
With Sword I fiercly laid about,
And soon dispers'd the Feather'd Rout:
The Poultry out of Window flew,
And Reynard cautiously withdrew:
The Dogs who this Encounter heard,
Fiercly themselves to aid me rear'd,
And to the Place of Combat run,
Exactly as the Field was won.
Fretting and hot as roasting Capon,
And greasy as a Flitch of Bacon;
I to the Orchard did repair,
To Breathe the cool and open Air: (ll. 178-207)

The passage illustrates Cook at his best. Not only does it reflect his ability to use contrasting levels of diction and allusions to underscore the baseness of the situation, but it also indicates his eye for realistic detail and his extraordinary talent for constructing a fast-moving narrative. There exists a contrast between both the elevated diction used to describe the scene and the meanness of the scene itself and the different levels of diction employed. The use of what almost amounts to poetic diction in such phrases as "golden Slumbers," "nocturnal Riot," "Sleeps thick Vapours" and "Feathered Rout" contrasts with what in

reality is a brawl among a group of undignified animals, the effect of which is, in best mock heroic fashion, to make the scene appear even more sordid by presenting it side by side with a kind of ideal implicit in the language. These "poetic" phrases are often followed by low or commonplace ones that furnish another level of contrast. The narrator is hardly more than awakened from his "golden Slumbers" when he discovers that one of the elements of the "nocturnal Riot" is a "grunting Pig"; "Sleeps thick Vapours" are barely cleared from his eyes when he "like a Drunken Saylor Swore"; and the "Feather'd Rout" is described in the next line as merely "Poultry."

Cook's writing is not highly allusive, either in this passage or in the rest of the poem, but a couple of vague allusions in the passage above help to underscore the baseness of the situation. Reynard the fox is not exactly a noble and dignified animal in literary tradition; however, he is stealthy and usually pursues his objects by means of artful strategems rather than by the kind of "hot pursuit" that characterizes Cook's fox. The battle itself is sometimes described in such a way as to conjure up images of heroic contests of old. The language describing the dogs' actions when they "to the Place of Combat run,/ Exactly as the Field was won" has suggestions of a chivalric encounter and as such contrasts with the baseness of the actual situation. Also, the very realistic description of

the narrator as "Fretting and hot as roasting Capon,/And greasy as a Flitch of Bacon" which immediately follows the heroic allusion implies in the rather low-class images a contrast between the narrator and an ideal hero who might have fought on the "Field" of the previous lines.

Figurative language is not as plentiful in The Sot-Weed Factor as it is in Hudibras and many of the latter's imitators. Cook only occasionally makes use of the low burlesque simile in which human beings and their actions are compared to animals. In the first Maryland court scene the narrator observes, he speaks of the lawyers making "Motions with their Paws," and the lawyer who finally assists in cheating him is described as "No wiser than a Daw in Steeple" (646). However, the most successful burlesque similes would seem to be those that depend on indirection and a slight time-lag for their maximum effect; in these the speaker doesn't tell the reader directly that someone is ignoble or base because he is behaving like an animal, but instead he uses the animal imagery in what at first appears to be an honest and objective attempt to simply present the situation without any bias whatsoever toward what he is describing. The reader must then discover for himself all of the incriminating implications involved in the other parallels that might exist between the person being described and the animal of the simile. About as close as Cook comes to utilizing this technique is in his

description of the canoe:

> The Indians call this watry Waggon
> Canoo, a Vessel none can brag on;
> Cut from a Popular-Tree, or Pine,
> And fashion'd like a Trough for Swine:
> In this most noble Fishing-Boat,
> I boldly put myself a-float: (61-66)

There is, of course, a certain parallel between an Indian canoe and a "Trough for Swine," and to this extent the simile amounts to an objective description of the vessel. But given the vulgarity of the people as already presented in the poem, the reader is likely, after a brief time-lag, to extend the parallel to the users of the two objects--that is, to recognize that Cook is implying a similarity between swine and the Marylanders. The effect is further heightened in the next line when the speaker sarcastically refers to the boat as "noble." However, this use of the burlesque simile is rare in The Sot-Weed Factor, as most of the similes in the poem are of the more conventional, or direct, kind.

At times Cook uses a contrast between a "poetic" personification and an unpleasant realistic detail as a basis for a satiric thrust. The narrator and his planter host spent some enjoyable hours drinking and talking,

> Till Midnight in her sable Vest,
> Persuaded Gods and Men to rest;
> And with a pleasing kind surprise,
> Indulg'd soft Slumbers to my Eyes.
> Fierce AEthon courser of the Sun,
> Had half his Race exactly run;

> And breath'd on me a fiery Ray,
> Darting hot Beams the following Day,
> When snug in Blanket white I lay:
> But Heat and Chinces rais'd the Sinner,
> Most opportunely to his Dinner; (508-518)

The personifications of time and the poetic diction here suggest an elegant or noble setting. In such a setting one might expect to be awakened by the singing of a lark or a blast on a martial trumpet, but hardly by the heat and common bedbugs. The technique is essentially mock-heroic in that the low or commonplace situation is made to seem even worse by being contrasted with the lofty ideal implied in the diction and personifications.

In reviewing the versification, diction and figurative language of *The Sot-Weed Factor*, it becomes obvious that Cook made use of many of the techniques that have come to be associated with the Hudibrastic manner. However, he employs these devices sparingly. Meter is hardly ever used for comic effect, and while he at times uses comic rhymes, conflicting levels of diction and burlesque similes as means of ridiculing his object, none of these devices is used to the extent that it is in such a work as *Hudibras*.

Although these techniques contribute to the indirection which is an important ingredient of satire, an attempt to evaluate *The Sot-Weed Factor* in terms of its overall satiric effect introduces some problems. That Cook intended his work as a satire is certain: he says on the title page that it is "a satire, in which is described

the laws, government, courts, and constitutions of the country; and also the buildings, feasts, frolicks, entertainments, and drunken humours of the inhabitants of that part of America." The problem, though, is whether the work in its overall effect comes closer to satire or to pure comedy.[16] If we apply to the work David Worcester's two general principles for distinguishing satire from pure comedy--intensity of condemnation and closeness of focus on a single object or a group of related objects[17]--we discover that while it meets the test of intensity of condemnation, there are problems with the focus of the satire.

The main confusion in the focus results from the character of the narrator. We see the Marylanders from his point of view, and there is every reason to believe that he is a somewhat untrustworthy reporter. In fact, much of the humor in the poem comes more from the contrast between the narrator and the Marylanders than from the vulgarity and licentiousness of the inhabitants themselves. A question surrounds his character from the very beginning when we learn that he was forced to flee his native soil. As the poem progresses he takes on more and more the appearance

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[16] George F. Horner in his dissertation, "A History of American Humor to 1765," discusses The Sot-Weed Factor and calls it--because of the Hudibrastic elements, the farcical plot and the satiric subject matter--a work of "greater complexity than any other comic writing of the period." University of North Carolina, 1936.

[17] The Art of Satire, pp. 37-38.

of a fop, an eighteenth-century dandy who is all pretension and no substance. He seems to be easily frightened. The howling of wolves puts him into a "pannick Fright," and when together with his guide he comes across a lone and friendly Indian he is prevented only by the better sense of his horse from running away. Having discovered that the Indian is harmless, he says that he "boldly fac'd the Courteous Devil," a nice touch of irony by means of which Cook underscores the ridiculous posing of his hero. He imbibes freely of the planters' alcohol, but he is unable to hold his liquor and throughout much of the poem is either drunk or suffering from a hangover.

The effect of the narrator's character as established is to blur the focus of the satire and turn the work in the direction of pure comedy. When he attempts, after becoming thoroughly intoxicated, to get a night's rest and is harassed by a series of animals until he finally ends up in a tree fighting off mosquitoes, we are, it is true, presented with the crudity of living conditions in colonial Maryland. But the humor here is directed not so much at these conditions as at the inability of the foppish narrator to deal with them. Similarly, when his clothes are stolen in the tavern, we laugh more at the fact that the joke was played on such a coxcomb than at the drunken, brawling and illiterate Marylanders. The same could be said of his experiences with the Quaker who absconds with his

goods and the quack lawyer who prevents him from receiving recompense for their loss. The venality of the latter's actions is somewhat undercut by the pretentiousness of the man they cheat. Even the vitriolic "Curse" that the narrator leaves behind loses much of its satiric force when considered in relation to the character of the man who utters it; the speech takes on much of the quality of an emotional outburst by a foot-stomping, peevish child who has been denied his way.

This is not to say that the work is free from satiric thrusts at the inhabitants of the New World; the Marylanders are presented as the vulgar, drunken and illiterate people who were becoming, and would continue to be, the butt of much of the satire and humor of literary works dealing with American subject matter. However, for a work to be satiric in its overall conception it must hold up to ridicule a single object or a group of related objects. Neither the Marylanders nor the narrator provides such an object and as a result the works lack the focus necessary for a good satire. If the poem has a focus at all, it is on the incongruity between the narrator and the inhabitants, and this focus on incongruity rather than on criticism of a specific object brings the work closer to the province of pure humor than to that of pure satire.

In 1731 Cook published in his The Maryland Muse a

revised version of The Sot-Weed Factor.[18] A comparison of the two versions of the poem reveals two major changes and approximately 123 changes in phrasing, exclusive of punctuation and spelling alterations. The majority of the purely verbal amendments improved the poem in either sense or sound, although at times they seemed to have either no effect at all or actually made matters worse.[19] One of the major revisions was the removal of the satire on the Quakers (613-620). He substitutes "Planter" for "Quaker," making only the changes in the narrative necessitated by this switch. The other major change is in the ending.[20] The "Curse" of the original version, which concluded with the lines, "May Wrath Divine than lay those Regions wast/ Where no Man's Faithful, nor a Woman Chast," is replaced by a milder version that warns merchants to be careful of being cheated and ends on a note of conciliation:

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[18] The Maryland Muse by Ebenezer Cook, ed. Wroth, pp. 327-335. Actually this work is identified on the title page as the third edition. The second edition, if such a work did exist, has never been found. For a recent discussion of the problems surrounding this second edition, see Edward H. Cohen, "The 'Second Edition' of The Sot-Weed Factor," American Literature, 42 (1970), 289-303.

[19] Of the 123 changes noted, this writer would classify them roughly as follows: definite improvements, 74; bad corrections, 25; corrections making little or no difference, 24.

[20] For a comparison of the texts of the two versions, see James Talbot Pole, "Ebenezer Cook and The Maryland Muse," American Literature, 3 (1931), 296-302.

And may that Land where Hospitality
Is every Planter's darling Quality,
Be by each Trader kindly us'd,
And may no Trader be abus'd;
Then each of them shall deal with Pleasure,
And each encrease the other's Treasure.

Most critics agree that, because of these two changes, the revised version is inferior to the original.[21] And with good reason. The passage on the Quakers is one of the most witty in the poem and much of this wit is lost in the revision. And the new conclusion fails because it is consistent with neither the tone of the poem nor the character of the narrator as established in it. As indicated above, the "Curse" which the narrator of the 1708 version leaves behind is about what one would expect from someone who had conducted himself in such a childish manner; the revised version reflects a level of maturity that the rest of the poem has not prepared us for.

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Cook's next major work, Sotweed Redivivus: Or the Planter's Looking-Glass, was first published by William Parks in 1730. It is more an economic treatise than an attempt at Hudibrastic satire, but the fact that the poet employed some of the same techniques in this work as in his two major Hudibrastic poems would seem to entitle it to brief mention here. Sotweed Redivivus begins

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[21] See, for instance, LeMay, p. 130; Wroth, p. 283; and Pole, p. 302.

with an eighty-one line prefatory poem in heroic couplets in which Cook, in a rather confused manner, introduces the subject of his work and laments his own poetic limitations. He has discovered that, for him, "all Attempts prove vain,/ Those glittering Smiles from Fortune to obtain" (1-2) and decides "In gingling Rhimes, to guide his gouty Feet,/ The ancient Path of Pegasus to beat" (7-8). After indicating how severely the natural resources of Maryland have been ravaged since he "on old Roan, with Guide before" some time previously had gone to "Battle-Town" (a direct reference to *The Sot-Weed Factor*), he introduces the purpose of his poem. Those responsible for the waste

> Will by their Heirs be curst for these Mistakes,
> E'er Saturn thrice his Revolution makes;
> Whose thriftless State, this Looking-Glass is meant,
> By way of Metaphor, to represent:
> Wherein the Planter may his Fate behold,
> By sad Experience, has been often told,
> It's Industry, and not a nauseous Weed,
> Must cloath the Naked, and the Hungry feed. (20-27)

There follows an apology for his work which, according to him, doesn't rise "Above the Pitch of Grub-street Elegy,/ Or the flat Sound of Doggerel Poetry" (45-46). The prefatory poem concludes with a suggestion that Maryland girls be required to provide themselves with a wardrobe of "Home-spun Weeds" before they marry and that the boys be prevented from marrying until they have grown 3000 pounds of hemp or flax.

The poem proper is written in octosyllabic couplets and divided into three cantos. At the beginning of the

first canto the poet arrives at Annapolis where a money bill is being debated in the Assembly. He himself is for a paper currency and enters into a discussion with a planter who favors metal coin. They are interrupted by a drunkard who says the Assembly is divided on the bill, after which the poet follows the man into a nearby tavern where politicians are lustily drinking and carrying on the debate begun in the Assembly. In lines deliberately echoing *The Sot-Weed Factor*, the poet is directed to bed and discovers that his roommate is the same "Cockerouse" who had afforded him hospitality when, in the former poem, his horse had "slipt his Halter" and "Left *Sotweed Factor* in the Lurch,/ As *Presbyterians* leave the Church" (I, 138-139). The poet and the planter decide to discuss the issue before the Assembly, and the first canto concludes with the promise that the next canto will be devoted to the planter's solution to the problem.

The promise is kept, and Canto II is devoted to the planter's discussion of the situation. Maryland is suffering from a single-crop economy and from unscrupulous merchants who take advantage of the planters' desperate plight. Production controls on tobacco must be instituted; each "taxable" person should be allowed only 600 pounds of "*Sotweed* good," and those who grow more should be subjected to a fine and public censure. Public warehouses should be erected in the towns so that the planters may vend their

wares at leisure for either goods or cash. He goes on to say that all taxes as well as priests' and lawyers' fees should be paid in currency. The canto--which amounts to a much more complex discussion of economic problems than this brief discussion can do justice to--concludes when "The God of Sleep, with Leaden Charms,/Lock'd up the Planter in his Arms" (II, 162-163).

Canto III carries on the discussion in much the same vein the following morning. The planter stresses the need for a diversification of crops: hemp, flax, rice and cotton should be grown after the swamps and marshes have been drained and made fit to receive these grains. Sheep and cattle in "mighty Numbers" should be raised, thus providing other marketable products in the form of hides and wool. Cook then has his planter launch into a long discourse on the advantages of having the Marylanders build their own ships in which to carry on trade "As the Phoenicians did of old" (III, 57). After the planter has concluded his program for curing the country's ills, the narrator says that he sees much good in the plan. However, speed and industry are necessary, and the poem concludes with the narrator's advice to the Assembly to act quickly:

> In vain, he on the Brook Side stands,
> With Shoes and Stockings in his Hands;
> Waiting 'till all the Stream be past and gone,
> That runs, (alas!) and ever will run on. (III, 131-134)

Edward Ames Richards says of the poem that it is "a competently written pamphlet in verse, by no means

wholly burlesque in intention or treatment."[22] What Richards means by "competently written" is not quite clear, but he would seem to be correct in assuming that Cook had no intention here of writing a satire. The poem contains some satiric thrusts from time to time, but its overriding purpose is more to offer in a serious manner some proposals for economic reform than to hold vice or folly up to ridicule.

Cook's versification in Sotweed Redivivus is very similar to that in The Sot-Weed Factor: his octosyllabic couplets move along smoothly with few variations in the meter for comic effect, and while he at times employs comic rhymes, these rhymes are not as frequent as in Hudibras. Unfortunately, as so often happens when the Hudibrastic manner is applied to a work that is essentially didactic or moral, the comic rhymes in Sotweed Redivivus are not always effectively used. Instead of becoming one of a number of tools used to debase a single object or a group of related objects and thus contributing to the overall low burlesque effect, the rhymes sometimes seem to exist merely for quick satiric thrusts at specific objects without having any relationship to a larger satiric context. This being the case, they seem obtrusive and tend to produce an almost "strained" attempt at humor. In the second canto the planter is discussing the many duties laid upon tobacco:

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[22] Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition, p. 105.

> THESE petty Charges not a few,
> With Subsidies both old and new,
> As Factors tell us, run so high,
> They swallow up our Industry.
> In whose undoubted Word and Honour,
> (That _Female Idol_,) Pox upon her,
> _Planters_ oblig'd are to confide,
> Or learn to plow the _Ocean_ wide.... (II, 26-33)

The effect of the comic rhymes here ("high-Industry"; "Honour-upon her") is to indirectly ridicule the merchants. However, while the merchants throughout the work are presented as one of the elements preying upon the planters, they are not part of a larger whole that is ridiculed in a similar manner: the absurdity of the rhymes is hardly consistent with the general attitude taken toward the economic problems--of which the merchants are a part--throughout the poem.

Sotweed Redivivus is also marred by what would seem to be unnecessary lines inserted merely for rhyme and by awkward and confused syntax. It is a characteristic of the Hudibrastic manner that lines are often added more for the humor they produce than for any specific content they carry. But the humor itself in a way becomes content, by virtue of the fact that it contributes to the undermining of the subject matter. When the humor is not present, though, the effect is merely awkward. At the beginning of the poem the narrator rides into Annapolis:

> Well mounted on my aged Pacer,
> In youthful Days, had been a Racer.... (I, 7-8)

While a case could be made that the couplet established a contrast between what the horse was and what he now is which parallels the aging of the narrator himself, one cannot help but feel that Cook added the second line merely to complete the couplet. The grammatical confusion into which Cook at times leads the reader is evident in the following passage in which the planter sums up the effect of a failure to diversify crop production:

> This is our Case, and will, I fear,
> Grow worse and worse, the Course we steer.
> Are grown too populous to thrive,
> Upon a nauseous Vegetive. (II, 85-88)

Cook maintains the regularity of his meter here, but at the expense of omitting the subject pronoun of his last sentence, an omission which puzzles the reader and necessitates a rereading of the passage.

The diction in Sotweed Redivivus is similar to that in The Sot-Weed Factor: a mixture of the abstract and poetic with the low and commonplace. However, unlike that in the latter poem, the two are seldom combined for satiric effect. Burlesque similes are not employed and figurative language in general is sparse. Classical allusions at times appear--e.g., the story of Aesop's swain (II, 60-65)--and abstractions occasionally are personified. But here again these devices are not used for the satiric purpose of debasing the real by comparing it with some imaginary ideal.

There are, of course, passages in Sotweed Redivivus that are witty and which compare favorably with some in The Sot-Weed Factor. The first canto in particular contains satiric portraits of the drunken, brawling and vulgar planters with whom Cook was so much concerned in the earlier work. As the narrator and his planter friend are discussing with some gravity the currency problem, they are interrupted by a "sudden noise"

> That seem'd to Eccho from the Hive;
> Whereat I grew inquisitive,
> To know the Meaning of such Clamour;
> Says One, in Drink, that made him stammer,
> The Reason's this, if you must know it,
> The House divided is, old Poet,
> In voting for the Money Bill;
> Which, tho' compos'd with wondrous Skill,
> Will never pass, I dare be bold,
> A Pipe of Wine on it to hold. (I, 79-88)

The comic rhymes, the comparison of the Assembly to a beehive, the drunken interpreter and the dispute itself present a picture reminiscent of the court scenes in The Sot-Weed Factor. As the narrator follows his new-found friend to the tavern we see the Marylanders in all of their drunken glory:

> This said, revolv'd on t'other Dose,
> To Tavern steer'd an Oblique Course:
> Which standing almost within Hollow,
> I did his drunken Worship follow;
> Seem'd by his reeling thro' the Street,
> To be much founder'd in his Feet.
> So reach'd the Bacchanalian Mansion,
> Before the Host had gave him Sanction.
> And meeting with young Politicians,
> Dull antiquated State Physicians;
> Replenishing their thirsty Souls
> With Lemon Punch, in flowing Bowls. (I, 89-100)

Here Cook has used rather sophisticated diction--"Oblique Course," "drunken Worship," "Bacchanalian Mansion"--to describe a low or vulgar scene, the final effect of which is to satirize the men in whose hands the fate of Maryland rests.

Unfortunately, any literary merit that Sotweed Redivivus may have is confined to isolated passages such as the one above. Cook's talent was essentially a narrative one and it is mainly in the first canto that he chose to utilize this talent. The poem as a whole may be, as L. C. Wroth has suggested, an economic discussion "significant in the history of the tobacco colonies,"[23] but the last two cantos are only rarely brightened by flashes of wit, and in spite of all their economic good sense they make dull reading indeed.

It is probably unfortunate that Cook chose to employ elements of the Hudibrastic manner in the poem. The very nature of Hudibrastic versification places it in the tradition of the low burlesque; the subject matter is deflated by means of comparison with the low and humorous form of the verse in which it is presented. When the work in question is a satire that focuses on a single object or a group of related objects, the Hudibrastic versification becomes functional in that it helps to undermine the dignity of

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[23] The Maryland Muse, p. 292.

that which is being attacked. Cook's Sotweed Redivivus is not so much a satire on existing conditions as it is a serious treatise on the ways to better these conditions. This being the case, the low character of the versification stands in contrast to the gravity of the proposals being considered; instead of being functional, the effect of the versification is often such as to cause an awkward incongruity between form and subject matter.[24]

3

Along with the revised edition of The Sot-Weed Factor, Cook published in his The Maryland Muse of 1731 a new poem entitled The History of Colonel Nathaniel Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia. Done into Hudibrastick Verse, from an old MS. Of Cook's three poems in the Hudibrastic manner, this is the longest and, probably, the least known. In a prefatory poem addressed to the author, a certain "H.J." indicates that he is sending Cook "an old, authentick Book" never before in print which he hopes the poet's muse will be able "in Doggrel Verse to Cook." The manuscript Cook received was undoubtedly the contemporary account of Bacon's

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[24]In "The Preface to the Reader" attached to Sotweed Redivivus, Cook calls the work a "dull Piece of Household stuff" and says that "one Blast from the Critick's Mouth, wou'd raise more Flaws in this Looking-Glass, than there be Circles in the Sphere." The tone of the Preface as a whole indicates that Cook probably recognized the limitations of this work and was not just making the traditional apology expected of authors in his day.

