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Restoration Satire



English satire flourished during the latter half of the seventeenth century. There were imitators of the Roman satirists, Horace and Juvenal, writers of the traditional verse satire, and those writing in prose who used satire as a weapon in various political and religious controversies. This last is the major difference between Restoration satire and the earlier Elizabethan and Jacobean. There is a definite preference during this period for attacking the personalities of the day or one's adversary personally rather than holding up certain human types (for example, the fop) to ridicule.

This collection, because of its emphasis on the historical rather than the literary, lacks good examples of close imitators of the Roman satirists, although Gold's *Love Given Over* uses a theme common to the Roman satirists. Furthermore, many of the Restoration satirists use allusions from the Classical tradition in their works.

There are, however, several examples of the traditional verse satire. Many of these works are eighteenth century reprints rather than first editions. Dryden, Oldham, and Rochester are among those represented. Oldham's *Spenser's Ghost*, in fact, fulfills the narrowest definition of satire—a poem in which prevailing follies or vices are held up for ridicule. Oldham's folly is that of attempting to be a poet, despite all the difficulties listed.

The greater share of the seventeenth century satires are in prose and follow the broader definition of a satire as "biting wit, irony, or sarcasm used to expose vice or folly". These prose satires have no particular style. They can be mock wills, funeral sermons, or allegories veiling their point in a story, or even a vindication which ridicules rather than praises. These satires often have a bitter and violent edge to them since they are generally designed as attacks on specific individuals. For this reason, they are often difficult to understand since they assume the reader is acquainted with contemporary events and people. Some, like *The Sick Popes Last Will and Testament*, can be appreciated with little knowledge of the period, while others aimed at Titus Oates or Roger L'Estrange require some knowledge of the events of the time in order for them to be appreciated.

Satire in all of its various forms played a major role in England during this period. In addition, it influenced the English satirists of the next century, men such as Swift and Pope.

This pamphlet contains works by two of the better known satirists of the seventeenth century. The first work, *MacFlecknoe* by John Dryden, is written in a mock epic style and may have served as a model for Pope's *Dunciad*. In *MacFlecknoe*, Dryden attacks only one rival, Thomas Shadwell, a fellow author and one time friend of Dryden's whose support of the Whigs led to a bitter feud between him and Dryden.

The second work, *Spenser's Ghost*, is by John Oldham. Oldham was probably the leading satirist of his day and he demonstrates why in this playful satire on the profession of the poet. In this poem, Spenser's shade returns to warn Oldham against becoming a poet, and lists all the pitfalls of the profession such as lack of rewards and respect. The shade's words fall on deaf ears for, as he points out, a man who succumbs to the Muse is a lost cause.

Dryden, John. *MacFlecknoe, a Poem: with Spenser's Ghost, Being a Satyr Concerning Poetry* by J. Oldham. London: Printed by H. Hills, and sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1709.

Gould, Robert. *Love Given Over, or, A Satyr Against the Pride, Lust, and Inconstancy, &c.: with Sylvia's Revenge, or, A Satyr Against Man, in Answer to the Satyr Against Women.* London: Printed and sold by H. Hills, 1710.

Rochester, John Wilmot, Earl of. *The History of Insipids, a Lampoon . . . with His Farewell, 1680: Together with Marvil's Ghost,* by Mr. Ayloff. London: Printed and sold by H. Hills . . . , 1709.

The Sick Pope's Last Will and Testament: with His Several Legacies Left to His Dear Children the Jesuites and Others. [London: 1680]

