

not so very “New” by now but dying hard. Using pseudo-scientific language it tends to confusion since it sets out to find everything in anything—an unscientific procedure. Linking Marvell’s “Picture of Little T. C.” with Virgil’s “Pollio” reminds me of a music-hall joke heard in the ’twenties. Question: “Why is George Bernard Shaw like Norma Shearer?” Answer: “Because they both have beautiful white beards . . . except Norma Shearer.”

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cullen might have found some comfort, if not exactly support, in Mr. Kermode’s note on l. 5: “Gives them names: a task traditionally attributed to Eve in Eden.” If not the pagan blissful state we should have its Christian equivalent.

<sup>2</sup> Marvell does not name Tasso, nor does he apparently quote from his works; but very near the beginning of *The Rehearsal Transpos’d*, he (without naming Guarini) mentions “Amaryllis’s dilemma” (Grosart, III, 8; see also p. 85), showing sufficiently his scorn for that sort of protest against “troppo dura legge” that forbids “il peccar . . . si dolce.” On that theme see Nicholas J. Perella, “Amarilli’s Dilemma: *The Pastor Fido* and Some English Authors,” *CL*, 12 (1960), 348–59.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., “The Dampe,” ll. 11–12. On this topic it suffices to refer to Louis Bredvold’s article, “The Naturalism of Donne in Relation to Some Renaissance Traditions,” *JEGP*, 22 (Oct. 1923), 471–502. Louis Lecocq, *La Satire en Angleterre de 1588 à 1603* (Paris: Didier, Perversion 1969), pp. 57–58, after quoting S. K. Heninger, “The Renaissance Version of Pastoral,” *JHI*, 22 (1961), adds: “Il faut préciser que certains regrets de l’âge d’or ne sont que des jeux poétiques . . . Donne suit cette mode dans son ‘Elegie xvii,’ vers 38 sqq., où l’on ne trouve rien de sérieux ni d’amer.”

## The Politics of Eighteenth-Century Satire

To the Editor:

W. B. Carnochan’s recent expedition into the virtually unmapped territory of late eighteenth-century satire (March 1970 *PMLA*) will doubtless provide essential guidance to future students of the subject. But I think that Carnochan’s essay needs correction in some particulars and that some alternatives to his hypotheses should be considered.

Carnochan gives William Gifford a prominent place in his essay. Gifford, he thinks, stands at “the far point” (p. 260) of changes in Augustan satiric theory and practice. He twice quotes Gifford’s statement (in the preface to his translation of Juvenal, 1802) that satire must overawe folly as well as vice in order to demonstrate the sublimity of the Juvenal to whom Gifford looked as satiric mentor; and in Gifford’s *Epistle to Peter Pindar* (1800)—especially in its ab-

sence of irony and its melodramatic treatment of evil—Carnochan hears the voice of both a sublime and a sentimental Juvenal. This interpretation would be more convincing if there were not better ways of accounting for Gifford’s satiric qualities.