Rebellion which has since become known as the Burwell Papers.[25] It was a fortunate gift, for Bacon's Rebellion offered the kind of subject matter that enabled Cook to give free rein to both his satiric and his narrative powers. The result was one of the best Hudibrastic satires to be produced in America.

Bacon's Rebellion occurred in 1676 when the frontier followers of Nathaniel Bacon took up arms against Governor William Berkeley of Virginia. Disgusted with the government's failure to provide adequate defenses against the Indians, Bacon and his men marched on Jamestown where they defeated the Governor's troops. Bacon, however, died of a fever shortly after and the rebellion came to a sudden end. Berkeley took a bloody revenge by executing thirty-seven of the leading rebels, an act which led Charles II to remark that the "old fool has hanged more men in that naked country . . . than I have done for the murder of my father."[26]

Cook's prefatory poem consists of twenty-four lines in octosyllabic couplets and concludes by suggesting that the poet may receive immortal fame for his work:

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[25]The Burwell Papers are published under the heading of "The History of Bacon's and Ingham's Rebellion, 1676" in Charles M. Andrews, ed., Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675-1690 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), pp. 47-98.

[26]Quoted in T. Harry Williams, Richard N. Current and Frank Freidel, A History of the United States to 1876 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 95.

YOU know what never-fading Glory,
Old Salust got by Catlin's Story;
The Fame Hyde gain'd, I need not tell y'on
By's Hist'ry of the Grand Rebellion:
You know how Butler's witty Lays
Procur'd for him immortal Praise:
I'll add no more--But if you please, Sir,
Attempt the same for Ebenezer,
Which you may gain, or I'm mistaken,
If you can nicely Cook this Bacon.

According to Joseph LeMay, the "H.J." who signed this poem and delivered the manuscript to Cook was one Hugh Jones, then a minister in Charles County, Maryland.[27] However, the style and tone of the poem suggest, as James Talbot Pole has noted, that Cook more than likely wrote it himself.[28]

Bacon's Rebellion is written in octosyllabic couplets and divided into three cantos, each of which is preceded by four or six lines of verse which give the argument. The beginning lines merit quoting at some length, as they both set the tone of the poem and establish the object of the satire:

I SING those dire BACONIAN Wars,
Which, like the Oliverian Jars,
Long since broke out in Smoke and Fire,
'Twixt testy Knight, and waspish 'Squire:
The First of which, (as Authors tell)
Govern'd VIRGINIA very well,
'Till little Nat, presumptuous Hector,
(Aspiring, like the Lord Protector)
O're the Atlantick Ocean came,
And put the People in a Flame;
Set Folks together by the Ears,
Who liv'd in Friendship many Years,

27"A Literary History of Colonial Maryland," p. 120.

28"Ebenezer Cook and The Maryland Muse," 298.

And in a Snare drew headstrong Rabble,
Who too much listen'd to his Babble.

The echo of the Aeneid in the first line and the reference to Hector later on place Bacon's Rebellion in a framework of the great epics. Also, the references to the English Civil Wars create a parallel between these wars and Bacon's Rebellion that will be emphasized from time to time. The passage indicates too that "little Nat" and his followers will be the villains of the piece and that Governor Berkeley will be cast in a more favorite light.

The poem continues by telling how Governor Berkeley out of "Christian Compassion" sent forces against the Indians who in their "Hellish Anger" were slaughtering the Marylanders. Berkeley's men surround the Indians in a fort until the latter become weak from hunger and send six messengers to sue for peace. Instead of being received according to the law of arms, however, the Indian messengers are "To Pluto sent, without their brains" (I, 75). After escaping from the fort, the remaining Indians take revenge by killing seventy of Berkeley's men. They then plead with Berkeley to make peace, but their terms are rejected "By Persons of the best Condition./Whose Int'rest lean'd the other Way;/ Such as, for Honour or for Pay" (I, 130-132). Angered at the rejection of their proposals, the Indians take to the warpath and begin a wholesale slaughter of the Virginians. The colonists, disenchanted with Berkeley because he will

not afford them the protection they desire, take matters into their own hands and

> . . . chatt'ring like _Jack-daws_ in Steeple,
> Against Sir _William_; chose this _Bacon_
> Their _Champion_; whom at first I _spake_ on;
> A Man _respected_ by the Mob,
> As a fit Fool to do their Jobb;
> Who, Sword in Hand, would rescue Cattle,
> And give the _Indians_ bloody Battle .... (I, 177-183)

Berkeley, however, will have none of it and tells them to "Go smoak their Bacon in the Chimney" (I, 203).

But a "furious Mobb" give Bacon a commission to pursue the Indians in spite of Berkeley's objection. Bacon gathers together an army and puts the Indians to flight, all the while being himself followed by Berkeley who has him labeled a traitor. However, the governor cannot catch him, and after putting the Indians to rout and being elected to the House of Burgesses as a reward for his services, Bacon returns to the capital where he is seized by Berkeley's men and made to stand trial for treason. He is acquitted of the charge and Berkeley admits him to the Council Board, at the same time promising him that he will be given a commission to lead government troops against the Indians. But "Promises are scarce worth minding," as Bacon discovers when his army goes home:

> For, when the Rabble were withdrawn,
> And promis'd Day had pass'd it's Dawn,
> For putting _Bacon_ in Commission,
> WILL, like a crafty _Politician_,
> Refus'd to sign the _Instrument_,
> Drawn up in Form, for that Intent.... (I, 193-298)

Bacon, however, can also be crafty. On the pretense of visiting his sick wife he gets permission to return to his home, where he reassembles his army for the purpose of marching on Jamestown and forcing the Assembly to grant him a commission. His show of force has the desired effect; the Assembly grants the commission and Bacon "rid from his Dwelling,/Like Oliver, a Colonelling" (I, 372-373).

Canto II begins with the argument:

> This CANTO tells of Gov'nor WILL
> Being routed by Nat Bacon's Skill:
> Of Stafford Folks with Treason sullied;
> And Glo'ster Men from Leigiance bullied:
> Here too, you'll find, to make you merry all,
> Accounts of Bacon's Death and Burial.

Bacon's army is described as a group of "Bullies, Ruffians, Debauchees,/Cheats, Gamesters, Pimps, and Raparees" (II, 8-9). Berkeley had fled the town in fear for his life when Bacon was given his commission, but he returns after Bacon leaves, only to be laid under a siege by the rebels when they return once again. In order to procure time to build his fortifications, Bacon seizes the wives of loyal planters and places them on "their Works," thus ensuring that Berkeley's men will not fire upon them. The fortifications completed and Bacon "having well secur'd his Men,/ In Trenches deep (like Pigs in Pen)" (II, 72-73), the women are released. Berkeley then decides to attack the rebels with some "mercenary Troops" that are waiting on board ship. The leader of this attack is one Huber Farrell, a man "More us'd t'attack a Cyder Barrel/Than face a Foe

upon old Sorrel" (II, 93-94). Farrell's charge, a masterpiece of farcical writing in which absurdity is piled upon absurdity, is a dismal failure as his men "all retire for Shelter,/In great Confusion, Helter-skelter" (II, 131-132).

Intimidated by the defeat of Farrell and the arrival of reinforcements for Bacon under the command of Major Whaley, Berkeley decides that it is best "Like Men, to save themselves, retreating,/And not (like Dogs) run Risque of Beating" (II, 165-166); he therefore abandons Jamestown, which Bacon and his men promptly enter and burn to the ground. Bacon then removes to Gloster County, where he discovers that a certain Colonel Brent is coming with 1200 men to attack him. After receiving a vote of confidence from his men, Bacon learns that Colonel Brent has not been so fortunate; fearing that they might regret the day they "Bacon-hunting went," Brent's men desert him and he is forced to give up the pursuit. Bacon next persuades the Gloster men to join him, after which he received word from the "Eastern Shore" that the people there are disenchanted with the treatment they are receiving from Berkeley and wish to put the governor and his supporters in Bacon's power. But at a time when "to human Thinking,/Berkleyan Intr'est was just Sinking" (II, 294-295) Providence intervened to foil Bacon's plans. While he is riding the crest of his success "Death at's Chamber door came rapping,/As Moss caught Mare, took Bacon napping" (II, 305-306). Before

dying, however, Bacon invests one Ingram--a man who is "As Richard Cromwell, wise and brave,/Like Quixot's Sancho, Fool and Knave" (II, 311-312)--with his commission to carry on the rebellion. The remainder of Canto II is devoted to a scurrilous description of Bacon's death and burial. He was eaten alive by lice that come from "Maggots hatched in hot Brain." In order that his body may avoid the fate of the "Bones of Noll," he is buried at sea, safe "From Foes, Indignities, and Laughter" (II, 334), although the author feels it would have been better "had he swung,/Such Bacon being best well hung" (II, 360-361).

Canto III begins by describing Berkeley's resolution to strike "whilst Iron's hot" and rout out the traitors fighting under Ingram's and Whaley's banners. The governor's attitude toward the rebels here is paralleled to his attitude toward those instigating the English Civil Wars: of all the colonial governors he remained "longest firm to Party Royal" and was the "First that dare own CHARLES the Second." The first rebels that Berkeley seizes are those led by Colonel Hansford. They are caught at Auborn's house after being betrayed by "Auborn's wanton Wife." Hansford is hanged as a traitor and the government men proceed to near Tindall's Point, where they hope to capture a band of men under Whaley's command. The attack is led by the Huber Farrell who failed so ignominiously at Jamestown. They attempt to surprise the rebels, but all is lost when a

trigger-happy soldier shoots the sentry, thus giving away their position. Once again Farrell must lead a humiliating retreat, only this time he is killed instead of being merely wounded as at Jamestown. The author comments upon his fate:

> THUS stoutest Braggadochio must
> At last lay's Honour in the Dust:
> So Pitcher now, you see is broke,
> At JamesTown crack'd, by Random Stroke
> From Nat; as I before have spoke. (III, 117-121)

Seeing their leader dead, Farrell's men hasten their retreat as "Higgledy Piggledy Malpas shot,/Heels over Heads, away they trot" (III, 130-131).

Berkeley next sends 500 men under the command of Major Smith to Middlesex to encounter the enemy. However, a Lieutenant Walkett leads thirty rebels against him and forces Major Smith and his army to retreat to Reverend Mr. Pate's house. Ingram later learns that Smith has left the house and has placed Pate himself in charge of guarding it. The rebel commander threatens annihilation to all within if they don't surrender, and he so frightens the good parson

> Whom Smith had left to guard the House,
> (In Peace a Man, in War a Mouse)
> That, not accustom'd to such Sport,
> He forthwith gives him up the Fort,
> Resolving now to mind his Church,
> And ne'er more leave her in the Lurch .... (III, 169-174)

Ingram and his men take over the fort with its store of arms, ammunition and supplies. When Major Smith returns

and finds Ingram in "Warlike Station," the situation makes "him Mad; but yet not quite/Enough to make him Ingram Fight" (III, 198-199). The hostile forces face each other, but neither has the stomach to begin a fight:

> Each fear'd the Dance first to begin,
> So Curs at one another grin.
> Thus they continue Scolding, Brawling,
> Like Cats in Cockloft Caterwawling .... (III, 204-207)

Smith's men debate what to do; some favor a fight, some a retreat to a greater distance, and still others capitulation. As might be expected from what has gone before, the third group prevails and "each Man down his Arms does lay,/And wing'd with Fear, all run away" (III, 236-237).

Just when it appears that Berkeley will never find men who have the heart to put down the rebellion, there arrives on the scene a trader named Captain Grantham, a man who recognizes that the rebels themselves are weary of the whole affair and that an appeal to self-interest might succeed where force of arms has failed. As a trader he both knows the planters and has influence over them:

> He long had traded in the Parts,
> Knew Planters Tempers and their Hearts;
> And had great Infl'ence far and near,
> Either for Int'rest, Love, or Fear;
> As many worthy Traders have,
> Who in their Hands still keep the Staff .... (III, 251-256)

After receiving Berkeley's consent to manage the affair, he first goes to Ingram and Walkett and convinces them that the governor is likely to be merciful if they capitulate. His proposal is well received and tends to make "both the

Wolves, as quank as Mice." He pledges the commanders to secrecy and next goes to the "Rebel-Rout." After an initial failure, Grantham finally persuades the troops to lay down their arms by telling them that he has sailed over with a troop of redcoats sent by King Charles to quell the disturbance. In addition, he promises indemnity for the freemen and freeholders, pay for the enlisted soldiers and freedom for the servants. The men are taken to Tindal's-Point where Berkeley "treats them with good Cheer" before they leave for their homes. When things have quieted down, however, the Assembly determines that some of the chief rebels ought to be hung in order "To frighten Folks from trayt'rous Action" (III, 417). The author indicates his approval of the executions and then takes a final swipe at the rebels:

> NOW, having told o'th' greatest Villain,
> You can't expect me to go still on;
> And other Rebels Names bespatter,
> So Mum's the Word about this Matter.
> I've said enough, I really think;
> The more 'tis stir'd, the more 'twill stink.
> (III, 432-437)

The work concludes with Cook's advising the reader to "rest a Spell" before reading Sotweed, the revised edition of which is the next poem in The Maryland Muse.

Bacon's Rebellion is not a great literary work. However, it definitely merits a better critical reception than it has thus far received. In this poem Cook has captured both the manner and the spirit of Hudibras to an

extent equaled by few of Butler's imitators. Joseph LeMay has said of Bacon's Rebellion that it "is a competent and occasionally enjoyable poem--but not as good as The Sot-Weed Factor."[29] Since he has not indicated the standards by which he has judged the two poems, it is difficult to refute his statement. This writer feels that Bacon's Rebellion is a better poem when considered under the broad category of satire, and that when considered in a narrower category of a Hudibrastic satire it is far superior to The Sot-Weed Factor. Nevertheless, LeMay has demonstrated some appreciation of the later work. What is disturbing is when such a student of Hudibras as Edward Ames Richards fails to find value in the poem. In his chapter entitled "Hudibras in America," Richards says that Bacon's Rebellion "is a rather flat performance, interesting in an account of hudibrastic verse chiefly because Bacon's designs are compared to Cromwell's and his rebellion with the Civil Wars in England."[30] Bacon's Rebellion is artistically flawed in places, but it is difficult to see how the poem in its entirety could be considered a "flat performance."

Other problems arise in regard to Cook's sources. Critics agree that Bacon's Rebellion is based at least in part on the Burwell Papers. A passage from the Papers and

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[29]"A Literary History of Colonial Maryland," p. 131.

[30] Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition, pp. 105-106.

one from the poem will indicate the close relationship which occasionally exists between the two:

> ...and so offering to go away, one Coll: Gouge (of his party) calls to him and tould him, that he had onely spoke to the Horss (meaneing the Troopers) and not to the foote. Bacon, in som passion, replide, he had spoke to the Men, and not to the Horss; haveing left that servis for him to do, because one beast best would understand the meaneing of another.[31]

> At this a certain Officer,
> Apply'd to's Honour, saying, Sir,
> "You've spoke to'th' Horse but not the Foot,
> "'Tis ten to one, but they will do't".
> Quoth Nat, "You miss my Speech's Force,
> "I spoke to th' Men, and not the Horse,
> "Though 'twas scarce worth my whil
> t' harangue 'em,
> "They're such obdurate Rascals, hang 'em;
> "Pray you go speak t'your Brother Creatures,
> "Asses best know the Horses Natures". (II, 261-270)

Such close adherence to the letter of his source is, however, unusual for Cook. He omits much of the political maneuvering between Bacon and the Assembly and Governor Berkeley, and many details in Cook's work are not to be found in the Burwell Papers. For example, these papers make no mention of Huber Farrell leading the charge on Jamestown nor of Bacon condemning "A poor Lieutenant" to death for deserting (II, 173-180).[32] In all likelihood, Cook made use of a number of contemporary sources and added

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[31]Narratives, p. 73.

[32]Another contemporary account, "A True Narrative of the Late Rebellion in Virginia, By the Royal Commissioners, 1677," tells of Bacon's executing one James Wilkenson for deserting. This could possibly have been the source of Cook's lines here. See Narratives, p. 138.

some details of his own to improve his story.

What Cook most surely received from the Burwell Papers, though, was the inspiration for the spirit and tone of his satire--a probability that critics have consistently overlooked. Lawrence C. Wroth has indicated with respect to the poem and its source that "in passing from prose to verse the bright metal of that narrative took on an unbecoming tarnish." He goes on to say that the author of the Burwell Papers maintained "a reasonable impartiality" and that he "betrayed no contempt for Bacon."[33] While it is true that the author of the prose work does not attack Bacon with Cook's vehemence and that he does establish some reasonable motives for the revolt in the first place, he often maintains the same mocking attitude toward both Bacon's and Berkeley's men that one finds in the poem. A passage describing Ingram's ascension to power is representative of his stance throughout the work:

> The Lion had no sooner made his exitt, but the Ape (by indubitable right) steps upon the stage. Bacon was no sooner removed by the hand of good providence, but another steps in, by the wheele of fickle fortune. The Countrey had, for som time, bin guided by a company of knaves, now it was to try how it would behave it selfe under a foole. Bacon had not long bin dead, (though it was a long time before som would beleive that he was dead) but one Ingram (or Isgrum, which you will) takes up Bacons Commission (or ells by the patterne of that cuts him out a new one) and as though he had bin his natureall haire, or that Bacons Commission had bin granted not onely to him selfe, but to his Executors,

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[33] The Maryland Muse, p. 306.

> Administraters and Assignes, he (in the Military Court) takes out a Probit of Bacons will, and proclames him selfe his Successer.
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> This Ingram, when that he came first into the Countrey, had gott upon his Back the title of an Esquire, but how he came by it may pussell all the Herolds in England to finde out, untill he informs them of his right name...[34]

This may be what Wroth chooses to call "a reasonable impartiality," but, if so, the same appellation would have to be applied to the bulk of Bacon's Rebellion.

Another critic, James Talbot Pole, says that Bacon's Rebellion "is in direct and interesting contrast ... to the seriousness of the Burwell Papers."[35] Such simply is not the case. The Burwell Papers must certainly be one of the most humorous prose works to emerge from colonial America. Almost any page could be selected to illustrate the wit and mocking irony characteristic of the author, but the following passage describing the attack of Berkeley's men at Jamestown--the one which Cook says was led by Huber Farrell--seems particularly representative of the tone of the work as a whole:

> The Governour understanding that the Gent: Women, at the Legure, was, by order, drawne out of danger, resalved, if posible, to beate Bacon out of his trench; which he thought might easely be performed, now that his Gardian Angles had forsaken his Camp. For the efecting of which he sent forth 7 or (as they say) 800 of his Accomackians, who (like scholers goeing to

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[34] Narratives, pp. 77-78.

[35] "Ebenezer Cook and The Maryland Muse," 298.

> schoole) went out with hevie harts, but returnd hom with light heeles; thinkeing it better to turne there backs upon that storme, that there brests could not indure to strugle against, for feare of being gauled in there sides, or other parts of there bodys, through the sharpness of the wether; which (after a terable noyse of thunder and lightning out of the Easte) began to blow with a powder (and som leade too as big as musquitt boolitts) full in there faces, and that with so grate a violence, that som off them was not able to stand upon there leggs, which made the rest betake them selves to there heeles, as the onely expedient to save there lives; which som amongst them had rather to have lost, then to have own'd there safty at the price of such dishonourable rates.[36]

It should be obvious from this and the foregoing passage that Cook neither "tarnished" his source material by displaying a partiality that was not in it nor made light of a "serious" work. The fact of the matter would seem to be that he found in the cynical and humorous tone of the _Burwell Papers_ the inspiration for a Hudibrastic satire in the same vein.

Cook's versification in _Bacon's Rebellion_ tends to be more complex than that in the earlier works. Although the work is not characterized by a great deal of functional metrical variation, Cook occasionally breaks the iambic tetrameter lines in order to achieve a comic effect, as in the following passage describing Farrell's second retreat:

> Happy the Man, that first can get
> To Shallop, tho' like drown'd Rat wet,
> _Higgledy Piggledy Malpas_ shot,
> Heels over Heads, away they trot,
> 'Till safe unto their Boat they got .... (III, 128-132)

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[36] _Narratives_, p. 70.

In Bacon's Rebellion Cook uses comic rhymes more frequently and with greater satiric effect than in his other Hudibrastic works. One device often employed is the comic rhyme in which one part of the rhyming pair is a proper name or a title: "Bacon-spake on"; "partake on-Bacon"; "Bacon's Power-Governour"; "Huber Farrell-Cyder Barrel"; "Whoreson-Parson"; "William-kill 'em." The effect of this practise is, of course, to degrade the person whose name or title is being used.

The diction again is at times a mixture of the lofty and the commonplace. The poet says Bacon's female captives were permitted to retire "When Phoebus in his hot Career,/ Forsook the Western Hemisphere" (II, 60-61) and then returned

> To open View, as Sol begun
> His Oriental Course to run:
> But where they slept, 'tis hard to say,
> 'Till Phospher usher'd in the Day;
> Unless with Nat, a Nap they took
> In Tent, as black as Chimney Nook. (II, 66-71)

In the following couplet he indicates that the men were digging "In Trenches deep (like Pigs in Pen)." The effect here is to heighten the vulgarity of the scene by contrasting it with a sort of ideal implicit in the lofty and allusive language with which the progress of the sun is described. All in all, though, the diction in Bacon's Rebellion probably is more scurrilous than that in Cook's other two satires. At times it seems to be unnecessarily smutty, as in the long passage describing Bacon's death at the end of Canto II, or when the poet describes Bacon's men mustering

and says that they "Like Tumble-T--ds got in a Cluster" (I, 355).

The satire on Bacon is carried on in part by means of puns and allusions. Bacon is frequently spoken of in terms of bacon meat, as when Cook says in the prefatory poem that he is going to "Cook this Bacon" or when Berkeley tells the people to "Go smoak their Bacon." After Bacon's death Satan takes him because he had no "Fish to fry" and longed to find out "How Pork would do," and the poet laments that he was buried at sea instead of dying by the halter, "Such _Bacon_ being best well hung" (II, 360-361). From time to time throughout the poem Bacon is compared to Oliver Cromwell and his rebellion to the English Civil Wars. Cook's point of view toward these wars is essentially that of a royalist, and the effect of his comparisons is to denigrate both Bacon and Cromwell. Bacon is described in another place as a "presumptuous _Hector_" and in still another place as "Quixot stout," although the poet goes on to modify the "Quixot" allusion by saying that he is really a "_Lilliputian Cavilero_." The effect of many of these allusions is to present Bacon as a man aspiring to a greatness that is beyond his capacity to attain.