One of these is the likelihood that politics—the overheated political atmosphere of the 1790’s—was a primary cause of Gifford’s ferocity. Most readers today, if they chance on Gifford’s satires and know anything about their subjects, are astonished or incredulous at the disproportion between Gifford’s invective and its victims. Nor were Gifford’s the only satires of their day to be marred by this disproportion. It is understandable that Pindar supposed Gifford to be the author (actually it was Thomas James Mathias) of *The Pursuits of Literature*, a satire which first appeared in 1794, was added to copiously in successive editions, and reached its sixteenth edition in 1812.<sup>1</sup> This work, like Gifford’s satires, appealed to that segment of the English public whose fears had been thoroughly aroused by the French Revolution—who had begun, in fact, to imagine radicals lurking behind nearly every bush. Just as Mathias stalked men like “Monk” Lewis, so Gifford stalked the Della Cruscan, because he really believed them to be subversive menaces. Although Gifford’s *Baviad* and *Maeviad* are less obviously political than *The Pursuits of Literature*, a careful reading of them reveals that Gifford devotes more attention (if not always his most violent rhetoric) to a Della Cruscan like Robert Merry, who was also a radical, than he does to the merely literary offenders. It may be less tenable to claim that Gifford’s *Epistle to Peter Pindar* was politically motivated: there are no overtly political references in the poem, and since Pindar had recently attacked him, Gifford may simply have been retaliating. But regardless of motivation, this poem too doubtless appealed mainly to the politically conservative; because of his satires on the Pitt administration, Pindar had acquired the reputation of a radical for readers like Gifford’s, and they must therefore have relished the verbal drubbing which Gifford gave him. Furthermore, it is extremely doubtful that this drubbing would have been so harsh if Pindar had been politically conservative. In short, instead of attributing Gifford’s declamatory tone to a “sublime” or “sentimental” Juvenal, I would attribute it, like Mathias’, in part to fear. Stemming from the French Revolution, Gifford’s fear found an object in the Della Cruscan, and perhaps also in Pindar, who seemed to him representative of the revolutionary disorder and the subversion of values which threatened England.<sup>2</sup>

Carnochan observes that Gifford’s satiric theory (and, presumably, his practice) does not offer much that is “intellectually new” (p. 260). Had Carnochan

pursued this point instead of tracing the evolution of a sublime and sentimental Juvenal, he might have seen that Gifford is in fact not only not new but regressive. Specifically, there are similarities between Gifford's satires and those of the Elizabethans. Gifford admired their satiric style: in the preface to his translation of Juvenal, he quotes approvingly from Joseph Hall; and in *The Baviad*, he commends Hall's "lash" and the "hiss" of John Oldham, who wrote in the Elizabethan manner.<sup>3</sup> Gifford could be witty when he chose to be, and in the smoothness of his numbers he is more Popean than Elizabethan; nevertheless, he is most characteristic, or at least most memorable, when he rails after the fashion of an Elizabethan scourging satirist. His diction—"scourg'd," "drivel" and "driveller," "toad," "reptile," "slavering," and "spues" are typical of his invective—has many parallels in Elizabethan satire; and so does his preoccupation with the physically diseased or loathsome.

Perhaps it can be argued that Elizabethan satire is sublime and sentimental, but Carnochan does not argue this point. In the absence of such argument, he seems unwise to regard Gifford's satiric theory as the culmination of an eighteenth-century evolution toward sublime satire. After referring (for the second time) to Gifford's idea that folly as well as vice must be overawed by satire, Carnochan makes three of his least cautious statements. "'Awe,'" he says, "is the aesthetic response appropriate in the presence of the sublime. The rough justice of Juvenal approximates divine justice. The values of Augustan satire have been overturned" (p. 263). The crux, here, is the meaning of Gifford's "overawed." Carnochan, though maintaining the tendency toward sublimity of Gifford's theory, admits the wide difference between it and the "raucous schoolboy invective" (p. 264) of Gifford's satiric practice. But it is just as likely that there is no difference, that Gifford's "overawed" has not even a connotative connection with the sublime, that it instead means something like "intimidated" or "terrified." A pleasing terror, of course, is one response to the sublime; but the feeling which Gifford's rhetoric seems designed to inspire in Pindar is more the mean fear of some small, nasty animal under attack: this "slimy toad," as Gifford terms Pindar, had better scuttle back to his "dark cell" before he is pelted to death.<sup>4</sup> Even if Gifford's theory and practice are perfectly consistent, one may of course still hold that they represent the overthrow of "the values of Augustan satire." I would insist, however, that it is important to determine the direction of the movement toward this end and to define the end. Was the movement ahead toward sublimity or, as I believe, backward toward what appears to be an Elizabethan scurrility?

If Gifford's theory of satire affords little that is

"intellectually new," the same can be said of the theory of William Combe, another satirist who figures prominently in Carnochan's essay. His prominence, indeed, is similar to Gifford's: just as Gifford's satiric theory is supposed to represent "the far point" in the movement of satire toward sublimity, so (if I understand Carnochan) Combe's is the far point in a movement toward sentimentality. Yet although Combe is markedly different in his overwrought tone from the Augustan ironists, in substance his views of the powers and responsibilities of satire are merely insignificant variations on Augustan commonplaces.

For example, Combe's assertion of the benevolence of satire in a good cause is not appreciably different from earlier claims that satire is true good nature. These claims generally took one of two forms. Men like Robert Dodsley and Edward Young held that good nature, to be genuine, must be discriminating; satire, by sparing the innocent and correcting or punishing the guilty, is thus truly good-natured.<sup>5</sup> More frequently, this claim took the metaphorical form of the satirist as physician or surgeon, seemingly severe in dispensing his bolus or lancing diseased tissue, but ultimately benevolent in his desire to cure.

Combe's idea that satire is or should be responsive to "injur'd Virtue" was anticipated nearly fifty years earlier. In a list of the duties (and apparently the standard duties) of satire, Walter Harte mentions "To raise the fal'n, to hear the sufferer's cries."<sup>6</sup> Except for his greater specificity (Combe's example of the sufferer is a beleaguered "young Virgin"), his idea of this responsibility of satire is exactly the same as Harte's.

Combe's virgin is under assault by "hungry Lust"—a personification presumably beyond the reach of religion or law. In suggesting that satire alone can touch its "flinty heart," Combe is simply echoing another cliché regarding the power of satire. Moreover, although he couches it in melodramatic language, his seems hardly more melodramatic than Pope's famous statement of it in the *Epilogue to the Satires*.<sup>7</sup>

Carnochan says (p. 265) that it would be difficult to find a "model . . . in nature" for Combe's ideas of the duties of satire—an actual satire which fully satisfies these ideas of what satire should be or do. I agree; but this fact does not necessarily demonstrate, as Carnochan seems to believe, that Combe had moved into or beyond the borderland between satire and sentimentality. It may only confirm Robert Elliott's observation that there has always been a great gap between the exalted ideals which the satirist professes and their realization in his art.<sup>8</sup>

Combe's heavy reliance on Augustan commonplaces about satire raises important questions. Is the

convergence of satire and sentimentalism only a matter of tone? If it is something more, how can Combe's views of satire be distinguished from those of his Augustan predecessors? An even more important question is raised about the origin and development of this convergence. Are writers like Young and Pope and Harte to be regarded as nascent sentimentalists?<sup>9</sup> If so, Carnochan's essay does not provide the evidence.

Other, less consequential objections might be made to this essay—to its claim, for example, that Juvenal came to supplant Horace in eighteenth-century esteem (p. 260). Again, there is not sufficient evidence in the essay. But I do not wish to end in caviling. I would instead rally Carnochan for his excessive modesty in calling his essay “contributory notes” toward a survey of late eighteenth-century satire. When this survey is written, it will find his pioneering work indispensable.

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Hopkins, *Portraits in Satire* (London: Barrie, 1958), p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *The English Della Cruscan and Their Time, 1783–1828*, International Archives of the History of Ideas, 22 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), [243]–244, also regards Gifford's motives in attacking the Della Cruscans as primarily political. Gifford's disclaimer of these motives—“Introduction” (1800) to *The Baviad, and Maeviad*, 8th ed. (London: Murray, 1811), p. xvi—is unconvincing.

<sup>3</sup> “An Essay on the Roman Satirists, by William Gifford, Esq.,” in *The Satires of Juvenal, Persius, Sulpicia, and Lucilius*, trans. Lewis Evans (London: Bell, 1852), p. xxi; *The Baviad, and Maeviad*, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> “Epistle to Peter Pindar,” in *The Baviad, and Maeviad*, p. 189.