Sometimes Cook employs sarcasm as a satiric device. The English are unable in Canto I to drive the Indians from the fort; finally, though, the Indians steal away under cover of night:

> Leaving the English (struck with Wonder)
> Their empty Citadel to plunder;
> Who pelted at the Daemons Nest,
> With Courage not to be express'd.... (I, 84-87)

Shortly after Huber Farrell's first charge fails, Bacon receives "Pieces Three of heavy Cannon," the news of which spurs Berkeley to action:

> THE Governour, at this sad news,
> Did soon resolve, no Time to loose;
> But, summoning both Old and Young,
> He strait perswades the trembling Throng,
> Like Men, to save themselves, retreating,
> And not (like Dogs) run Risque of Beating. (II, 161-166)

It is through such sarcastic passages as these that the poet indicates why neither side is able to achieve a military victory: both groups lack the courage to enter into a fray in which a victorious outcome is not absolutely certain.

Similes and metaphors are used with greater frequency in Bacon's Rebellion than in his other two Hudibrastic works. At times this figurative language is used as a witty and immediate reinforcement of a point that has been made. After the Reverend Pate is frightened into giving up his fort to Major Smith, he is determined to never again leave his church:

> But stick to's Text, and mind his Book,
> Since Mars had such a dismal Look;
> Ne'er fight again, with temp'ral Sword,
> But fight the Battle of the Lord;
> And never use a Sword at all,
> Besides the Sword that's spirit'al. (III, 175-180)

More characteristic of the poem than this type of metaphor, though, is the low burlesque simile, particularly those

employing an animal as the vehicle. An effective use of such similes may be observed in the passage describing Huber Farrell's first charge and his subsequent retreat. Farrell's men prior to the charge are confined on ship, and Cook uses a simile to stress their situation:

> BESIDES his mercenary Troops,
> Confin'd on Board (like Geese in Coops)
> Might get the Scurvy (as he thought)
> In Case to Shore they were not brought. (II, 86-89)

After the men come to shore and ready themselves for the attack, Farrell, a man of "little Skill" but who in his "Thoughts did vie with Machiavel," hits upon a scheme for saving lives, and another simile is introduced:

> He bids his Bands, in Martial Paces,
> By stooping down, to save their Faces
> From Shot; (thus Woodcocks hide their Snout,
> In Bush, but leave their Bodies out)
> When once they saw him this to do,
> He order'd them, to do so too. (II, 107-112)

Unfortunately, though, the charge had no more than begun when "a Ball from Nat/Laid Farrell on his Belly flat" (II, 113-114). The men with Farrell think that he is merely doing what he advised them to do to save their faces, so they too fall flat. But the cavalry and other reserves in the rear who are not in on Farrell's scheme think that disaster has befallen the foremost troops and begin running over one another in a hasty retreat. Finally, the whole army retires "for Shelter,/In great Confusion, Helter-skelter" (II, 131-132). Now the appropriateness of the similes becomes apparent. Although on the surface the one served

to stress the confinement of the troops and the other to illustrate, although somewhat ludicrously, the action Farrell wanted his men to take, at a deeper level they make a statement about the nature of the men involved in the attack. When confronted with danger the soldiers fall over one another in a frantic attempt to save themselves--they are, in fact, as skittish as poultry in a barnyard or a covey of birds. Thus, instead of merely illustrating a situation or an action, the similes, after a time lag, come to make a statement about the quality of the courage the men possess. Such similes are plentiful in Bacon's Rebellion and contribute to the depth and complexity of this work.

And Bacon's Rebellion is both a more complex and a more meaningful work than either of Cook's other two poems in the Hudibrastic manner. It has, for sure, some of the weaknesses of the other works. Syntactical confusion frequently occurs and the poet still has a tendency to add meaningless lines in order to finish out a couplet. It is difficult to imagine, for instance, how Cook could fail to recognize the inanity of the second line of the couplet beginning Canto II:

> NEXT I describe t'you Bacon's Army,
> You need not fear, they will not harm ye;

It even has what might be considered a major weakness that the other poems do not have: some of the passages,

particularly the one describing Bacon's death, are scurrilous.[37] But the versification and the figurative language in Bacon's Rebellion are handled with greater sophistication than in either The Sot-Weed Factor or Sotweed Redivivus. In addition, the later poem lacks the overt didacticism of Sotweed Redivivus and the confused focus of The Sot-Weed Factor. It is, in short, much more successful as a satire.

However, an attempt to define clearly the object of the satire runs into complications. There is just as great a temptation to simplify this object in Bacon's Rebellion as there is to simplify it in its predecessor, Hudibras. One can say that Cook is attacking Bacon and the rebellion that he led, just as he can say that Butler was attacking the Presbyterians and Independents and their rebellion. While both statements are true as far as they go, neither accounts for all of the complexities in the respective works.

Bacon's Rebellion, like Hudibras, is a satire on many things. It is a satire on human self-interest, on men who "basely take the strongest Side" (II, 227), as do Berkeley's men when Bacon's star is rising; it is a satire on human courage, on men who roar like "Phalaris's Bull" when the advantage is with them but who retreat like "harmless Lambs" (III, 242-246) at the first reversal in fortune; it

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[37] The Sot-Weed Factor does have one rather indelicate couplet: In describing the planter's pipe Cook says that it was "In length, scarce longer than ones Finger,/ Or that for which the Ladies linger" (124-125). Bacon's Rebellion, however, contains quite a few raw passages.

is a satire on human stupidity, on men, such as the Reverend Pate, who become involved in things they know nothing about. Basically, Cook is opposed to Bacon and his rebellion. However, he would no more seem to be holding Berkeley and his men up as the norm than Butler was holding up the Anglicans for a similar purpose. When the work is viewed from a distance, what Cook really seems to be satirizing is the nature of man. The rebellion is bad, not because of the specific issues over which the rebels are ostensibly fighting, but because it provides the opportunity for men to operate at the level of their baser instincts. While Berkeley himself is presented as a Machiavellian figure, his regime ensures a kind of order that keeps these baser instincts in check; disrupt this order in any way and human selfishness, cowardice and stupidity will create chaos. In short, given human nature for what it is, the more any stable order is stirred "the more 'twill stink" (III, 437).

Certain parallels exist between the works of Ebenezer Cook and Ned Ward. In his brief discussion of Cook, Edward Ames Richards says that his Hudibrastic poems "are more closely related to the work of Ned Ward than to Hudibras, on account of their descriptive detail and a garrulous narrative style."[38] Whether "garrulous" is quite the correct adjective to describe Cook's narrative style is questionable, but the fact remains that he has Ward's ability to keep his

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[38] Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition, p. 105.

story moving at a fast pace. He, like Ward, is particularly adept at constructing the farcical situation in which one absurd event is followed by another even more absurd. Both Cook and Ward also have a tendency toward a very colloquial and racy diction and to occasionally create scurrilous passages. And, finally, there is a thematic connection between two of their works. What Ned Ward did to the people of Boston in his prose work, "A Trip to New-England,"[39] Cook did to the Marylanders in The Sot-Weed Factor. Since Ward was a popular contemporary writer and his essay was published only a few years prior to Cook's poem, it seems possible that the poem might have been inspired in part by Ward's satire on the Bostonians.

But in at least one poem, Bacon's Rebellion, Cook comes closer to the spirit of Hudibras than to the work of Ned Ward,[40] though even in this poem Cook's manner may more nearly resemble Ward's than Butler's. While Bacon's Rebellion lacks the verbal pyrotechnics, the metaphoric complexity and the philosophic subtlety of Hudibras, in this work Cook was able to rise above the topicality of his subject matter and make a statement about the nature of man, to universalize the object of his satire as Butler had done and as Ward

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[39] The Second Volume of the Writings of the Author of the London Spy, pp. 140-165.

[40] For a discussion of the relationship between the works of Ned Ward and Hudibras, see Howard William Troyer, Ned Ward of Grubstreet, pp. 91-92.

with his attacks on contemporary opponents did not do. In addition, both Butler and Cook maintain the same cynical detachment toward the possibility of man overcoming his inherent weaknesses and improving his condition.

Ebenezer Cook was the first American to publish a substantial Hudibrastic satire. There is no indication that his satires were either widely read in Cook's own day or that they were an influence on any other writer. Although Hudibras continued to be popular in America and short Hudibrastic satires would continue to appear, mainly in newspapers and magazines, it wasn't until the publication of the first canto of John Trumbull's M'Fingal in 1776 that another American author would attempt a Hudibrastic satire of the scope of Bacon's Rebellion. Most of what Cook wrote suffers from a lack of polish; one gets the feeling that he dashed off his satires in a burst of inspiration--in much the manner of the fictional Ebenezer Cook of John Barth's novel[41]--and never bothered to revise. Even so, it is regrettable that The Sot-Weed Factor had to wait until the latter half of the nineteenth century for any critical recognition and that to this day Bacon's Rebellion has been largely ignored.

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[41]The Sot-Weed Factor, revised edition (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1967).

CHAPTER IV

JOHN TRUMBULL

Alexander Cowie in his John Trumbull: Connecticut Wit suggests three factors which partly accounted for the nature of John Trumbull's poetry: Puritanism, neoclassicism, and the Revolution.[1] As a broad generalization one might say that these same three factors were responsible for the nature of most of American literature during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and, further, that their overall effect was to postpone until the second quarter of the nineteenth century the creation of original and durable literary productions. However, John Trumbull provides an exception to the latter part of this generalization. While there can be little doubt that Puritanism with its emphasis on the religious and moral function of art and neoclassicism with its insistence that art must adhere to certain preestablished rules had a deleterious effect on much of Trumbull's poetry, the American Revolution provided the impetus for his major literary work, M'Fingal. Freneau

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[1](Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936), p. 1.

and other American writers may have dissipated their talents in producing the kind of journalistic bombast that the times encouraged from her literary patriots, but Trumbull's talent was essentially a satiric one and the Revolution provided him with both the motivation to leave less fruitful endeavors and the subject matter for a major satiric work.

The facts of Trumbull's life are fairly well known.[2] He was born in Westbury, Connecticut on April 13, 1750, the son of John and Sarah Trumbull. The Trumbull family was, and for a long time would continue to be, an illustrious one in Connecticut; the poet's father was a first cousin of Jonathan Trumbull, Revolutionary governor of Connecticut, and his mother a granddaughter of Solomon Stoddard. And there was every indication that the younger John Trumbull would be a credit to the family name: he learned to read at the age of two; before his fourth birthday he had read the entire Bible; at five he was writing poetry; by the time he was six he was studying Latin; and this record of precocity reached its culmination in 1757 when, at the age of seven, he passed the entrance examinations to Yale. His father, however, felt that even his brilliant son was a little too young for college and the poet spent his next

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[2]The following biographical facts are taken largely from Alexander Cowie's John Trumbull. An excellent condensed account of Trumbull's life by the same biographer may be found in Dictionary of American Biography, ed. Dumas Malone (New York: Scribner's, 1936), X, 10-11.

six years at Westbury, reading such classical and English books as were available in the small town.

In 1763 he matriculated at Yale, where he was to spend the larger part of his next ten years. During his undergraduate years Trumbull was apparently a dutiful but somewhat disgruntled student; he objected to the emphasis placed by the college on mathematics, ancient languages, and theology and its virtual neglect of English composition and the interpretation of literature. His undergraduate poetry consisted chiefly of rather bland elegies written under the influence of the neoclassical school and short comic pieces which early revealed his potential as a satiric writer. He graduated in 1767, was awarded a Berkeley fellowship, and remained at Yale for the next three years, receiving his master's degree in 1770. Aside from miscellaneous verses, his significant literary endeavors during his years as a graduate student were a series of ten Addisonian essays published under the name of "The Meddler" in *The Boston Chronicle* (September 4, 1769-January 22, 1770), the "Epithalamium," a Hudibrastic poem of some merit written in 1769, and his 1770 valedictory oration, *An Essay on the Use and Advantages of the Fine Arts*, the latter concluding with a rather insipid poem entitled "A Prospect of Our Future Glory."

Upon receiving his master's degree, Trumbull left New Haven to spend a year at Wethersfield, Connecticut,

studying law, writing verse and, possibly, teaching. In 1772 he returned to Yale as a tutor, a post which he occupied for the next two years. While a tutor he completed another series of thirty-eight essays, "The Correspondent," which appeared in The Connecticut Journal (February 23-July 6, 1770; February 12-September 3, 1773), and published in three parts during 1772 and 1773 one of his two major works, The Progress of Dulness. After passing his bar examination in 1773, Trumbull moved to Boston, where he studied law under John Adams. While associated with Adams, he was exposed to the political machinations that would ultimately lead to the Revolutionary War, an exposure which provided him with much of the background for M'Fingal. In 1774 he published An Elegy on the Times, which, while cautioning the colonists against the use of violence, bore a patriotic message. When Adams left Boston in 1774, Trumbull moved to New Haven, where he began the practice of law. In 1777, under threat of British invasion, he moved to Westbury, where he remained until 1781 when he moved to Hartford. On November 21, 1776 he had married Sarah Hubbard, by whom he had two sons and two daughters.

Early 1776 saw the publication of the initial canto of M'Fingal, which the poet claimed had been undertaken at the urging of some leading members of the first Congress. Subsequently Trumbull divided this initial part into two cantos and added two new ones, publishing the completed

work in 1782. The publication of this work established him as the literary head of the "Hartford Wits," but it also signaled the end of his major literary endeavors. He played a small part in the creation of "The Anarchiad," which appeared in The New Haven Gazette and the Connecticut Magazine (1786-1787), and The Echo (1807), which was first published in the Hartford American Mercury (1791-1805). But after 1782 the greater part of his energy was taken up by law and politics. Having become an ardent Federalist, he held a series of public offices, beginning in 1789 with the post of state's attorney for the county of Hartford. In 1792 and 1800 he was elected to the state legislature; in 1801 he was appointed judge of the Superior Court of Connecticut and in 1808 judge of the Supreme Court of Errors, both of which offices he held until ousted by politics in 1819. He published in 1820 The Poetical Works of John Trumbull and in 1825 moved to Detroit, where he died on May 11, 1831.

A number of enigmas envelop the literary career of John Trumbull, not the least of which is the question of why at the time of his greatest success, M'Fingal, he virtually dropped out of sight as a creative artist. One can, of course, only conjecture as to the reason for this behavior. Perhaps he realized that he was not likely to produce another work to equal in popularity this satire; it was not probable that there would again occur a time when public sentiment would be so likely to coincide with both the

political and artistic temperament of the poet. On the other hand, though, it is doubtful whether M'Fingal's immediate popularity was great enough to satisfy a man of Trumbull's literary ambitions. While it was reprinted more than thirty times between 1782 and 1840, during the war it went through only three editiins, not an impressive success when compared with a work such as Thomas Paine's Common Sense, which was first issued at about the same time and had a sale of more than one hundred thousand copies within a few months.[3]

A more likely reason for the poet's withdrawal from letters is that M'Fingal revealed to him the gap between his standards of literary excellence and his own performance. Trumbull was not only well read in both major and minor English writers of his century; he was also a very perceptive critic of this literature. A quick perusal of his "Critical Reflections" (1778-1783)[4] reveals many insights into the strengths and weaknesses of eighteenth-century writers, insights which have stood up well under almost two hundred years of critical examination of these works. Although it is not unusual for a perceptive critic to be blind to those weaknesses in his own productions that he is quick to notice in others', one cannot help but wonder if

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[3] DAB, X, 11.

[4] Cornell MSS.

Trumbull was not, on perhaps a not quite conscious level, aware of the shortcomings of his own serious non-satiric works, particularly in light of the fact that one of his most frequent criticisms of his contemporaries was equally applicable to his poems, namely a tendency toward an inflated and turgid poetic diction.[5] If he did recognize this weakness in his serious poetry, the recognition must surely have been combined with an awareness, based partly on his own perceptions and partly on the judgments of those whom he respected, that his forte was satire and the octosyllabic couplet.

This being the case, the complete _M'Fingal_ published in 1782 could have been Trumbull's one great attempt to create a work that would give vent to his natural talent and at the same time meet his own rigid neoclassical standards for literary excellence. That he took _M'Fingal_ seriously is evident from his celebrated letter of May 20, 1785 to the Marquis de Chastellux in which he stresses the importance of "a regular plan and design" in burlesque poetry; he castigates such writers as Boileau, Garth and Pope for failing to provide an adequate plan or design and indicates that he has taken pains to avoid this flaw in _M'Fingal_.[6]

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[5]For discussions of Trumbull's criticisms of contemporary literature, see in particular Alexander Cowie, "John Trumbull as a Critic of Poetry," _NEQ_, 11 (1938), 773-793; and Max F. Schultz, "John Trumbull and Satirical Criticism of Literature," _MLN_, 73 (1958), 85-90.

[6]_The Poetical Works of John Trumbull, LL.D._ (Hartford: Samuel G. Goodrich, 1820), Appendix, II, 230-233.

In addition, there is every indication that the poet was attempting to convince at least himself that satire could be an important literary genre. Max F. Schultz has concluded on the basis of his examination of the "Woodbridge Papers" that during the last twenty years of his life Trumbull took satire as a literary genre seriously.[7] But long before this, and shortly after the publication of the completed *M'Fingal*, Trumbull in his "Critical Reflections" was using biblical examples of satire to lend dignity to this sort of writing.[8]

Having set his sights high, there is every possibility that his great work did not live up to his expectations. Although a popular success and the most polished Hudibrastic satire so far produced in America, *M'Fingal* revealed certain intellectual and temperamental shortcomings on the part of the poet. Perhaps these shortcomings made it seem unlikely that he would ever create a satire that would satisfy his own critical standards. Unable to achieve the kind of excellence he wanted in a literary genre for which he seemed to have more natural talent than any other, Trumbull abandoned letters to devote himself to the more stable and dependable pursuit of the law.

This is not to say that *M'Fingal* fails to be an

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[7] Schultz, 85-90.

[8] "Critical Reflections." The date of these remarks is given as January, 1783.

outstanding literary production; in many ways it is the best Hudibrastic poem ever produced in America. Trumbull possessed many of the attributes requisite of a writer of Hudibrastic satire: a sense of the ludicrous and ironic; an ability to construct pungent epigrams; and, perhaps above all, an adeptness in handling the octosyllabic couplet. But he lacked a certain quality of mind which seems necessary to produce a work such as Hudibras. While this quality is hard to locate and define, perhaps an examination of his two major satires that precede M'Fingal, "Epithalamium" and The Progress of Dulness, will shed light on the nature of both his success and his failure in M'Fingal.

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The "Epithalamium" was written in 1769 on the occasion of the marriage of Stephen Mix Mitchell, one of the Yale tutors.[9] Although the poem caused a permanent estrangement between Trumbull and Mitchell,[10] it comes closer to being a burlesque on the traditional epithalamion than an attack on the tutor. Trumbull wrote on one of the manuscript

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[9]"Epithalamium" was published in an expurgated version in the Monthly Anthology and Boston Review, 2 (1805), 247-250. Two manuscript copies exist, one in the Yale University Library and the other in the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit, Michigan. All references to "Epithalamium" in this dissertation will be to the Yale University manuscript.

[10]See Cowie, John Trumbull, p. 49.

copies of this poem that "in the Structure of it, & many particular Allusions, it is designed as a burlesque on on [sic] the ancient Epithalamia; particularly those of Spencer [sic], Claudian, &c."[11]

The poem begins with a distortion of the traditional invocation to the muses:

> Ye nine great daughters of Jupiter,
> Born of one mother at a litter,
> Virgins, who ne'er submit to wifedom,
> But sing and fiddle all your lifetime,
> In verse and rhyme great wholesale dealers,
> Of which we bards are but retailers,
> Assist;

The poet then appeals to his special muse who has never failed him whether he has

> ...sung in high bombastick,
> Or sunk to simple Hudibrastick,
> Or in dire dumps proclaim'd my moan,
> Taught rocks to weep, and hills to groan,
> Or chang'd the style to love and deary,
> Till even Echo blush'd to hear me....

Phoebus next jumped out of bed, "rubb'd his eyes," and seeing that night had "turn'd her backside," started out on his journey, leaving the lovers "yet in-bed."

"At leisure now for episodes," the poet takes the opportunity to introduce in ludicrous fashion his "set of Gods." These range from Juno and Hymen down to such lesser deities as Dryads and the mountain and water Nymphs, the latter of whom from "swamps and flats,/Came dripping on, like drowned rats." Lucina, the goddess of childbirth,

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[11]Quoted in Cowie, John Trumbull, p. 49.

"ready stood at nine months' warning," and the presentation of the deities concludes with the singing of various birds, followed by the poet's admonition to "quit this singing sport" and tend to the sleeping mortals. The bridegroom, having overslept, jumps from his bed and rubs "sleeps soft dew from both his eyes." The poet says that if rhyming didn't "greatly harrass one,/Twere a fine place to make comparison" between the bridegroom and "the ghosts of heroes pristine,/Egyptian, Trojan, Greek, Philistine." Appearing at his bride's door, the bridegroom awakens her with a series of speeches. Even though every muse and every grace might deck out Venus' face, the bride is "handsomer than all this trash,/By full three thousand pounds in cash." Since lovers and bards tend to "spy a Cupid" in every charm, the bride appears "deck'd with Cupids o'er and o'er."

Passing up the opportunity to "sing of breakfast" and other matters, the poet launches directly into the wedding procession. The sun "riding at his usual rate,/ Had scarcely pass'd the midway course" when the "bridegroom, and his lovely virgin/Set forth to church with little urging," attended by a "lengthly cavalcade" of nymphs and swains "Of ev'ry shape and ev'ry hue." Then appears an allusion to Hudibras:

> Not that more solemn scene of old,
> As in romances we are told,
> By Hudibras that val'rous knight,
> For joining dog and bear in fight;
> Nor shall we make a pause for stating,
> Th' odds 'twixt marriage and bear baiting.

There follows a humorous description of the priest who with "solemn wag" and in "dress and air right well accouter'd" was proceeding on his "ambling nag." In spite of his appearance, the priest is a powerful man, for those whom he marries are "Tied up in wondrous Gordian knot" from which "the world can never free 'em."

Next comes the description of the wedding. In good epithalamion tradition, the poet says he will "Pagan mix with Christian." He then describes the wedding guests:

> And first great Hymen in the porch,
> Like link-boy stood, with flaming torch,
> Around in all the vacant places,
> Stood Gods, and Goddesses, and Graces.
> Venus, and Cupid, (God of Love,)
> With all the rabble from above.

The priest performs the wedding ceremony; "the bargain made" and "smack being given," he "pronounc'd them both one flesh." Using biblical and mathematical examples, the poet comments upon the virtues of uniting two people into one, a union which "no tinker, 'tis confest,/Can splice and sodder like a priest." The priest and other members of the wedding party kiss the bride and then proceed to her house to continue the celebration, where, since "greatest joys" are "always shown with greatest noise," there is much "firing, shouting, ringing/By dancing, drinking, wine, and singing." The groom, however, thought daylight would never end and called the sun a "lagging drone." The sun finally goes to the "sea where he puts up," and the poet chooses not to tire reader and muse by describing the feast, or the guests

and "How frolicksome the liquor made 'em." Night spreads her blanket over the world and sleep reigns over all except "wolves and rovers,/Owls, bats, and ghosts, and thieves, and lovers." The poet discreetly refuses to go too far in his description of what then took place between the lovers:

> No alderman's invited guest
> To gormandize at turtle feast,
> When first he sees the dish brought in,
> And 'gins to dip and grease his chin,
> E'er feels such raptures as our lover,
> Now all his griefs and fears were over.
> Th' events that afterwards befel
> Our bashful muse would blush to tell.

He is not, however, too bashful to indicate that the lovers made noise so "loud and ruinous" that the guests

> ...started off from sleep profound,
> Thinking an Earthquake shook the ground,
> Which they interpret as an omen,
> Of something past and something coming;
> And what that is, I'm somewhat jealous,
> A boy will come next year to tell us.

"Epithalamium" has received little critical attention. Evert A. and George L. Duyckinck printed the poem in its entirety, but without critical commentary.[12] Clare I. Cogan, in his brief survey of Trumbull's satirical works, says that "Epithalamium" is a work "following the progression of Spenser's wedding song, written in bad taste and worse verse...."[13] Only Alexander Cowie seems to have given the

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[12] Cyclopaedia of American Literature (New York: Scribner's, 1855), I, 312-314. They have used the expurgated version printed in the Monthly Anthology.

[13] "John Trumbull, Satirist," The Colonnade, 14 (1922), 89.

poem sympathetic treatment. Calling it "a more obviously successful and sustained imitation of Butler's famous work than any other poem by Trumbull, including M'Fingal," Cowie goes on to say that it "deserves moderate praise for its good structure, its able marshaling of epic machinery, and its nervous, well-knit verse." But the poem is not flawless:

> The poem is almost continuously amusing. Perhaps it errs on the side of being a little too clever occasionally--the principal sign in it of the author's immaturity. It is of course a bookish performance. Indeed, one of the major defects of Trumbull as a poet is that although he plays expertly with words and ideas, he fails to persuade the reader that he knows human nature as a whole....Hence although he is capable of shrewd satirical strokes, he does not excel in characterization. Perhaps it was a realization of this deficiency which led him to deal so much in parody and burlesque, in which a comprehensive knowledge of life and character is less a desideratum and literary virtuosity is at a premium. Actually the "Epithalamium" meets very well the requirements of its genre.[14]

Cowie concludes his discussion of "Epithalamium" by suggesting that the bookish quality of the poem at least saves it from vulgarity.

Cowie's judgment is perceptive in places. However, one could wish that he had taken more into consideration the limited scope of Trumbull's efforts in "Epithalamium" and not used the poet's failure to do things that he never set out to do to indicate limitations in both the poet and the "genre" in which he is writing. "Epithalamium" is a burlesque of a particular literary type. While it is true

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[14]Cowie, John Trumbull, pp. 52-53.

that the really great satires are able to transcend their immediate subject matter, to raise the object to the level of a symbol that has universal implications, it would seem reasonable to first consider certain limitations placed upon the poet by the nature of this immediate subject matter. The traditional epithalamion is a "bookish" literary type and it is therefore difficult to understand how a poet could be expected to write a burlesque of such a work that would not appear to a certain extent bookish. In fact, the very bookishness of the type is undoubtedly one aspect of it that Trumbull is holding up to ridicule, and since the essence of the burlesque mode lies in distortion and exaggeration the poet's own bookishness would appear to be functional. The nature of the subject matter would also preclude the necessity for characterization since Trumbull was satirizing a literary and not a human type.

Considering the limited scope of "Epithalamium," it seems unsatisfactory to say that it is a more "successful and sustained" imitation of _Hudibras_ than is _M'Fingal_. It is true that in certain matters of versification and language "Epithalamium" more nearly approximates _Hudibras_ than anything else Trumbull wrote. Also, the attack in the shorter poem is more indirect than in _M'Fingal_, and it contains an element of sensuality and sexual suggestiveness not found in _M'Fingal_ and more characteristic of _Hudibras_. But _M'Fingal_ is a much longer and much more complex poem

and its very length and the complexity of its satiric object, when considered together with some of the Hudibrastic techniques employed, make it seem closer in intention to Hudibras than the shorter poem.

The versification, diction, imagery and figurative language employed in "Epithalamium" place it squarely in the low burlesque mode. Traditionally an epithalamion is a serious, dignified and graceful poem written to honor one or both partners to a marriage. In Trumbull's poem the type is burlesqued by retaining much of the background and many of the incidents customarily associated with it, but so distorting this background and these incidents as to create a humorous incongruity between the parallel parts in the traditional epithalamion and the distorted version. The traditional epithalamion places ideal lovers in an ideal setting, but Trumbull brings both lovers and setting down to a coarse, vulgar reality, a reality that mocks the pretensions of the other ideal world.

As in the typical Hudibrastic poem, much of the mockery is carried on by means of the verse form itself. The meter of Trumbull's octosyllabic couplets is seldom varied for comic effect; however, the lines move along at a jog-like pace that verges on monotony and stands in contrast to the more delicate and refined movements expected in a serious epithalamion. Comic rhymes abound; in fact, the frequency of such rhymes is greater than in any of Trumbull's

other satiric works. Both broken ("deary-hear me"; "turn he-journey"; "Christian-priest join") and imperfect ("usurp-jewsharp"; "guest-feast") rhymes help to keep the subject continually in a comic perspective.

"Epithalamium" is unique also for the way in which the poet employs diction for satiric effect. In no other work does Trumbull make such widespread use of the low burlesque technique of utilizing various kinds and levels of diction to undermine a supposedly elevated or serious subject. At times he uses commercial terms in order to vulgarize that which the traditional epithalamion takes seriously, as when he speaks, in his invocation, of the muses as "wholesale dealers" in verse and rhyme and the poets themselves as merely "retailers," or when he says of the marriage ceremony that the priest "struck the bargain" in a trice. At other times incongruity is created by merely using an inappropriately low or colloquial level of diction. He says of the departing night that she "turn'd her back-side" to Phoebus, and when the sun departs he comes to the sea "where he puts up." The ancient heroes are spoken of as "rogues," the gods and goddesses attending the wedding are "all the rabble from above," and when the bridegroom kisses the bride it is described as a "smack being given, neat and fresh." Occasionally Trumbull presents a situation in a straightforward manner for several lines and then very dramatically undercuts it by means of a low level of diction

and other techniques. When the bridegroom appears at the bride's door, he praises her beauty:

> How beautiful art thou my love,
> Surpassing all the dames above.
> Venus with thee would strive again
> Venus with thee would strive in vain.
> Tho' ev'ry muse and ev'ry grace
> Conspire to deck bright Venus' face:
> Thow'rt handsomer than all this trash
> By full three thousand pounds in cash.

Aside from the rather slangy "dames" in the second line, the first six lines of the passage seem typical of the traditional lover's paean to his bride. But the use of the appellation "trash" to describe the gods in line seven and the attributing of a very mercenary motive to the bridegroom in the last line effectively demolishes all that has gone before.

Along with the colloquial diction, another factor that injects an earthly or realistic quality into "Epithalamium" is the poet's tendency to have his characters perform very human acts. When Phoebus arises to begin his journey, he is described as any other person getting out of bed:

> Now from his hammock in the skies
> Phoebus jump'd up, and rubb'd his eyes,
> Clapp'd on his daylight round his ears,
> Saddl'd his horse, and fix'd his spurs.

The bridegroom is similarly described:

> Our bridegroom ere he did arise,
> Rubb'd sleep's soft dew from both his eyes,
> Look'd out to see what kind of weather,
> And jump'd from bed, as light as feather....

In contrast to the idealized gods and humans we might expect to find in an epithalamion, Trumbull's perform the very human acts of rubbing their eyes when they first awake and looking out the window to observe the weather. The priest, although not presented in what could be considered really picturesque detail, is a somewhat shoddy character. He appears on an "ambling nag" with "hat new brush'd, his hair new powder'd" and dressed in a "threadbare coat, late turn'd by Snip." All of these realistic touches tend of course to burlesque the more poetic and ideal world of the traditional epithalamion.

Trumbull does not make extensive use of the burlesque simile so common in most Hudibrastic poems, although they occasionally do appear. He says that the "Mountain Nymphs skipp'd down like fleas" and that the Water Nymphs "Came dripping on, like drowned rats." Probably the most effective low burlesque simile occurs near the end of the poem when the rapture of the bridegroom, who is finally alone with his bride, is said to be greater than that of the alderman's guest who, when he sees the "dish brot in," begins "to dip and grease his chin." The identification of the bridegroom's passion for his bride with the coarse sensuality of the dinner guest provides a fitting conclusion to a poem that has had as one of its main purposes the debasing of the idealized love usually found in the conventional epithalamion.

Trumbull's "Epithalamium" employs many of the conventions found in the type itself, but invariably they are in some way vulgarized by the application to them of a variety of the low burlesque techniques discussed above. There is the invocation to the muses, but it is an invocation tainted by commercial diction; the gods and goddesses attending the wedding are catalogued, but their dignity is undermined by means of low burlesque similes, colloquial diction and the very human traits assigned them; the bridegroom praises the virtues of his bride, but the praise is undercut by the diction he uses and the nature of his motives; the marriage ceremony is described, but it is performed by a shaggy priest who lacks both the appearance and dignity expected of one in his station, and the union of the lovers is characterized as a "bargain" resulting in a "Gordian knot" and a "fetlock," all of which leaves little room for the sacred and spiritual; the wedding celebration is presented, but the diction and imagery describing it is suggestive of a vulgar, drunken brawl; and, finally, there is the traditional departure of the guests and the retiring of bride and bridegroom, but the possibility of anything either spiritual or beautiful attending the consummation of the marriage is destroyed by the sensual low burlesque comparison of it to a feast and the crude and loud noise of the lovers in bed. Although most of the burlesque is of characters and events found in numerous epithalamia, Spenser's "Epithalamion"

is specifically ridiculed in at least one passage. The refrain with which Spenser concludes his first stanza ("The woods shall to me answer and my Eccho ring") and which is repeated with variation at the end of subsequent stanzas is distorted by Trumbull in his invocation to the muses when he indicates that he had at times "Taught rocks to weep, and hills to groan" and at other times "chang'd the style to love and deary,/Till even Echo blush'd to hear me."

Another comic device employed is authorial intrusion in which the poet either states what he is about to do or discusses alternatives open to him:

> At leisure now for episodes,
> We'll introduce our set of Gods.
> . . . .
> Here, if our Muse we did not check first,
> We might go on and sing of breakfast;
> . . . .
> Trifles skipt o'er, our next proceeding
> Shall give description of the wedding.
> Where tho' we Pagan mix with Christian,
> And Gods and Goddesses with priests join,
> Truth need not stand to make objection,
> We poets have the right of fiction.

Although effective in debunking the practice in traditional epithalamia, this technique is probably one of the less fortunate aspects of Trumbull's poem. The presence of a manipulating author and the obvious nature of his ridicule is in conflict with the more subtle and indirect attack in the rest of the work.

"Epithalamium" is neither a great poem nor Trumbull's best. There is a certain heavy-handedness in its execution that is only partially accounted for by the authorial

intrusions mentioned above. While the attack has, for the most part, the indirection characteristic of good satire, the satiric devices tend to be relatively unsophisticated and their application sustained to the point of monotony. The poem is humorous but it contains little subtlety in the use of meter, rhyme, allusions or figurative language, and epigrammatic statements are nonexistent. Although Trumbull employs elements of the Hudibrastic manner in "Epithalamium," the poem is so much more limited in its scope than *Hudibras* that a meaningful comparison of the two works is difficult to make.

However, "Epithalamium" does reveal Trumbull's early interest in the Hudibrastic manner as well as his ability at age nineteen to handle many of the techniques involved in this manner. It also indicates that he was capable of writing a sustained satire in the burlesque mode and of pursuing the object of his satire by indirection and without resorting to overt moralizing. But even more important, "Epithalamium" reveals an aspect of Trumbull's character that we will see little of in his later works: an earthy vigor and sense of humor that enables him to mock a serious literary type for the sheer joy of it. There is a kind of lustiness and irreverence that pervades "Epithalamium" and makes it a work quite different in spirit from either *The Progress of Dulness* or *M'Fingal*. In fact, it is probably this spirit more than the superficial elements of the Hudibrastic manner that links this poem to *Hudibras*.

Trumbull's first major satire, The Progress of Dulness (1772-73),[15] probably has less spiritual affinity with Hudibras than does "Epithalamium." While there can be little doubt that the poet had Butler's work very much in mind while writing "Epithalamium," it is obvious that such was not the case with The Progress of Dulness. Alexander Cowie feels that Butler was only one of a number of influences; among others he lists Prior, Swift, Churchill, Pope, and such specific works as J. D. Breval's The Progress of a Rake (1732) and Thomas Warton's The Progress of Discontent (1750).[16] Actually The Progress of Dulness is of importance to this study more for what it reveals about Trumbull's development of certain Hudibrastic techniques than as a Hudibrastic satire in itself. Its obvious didacticism alone is enough to make it quite a different work from

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[15]I have elected to use as my text for both The Progress of Dulness and M'Fingal the versions found in The Satiric Poems of John Trumbull, ed. Edwin T. Bowden (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1962). These texts represent the first complete edition of each poem: The Progress of Dulness, Part One, 1772 and Parts Two and Three, 1773; and M'Fingal, 1782. In addition to the fact that the Bowden edition is probably more readily available to the reader than the final edition published by Trumbull in 1820, I have chosen this text for the same reasons given by Bowden in his "A Note on the Text," to which the interested reader should refer (pp. 20-23). Another reason for my choice is the fact that the Bowden edition contains line numbers whereas the 1820 edition does not. I have, however, compared the Bowden texts with the 1820 edition and any significant differences between the editions in passages used in this dissertation will be duly noted.

[16]Cowie, John Trumbull, pp. 96-100.

Hudibras. However, as a transitional work between "Epithalamium" and _M'Fingal_ it reveals something about the direction the poet's satiric bent was taking.

The Progress of Dulness is divided into three cantos, each dealing with a different character type. The first opens with a farmer and his wife deciding to send their son, Tom Brainless, to college. Tom, whose "genius is too much above" the prospect of hard work on the farm, is delighted, and he is forthwith sent to the village parson to begin his preparation. Tom is, however, a somewhat dull and reluctant student and the parson, who had once himself "run the same dull progress o'er," a less than enthusiastic teacher. But the college is finally persuaded by the parson and Tom's parents that Tom "knows much more than he can tell" and he is admitted. Once in college, Tom finds that he "can't endure the increasing trouble" of his lessons and falls victim to the "college-evil," a sickness which is manifested in many forms but always occasioned by an attempt to study. There then follows a long digression of over a hundred lines in which th poet discusses the need for curriculum reforms, advocating among other things that study of ancient languages and abstruse metaphysical speculation be subordinated to more practical and modern concerns.

Returning to Tom, the poet explains how he was graduated from college a scholar, "Without the aid of books or sense," and then advised to teach school for a year before

becoming a minister. After a year of flogging students, Tom begins his ministerial studies, learning "the nice art, to make with ease/The scriptures speak whate'er he please." Tom concludes his studies and "stalks abroad, a grave divine," in spite of the fact that "his wits could ne'er dispense/One page of grammar, or of sense," a situation which prompts the poet to attack the clergy in another long digression of some sixty lines. The canto concludes with a portrait of Tom as a minister, delivering lengthy sermons in a "faltring tongue" while his "yawning audience nod beneath" and, all in all, doing "no good, and little harm."

The second canto deals with the life and character of one Dick Hairbrain, the only son of the "wealthiest Farmer of the town." The farmer, thinking his son's "parts were quick," sends the "pert dunce" to grammar school for three years and then on to college. Dick next delivers in his own person a long "meditation" in which he envisions a college without the "pedant-air of learned books" where "Wit shall sport with vast applause,/And scorn the feeble tie of laws." The meditation ended, Dick appears at college. Although the road from "Clown and Dunce" to gentleman is a little rough going at first because Dick brings with him his laughter-provoking country manners, "fame is placed in Folly's reach" by the numerous influences surrounding him at college. Tailors and barbers fashion his appearance; his speech and manners are obtained from France, novels and

magazines; and his wit and deistical ideas from Hume, Voltaire and Bolingbroke. Having detailed the forces that transformed Dick from a clown to "Clockwork-Gentleman" and coxcomb, complete with a love of "free thought" and contempt for orthodox religion, the poet turns to his college education, or, rather, his lack of it. Dick "steer'd where nature led the way" and since nature decided that he "was not made to think" he followed the coxcomb's way to gaming, swearing and drinking. His father having died, Dick is left with an inheritance which he uses to travel and collect the "levities of other climes."

The poet next describes Dick's love affairs. Lacking any standards of judgment himself, he "flatter'd where the world admir'd" and praised "*Mahomet's* sense, who holds/That Women ne'er were born with souls." Of course women "of higher mind" would have nothing to do with the "vain, gay, noisy thing" that Dick had become, and he was by fate drawn to the "light Coquettes" with whom he had a natural affinity. Unfortunately, though, the "brightest stars must quickly set" and Dick is no exception. He runs deeply in debt, loses the "dress and trappings of the Beau," and, since "these were all," when they go everything is lost for Dick. He becomes a "superannuated Beau" who "sinks forlorn" and becomes scornful of even himself. The canto concludes on a moralistic note with the poet recommending that we avoid "gaudy, sublunary things" and follow the "nobler thoughts"

that will enable us to "seize our portion in the skies."

Canto three deals with Dick's female counterpart, the coquette Miss Harriet Simper. The canto begins with Harriet's mother and a group of other ladies discussing the six-year-old girl's education. The mother, "once herself a toast,/Prays for her child the self-same post," while the father "hates the toil and pother" and leaves the girl's education to her mother. The essence of the advice given by the ladies is that Harriet avoid the kind of heavy study that only "paves the way to wrinkles" and concentrate on "airs and beauty," which, once possessing, "sense and wit will follow after." The poet next addresses parents in a digression designed to illustrate how a girl's education is often centered on all "that's false and fickle." Instead of providing the mind with the kind of "mental diet" that will enable it to grow and mature, the coquettes are provided with a fare of "Gay trifles." Many hours are wasted on dancing lessons and on embroidering things that are either frivolous or could be bought cheaply without such an expenditure of time.

Returning to Harriet, who has grown to maturity under this kind of education, the poet indicates the effects it has on her. She is able to tell "exact to half a minute,/ What's out of fashion and what's in it"; attendance at church becomes for her not a time of "pious hearing" but instead an opportunity to test the "artill'ry of her charms" against

the young beaus; conversation is focussed on idle gossip and backbiting with other coquettes; and reading is confined to romances that "Elate her mind and turn her brain." She delights in attracting coxcombs who flutter around her with "oath, card, billet-doux, and song," but even more she loves to reject those she has won. Unforunately, though, the Harriet who has been able to break the hearts of so many coxcombs has the tables turned on her when she falls desperately in love with Dick Hairbrain. He rejects her, leaving "in her heart a void" which subsequent beaus can never fill. Finally she "trembles at th' approach of age," and as "New Beauties push her from the stage" she "Affects to scorn the tinsel shows" of assemblies and balls that had before been so much of her life. Having turned moralist and permitted her appearance to deteriorate, she is a likely prospect for Tom Brainless, who has been "Six years a rev'rend Pastor" and who is seeking a partner "to smooth his life." The canto concludes with the marriage of Tom and Harriet, a marriage which is blessed by Tom's congregation, who greet her "at church with rev'rence due,/And next the pulpit fix her pew."

The main weakness of The Progress of Dulness as a satire lies in the poet's reluctance to sustain an indirect attack on his object. Unwilling to let his characters expose themselves, the poet continues to intrude in his own voice, at times speaking softly and at other times practically

shouting. This confusion can best be observed in the relationship he maintains toward his characters, a relationship which operates on at least four different levels: (1) dialogue in which the character speaks in his own person; (2) exposition and narration focussed directly on specific characters; (3) exposition and narration focussed on a type or more generalized character; (4) straight argumentation in which all characters are virtually forgotten. The first canto opens with a dialogue by Tom's father; after sixteen lines the narrator intrudes and the poem shifts to a combination of exposition and narration dealing specifically with Tom. At line 63 the narrator permits his discussion to fade into a more generalized picture as he indicates that his "sire and priest attend him" as he goes to college, "Or if detained, a letter's sent," thus suggesting that he is speaking of common practices rather than the specific instance of Tom. At line 83 we return to Tom when the narrator states that "He enters well--no matter how." The narration and exposition focus on Tom until line 113, at which point the poet leaves his character and launches into a long expository passage which becomes in effect a treatise on the inadequacy of the college curriculum and extends to line 227 when we again return to Tom. The same mixture is evident in the other cantos, as, for instance, in the Dick Hairbrain section where we begin with narration and exposition centered on Dick, move to a long passage of

dialogue in which Dick indirectly exposes his own frivolous values and then, after a brief return to Dick, proceed to a long passage that is a blend of narration and exposition involving the coxcomb as a type and argumentation. This continual shifting of the point of view from detached and objective presentation to overt moralizing substantially weakens the satiric effect of the poem.