<sup>5</sup> “On Good and Ill-Nature. To Mr. Pope,” in *Trifles* (London, 1745), pp. 181–82; *Two Epistles to Mr. Pope, Concerning the Authors of the Age* (London: Gilliver, 1730), pp. 12–13.

<sup>6</sup> *An Essay on Satire, Particularly on the Dunciad* (London: Gilliver, 1730), introd. Thomas B. Gilmore, ARS No. 132 (1968), p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> *The Poems of Alexander Pope: A One-Volume Edition of the Twickenham Text with Selected Annotations*, ed. John Butt (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 701–02, ll. 208–11.

<sup>8</sup> *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1960), pp. 107, 268.

<sup>9</sup> Carnochan cites Harte (p. 261) in tracing the development of a sublime Juvenal, but not in his section on the convergence of satire and sentimentality.

#### Mr. Carnochan replies:

Mr. Gilmore is a generous critic, and I'm ready to yield some ground, if necessary, in hopes of arranging a joint tenancy.

I agree that to put all the responsibility for what happened in satiric practice on the example of Juvenal, half-understood or misunderstood, would be a mistake. But I didn't think I'd done that. My claim is more limited: that insofar as the division of satiric territory between Horace and Juvenal still prevailed—which to a good extent it did—there was an appeal in both theory and practice to the Juvenalian mode, supplemented by a recasting of Juvenal's image as a poet. The question is partly semantic: who or what was “Juvenal” anyway? I would say, not a poet but an idea, not a source or an influence but a typical case, the origin of satiric themes and a satiric style, a convenient symbol. No matter how important political matters were in the 1790's, still I don't think they need make a serious division between Gilmore and myself. Charles Churchill, “qui nunc cum Juvenale est,” was after all the most political of satirists. As for Elizabethan models: if it could be shown that Gifford did not assimilate them to the general instance of Juvenalian satire, that would be a more telling argument. But Juvenal was part of the mix that went into Elizabethan practice. The theory of complementarity makes a good metaphor for describing the truth of many a contested case; I think that most of Gilmore's views and mine, like particle and wave, are compatible aspects of the light we've tried to shed.

But I can't agree about “overawed.” All the connotations of “awe” and “overawe,” except those implying merely an advantage in “strategical position” (*OED*), are of passionate feeling. Johnson's first example of “overawe” is this one, from Spenser: “The king was present in person to overlook the magistrates, and to *over-awe* these subjects with the terror of his sword.” The *OED* cites Hume: “That he might . . . overawe the mutinous people.” Is a toad capable of feeling awe? It is only persons who feel awe, even if in Gifford's practice it feels as though we're dealing with real toads in real gardens. He takes an allusive reference to Satanic evil and (thinking it an heroic act?) subtracts whatever the image contained of restraint and of allusiveness.

Finally I'm puzzled by the question: whether the convergence of satire and sentimentalism is only a matter of tone. True enough, sentimentalism was something more than the sum of its rhetorical effects; but insofar as sentimentalism was sentimental, what was it if not a matter of tone? I grant the force and the interest of the next question, though: whether some of the earlier satirists were nascent sentimentalists. To put the question so boldly seems to require as bold an answer, either yes or no, and I'm not ready to give one. Gilmore's triumvirate of Young and Pope and Harte is an oddly assorted lot. I'll concede, however, what I've never fully admitted before to myself and there-

fore glossed over in the article, a reaction that is brought to the surface now by the forthrightness of Gilmore's question: that Pope's self-defense in the "Epilogue to the Satires"—even when we make what allowances we can for theories of personae and the like—does seem to me on the very edge, perhaps over it, of sentimental excess.