On the other hand, though, *The Progress of Dulness* employs a number of sophisticated techniques that had not been used in "Epithalamium." Alexander Cowie has correctly identified the real value of the poem:

> ...the very *raison d'etre* of the whole poem is its perfection of detail and its humorous commentary. Trumbull's courage flows and ebbs, but his language is always at flood. If he occasionally loses the course of his story, his wit at least never wanes. *The Progress of Dulness* shows him to be a brilliant (if discursive) satirist, but even more clearly it shows him to have been possessed of a gift for sustained comic or burlesque commentary equaled by few poets of any period.[17]

Although some of the verse techniques employed in the poem tend to blur the contrast between matter and manner characteristic of the burlesque mode, Trumbull in places shows himself capable of handling the more subtle devices of such Hudibrastic writers as Butler, Churchill and Prior.

In general, the verse in *The Progress of Dulness* tends to be much more urbane and polished than that in either "Epithalamium" or *Hudibras*. A passage from Canto II

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[17] *John Trumbull*, p. 121.

in which the poet is leveling a vituperative attack on the "Coxcomb-race" illustrates the general quality of the verse as it appears in much of the poem:

> The poor in purse, with metals vile
> For current coins, the world beguile;
> The poor in brain, for genuine wit
> Pass off a viler counterfeit;
> (While various thus their doom appears,
> These lose their souls, and those their ears)
> The want of fancy, whim supplies,
> And native humour, mad caprice:
> Loud noise for argument goes off,
> For mirth polite, the ribald's scoff;
> For sense, lewd droll'ries entertain us,
> And wit is mimick'd by prophaneness. (II, 317-328)

The iambic tetrameter metrical pattern is seldom broken and initial consonant sounds are generally soft, the final effect of which is to create smoothly flowing lines. Parallelism, balance and antithesis dominate the passage, providing a structure that puts thoughts into proper relationship with each other and at the same time producing a pleasing aesthetic experience. Trumbull's couplets are closed; each is in effect a simple sentence containing a subject and a predicate. In short, the passage is artfully constructed and the handling of the octosyllabic couplets here is typical of the sophisticated treatment of Gay, Swift, Prior or any number of other Augustan poets. When Trumbull introduces metrical irregularity, he usually does so for a purpose, as in the following passage in which he explains how intelligent girls ignored Dick Hairbrain:

> What tho' the Fair, of higher mind,
> With brighter thought and sense refin'd

> Whose fancy rose on nobler wing,
> Scorn'd the vain, gilt, gay, noisy thing! (II, 459-462)

The spondees and the hard initial consonants in the last line create a raucous sound that contrasts with the smooth flow of the preceding lines, the effect of which is to underscore the contrast between the pleasant and intelligent girls and the "noisy" and unpleasant Dick Hairbrain.

The poet also makes skillful use of Hudibrastic rhymes. In general, the comic rhymes are not applied as frequently as in _Hudibras_; however, the poem contains almost as many different kinds of these rhymes as Butler's work. They also seem to be both more absurd and more frequent in those places at which his attack is most vitriolic. For example, when the poet is satirizing the coquettes (and the objects of their taste) for reading romances (III, 371-398), the following combinations occur: "fancies...romances," "Fair one...Heroine," "really..._Pamela_," "moveless..._Lovelace_." The foregoing rhymes not only help to establish the overall contrast between matter and manner in the passage, but also serve to direct more pointed jibes at both the sentimental novel and specific works within the genre.

Closely related to and at times inseparable from the formal aspects of Trumbull's verse and his rhymes is what can be loosely called the wit in _The Progress of Dulness_. Epigrams, startling phraseology, surprising contrasts and unusual comparisons abound in the work. The

closed octosyllabic couplet does, of course, encourage epigrammatic statement, and the poem contains many couplets that have the terseness, wit and polish characteristic of the epigram:

> For metaphysics rightly shown
> But teach how little can be known.... (I, 199-200)
> . . . .
> The man of wealth the world decries,
> Without the help of learning, wise .... (II, 47-48)
> . . . .
> Whoe'er at College points his sneer,
> Proves that himself learn'd nothing there.... (II, 417-418)

At times two or more such terse couplets are combined into a longer passage that constitutes a short epigrammatic poem:

> As noonday sun, the case is plain,
> Nature has nothing made in vain.
> The blind mole cannot fly; 'tis found
> His genius leads him under ground;
> The man, that was not made to think,
> Was born to game, and swear, and drink:
> Let Fops defiance bid to satire,
> Mind Tully's rule, and follow nature. (II, 367-374)

Each of the couplets here contains a complete thought and their combination in the passage amounts to a tersely expressed satire on the fop, a satire which could easily be extricated from its context in the poem without lessening the effectiveness of the passage. It is worth noting too that the pungency of the satire is heightened by the low burlesque technique of indirectly comparing a man to a lower order of animal, in this case a fop to a mole.

Words and phrases are often used in unusual ways. Speaking of Tom Brainless' study of geometry, the poet says that the lines are so "crooked" that he "Sprains all his

wits to overlook it" (I, 104). The use of "Sprains" in connection with a mental activity tends to debase the quality of Tom's brain by reducing it to a purely physical object that can be so treated. Occasionally a word is used twice in a single line but in two different senses, as when the poet says of Tom's teaching methods that he "breaks their heads to break their wills" (I, 300). The humorous cause-effect relationship here is reinforced by the grammatical parallelism, the final effect of which is to stress Tom's tendency to blur the distinction between physical and mental activities.

A technique frequently employed in The Progress of Dulness is that of undercutting. Closely allied to what would later be termed "romantic irony," this technique involves first stating something completely congruent with one's expectations and then presenting as equally plausible a statement that undermines any suggestion of sincerity or nobility that might have been implied in what preceded it. Usually the two parts are in parallel grammatical form and are separated by a caesura which strengthens the dramatic impact, as in the second line of the following couplets:

> Greek spoils his eyes (the print's so fine)
> Grown dim with study--and with wine .... (I, 99-100)
> . . . .
> And settles down with earnest zeal
> Sermons to study, and to steal .... (I, 307-308)
> . . . .
> And seek again, their school to keep,
> One just as good, and just as cheap. (I, 303-304)

Occasionally a similar effect is achieved by building a couplet into an exaggerated statement which is then undercut by a contrasting phrase:

> The lowest dunce, without despairing,
> May learn the true sublime, of swearing.... (II, 161-162)

In all of these instances an ideal or norm is created as a background to highlight the deviant behavior with which the satirist is concerned.

Trumbull employs a wide variety of figurative language in the poem. Often simple metaphors, similes or personifications are used more for humorous effect than to illustrate a point, as, for instance, when the poet is ridiculing abstruse theological speculations and says that divines may "on the wings of folly fly/Aloft in metaphysic sky" (I, 323-324). At other times simple figures provide dramatic illustration as well as humor; when in the midst of his fellow wits one makes jest of a grave subject, each

> ...blockhead greets the sound,
> And, like electric fire, at once,
> The laugh is caught from dunce to dunce. (I, 374-376)

Extended metaphors involving lengthy passages are occasionally employed. In the third canto Trumbull begins a metaphor of some fourteen lines in which he speaks of learning as a "mental diet,/That serves the hungry mind to quiet" until "souls grow up to common size." He continues the metaphor in reference to coquettes who

> Despise all dishes rich and rare,
> And diet wholly on the air;
> Think fogs blest eating, nothing finer,
> And can on whirlwinds make a dinner;
> And thronging all to feast together,
> Fare daintily in blustring weather. (III, 143-148)

Not content to stop with a comparison of the coquette's education to air, Trumbull utilizes "fogs," "whirlwinds" and "blustring weather" to give his metaphor an added dimension which strengthens the satiric thrust.

The epic simile so common in Hudibrastic satires appears at least five times in The Progress of Dulness. In Canto III the poet indicates how the coquette

> By shrewdest hints and doubtful guesses,
> Tears reputations all in pieces;
> Points out what smiles to sin advance,
> Find assignations in a glance.... (III, 335-338)

This passage is followed by an epic simile that supposedly illustrates the point:

> So Priests drive poets to the lurch
> By fulminations of the church,
> Mark in our titlepage our crimes,
> Find heresies in double rhymes,
> Charge tropes with damnable opinion,
> And prove a metaphor Arminian,
> Peep for our doctrines, as at windows,
> And pick out creeds of innuendoes. (III, 341-348)

The simile obviously goes far beyond what is necessary to illustrate the tenor or subject. It amounts, in fact, to a digression in which Trumbull retaliates on those who so severely condemned the first canto of The Progress of Dulness for what they believed to be disrespect toward the church. Other epic similes, while lacking the personal allusions, also carry the parallel to the point where the simile itself

becomes a short digression, and at least one of these contains an element of the low burlesque in that the subject is indirectly degraded by the nature of the comparison. The coquette's practice of reading their fortunes in tea leaves is compared in this epic simile to "Roman Augurs" who prophesy by looking into "victims hearts," "pigeon's gizzards" and "an oxes liver" (III, 361-368).

The short low burlesque simile also appears with some frequency in the poem. After speaking of the habits and mannerisms Dick Hairbrain has acquired on his European tour, the poet writes:

> As fire electric draws together
> Each hair and straw and dust and feather,
> The travell'd Dunce collects betimes
> The levities of other climes; (II, 403-406)

The implied comparison between what Dick acquires on his trip and "hair," "straw," "dust" and "feathers" effectively debases these acquisitions. In a similar manner, Harriet Simper is indirectly degraded when, due to her ability to spot the most minute faults of fashion, she is compared to a "flea" who "Sees atoms better far than we" (III, 239-240). Harriet's beaus, who languish and protest they are dying for her love but who always manage to recover, are also dealt with in two low burlesque similes:

> The swain revives by equal wonder,
> As snakes will join when cut asunder,
> And often murther'd still survives;
> No cat hath half so many lives. (III, 433-436)

The snake simile appears again when Harriet finally falls in

love with Dick Hairbrain and, gathering "all her smiles about her," attempts to "charm him down as snakes do squirrels" (III, 591-592). Low burlesque similes appear with greater frequency in the last canto than in the first two, a fact which no doubt partially accounts for Cowie's statement that this canto is "an orgy of unmitigated Hudibrastic verse."[18]

Occasionally a number of techniques are merged in a single passage. When Harriet Simper and other coquettes travel to church to display their finery and charms, they are first described in an extended metaphor suggestive of a military parade. The "female Squadron" moves "All arm'd with weapons used in love," with high caps floating "Like colour'd ensigns gay and fair," and each bearing "th' artill'ry of her charms,/Like training bands at viewing arms." This description is immediately followed by an epic simile:

> So once, in fear of Indian beating,
> Our grandshires bore their guns to meeting,
> Each man equipp'd on Sunday morn,
> With psalm-book, shot and powder-horn;
> And look'd in form, as all must grant,
> Like th' antient, true church militant;
> Or fierce, like modern deep Divines,
> Who fight with quills, like porcupines. (III, 283-290)

The military metaphor is suggestive of the high burlesque technique employed by Pope in "The Rape of the Lock"; the meanness of the coquettes' action is highlighted by an implied contrast between these actions and the romance and splendor of the military pageantry with which the language

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[18] John Trumbull, p. 120.

and images are normally associated. Another dimension is then added to the ridicule by the epic simile. Whereas the metaphor had stressed the lack of nobility and grandeur in the coquettes' behavior, the simile, by virtue of the seriousness of the grandsires' plight, emphasizes their essential frivolity. However, the passage is complicated by the low burlesque simile in the concluding couplet, a simile which adds little to the picture of the coquettes but instead represents a satiric thrust at the "modern deep Divines." Both the mixture of different kinds of figures and allusions in treating of a specific incident and the momentary digression characterized by the concluding couplet are typical of _Hudibras_, as is the mixture of high and low burlesque elements in a single passage.

Allusions to literary and historical figures are plentiful in _The Progress of Dulness_. Many of these allusions are directly to the people or their works, either praising--as with Milton and Pope--or blaming--as with Hume, Voltaire and Sterne--according to how the poet evaluates their respective contributions. At other times allusions are used to illustrate an idea, generally in the form of a metaphor or simile. In attacking the college curriculum, Trumbull indicates that wisdom is "in her cradle" and

> Late, like _Minerva_, born and bred;
> Not from a _Jove's_, but scribler's head.... (I, 333-334)

Tom Brainless' wife, Harriet Simper, is described as

> Grown fit for th' ministerial union,
> And grave, as _Christian's_ wife in Bunyan. (III, 665-666)

When marching to court Harriet, Tom and his deacon appear "Like knight and squire in fam'd romance" (III, 680), an allusion of course to Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.

A number of the techniques characteristic of Hudibrastic satires are virtually disregarded by Trumbull. Although footnotes occasionally appear, with but one exception--the reference to _Dudon's Geographical Paradoxes_ in Canto II--they are straightforward explanations of matters in the text, not pseudo-erudite. While the sort of twisted logic so often found in _Hudibras_ seldom occurs in _The Progress of Dulness_, Trumbull can at times make it an effective instrument of his sarcasm. Dick Hairbrain

> Drank wine by quarts to mend his sight,
> (For he that drinks, till all things reel,
> Sees double, and that's twice as well).... (II, 386-388)

Another device only occasionally used by Trumbull is the playful aside in which the author intrudes in his own person to comment on the process of creation or on other matters relating to his art. After stating that Harriet Simper attracts admirers as a "tube electric" draws "multitudes of straws," the poet comments parenthetically:

> (For I shall take similes
> From _fire electric_ when I please.) (III, 407-408)

However, none of the above techniques--the pseudo-erudite note, the twisted logic or the playful aside--occur with

enough frequency to be considered as major elements in Trumbull's satire.

All in all, when viewed close up, The Progress of Dulness reveals Trumbull as a poet capable of handling with some facility both sophisticated verse techniques and a number of the traditional Hudibrastic elements. His functional use of meter and his handling of parallelism, antithesis and balance within the octosyllabic couplet; his ability to construct witty and often complex figures of speech; his tendency toward epigrammatic statement and his use of undercutting and his utilization of such Hudibrastic techniques as twisted logic, complicated burlesque similes and subtle allusions--all help to make The Progress of Dulness a much more complex work than "Epithalamium."

However, the artistic polish evident in many of the details of the poem creates a problem with regard to its overall effectiveness. At the very essence of the burlesque method is the contrast between matter and manner, between the subject and the way in which it is presented. The author may use the high burlesque technique of placing the manner above the subject matter, thus making his point by contrast, or he may use the low burlesque technique of putting the manner below the subject, achieving his ends by comparison.

The problem in The Progress of Dulness is that neither method is employed exclusively enough throughout

the poem to make the manner as a whole an effective instrument of satire. While the comic rhymes and burlesque similes are elements of the low burlesque and tend to debase the subject matter, the polish and urbanity of much of his versification--the artfully constructed couplets and the generally high level of diction--works in the opposite direction, the final effect of which is to create an incongruity within the author's manner itself instead of between the overall manner and the subject matter. It is true, of course, that most of the successful Hudibrastic satires employ elements of the high burlesque, such as epic similes and classical allusions, within the context of the low burlesque manner; but these elements are not prevalent enough to establish a conflict within the overall manner of the work. In fact, the low burlesque manner is often so pervasive as to hold the high burlesque conventions themselves up to ridicule. The situation in Trumbull's poem is further complicated by a lack of consistency in the application of the low burlesque elements. Comic rhymes and burlesque similes virtually disappear in the moralistic conclusion to Canto II, while near the end of Canto III the poet does in fact engage in an orgy of these low burlesque techniques. Thus while the individual parts of <u>The Progress of Dulness</u> may be admired for the skill with which they are executed, the poet's failure to establish a dominant burlesque mode throughout and a certain unevenness in the application of

the low burlesque techniques create serious flaws which mar its overall aesthetic effect.

These flaws, when considered with the shifting point of view and the didactic element discussed earlier, seriously damage but do not completely destroy the effectiveness of The Progress of Dulness. Much enjoyment may still be had from the sustained wit and keen observation of human follies which it contains. Nor are the virtues and defects of this poem unique to it; Trumbull's next and final major literary endeavor, M'Fingal, has many of the strengths and weaknesses of The Progress of Dulness.

3

The history of the inception of M'Fingal has been well established by Alexander Cowie.[19] In the spring of 1775 the idea for the poem was suggested to him by his friend Silas Deane, although the disrepute into which Deane later fell apparently led Trumbull to attribute the idea to some members of Congress in his letter to the Marquis de Chastellux and in the preface to his collected edition of 1820. He appears, however, to have done little with the idea until August, 1775 when he published, anonymously, in two successive issues of The Connecticut Courant,[20] a travesty in Hudibrastic verse on General Gage's proclamation of

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[19]See John Trumbull, pp. 158-168.

[20]August 7, 14, 1775.

June 12, 1775. According to J. Hammond Trumbull, the satire on Gage's proclamation "induced the Author's friends to urge him to the composition of a longer and regularly constructed poem, in the same measure and a similar vein...."[21] This work then is the seed from which M'Fingal grew; in fact, about fifty of the poem's 216 lines were transferred with either little or no alteration to various places in the first three cantos of M'Fingal.

Although the poem on Gage's proclamation contains some witty lines, it is not a polished work and, all in all, has little to distinguish it from many other hastily composed Hudibrastic satires written during the Revolutionary period. A short quotation from near the end of the poem will illustrate its general texture and tone:

> But putting off this rage and fury,
> I'm twice as glad again t' assure ye,
> That all who in this trying crisis,
> Shall heed my peaceable advices,
> Submit to me in ev'ry thing,
> And lose their rights to please the king,
> Shall from my arm, which is not short,
> Obtain protection and support,
> Such as I give the Boston tories
> Who starve for heeding thus my stories,
> Or venture each his worthless head,
> Condemn'd to list and fight for bread.[22]

While there are passages much wittier than this one, it does illustrate the sort of blandness in the versification and the heavy-handed satire that is characteristic of much of

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[21] The Origin of M'Fingal (Morrisania, New York, 1868), p. 11.

[22] The Connecticut Courant, August 14, 1775, p. 4.

the poem. The parenthetical "which is not short" in the seventh line seems filler for the sake of rhyme, and the too obvious manner in which Gage exposes the absurdity of his own argument is representative of the lack of subtlety throughout the poem.

The first canto of M'Fingal was published in Philadelphia by William and Thomas Bradford. Although the title page bears a 1775 date, there is a strong probability that the first edition did not reach the public until January, 1776. This first canto, representing in extent about one-half of the completed poem, was in 1782 slightly revised and divided into Cantos I and II. Cantos III and IV were then added and the poem as a whole was published for the first time by Hudson and Goodwin of Hartford between August 20 and September 10, 1782.[23]

Canto I of M'Fingal, entitled "The Town Meeting A.M.," begins with a brief mention of the historical context, followed by a discussion of the hero's ancestry:

> His fathers flourish'd in the Highlands
> Of Scotia's fog-benighted islands:
> Whence gain'd our 'Squire two gifts by right,
> Rebellion and the Second-sight. (I, 23-26)

Just as his Scottish ancestors had long been known for their ability to create havoc among the British, so will M'Fingal attempt to "tear the provinces in pieces." So sharp is his second-sight that he gains "fame by seeing/Such things as

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[23]See John Trumbull, pp. 166-167.

never would have being" (I, 75-76), mainly the day when all rebels are hanged and he and his friends can divide their "estates and pelf." In addition to his prophetic powers, M'Fingal is skilled in the art of making speeches, although his

> ...reas'ning toil
> Would often on himself recoil,
> And so much injur'd more his side,
> The stronger arg'ments he applied.... (I, 99-102)

Nevertheless, in his strife-torn town M'Fingal is the recognized leader of the "tory faction," who follow him "like files of geese."

The action of the first canto begins with the convening of a town meeting in the local church. The meeting is presided over by a moderator who is accompanied by a constable to keep the peace. In attendance are

> Whigs, tories, orators and bawlers,
> With ev'ry tongue in either faction,
> Prepar'd, like minute-men, for action.... (I, 154-156)

Arriving late, M'Fingal enters just as the Whig leader, Honorius, begins a long speech tracing the demise of Great Britain. He compares her to an aging woman:

> Thus now while hoary years prevail,
> Good Mother Britain seem'd to fail;
> Her back bent, crippled with the weight
> Of age and debts and cares of state:
> For debts she ow'd, and those so large,
> As twice her wealth could not discharge,
> And now 'twas thought, so high they'd grown,
> She'd break and come upon the town;
> Her arms, of nations once the dread,
> She scarce could lift above her head .... (I, 195-204)

As she grew weaker the "Gallic crows" began "to pick her," until, her "grand Climact'ric" past, she

> ...just like all old women else,
> Fell in the vapours much by spells. (I, 215-216)

Her judgment gone, she

> ...took a whim to be Almighty;
> Urg'd on to des'prate heights of frenzy,
> Affirm'd her own Omnipotency;
> Would rather ruin all her race,
> Than 'bate Supremacy an ace.... (I, 230-234)

She mistook "slav'ry for the bill of rights" and attempted to work the ruin of the colonies, sending as her special emissary to do the job the "hangman" General Gage. According to Honorius,

> No state e'er chose a fitter person,
> To carry such a silly farce on. (I, 295-296)

The speaker then goes on to attack the self-seeking Tories who sell their "souls and consciences for gold" and in so doing aid in the destruction.

Unable to contain himself any longer, M'Fingal signals his Tory friends, who raise such a clatter that Honorius is forced to relinquish the floor to him. M'Fingal then begins a long speech, punctuated by occasional interruptions from Honorius, in which he attempts to frighten the Whigs into submission. In characteristic fashion the speaker's arguments tend to recoil upon him and weaken his own position. Have not the "High-Church Clergy" made it clear

> That right divine from heav'n was lent
> To kings, that is the Parliament,
> Their subjects to oppress and teaze,
> And serve the Devil when they please? (I, 419-422)

Modern kings are sent as scourges to aid man in his repentance, and many of the colonists' own clergymen have indicated that it is a sin to rebel against the powers that be. There have also been "earthly reas'ners" who supported the Tory cause; M'Fingal catalogues the contemporary Tory journalists who, among other things, have

> New whitewash'd Hutchinson and varnish'd,
> Our Gage, who'd got a little tarnish'd,
> Made 'em new masks, in time no doubt,
> For Hutchinson's was quite worn out.... (I, 531-534)

When Honorius accuses the Tories of lying, M'Fingal defends the practice, saying that it is the "highest privilege of speech" and "no sin, or shame." The first canto concludes with M'Fingal promising to elaborate upon the Whigs' crimes later, it now being "time t' adjourn for dinner."

The second canto, entitled "The Town Meeting P.M.," begins with this mock-epic description:

> THE SUN, who never stops to dine,
> Two hours had pass'd the midway line,
> And driving at his usual rate,
> Lash'd on his downward car of state.
> And now expired the short vacation,
> And dinner done in epic fashion;
> While all the crew beneath the trees,
> Eat pocket-pies, or bread and cheese;
> Nor shall we, like old Homer care
> To versify their bill of fare. (II, 1-10)

After the meeting reconvenes, M'Fingal takes up his argument again, calling the Whigs "Ungrateful sons" for rising against the parent-land that had done so much for them. Britain drove their fathers over, gave them charters to lands they owned before, brought "all felons in the nation" to the

colonies to help populate it, sent generals to help fight Britain's enemies when they attacked the colonists, and asked only for the "simple tythe" of all the colonists had. North has himself declared that Britain stands to gain "substantial rev'nue" by the impending fight. Nor does she lack the means or the "humanity" to carry it on; has she not already enlisted the Indians,

> T' amuse themselves with scalping knives,
> And butcher children and your wives;
> That she may boast again with vanity,
> Her English national humanity?
> (For now in its primaeval sense,
> This term, human'ty, comprehends
> All things of which, on this side hell,
> The human mind is capable;
> And thus 'tis well, by writers sage,
> Applied to Britain and to Gage.) (II, 177-186)

Honorius interrupts and in a sarcastic vein reminds the Squire that Gage's efforts have indeed been heroic; he has spent his time issuing proclamations and building fortifications to protect him from the patriots. M'Fingal responds by indicating that providence can use "what instruments it pleases," and unconsciously ridicules Gage by comparing him, in a series of allusions, to such creatures as geese, curs, frogs and lice, all of which played a part in important historical and biblical events. According to M'Fingal, even though the British triumphs in war may have been few, they have "gain'd great fame in other things." They have bested the colonists in playing "Yanky-doodle," in retreating, in tarring and feathering and in employing the "arts of secrecy and scheming," each of which accomplishments is illustrated

by reference to a contemporary event that in reality was particularly humiliating to the British. In a long passage in which the poet borrows heavily from his earlier satire on Gage's proclamation, M'Fingal attempts to present General Gage as a merciful man

> Whom mother Britain old and wise,
> Sent o'er the Col'nies to chastise.... (II, 391-392)

M'Fingal's argument, of course, recoils upon him and Gage appears as a villain and a coward, as do other British leaders whose exploits are subsequently described. Many of the speaker's arguments in this section are a little too obviously ridiculous and help to undermine the credibility of M'Fingal as a character. Speaking of Britain's naval forces, he indicates that they

> Display their glory and their wits,
> Fright unarm'd children into fits,
> And stoutly from th' unequal fray,
> Make many a woman run away! (II, 517-520)

M'Fingal becomes so enraptured with his own description of Britain's glory that his second-sight takes over and he begins prophesying the glories to come:

> I see to join our conqu'ring side
> Heav'n, earth and hell at once allied!
> See from your overthrow and end
> The Tories paradise ascend;
> Like that new world that claims its station
> Beyond the final conflagration! (II, 593-598)

But the "Tories paradise" will be a worldly one, one from which "Lordships, posts and pensions rise." M'Fingal may get a "Sir" to affix to his name and many Tories may get

titles which will

> Place rev'rence, grace and excellence
> Where neither claim'd the least pretence.... (II, 637-638)

Honorius then interrupts the Squire and, in a speech that seems a little too serious considering the absurdity of M'Fingal's argument, predicts a victory for the colonials:

> Yes, tho' tyrannic force oppose,
> Still shall they triumph o'er their foes,
> Till heav'n the happy land shall bless,
> With safety, liberty and peace. (II, 703-706)

He goes on to ridicule the Tories for their cowardice in the face of the British, indicating that they are a disgrace to their "forefathers' valiant race." M'Fingal and his crew can restrain themselves no longer and they begin to drown out the speaker with various noises. The noise increases in a rising crescendo, each side getting poised for a bloody brawl, until a "terrific shout" is heard outside, whereupon the disputants rush out and leave the moderator, who had hid behind a bench, to adjourn them "without time or place."

Canto III, entitled "The Liberty Pole," picks up the action as the meeting-house crowd arrives at the scene of the "terrific shout." A group of patriots, their public spirit aided by frequent libations from the tavern, are erecting a liberty pole. M'Fingal, enraged by the "Maypole of sedition," lashes out at the patriots in a speech calculated to expose their democratic idealism for what it really is, a speech which has since become the most famous part of *M'Fingal*. After warning the patriots that their maypole

won't save them when British "balls move hissing thro' the sky," M'Fingal indicates that they will become victims of every

> ...tavernprating demagogue,
> Whose tongue but rings, with sound more full,
> On th' empty drumhead of his skull.... (III, 63-65)

The patriots see liberty as "but for crimes a patent license" and ultimately will

> ...make the bar and bench and steeple,
> Submit t' our sov'reign Lord, the People.... (III, 83-84)

When things go badly, the people will not be able to recognize the source of their trouble:

> And when by clamours and confusions,
> Your freedom's grown a public nuisance,
> Cry, Liberty, with pow'rful yearning,
> As he does, fire, whose house is burning,
> Tho' he already has much more,
> Than he can find occasion for. (III, 103-108)

M'Fingal heaps ridicule on the common people who think they are capable of running the government and who will finally crush all the "great ones" beneath their "pop'lar weight." Although a common danger now cements the Whigs together, when this is past the government will fall because they won't have "sense enough to mend it." In the meantime, though, the Whigs have "call'd up anarchy from chaos" and thoroughly frightened the Tories to the point where they hardly know which way to turn. M'Fingal had constructed a fairly rational argument against the Whigs, but once he starts speaking of the confusion of his Tory friends he lapses into his old absurdities, again using arguments that recoil upon himself.

Determined to punish the Whigs, M'Fingal calls forth the constable to read the "riot-act and proclamation." The constable has scarcely begun when he is assailed with clubs and stones, and, after attempting to hide, is finally caught and bound. This precipitates a general free-for-all among Whigs and Tories. The ensuing battle, while carried on with such commonplace objects as "handirons, tongs and shovels" and resulting in "broken nose and batter'd shin," is described in a mock-heroic manner, with allusions to contests in medieval romances and such specific works as the _Iliad_, the _Aeneid_ and _Paradise Lost_. M'Fingal, in the forefront of the fight,

> Drew forth his old militia sword;
> Thrice cried, "King George," as erst in distress
> Romancing heroes did their mistress,
> And brandishing the blade in air,
> Struck terror thro' th' opposing war. (III, 332-336)

The Squire would have felled the pole had not "some Pow'r, a Whig at heart," descended down and urged one of the men to challenge him to a single combat. The Whig's weapon is only a spade, but once again the gods are against M'Fingal as, in good epic fashion,

> ...Jove in equal balance weigh'd
> The sword against the brandish'd spade,
> He weigh'd; but lighter than a dream,
> The sword flew up and kick'd the beam. (III, 369-372)

M'Fingal's sword, as rusty as Hudibras' gun, breaks against the onslaught of the spade and its owner in desperation turns to his fellow Tories for help. They, however, had already fled, a tactic which M'Fingal also tries until "age

unwieldy" forces him to stop and stand his ground. As he is stooping over to get a rock with which to fight, his adversary discharges with his spade a blow "Tremendous on his rear below." The Squire falls and

> Like antient oak o'erturned he lay,
> Or tow'rs to tempests fall'n a prey,
> And more things else--but all men know 'em,
> If slightly vers'd in Epic Poem. (III, 425-428)

M'Fingal is bound and conducted to the pole. However, the crowd decides to deal first with the constable. A rope being fastened around his middle, he is hoisted up the pole "like a keg of ale." Just as "Socrates of old" found that "thoughts flow strangely clear" when one is "Swung in a basket in mid air," the constable

> ...looking forth in prospect wide
> His Tory errors clearly spied.... (III, 453-454)

He agrees to renounce

> ...the Pope, the Turks,
> The King, the Devil and all their works... (III, 459-460)

and will "Turn Whig or Christian, what you please." They lower the constable to the ground, vote to accept his confession and then turn their attention to M'Fingal. The latter, however, proves to be a more recalcitrant subject as he stands "heroic as a mule" and delivers a speech on the futility of punishment:

> No man e'er felt the halter draw,
> With good opinion of the law.... (III, 489-490)
> . . . .
> Has Rivington, in dread of stripes,
> Ceas'd lying since you stole his types?

> And can you think my faith will alter,
> By tarring, whipping, or the halter?
> I'll stand the worst; for recompense
> I trust King George and Providence. (III, 499-504)

A "Bench of Justice" is next assembled; since M'Fingal has shown "no tokens of repentance," he is declared the "vilest Tory in the town" and sentenced to be tarred and feathered and paraded in a cart through the streets. The tarring and feathering itself is described at length in a mock-heroic passage heavily punctuated with epic terms and classical allusions. First the tar is applied,

> Till all o'erspread, with colors gay
> He glitter'd to the western ray,
> Like sleet-bound trees in wintry skies,
> Or Lapland idol carv'd in ice. (III, 563-566)

Then the feather bag is emptied over his head

> And spreads him o'er with feathers missive,
> And down upon the tar adhesive:
> Not Maia's son, with wings for ears,
> Such plumes around his visage wears;
> Nor Milton's six wing'd angel gathers,
> Such superfluity of feathers. (III, 569-574)

No longer a man by Plato's "two-legg'd, unfeather'd creature" definition, the Squire, along with the constable, is drawn through the town to the accompaniment of "martial music" from "horns and fiddles, fifes and drums." Their sport ended, the mob disperses, leaving M'Fingal glued to the liberty pole, "by the tar t' his rear applied."

The experience has been an illuminating one for the staunch Tory:

> So now M'Fingal's second-sight
> Beheld all things in diff'rent light;

> His visual nerve, well purg'd with tar,
> Saw all the coming scenes of war. (III, 629-632)

As his "prophetic soul" grows stronger, he hears

> ...a voice that calls away,
> And cries, the Whigs will win the day.... (III, 645-646)

The canto concludes with M'Fingal, his defiance gone, ordering the constable to assemble their brethren so that he may warn them with his "prophetic voice" of things to come.

Canto IV, "The Vision," begins with the Tories secretly assembled in M'Fingal's basement that same night. "Tarstreak'd" and "feather'd," but like Milton's Satan still retaining some of his "original brightness," the Squire rises "solemn from the turnep-bin" to warn his fellow Tories of the omens of disaster he has seen. In a vision one night a certain Malcolm--an aid to Governor Tryon, who had been tarred, feathered and half hanged in 1774--arose to show him the future:

> For lo, thro' deepest glooms of night
> I come to aid thy second-sight,
> Disclose the plagues that round us wait
> And wake the dark decrees of fate.
> Ascend this ladder whence unfurl'd
> The curtain opes of t' other world,
> For here new worlds their scenes unfold,
> Seen from this backdoor of the old. (IV, 97-104)

The Pisgah vision which follows is probably the most tedious section of the poem. Although enlivened with epigrams and various burlesque techniques, it is basically a history of the British misfortunes from Montreal onward. Worried that M'Fingal might be too much "pained" by all of this, Malcolm

invites him to

> ...see the deeds not small or scanty,
> Of British Valor and Humanity.... (IV, 399-400)

What follows is a catalogue of British atrocities, particularly those committed by Howe and his hireling, Josiah Loring. These include starving and poisoning the prisoners, introducing plagues and fevers among them, and even using them for target practice for British soldiers. Malcolm shows him how Clinton, Vaughan and Tryon

> March forth with patriotic joy,
> To ravish, plunder, burn, destroy. (IV, 539-540)

Returning to the battles, Malcolm presents the follies and military blunders of the British generals Howe, Clinton and Cornwallis and the rising fortunes of Washington and the Frenchmen who come to the colonists' aid. He warns M'Fingal that there is more tar predestined for his back and advises him to quit "this dang'rous home." M'Fingal is finally treated to a vision of the rise of the "famed European Pow'rs" and the "Amer'can empire" that will accompany the collapse of Britain. Holland, France and Spain will with "conq'ring navies rule the main"; Russia will "Spread commerce round the eastern world"; and America will "To glory, wealth and fame ascend."

At this point M'Fingal's narration of his vision is interrupted by "rude bangs and loud uproar" as the Whigs discover the Tories' meeting place. The lights are put out and

...each Tory calls
To cover him, on cellar walls,
Creeps in each box, or bin, or tub,
To hide his head from wrath of mob,
Or lurks, where cabbages in row
Adorn'd the side with verdant show. (IV, 1055-1060)

Scorning "all the fame of martyr," the Squire makes his exit through a window known only to him:

His friends, assembled for his sake,
He wisely left in pawn at stake,
Of tarring, feath'ring, kicks and drubs
Of furious, disappointed mobs,
And with their forfeit hides to pay
For him, their leader, crept away. (IV, 1079-1084)

Thus _M'Fingal_ concludes with the Tory hero leaving his constituents "in the lurch" and beating a hasty, and undignified, retreat to Boston.

M'Fingal's popularity over the years and the reception given it by serious literary critics has been discussed at length by Alexander Cowie.[24] While the first canto published in 1776 met with the approval of the intelligentsia, it was evidently not as popular with the masses as pamphlets like Dickinson's _Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania_ and Paine's _Common Sense_. After the conclusion of the war and the publication of the complete 1782 edition, it began to increase in public appeal, becoming perhaps the "most popular American poem of its length before Longfellow's _Evangeline_."[25] Its appeal continued until about 1830, when it began to lose

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[24] See _John Trumbull_, pp. 181-198.

[25] _John Trumbull_, p. 181.

ground to a host of new native poems, and since then it has been largely neglected by all except the literary or historical scholar.

M'Fingal as a work of art is superior to *The Progress of Dulness*. Although at least one major weakness of the former work still persists, *M'Fingal* is a much more carefully conceived and executed poem. And since Trumbull has utilized the burlesque mode and elements of the Hudibrastic manner in both works, perhaps *M'Fingal* can best be evaluated by a comparison of the way in which these techniques are handled in the two poems.

One of the major weaknesses of *The Progress of Dulness* is the didactic element which causes the poem to lose the indirection characteristic of good satire. *M'Fingal* also suffers from this problem, although it is not so pronounced and is manifested in a different way. In *The Progress of Dulness* the didacticism is related to the continually shifting point of view, whereas in *M'Fingal* this element is involved with certain inadequacies in the characterization. The narrator in the earlier poem is seldom content to let the characters expose themselves by means of dialogue, nor does he always keep his focus on the specific characters and let the reader make his own generalizations on the basis of these particular examples. He continually intrudes with argumentative passages which amount to little more than sermons directed toward pointing out either the follies of

the type or the more general intellectual or moral shortcomings of the people and institutions that surround them.

In M'Fingal Trumbull utilizes dialogue to a much greater extent, letting the Squire expose himself. Also, when the narrator is speaking in narrative or expository passages, he, for the most part, keeps his attention focussed on the specific characters and the incidents in which they are involved, thus permitting the reader to draw whatever general conclusions he wants on the basis of the facts provided. But, as a number of critics have pointed out, the debate between M'Fingal and Honorius is so stacked in favor of the latter as to make Honorius little more than a mouthpiece for the author. Whether or not he is meant to be identified with John Adams,[26] the fact remains that his rational presentation of his argument and his moral earnestness make him a little too obviously an ideal or norm. If he were believable as a character, the didactic effect of his presence would be lessened somewhat, for he would not then seem so obviously an artificial prop to deliver the author's message. As it is, though, he has no individuality of his own. The very fact that he attempts to carry on a serious debate with a man so lacking in moral judgment and logical consistency as M'Fingal makes him appear too

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[26] Alexander Cowie is one who seems to favor the identification of Honorius with John Adams. John Trumbull, p. 201. For an argument against considering Honorius as Adams, see Lennox Grey, "John Adams and John Trumbull in the 'Boston Cycle'," NEQ, 4 (1939), 509-514.

ridiculous to be believable. Fortunately Honorius does not appear after the second canto, and, while his absence possibly mars the overall structure of the work, the didactic element is less prominent in the last half of the poem.

Another problem in the poem is the characterization of the hero himself. Although M'Fingal comes closer to being alive as a character than does Honorius and has more individuality than many critics are willing to grant him, the fact remains that he is to a large extent a caricature. In a burlesque poem this is neither unusual nor undesirable. However, a number of his arguments are so patently absurd that the caricature itself is weakened. The poet's purpose undoubtedly was to illustrate the faulty reasoning of the Tories by exaggerating certain defects in M'Fingal's reasoning processes. But Trumbull at times goes so far with the exaggeration that the foundation out of which the caricature grew--i.e., human "reason"--is no longer visible. M'Fingal, near the beginning of Canto II, is attempting to persuade the Whigs of their debt to England:

> Did they not send you charters o'er,
> And give you lands you own'd before,
> Permit you all to spill your blood,
> And drive out heathen where you could;
> On these mild terms, that conquest won,
> The realm you gain'd should be their own. (II, 45-50)

M'Fingal's speech here fails to give even the appearance of an attempt to construct a rational argument. A political cartoonist drawing a caricature of a politician's nose must be certain that the finished product will still be identified

as a distortion of a <u>nose</u> and not of some other appendage; in the same manner, the distortion of the Tories' reasoning must still retain some of the character of a reasoning process if the caricature itself is to be effective. This is not to say that M'Fingal is always ineffective as a caricature of Tory reasoning, but only that at times the poet is a little too heavy-handed and moves from distortion to outright obliteration of that which is being caricatured.

A further problem is the inconsistency created when M'Fingal moves in the opposite direction, away from caricature altogether and toward a kind of reasoning that seems sound and which the author apparently intends to be taken seriously. This inconsistency is particularly evident in Canto III. M'Fingal's famous anti-democratic speech at the beginning of this canto is a straightforward denunciation of democratic vices and contains none of the blatant, argument-damaging absurdities of many of his other speeches. However, at the conclusion of this sane, albeit vitriolic, speech he lapses into his old ways. He is speaking of the British constitution,

> That constitution, form'd by sages,
> The wonder of all modern ages:
> Which owns no failure in reality,
> Except corruption and venality;
> And only proves the adage just,
> That best things spoil'd corrupt to worst. (III, 197-202)

He then goes on to admonish the patriots for giving up this constitution for the "anarchy" of their democratic rule.

Thus M'Fingal's character is blurred by both this failure to keep him consistently in the realm of caricature and the occasional inadequacies of the caricature when he is being so used. This movement back and forth along a spectrum from absurdity to a caricature of human reason to the role of a serious spokesman is aesthetically unsatisfying and represents a major weakness in the poem.

On the positive side, M'Fingal is provided with a plot which gives the poem an overall unity not possessed by The Progress of Dulness, or, for that matter, by Hudibras and many of its imitators. Beginning with M'Fingal's arrival at the town meeting, proceeding through the tarring and feathering and concluding with the hero's flight to Boston, the narrative thread provides a focal point around which the various arguments can cluster and is at the same time a logical outgrowth of the nature of these arguments. Unfortunately the dramatic action is not consistently maintained throughout the poem; long speeches by M'Fingal and Honorius tend in places to overshadow the dramatic situation. Canto III contains more action than any of the other cantos, a fact which partially accounts for the popularity of this section of the poem. On the other hand, the last canto with the lengthy description of M'Fingal's vision is probably the least successful and least popular of the four cantos. The dramatic situation of the Tories hiding in M'Fingal's basement is submerged under the Squire's tedious

prophesying in regard to the direction events are to take in the colonies. Nevertheless, the poem concludes dramatically with M'Fingal's ignominious retreat to Boston, a retreat which brings events full circle from his arrogant arrival from the same town at the beginning of the first canto. Beginning and end are thus linked together, giving the work a symmetry and unity too often lacking in Hudibrastic satires.

One of the main problems in The Progress of Dulness is that the manner as a whole does not become an effective instrument of the satire; the polish and urbanity of the versification conflict with the low burlesque elements of the Hudibrastic manner to forestall an overall contrast between matter and manner. In M'Fingal this problem does not occur; an overall manner is established and this manner operates effectively as a satiric tool to debase the subject matter. At least three factors account for the consistency of the manner in the later work: (1) the lack of an obvious and artificial elegance in the versification; (2) closely related to (1), the heavier texture in the work, i.e., the clogging of the movement of the poem with a variety of literary devices; and (3) the frequent utilization of allusions and figurative language for low burlesque ends. The effect of all of this is to establish a manner embodying a consistent vision, a weltanschauung, which indirectly serves as an instrument for ridiculing the motives and aspirations

of Trumbull's characters. An examination of some of the techniques employed in M'Fingal should help to establish the nature of this vision as well as to indicate some of the essential differences between it and The Progress of Dulness.

In general, the octosyllabic couplets in M'Fingal do not seem to be as artfully contrived as those in The Progress of Dulness; by and large they lack the structural elegance and rhythmic grace of those in the earlier poem. This is, of course, only a broad generalization and a number of passages in M'Fingal can be cited to serve as exceptions to the generalization. For instance, the following passage from Canto I contains the parallelism, balance and antithesis characteristic of many such passages in The Progress of Dulness:

> "---For ages blest, thus Britain rose
> The terror of encircling foes;
> Her heroes rul'd the bloody plain;
> Her conq'ring standard aw'd the main:
> The diff'rent palms her triumphs grace,
> Of arms in war, of arts in peace.... (I, 169-174)

Occasionally, too, the couplets in M'Fingal move with a lyrical flow. But the lyricism is usually functional, as when Honorius, angered by M'Fingal's denunciation of the Whigs, launches into a declamation in support of patriotic involvement:

> Rise then, ere ruin swift surprize,
> To victory, to vengeance rise!
> Hark, how the distant din alarms!
> The echoing trumpet breathes, to arms:

From provinces remote, afar,
The sons of glory rouze to war;
'Tis freedom calls; th' enraptur'd sound
The Apalachian hills rebound.... (II, 685-692)

This passage reflects Honorius' own emotional attachment to the cause, an attachment that helps give at least a little life to an otherwise static character.