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### Objectivity in Scholarship

To the Editor:

In "Do Literary Studies Have an Ideology?" (May 1970 *PMLA*) I suggested that recent academic criticism has been appreciably influenced by tacit political assumptions. Such influence, I conceded, is harder to discern in a libertarian society than in a totalitarian one, and is less evident in literary studies than in the social sciences; it can be established only inferentially. Yet our adherence to "scholarship's ideal of shedding prejudice" and our distaste for the "politicization of learning" should, in theory at least, make us eager to recognize and correct any political inhibition on our objectivity. I acknowledged that in practice most professors would be incapable of such unaccustomed self-appraisal, and I predicted that a shift of direction would have to come from critics who are impatient with the whole ideological consensus that has prevailed since World War II.

The three letters in your January issue ignore this reasoning, but in varying degrees they do offer some minor support for it by their very digressiveness. My essay spoke of the religiosity, hortatory muddle, and misplaced outrage that often substitute for argumentation when American values are felt to be threatened. Mrs. Katherine Cooper rebuts my essay by saying that I have "definitely supported the enemies of the American system" and then by invoking the defective heart of man, the sanctity of the family, and the need for "a God-oriented literature." Lawrence W. Hyman denies that I regard literature primarily as an art, wrongly infers that I am asking present-day critics to adjust their literary standards to their politics, and urges, as I would, that literature be enjoyed for itself. And Morton W. Bloomfield alerts MLA members to several dangerous tendencies he ascribes to my essay, volunteers to "take to the barricades" if necessary, and reaches a Churchillian climax of objectless fervor: "If we must go underground we will go underground, but the torch of humanism should not be allowed to lose its light in a universal holocaust by our throwing more fuel on the fire."

Largely through innuendo but also through incorrect summary, Bloomfield encourages your readers

to believe that I see all criticism and even all literature as nothing but ideology; that by my standards "*King Lear* is the same work as the *Communist Manifesto*"; that I would cherish *King Solomon's Ring* above *Hamlet* as being more "useful in the biological struggle for survival"; that I would deny that Americans have any "freedom to complain and criticize" by pointing "to the oppression of the blacks and chicanos, Judge Hoffman, the Bobby Seale trial, the students killed at Kent State, etc."; that literature, for me, *is* its social and mental antecedents; that I subscribe to the canons of socialist realism and would judge literature "according to whether it contributes to the advancement of communism or not"; and that my ideas would lead to "creating tyranny in the name of liberty" and to such policies as the detention of Soviet writers. These extravagant fantasies are offered, you will recall, in answer to my argument that American scholars are not as open minded as they might be. I can now understand how Leslie Fiedler must have felt when, after one of his piquant lectures about Ishmael and Queequeg, a member of the audience accused him of having stolen his raincoat.

Bloomfield's irrelevancies can be understood only as so many efforts to change the grounds of discussion and to surround my essay with an aura of subversion. Readers may remember that I credited the "genuine intellectual freedom" that scholars enjoy under capitalism in confident times, alluded to "the suffocation of dialogue under present-day socialism," and declared that "officially sanctioned socialist criticism is almost always simpleminded and venal, like any other mental effort that must flatter a bureaucracy and meet a doctrinal test"; Bloomfield pretends that I said the exact reverse. He takes as his thesis the truism that "there is a non-ideological aspect to literature," as if I had maintained otherwise. In place of rational debate we are then offered a melodramatic choice between freedom and bondage, American liberty and "Soviet insane asylums." Recourse to these all too familiar tactics does not inspire much confidence in the author's thoughtfulness. As Karl Mannheim observed, "Those persons who talk most about human freedom are those who are actually most blindly subject to social determination, inasmuch as they do not in most cases suspect the profound degree to which their conduct is determined by their interests."

The only intellectually serious argument I can find in your three letters is Hyman's claim that formalist criticism is justified by the very nature of literature. Citing Yeats and Eliot, he reiterates the formalist position that literature escapes altogether from emotions, creating "something that has nothing to do with action or desire." If this is so, he deduces, I was ill-advised to place such heavy emphasis on social and psychological