More typical of the versification in much of M'Fingal is the following passage in which the Squire is vilifying the democrats:

For in this ferment of the stream,
The dregs have work'd up to the brim,
And by the rule of topsyturvys,
The skum stands swelling on the surface.
You've caus'd your pyramid t' ascend
And set it on the little end;
Like Hudibras, your empire's made,
Whose crupper had o'ertop'd his head;
You've push'd and turn'd the whole world up-
Side down and got yourselves a-top:
While all the great ones of your state,
Are crush'd beneath the pop'lar weight.... (III, 143-154)

The basic meter here is iambic tetrameter, but the metrical variations, elisions, clipped words, enjambment and rhyme on a hyphenated word all tend to produce a more weighty movement than is often associated with the octosyllabic couplet. Nor do any of the couplets contain such rhetorical devices as balance and antithesis to give them the appearance of an artful construction. Furthermore, although not an element of versification, the complexity and frequency of the figures of speech tend to slow down the overall movement of the passage. The three figures--the scum, the pyramid and Hudibras' crupper--increasing in complexity as

they do, require of the reader an intellectual involvement and slow down the pace at which the passage can be assimilated. Of course the movement of the verse in M'Fingal is, in general, much less weighty than that in Hudibras; but it at the same time lacks the grace and elegance characteristic of the verse in The Progress of Dulness.

Trumbull's handling of comic rhymes in M'Fingal is much the same as in The Progress of Dulness. Broken and imperfect rhymes abound; only occasionally when he is writing in an heroic or serious strain do these rhymes cease to be prevalent. If anything, the poet's rhymes become even more bizarre than in the earlier work. Imperfect rhymes of many kinds occur on almost every page; even an occasional triple rhyme is employed, as in "a lye in...prophesying" (I, 79-80). In addition, Trumbull in M'Fingal has adopted Butler's practice of building rhymes on conjunctions and other unimportant parts of speech not normally used as members of rhyming pairs. At one point, for instance, the poet speaks of M'Fingal,

> Who tried before by many a freak, or
> Insulting noise, to stop the speaker.... (II, 741-742)

Another technique occasionally employed is the combination of enjambment and imperfect rhyme. M'Fingal is complaining of the rebels' treatment of the British troops at Lexington when the former

> Fir'd on them at your will, and shut
> The town, as tho' you'd starve them out.... (II, 427-428)

These few examples of comic rhymes could be supplemented with many more, all of which indicates that Trumbull's rhyming in M'Fingal is an important element of his satire. Other elements such as irregular meter, a lack of sophistication in the structure of the couplets, enjambment, elision and word clipping combine with the comic rhymes to produce a consistently humorous and rough versification, a versification that contrasts with the otherwise serious subject matter and becomes a major satiric tool for ridiculing the latter.

The diction in M'Fingal is a mixture of the colloquial and the formal. However, the two levels are seldom juxtaposed for the specific purpose of creating an incongruity in diction alone; usually the diction used is incongruous with the situatiin it is describing and not with other levels of diction in the same passage. At times the contrast in diction is between the connotations of the words in a single passage, as when Malcolm is relating the British defeat in his vision:

> Behold the Pennsylvanian shore,
> Enrich'd with streams of British gore;
> Where many a vet'ran chief in bed
> Of honor rests his slumbring head,
> And in soft vales in land of foes,
> Their wearied virtue finds repose.
> See plund'ring Dunmore's negro band
> Fly headlong from Virginia's strand.... (IV, 157-164)

The word "gore" with its gruesome and bloody connotations stands in marked contrast to the peaceful and soft connotations of such words and phrases as "slumbring head,"

"soft vales," "wearied virtue" and "repose." By the same token these latter words also have connotations of moral virtue and/or quietness that contrast with the connotations of the words "plund'ring" and "headlong" of the last couplet. The effect of these contrasts is to establish a real-ideal dichotomy, one that highlights the actual ugliness, both moral and physical, of the British plight.

More often exaggerated or inflated diction is employed to satirize some person, thing or event; the words are too dignified or elegant for the context in which they are used, thereby implying a qualitative contrast between that which they are actually describing and that which is implied in the language used. M'Fingal in Canto III speaks of the origin of patriots:

> From dunghills deep of sable hue,
> Your dirtbred patriots spring to view.... (III, 129-130)

The phrase "sable hue" belongs in a romantic or chivalric context and not in a description of a dunghill, and its effect here is to suggest its normal context against which the dunghill can be made to appear all the filthier (of course the heroic inversion of "dunghill" and "deep" enhances the contrast even more). Many examples of single phrases so used can be found in M'Fingal. Frequent too are longer passages in which heroic diction is used to describe a person or event of a somewhat lower order. When M'Fingal spies the liberty pole, his advance is described as if he

were a Homeric warrior:

> By this, M'Fingal with his train,
> Advanc'd upon th' adjacent plain,
> And fierce with loyal rage possess'd,
> Powr'd forth the zeal, that fired his breast.
> (III, 41-44)

At times the sordid reality with which the heroic language contrasts is left for the reader to divine, but more often than not Trumbull provides subtle clues. M'Fingal, in his vision, sees the British general Clinton and his troops come into view:

> I look'd, and now by magic lore,
> Faint rose to view the Jersey shore;
> But dimly seen, in glooms array'd,
> For Night had pour'd her sable shade,
> And ev'ry star, with glimm'rings pale,
> Was muffled deep in ev'ning veil:
> Scarce visible in dusky night,
> Advancing redcoats rose to sight.... (IV, 665-672)

The poetic diction would seem to foreshadow the arrival of an awe-inspiring army, but what come instead are merely "redcoats." By this point in the poem the redcoats have become identified with all kinds of cowardice and villainy, thus establishing a contrast between the associations of the language and the reality the language is describing. The heroic strain continues, only to be again undercut:

> The lengthen'd train in gleaming rows
> Stole silent from their slumb'ring foes,
> Slow moved the baggage and the train,
> Like snail crept noiseless o'er the plain;
> No trembling soldier dared to speak,
> And not a wheel presum'd to creak. (IV, 673-678)

Now the reality becomes clearer as we learn that the "Advancing" army of a previous line is actually composed of

"trembling" soldiers in an ignominious retreat while their foes sleep. The redcoats are further degraded by the low burlesque simile in which they are compared to snails, a comparison that on one level accurately describes the speed of their movement while on another associates them with a low form of life. Later in the passage the troops steal away on "tiptoe," an act which lends a childish quality to their retreat.

This incongruity between the language used and that which it is describing, between the manner and the matter, is one of the mainstays of Trumbull's burlesque technique. In the passages just examined the specific mode is that of high burlesque: the meanness of the subject matter is illustrated by contrasting it with an ideal that is far above it, in this case an ideal implicit in the dignified and heroic language.

If we confine our definition of wit to those brief, terse expressions, involving no more than a couplet or two, that either embody some general truth, as in epigram, or contain some startling phraseology, unusual word usage or shocking but plausible comparisons and contrasts, M'Fingal probably contains less wit, relative to its length, than The Progress of Dulness. This fact can be in part accounted for by the less sophisticated and artful versification in the later poem. In M'Fingal Trumbull relies more on the broader strokes obtained through the overall texture of the

versification, allusion, metaphor and other extended comparisons and contrasts to achieve his comic and satiric thrusts than on the finer ones commonly associated with wit.

Nevertheless, the finer strokes are not entirely absent from M'Fingal. While epigrams do not occur as frequently as in The Progress of Dulness, the following from M'Fingal have all the pungency of those in the earlier poem:

> But optics sharp it needs I ween,
> To see what is not to be seen. (I, 69-70)
> . . . .
> No man e'er felt the halter draw,
> With good opinion of the law.... (III, 489-490)
> . . . .
> Fools love deception, but the wise
> Prefer sad truths to pleasing lies. (IV, 215-216)
> . . . .
> For genius swells more strong and clear
> When close confined, like bottled beer.... (IV, 361-362)

Trumbull occasionally employs rhetorical techniques characteristic of Pope. Zeugma, or the use of a single word standing in the same grammatical relationship to two or more other words but with an alteration in its meaning when applied to one of them, is present when M'Fingal says of the Whigs that they "Break heads and windows and the peace" (III, 91). A technique frequently employed is the list of nouns in a series, one of which, although generally considered of a higher order, is debased by its parallel association with the others. M'Fingal speaks of a "formidable league" composed "Of Indians, British troops and Negroes" (II, 222); while we today would probably not consider it in the same

light as Trumbull's contemporaries, the parallel association of the British troops with Indians and Negroes was no doubt intended by the poet as another example of self-incrimination on the part of M'Fingal and a satiric jab at the British. Another instance of the technique occurs at the beginning of Canto IV:

> The honest world all snored in chorus,
> While owls, and ghosts and thieves and Tories,
> Whom erst the mid-day sun had aw'd,
> Crept from their lurking holes abroad. (IV, 5-8)

The placing of Tories on the same plane with owls, ghosts and thieves is a concise and witty way of satirizing them.

Occasionally a word is used in a strange sense, as when M'Fingal asks if it is not true that Britain has set the Indians to butchering children and wives so

> That she may boast again with vanity,
> Her English national humanity?
> (For now in its primaeval sense,
> This term, _human'ty_, comprehends
> All things of which, on this side hell,
> The _human mind_ is capable.... (II, 179-184)

M'Fingal's peculiar definition of the word "humanity" is, of course, another indication of both his moral inadequacy and his tendency to condemn himself with his own arguments. The definition also amounts to a kind of twisted logic, an intellectual playfulness of the sort found throughout _Hudibras_.

The undercutting within a couplet so prevalent in _The Progress of Dulness_ occurs less frequently in _M'Fingal_, although instances may be found in the later poem. Malcolm

says of the Tories that they are

> True to their King, with firm devotion,
> For conscience sake and hop'd promotion.... (IV, 851-852)

Here the virtuous qualities suggested by "firm devotion" and "conscience sake" are undercut by the opportunism implied in the "hop'd promotion" with which the couplet concludes. Many of the speeches in which M'Fingal weakens his own argument contain contrasting elements, one of which undercuts the other. Speaking of the British troops, the Squire indicates that they will

> Display their glory and their wits,
> Fright unarm'd children into fits,
> And stoutly from th' unequal fray,
> Make many a woman run away! (II, 517-520)

Their treatment of women and children shows them to be quite the reverse of glorious and stout. Unfortunately, though, the contrast is a little too obvious, the passage being typical of those which destroy M'Fingal's credibility as a character.

But the strength of *M'Fingal* as a satire derives not so much from the wit displayed in specific passages as from the consistent view of man's behavior developed throughout the poem. And the major elements composing this view are the allusions and the figurative language. In fact, the very density of the allusions, similes, metaphors, and personifications creates a texture that makes *M'Fingal* quite different from the more urbane and witty *Progress of Dulness*. *M'Fingal* must be read carefully because of the many

intellectual demands placed upon the reader; not only the quantity of the allusions and metaphoric devices but also the many different combinations of these in individual passages make the work, in places, very complex. Also, after observing with care the types of allusive and metaphoric foliage, it is necessary to step back and view the forest as a whole, to observe the specific satiric ends achieved by the combination of the diverse parts. Too often this last step is omitted, and, as a result, Trumbull's art is not fully appreciated.

Allusions, either particular or general, fill the pages of _M'Fingal_; they are drawn freely from historical, literary and biblical sources and reveal both the wide range of Trumbull's reading and his imaginative talent for seeing relationships between ostensibly dissimilar phenomena. Homer, Virgil and Milton appear frequently, but the source used most often is the Bible. Many of the allusions, even some of the more obvious ones, are meticulously footnoted, an indication that Trumbull intended his work for the general as well as the well educated reader. Since the allusions in _M'Fingal_ are to a large extent inseparable from the vehicles that carry them, mainly the similes, they will be discussed here along with the figurative language.

Any page of _M'Fingal_ may contain several kinds of figurative language, and these different kinds may be interrelated in complex ways. Personification is not an important

instrument of Trumbull's technique, although he occasionally does employ it; Honorius in Canto I and M'Fingal in Canto II both develop in extended arguments the idea of England as a mother and the colonists as her children. Conventional similes and metaphors, those that have as their purpose merely the clarification of a person, thing or event and that do not suggest relationships beyond those associated with the specific vehicle, appear frequently. But by far the most common form of figurative language in the poem is the burlesque simile, the simile which, while on the one hand doing everything the conventional simile does, on a second level suggests a relationship between the tenor--the specific subject matter under consideration--and the class of things to which the vehicle belongs, a relationship that usually involves some sort of value judgment in regard to the tenor. Trumbull employs both the low and the high burlesque simile, the former on this second level implying a <u>comparison</u> between tenor and vehicle and the latter implying a <u>contrast</u> between the two, although, as will be indicated later, the distinction is sometimes blurred in actual practice.

Conventional similes and metaphors serve a number of functions in the poem. At times they are used as a tool of argumentation by one of the characters; M'Fingal, in his notorious defense of lying, uses a simile of a will to advance his cause:

> As men last wills may change again,
> Tho' drawn in name of God, amen;
> Be sure they must have much the more,
> O'er promises as great a pow'r,
> Which made in haste, with small inspection,
> So much the more will need correction;
> And when they've careless spoke, or penn'd 'em;
> Revise their vows, or change the text,
> By way of codicil annex'd.... (I, 647-656)

The comparison is ingenious and illustrates M'Fingal arguing at his best. The passage is also indicative of the complexity of some of the figures in the poem; what began as a simile gradually evolves into a metaphoric statement at the end. At other times similes serve to make sensual images more vivid, as when the Tories, impatient with Honorius' speech,

> Made their disapprobation known
> By many a murmur, hum and groan,
> That to his speech supplied the place
> Of counterpart in thorough-base:
> As bag-pipes, while the tune they breathe,
> Still drone and grumble underneath.... (II, 745-750)

This passage is followed by another simile, one that comes close to being low burlesque, in which Honorius is compared to Demosthenes and the Tories' noise to the sound of wind and waves over which he tried to speak. Other similes lend concreteness and dramatic immediacy to that which is abstract. Malcolm is speaking of England's demise:

> Yet ere our empire sink in night,
> One gleam of hope shall strike the sight;
> As lamps that fail of oil and fire,
> Collect one glimmring to expire. (IV, 747-750)

The passage reflects also Trumbull's willingness to construct his figures from homely everyday objects. In a poem so full

of biblical and classical allusions such figures as the above help to save the work from the charge of bookishness to which it might otherwise be susceptible.

Much more common in M'Fingal are the low burlesque similes. Most of these achieve their satiric effect by drawing a comparison between man and some low order of animal or insect. On one level the simile accurately illustrates or clarifies the human action, but implicit in the comparison is the suggestion that the human being is in many other unspoken ways in the same general class as that with which he is being compared. The narrator describes the Tories following M'Fingal "Successive on, like files of geese" (I, 134). After lunch both Tories and Whigs returned to the meeting-house and "Throng'd in, like sheep, at sound of bell" (II, 12). M'Fingal explains how the common man rises to power in a democracy:

> From dunghills deep of sable hue,
> Your dirtbred patriots spring to view,
> To wealth and pow'r and pension rise,
> Like new-wing'd maggots chang'd to flies.... (III, 129-132)

Malcolm, prophesying disaster for the Tories, condemns himself and his Tory friends when he indicates that if he could save his neck he would

> ...quit this cause and course and calling,
> Like rats that fly from house that's falling. (IV, 247-248)

Although not actually in the form of a simile, a similar effect is unwittingly produced by M'Fingal when he attempts

to defend General Gage from Honorius' charge of incompetence. Providence can, after all, "use what instruments it pleases":

> To pay a tax at Peter's wish,
> His chief cashier was once a fish;
> An Ass, in Balaam's sad disaster,
> Turn'd orator and sav'd his master;
> A Goose plac'd centry on his station
> Preserv'd old Rome from desolation;
> An English Bishop's Cur of late
> Disclosed rebellions 'gainst the state;
> So Frogs croak'd Pharaoh to repentance,
> And Lice revers'd the threat'ning sentence.... (II, 259-268)

The quotation also reflects both the wide range of allusions in M'Fingal and the density of their application in single passages. Not only does each of the animal or insect comparisons in the passages cited above directly illustrate the actions of the human beings to which they are applied and indirectly imply further relationships between the two, but the aggregate of such comparisons throughout the poem contributes to the overall burlesque of human behavior that, as shall be more apparent later, becomes so much of the essence of M'Fingal.

Not all of the low burlesque similes employ animals. In a complex arrangement of a metaphor and two similes, M'Fingal says that the sanctity given kings is

> Like extreme unction that can cleanse
> Each penitent from deadly sins,
> Make them run glib, when oil'd by Priest,
> The heav'nly road, like wheels new greas'd.... (I, 459-462)

The effect here is to reduce a religious ritual to a mechanical contrivance, to debase spiritual aspirations by

associating them with and putting them on the same level as material things. A similar effect is created when M'Fingal, in attempting to vindicate Hutchinson, asks,

> Was there a parson used to pray
> At times more reg'lar twice a day;
> As folks exact have dinners got,
> Whether they've appetites or not? (I, 597-600)

Besides indicating the meaningless mechanical regularity of Hutchinson's prayers, the concluding simile identifies them with appetite, and in so doing reduces what should be a spiritual act to the level of sensual gratification.

By far the largest number of similes in M'Fingal are derived from classical and biblical allusions and/or techniques and appear to be of the high burlesque type. While the epic simile is not a major tool of Trumbull's satire, it does provide one example of the way in which the poet utilized classical techniques in his work. M'Fingal is boasting of the British generals, Howe, Clinton and Burgoyne:

> As comets thro' the affrighted skies
> Pour baleful ruin, as they rise;
> As Aetna with infernal roar
> In conflagration sweeps the shore;
> Or as Abijah White when sent
> Our Marshfield friends to represent,
> Himself while dread array involves,
> Commissions, pistols, swords, resolves,
> In awful pomp descending down,
> Bore terror on the factious town:
> Not with less glory and affright,
> Parade these Gen'rals forth to fight. (II, 449-460)

The accumulation of similes and the extension of the final one into a short narrative that goes beyond what would seem

necessary for the parallel are characteristic of the practice in many epic poems. In addition, the diction--"dread array," "awful pomp"--echoes that often found in the epic. The passage is also typical of Trumbull's sense of the incongruous; he has his character employ both the epic pomp of the simile form and the images of great cosmic and natural forces as means of highlighting the smallness of Abijah White--a footnote on White aids the ridicule too--and, by association, the generals who are the tenor of the simile.

Many allusions in _M'Fingal_ arise from events that parallel those in classical works as well as from imitative techniques. Many of these parallels are pointed out in footnotes by Trumbull and need not be elaborated upon here. One example is the battle between the Whigs and the Tories in Canto III, which corresponds at many points to similar battles in Homer, Virgil and Milton. For instance, the single combat between M'Fingal and the Whig echoes other single combats in _The Iliad_, _The Aeneid_ and _Paradise Lost_. Ostensibly this is a high burlesque technique in which the battles in _M'Fingal_ are made to appear even more ridiculous--the Whig subdues M'Fingal with a spade--by virtue of their being juxtaposed to the really monumental epic conflicts. However, a close look at the way Trumbull handles classical and biblical allusions in the numerous similes throughout the poem might indicate that this is not quite the case.

Bruce Ingham Granger, in his _Political Satire in_

the American Revolution, 1763-1783, has indicated that the "Hudibrastic tradition, unlike the mock-heroic, never takes seriously the epic and romantic conventions it employs, such as invocation and description, and invariably it travesties heroic allusions."[27] This is an accurate statement about the tradition in general and M'Fingal in particular. While the allusions in M'Fingal are drawn from a world of great and heroic deeds, a world in which magnificent, or at least powerful, men and women struggle with the central issues of human destiny, and while this world and these people seem to provide a contrast to those in M'Fingal, a contrast that makes the latter seem even smaller and thus represents an embodiment of the high burlesque technique, the actual effect of most of the allusions is quite different. Instead of providing an ideal against which to measure the meanness of M'Fingal's world, the heroic and biblical allusions are themselves the object of ridicule and the characters and actions they embody tend to become one with the world of the poem.

Although they sometimes blend into one another, Trumbull employs basically three means for debunking the subject matter of classical and biblical works: (1) direct ridicule of the people, events or conventions; (2) indirect ridicule through the manner in which he presents them; and (3) indirect ridicule through a humorous distortion of an

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[27]Granger, Political Satire, p. 13.

action lifted out of context and often stressing the immorality of the actors. An example of the first is provided by a digression--one of the few in the poem--of some thirty lines in which the narrator pokes fun at the muses of classical works. Unable to hear above the din created by M'Fingal's followers, his muse is prevented from taking in "short-hand ev'ry word":

> As antient Muses wont, to whom
> Old Bards for depositions come;
> Who must have writ 'em; for how else
> Could they each speech _verbatim_ tell's? (I, 377-380)

He goes on to say that some "weak minds" have objected that lovers do not groan "sad soliloquies" through "many a page" with no one but "rocks and groves" to hear them, and therefore "what they scribbled must be fiction." But, according to the narrator,

> 'Tis false; for while the lovers spoke,
> The Muse was by, with table-book,
> And least some blunder might ensue,
> Echo stood clerk and kept the cue.
> And tho' the speech ben't worth a groat,
> As usual, 'tisn't the author's fault,
> But error merely of the prater,
> Who should have talk'd to th' purpose better....
> (I, 391-398)

He concludes the digression by asking his "critic-brothers" to remember that he too may be the victim of characters who haven't "talk'd to th' purpose better." Such ridicule of a romance convention does not invite the reader to take the world of which it is a part seriously.

More often the heroic world is degraded indirectly

by means of the irreverent or flippant manner in which the allusions are presented. Canto III begins with what Alexander Cowie calls a "brief frolic on the green":[28]

> THE SUN, who never stops to dine,
> Two hours had pass'd the midway line,
> And driving at his usual rate,
> Lash'd on his downward car of state.
> And now expired the short vacation,
> And dinner done in epic fashion;
> While all the crew beneath the trees,
> Eat pocket-pies, or bread and cheese;
> Nor shall we, like old Homer care
> To versify their bill of fare. (II, 1-10)

The colloquial familiarity with which the sun, epic dinners and even Homer himself are treated effectively undercuts the dignity normally associated with them. The sun, who traveled at his "usual rate" and "Lash'd on" his car of state, is distinguished from any ordinary carriage driver only by the fact that he "never stops to dine." The dinner is done in "epic fashion" and implicit in the poet's reluctance to "versify their bill of fare" is the attitude that this practice was just so much foolishness on the part of "old Homer" anyway. This same flippant attitude toward the ancients is evident in Canto III when, after a series of humorous allusions paralleling M'Fingal's single combat with the Whig, the poet concludes with a couplet reflecting his weariness with the whole business:

> And more things else--but all men know 'em,
> If slightly vers'd in Epic Poem. (III, 427-428)

Here again much of the ridicule is achieved through the informal or humorous diction used to convey the allusions.

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[28] _John Trumbull_, p. 171.

Malcolm compares the trip he is going to take M'Fingal on to Aeneas' journey through the underworld when the latter

> ...bore in show his mortal carcase,
> Thro' realms of Erebus and Orcus.... (IV, 107-108)

Britain's "atrophy of purse" is compared by Malcolm to Achilles' heel and her fate to that of the Greek hero, who

> .. met at last his fatal wound,
> By Paris' arrow nail'd to ground.... (IV, 229-230)

The phrase "mortal carcase" and the verb "nail'd" in these examples help to deflate the heroic actions they are describing and are representative of a practice employed throughout <u>M'Fingal</u>.

Often actions appear ridiculous or immoral because they are removed from the larger heroic context in which they exist. M'Fingal compares Colonel Alexander Leslie's 1775 expedition to Salem to the incident of the Trojan horse:

> For gain'd they not an equal fame in
> The arts of secrecy and scheming?
> In stratagems show'd mighty force,
> And moderniz'd the Trojan horse,
> Play'd o'er again those trick Ulyssean,
> In their fam'd Salem-expedition?
> For as that horse, the Poets tell ye,
> Bore Grecian armies in his belly;
> Till their full reck'ning run, with joy
> Their Sinon midwif'd them in Troy.... (II, 317-326)

While the incident is an example of "secrecy and scheming" on the part of the Greeks, its extrication from the larger heroic struggle of which it is a part and the manner of presentation here combine to make it appear as little more than a shabby trick. At times the immorality of the gods

is stressed, often in general allusions that refer to no particular work. The narrator describes how the gods stand in expectation as the Whigs and Tories prepare to come to blows at the conclusion of Canto II:

> Plum'd Victory stood perch'd on high,
> Upon the pulpit-canopy,
> To join, as is her custom tried
> Like Indians, on the strongest side;
> The Destinies with shears and distaff
> Drew near their threads of life to twist-off;
> The Furies 'gan to feast on blows,
> And broken heads or bloody nose.... (II, 781-788)

Hardly more respectable are the gods who, according to Malcolm, in "Homer's day" used to "help weak heroes run away" (IV, 705-706). And Trumbull concludes M'Fingal with an allusion that, since it exemplifies the kind of treatment the great events of antiquity have been subjected to throughout the poem, seems particularly appropriate. The narrator compares M'Fingal's abandonment of his friends to a "similar" biblical situation:

> So when wise Noah summon'd greeting
> All animals to gen'ral meeting;
> From ev'ry side the members sent
> All kinds of beasts to represent;
> Each from the flood took care t' embark,
> And save his carcase in the ark;
> But as it fares in state and church,
> Left his constituents in the lurch. (IV, 1085-1092)

The larger issues involved in the Noah story are not dealt with. Instead, Trumbull divorces one specific aspect of it from its context and, in so doing, casts a moral taint upon the whole. Each animal tries to "save his carcase," a kind of act typical of those performed by many of the classical

and biblical figures alluded to in M'Fingal.

In his letter to the Marquis de Chastellux, Trumbull states his intentions in regard to the style of M'Fingal:

> In the style, I have preferred the high burlesque to the low, (which is the style of Hudibras) not only as more agreeable to my own taste, but as it readily admits a transition to the grave, elevated or sublime: a transition which is often made with the greatest ease and gracefulness, in the satirical poems of Pope and Despreaux.[29]

We do not know exactly how he defined "high burlesque," but it is evident that M'Fingal is not in the high burlesque style of Pope in, for instance, "The Rape of the Lock." The epic, romantic and biblical worlds are placed side by side with the world of Tories and Whigs, but not, as in high burlesque, for the purpose of contrasting an ideal with the real. Instead, the numerous allusions, when considered in the aggregate, postulate a world of selfish, cowardly, immoral and often absurd heroes, a world in which both men and gods are motivated by self-interest to struggle for the most trivial of ends. Nor is this world merely one constructed by a particular character in the poem; the narrator, M'Fingal, Honorius, Malcolm, all contribute to the consistency of the vision. Trumbull has, in essence, satirized the traditional view of the ancient heroes, shown them to be base and venal creatures, and then used them as instruments to satirize the contemporary personages in his

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[29] Poetical Works, pp. 232-233.

poem. Employing low burlesque techniques, he degrades the Whigs and Tories by comparing their behavior to that of the depraved inhabitants of the epic, romantic and biblical worlds.

The effect of the low burlesque use of allusions is to make this aspect of *M'Fingal* consistent with other techniques used in the poem, and thereby to establish an overall manner which appears to be incongruous with, and consequently helps to ridicule, the subject matter. So pervasive is the satire of the great men and events of the past that even those few passages which seem to take them seriously are substantially undercut by this overall attitude. It is, for example, hard to take the exaggerated and heroic diction seriously as an instrument for establishing, in certain passages, a real-ideal dichotomy when the world of which this diction is a part has been so effectively debunked throughout the poem; the incongruity between the actions being described and the words used to describe them is still there, but when considered in the context of the rest of the poem the diction suggests not so much an incongruity between two different worlds as it does a certain pretentiousness that the two have in common. The deflated heroic world embodied in the allusions, the absurdities of the versification and such aspects of the figurative language as the animal similes establish an overall low burlesque manner, a manner embodying a consistent attitude

toward human experience. According to this attitude, man is and always has been a base and ignoble creature; he is pretentious, vain, selfish and, all in all, entitled to be treated with no more dignity than that afforded by the droll octosyllabic couplets and comic rhymes. This manner, with the vision of human experience implied in the totality of its constituent elements, is both a part of the poem's message or theme and an instrument for satirizing the ostensible subject matter, the machinations of the Whigs and Tories. The latter become inextricably entangled in the vision implicit in the manner in which they are treated, so entangled that they are ultimately pulled down from their pedestals and shown to be one with it. This is, of course, the low burlesque technique at its best; what appears to be a contrast between the dignified subject and the low manner of treatment turns out to be not really a contrast at all: the satirist pricks the balloon of appearance and lets the subject settle down to the level of the manner where it belongs.

It is obvious that the satiric scope of M'Fingal extends far beyond the ridicule of Tory behavior during the Revolutionary War. Trumbull himself has indicated a larger purpose:

> My design was to give, in a poetical manner, a general account of the American contest, with a particular description of the characters and manners of the times, interspersed with anecdotes, which no history would probably record or display: and with as much

> impartiality as possible, satirize the follies and extravagancies of my countrymen, as well as of their enemies.[30]

While the heaviest satiric weight falls on M'Fingal and his followers, the Whigs come in for their share of the criticism too, both specific and general. M'Fingal's attack on mobocracy in Canto III is effective in spite of the weaknesses of the character who utters it. Also, the narrator frequently includes Tories and Whigs alike in his satiric thrusts, as when at the beginning of Canto II he indicates that both returned to the meetinghouse "like sheep, at sound of bell." At times he singles out the Whigs: in Canto III, the narrator in a passage of some twenty-three lines (17-40) ridicules the patriots whose "quintessence of public spirit" comes from a bottle.

It is, in fact, as inaccurate to see _M'Fingal_ as a satire on Tories alone as it is to see _Hudibras_ as an attack on only Presbyterians and Independents. Both works employ a low burlesque manner that deflates the pretensions of their characters and at the same time makes a more universal statement about the nature of human beings. The parallel must not, of course, be drawn too far. Butler's satire is, as Ellen Leyburn has pointed out, directed at the misuse of the mind;[31] he is concerned with ideas, how they

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[30]"Letter to the Marquis de Chastellux," _Poetical Works_, pp. 231-232.

[31]_Satiric Allegory: Mirror of Man_ (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1956), p. 40.

originate in imperfect human minds and the way in which these minds abuse their own imperfect creations. Trumbull's satire, on the other hand, is directed at some of the more superficial aspects of human behavior, at the way men act and not at the complex mental processes that underlie these actions. Nevertheless, Hudibras and M'Fingal have an element of universality that is attained through the same techniques and which frees them from the confines of time and place so fatal to most satires.

There are a number of smaller resemblances between Hudibras and M'Fingal, most of which have been pointed out by Alexander Cowie and will not be repeated here.[32] However, Trumbull's own comments in his "Critical Reflections" regarding the influences on M'Fingal bear repeating:

> The Critical Reader will discern, that I have rather proposed to myself Swift and Churchill as models in my Hudibrastic writings, than the Author of Hudibras. I have sometimes had Butler's manner in my eye, for a few lines, but was soon forced to quit it. Indeed his kind of wit & the oddity of his Comparisons was in my Opinion never well imitated by any man, nor ever will be.[33]

Undoubtedly Trumbull's verse, even in M'Fingal, is smoother than that in Butler's poem. Also, as Cowie has indicated, Churchill's The Ghost contains "a surprising amount of cognate material."[34] But what most distinguishes M'Fingal from

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[32]See John Trumbull, pp. 148-151.

[33]Cornell MSS.

[34]John Trumbull, p. 152.

Hudibras is the lack of what Edward Ames Richards calls "intellectual playfulness" in Trumbull's poem.[35] Few poets, English or American, have had Butler's tremendous resources of wit and learning upon which to draw; in *Hudibras* ideas are introduced, condensed, expanded into absurdities, related to other ideas, until one is lost in a veritable thicket of intellectual play. And "play" it is, for Butler, aside from exposing the infirmities of the human mind, delights in juggling ideas. Trumbull, on the other hand, seems less willing to make an analysis of ideas a part of the playfulness of his poem. As has been mentioned before, Trumbull undoubtedly possessed a highly developed sense of the inconsistencies and incongruities in human behavior; he has, in particular, the ability to detect the trivial in the great, to pierce beneath appearances and expose the base realities behind ostensibly noble actions. But when he deals with ideas he is not as comfortable as Butler is. He probably did not possess Butler's intellectual resources, but, even so, when he does employ those at his command there is about his handling of his material a kind of moral earnestness one doesn't find in *Hudibras*.

And this moral earnestness is the source of the main weakness of *M'Fingal* as a satire. Although there are a number of resemblances between Hudibras and M'Fingal as

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[35] *Hudibras in the Burlesque Tradition*, p. 112.

characters, the former's arguments, however morally or intellectually wrongheaded they may ultimately be, are subtle and ingeniously constructed, while the latter's are crude and obviously ridiculous. It is almost as if Trumbull is afraid that the reader will miss the point, that the moral inadequacy of M'Fingal's position might go unnoticed if not blatantly announced. This moral earnestness is also evident in the person of Honorius. The Squire's antagonist is not only unbelievable as a character, but he embodies an attitude that is inconsistent with the conception of man, both Whig and Tory, developed in the rest of the poem. His seriousness and moral rectitude--in spite of the allusions and similes he contributes to the overall manner--make him little more than a thinly-veiled mouthpiece for the author. As such he makes explicit that which should be implicit, causes the work, in other words, to lose the indirection characteristic of good satire. Trumbull, unlike Butler, was afraid of being misunderstood, and as a result the best Hudibrastic satire to be produced in America is substantially weakened.

Alexander Cowie suggests that perhaps Trumbull gave up literature because he was "not essentially a creative artist"; he was a "facile" writer but he did not appear to have "that overpowering passion for self-expression that accompanies literary genius."[36] No doubt this is true.

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[36]John Trumbull, p. 207.

Trumbull set out to make M'Fingal a work of art, to give it a "regular plan and design," but so deeply engrained in him was the Puritan idea of the moral and religious function of art that he permitted other concerns to override his artistic sensibilities; thus the didactic element in both The Progress of Dulness and M'Fingal. The moral and artistic need not, of course, conflict with each other. But the satirist who proceeds by indirection always runs the risk that in the eyes of the reader they will, and Trumbull's dedication to art was probably not strong enough to make him willing to take the risk. Only in "Epithalamium," a work not intended for publication, did Trumbull give his comic genius free rein, and this was evidently a poem composed on the spur of the moment and without serious artistic intent.

From "Epithalamium" to The Progress of Dulness and finally to M'Fingal, Trumbull reveals an ability to handle increasingly complex burlesque techniques. And while M'Fingal is not a great work, it is superior in conception and complexity to any other Hudibrastic satire created in America, and to many of the English imitations of Hudibras. Perhaps one should not criticize Trumbull too severely for a lack of dedication to art; the tumultuous times in which he lived would probably have made such dedication seem irresponsible. Actually he maintained a greater objectivity than most of his contemporaries in regard to the issues of

his time. In spite of its artistic shortcomings, Trumbull created in M'Fingal a satire that may still be read with enjoyment some two hundred years later--a feat accomplished by few satirists in any time or place.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

For the average eighteenth-century American the term "Hudibrastic" meant little more than octosyllabic couplets and comic rhymes. Although Americans were innovative in the uses to which they put Butler's verse form, few attempted either to capture the spirit of his work or to imitate his more sophisticated burlesque techniques. They were, in fact, more interested in attack than in art, and the jogging rhythms of the octosyllabic couplets together with the dissonant clatter and undignified appearance of the comic rhymes provided a ready and easily manipulated vehicle with which to degrade the object of their indignation. The works these authors produced are occasionally witty but they hardly meet even the minimum standards for artistic creations.

Nevertheless, a few authors did produce a significant body of Hudibrastic works which, although they fall far short of Butler's achievement in Hudibras, deserve consideration as serious artistic endeavors, consideration which, due to the opprobrium attached to Hudibrastic works in general, they have seldom received. Both Ebenezer Cook

and John Trumbull created works that in overall conception and design are artistic wholes and at the same time reveal the authors' skill in handling both the burlesque mode and specific Hudibrastic techniques. Bacon's Rebellion is a narrative burlesque that, in spite of a certain crudity in versification, compares favorably with those produced by Thomas D'Urfey and Ned Ward, and M'Fingal captures as much of the spirit of Hudibras and employs to advantage as many of Butler's specific techniques as any of the English imitations. Other Americans also reveal some skill in handling elements of the Hudibrastic manner. Joseph Green's Entertainment for a Winter's Evening, although limited in scope, is a unified work of art and utilizes well caricature and other burlesque techniques. Both Hugh Henry Brackenridge and Thomas Green Fessenden manipulate with facility certain Hudibrastic elements, even though their works as a whole contain serious artistic flaws.

Although each Hudibrastic satire must ultimately be evaluated on the basis of the extent to which its own particular elements coalesce into a unique and unified artistic creation, it is possible to identify at least four recurring problems that impeded the transformation from attack to art in American works: (1) the failure of the artist to make his attack indirect; closely allied to this, (2) a tendency toward didacticism; (3) a confused or blurred focus; and (4) an unwillingness or inability to transcend the

topical subject matter and make a more universal statement having implications beyond the artist's own time and place. Nor are these problems confined to those lesser works which were quite obviously composed in haste; the productions of Cook and Trumbull, for instance, merit consideration as serious literary works not because all of these problems are nonexistent but because of other strong compensating factors which tend to make them less obvious.

The cruder Hudibrastic satires are of course those in which the artist makes no attempt to detach himself from the object of his derision and merely pours forth a stream of invective cast in octosyllabic couplets and comic rhymes. One step removed from direct invective is the poem in which the poet speaks in his own person but deflects the directness of his attack by means of irony, usually in the form of understatement or sarcasm. Trumbull uses this technique to advantage in The Progress of Dulness, and the anti-Whitefield poem discussed in Chapter II is saved from pure invective by ironical comments. Many Americans also attempted to achieve indirection by utilizing high and low burlesque elements, by relying on the reader to discover for himself the implications of a particular contrast or comparison he had established. Unfortunately, though, authors frequently used little subtlety in the application of these devices; unwilling to trust the reader to recognize the satiric point of a few well placed comparisons or contrasts, they applied

low and high burlesque elements so heavily that they became merely sledge hammers for driving home what all too soon became the obvious. "The Reduction of Fort Sand" and the last canto of Terrible Tractoration provide examples of the way in which these techniques can lose their effectiveness through over-application. But probably the most frequently used technique for achieving indirection was the one that Butler himself employed throughout Hudibras: the ironical narrator who destroys his own argument or character in attempting to defend it. While Sir Hudibras' arguments are upon close examination either sophistical or based upon morally unacceptable premises, they at least seem upon a superficial appraisal to be logically sound. American writers employing this technique seldom took the care to construct such subtle arguments. More often than not the character's stupidity and immorality are immediately apparent and the ironical defense a non-functional veil through which the author's condemnation clearly shows. Most of the travesties of proclamations suffer from this defect, as do such works as the Plagi-Scurriliad and the "Dinwiddie" poem. Even Trumbull's M'Fingal, although his arguments are sometimes persuasive, becomes in places a little too ridiculous to be even superficially convincing.

If American writers of Hudibrastic satires were reluctant to keep their attacks indirect lest the reader miss the particular folly they were satirizing, they were

just as determined to point out explicitly the norms from which their characters were deviating or to suggest an ideal that should replace things as they are. Often this didacticism seemed to be endemic in the forms into which Americans chose to cast their Hudibrastic works. While parables, animal fables and allegories can provide an element of indirection, they at the same time carry strong implications of a "lesson" designed to promote specific virtues, and thus such works as the "Dic Burlesque" poem, Nicholas Scull's Kawanio Che Keeteru and Timothy Dwight's "The Critic" acquire a didactic element from the forms in which they are embodied. Occasionally the didacticism arises from a first person narrator who straightforwardly argues for a particular course of action, as is the case with Cook's Sotweed Redivivus. More often, though, the didactic element is introduced through a character who is little more than a mouthpiece for stating the author's alternatives to the values he is ridiculing. The list of such characters in American Hudibrastic works would be a long one, but some of the more salient examples are Honorius in M'Fingal, George in Kawanio Che Keeteru and the poet, the philosopher and sometimes even the knight himself in the Modern Chevalier. In each of these cases the characters lend but a thin facade of dramatic action to the author's lecture on the way things should be.

A third problem occurring in American Hudibrastic

productions is that of the unclear or vague focus, the failure of the artist to delineate with precision the object of his attack and to pursue it relentlessly to the exclusion of all else. The problem is observable in works as diverse as Cook's The Sot-Weed Factor, Scull's Kawanio Che Keeteru and Fessenden's Terrible Tractoration. Cook, one feels, was diverted from his satiric purpose by the sheer joy of the comic situation he had created, but the problems in the other two works are more complex. Both Scull and Fessenden were attacking attitudes and practices that were not clearly defined in relationship to some existing norm or ideal: the Quakers were themselves divided in their attitudes toward self-defense, and the line between legitimate science and pseudo-science or fancy was too vague for Fessenden to focus clearly on the latter. Americans were no doubt hampered to a certain extent by the absence of a firm social and political structure that could serve as a standard by which to measure aberrant behavior. With but few exceptions, English Hudibrastic satires were written by men upholding established and clearly defined institutions against the encroachment of minorities who threatened the stability of the system. In America the basic institutions themselves were constantly being reformulated and satirists such as Brackenridge who upheld democratic principles but feared "mobocracy" were confronted with a much greater problem in the definition of norms than were English authors.

And, finally, few Americans bothered to deal with matters of universal concern; most were content to attack the specific persons or institutions which at the moment angered them and cared little about exposing the more generically human weaknesses that were responsible for the behavior they detested. In short, few were concerned with raising the object to the level of a symbol that would have relevance for other times and other places. The objects of their attack were varied: literary types and critics, economic folly, frivolous education, stupid and corrupt politicians, worldly clergymen, inept military leaders, useless science and hypocritical social orders--just to mention a few. But with only a couple of exceptions, among which would be Bacon's Rebellion and M'Fingal, the Hudibrastic satires produced in America seldom transcended the topical issues with which they dealt.

A number of factors, in addition to the lack of stable social and political institutions mentioned above, no doubt account for these artistic shortcomings. As indicated in Chapter I, satire in general and burlesque in particular were not regarded in the eighteenth century as respectable literary genres and one who wrote in this vein could hardly be expected to put forth his best artistic efforts when he knew that his production would not be considered a serious literary work, however meritorious it might be. Also, the octosyllabic couplets with comic rhymes

were no doubt tainted by the frequency with which they were used as a comic device by people of no literary talent whatever; it is not unusual, for instance, to find in the newspapers of the period advertisements for goods or runaway slaves cast in poems employing the Hudibrastic verse form. But the lack of indirection in the attacks and the strong didactic element that pervades so many of the works can possibly be accounted for by the existing attitudes toward literature in general and the nature of the audience for which Hudibrastic satires were intended. Any poetry that aspired to go beyond mere comedy in eighteenth-century America was, according to prevailing literary standards, expected to either ennoble the mind through the beauty of its presentation or embody some morally stimulating lesson. Satire, since it did not ennoble the mind through beauty, could be justified only if it pointed a moral, if it aimed at the reformation of some segment of mankind. Such a requirement is not in itself necessarily fatal to satire. However, American Hudibrastic works were produced for the general public, mainly for the middle-class newspaper reader. This being the case, the satirist could not depend upon a great deal of literary sophistication in his audience. To be too subtle was to be misunderstood, and therefore we find a Honorius delivering a sermon or a M'Fingal crudely exposing the absurdity of his position. In short, the

satirist was driven by necessity to use the bludgeon rather than the knife.

Given these conditions, it is remarkable that Americans did produce a few Hudibrastic poems that merit consideration as works of art. Cook's success is more understandable than Trumbull's. Born in England and associated with the upper class in a colony in which the influence of Puritanism was not strong, Cook was free in _The Sot-Weed Factor_ and _Bacon's Rebellion_ to aspire to the objectivity and detachment essential to effective satire. Trumbull wrote under less friendly influences, and his works suffer because of them. Nevertheless, it is a credit to his genius that in spite of the didactic element and the occasional failure of his hero to be convincing he wrote the best imitation of Butler produced in America. No other American, Cook included, mastered so well Butler's techniques and created a poem matching _M'Fingal_ in complexity and artistic integrity.

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