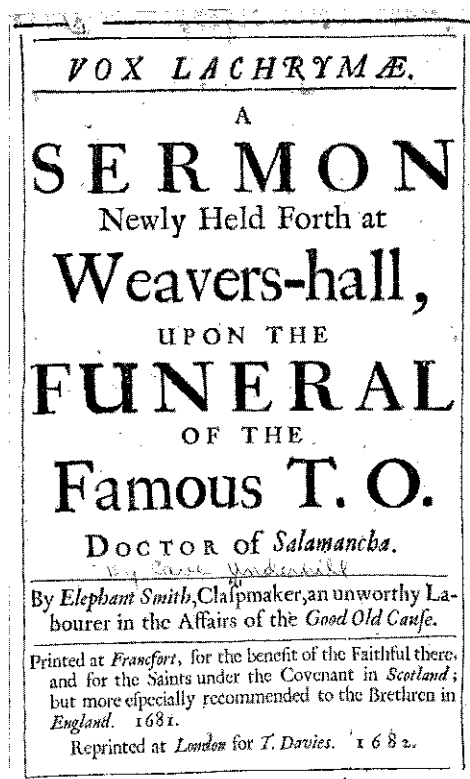
Women have frequently been a subject of satirists. Gould's poem, originally published in 1680, is a biting, occasionally obscene diatribe against women reminiscent of Juvenal's sixth satire. Gould drew not only on Classical tradition, but also on Biblical tradition, using Eve as the first example of the faults women have. Nor was Gould the only seventeenth century satirist to use women as a subject. Rochester, Oldham and many others found the female sex a fertile topic for their caustic wit. This 1710 edition of Gould's work also provides an example of the other side of the coin: satires against men. *Sylvia's Revenge* written by Richard Ames in 1688 in essence reverses the traditional charges levelled against women, (for example, inconstancy), and applies it to men. Ames, although seemingly defending women in *Sylvia's Revenge*, was no feminist and would later write *The Folly of Love*, a vitriolic attack on women.

This title contains three poems originally written in the seventeenth century. The first two are attributed to John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. Rochester in many ways epitomizes the dissolute, rakish courtiers who surrounded Charles II. Rochester's biting and often malicious wit earned him several enemies and occasionally his sovereign's disfavor. Here, Rochester has turned his brilliant wit on Charles II and the notables of his court.

The last poem, "Marvil's Ghost," is a satire on the Stuarts in general. Marvil refers to Andrew Marvell, a satirist of the period, who was an ardent republican and no friend of the Stuarts. John Ayloff, the author, was executed for his role in the Rye House Plot, an assassination plot against Charles II and his brother, the Duke of York.

A spectre which haunted seventeenth century England and caused many of the anti-Catholic outbursts was the fear that the Pope through some devious means would find a way to gain control over England, either by a Catholic succeeding to the throne or by an outright *coup d'etat*. The Pope was perceived by Englishmen to be a tyrannical foreign monarch who desired to enslave them. The will begins as follows: "Being very crasie in Body, but extremely sick in mind . . ." and continues with several bequests demonstrating many of the beliefs held about the Pope and the various Catholic Orders. It bequeaths to the Franciscans "six Fardels of hypocrisies, and seven chests of Franciscan lies," but to the hospitals within his jurisdiction a mere three half pence.

Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury had a long and illustrious career, serving not only as a councilor to Cromwell but also as Lord Councilor to Charles II. His championship of the Duke of Monmouth as a successor to Charles eventually led to his downfall. Nevertheless, the Earl of Shaftesbury whether holding office or not was a force to be reckoned with in politics for a large part of the seventeenth century. Shaftesbury's political involvement, particularly with Monmouth, gave the satirists ample material for their pen as these examples indicate. *Grimalkin, or The Rebel Cat* written in 1680 uses cat imagery to describe intrigues involving Charles II, Shaftesbury, and Monmouth. Shaftesbury is described as "the Cat as being believed by all a subtle, sly, shifting creature . . ." The last two also concern Shaftesbury's attempt to make the Duke of Monmouth the heir of Charles II. He is represented as the King of Poland, an empty title to the Englishmen of the period. Both satires also depict the men who supported Shaftesbury. For example, in *The Last Will and Testament of Anthony King of Poland*, John Dryden is depicted as his poet laureate.



Titus Oates was an unappealing man who styled himself D.D. of Salamanca. He came to prominence in 1678 as the man who uncovered a conspiracy among the Catholics to assassinate Charles II and establish a Catholic government. This so-called conspiracy and the hysteria it created became known as the Popish Plot. Although his testimony sent several to the gallows, Titus Oates was eventually shown to be a perjurer. His detractors used his invented title of Doctor of Salamanca as a means to ridicule him. They also turned to various forms of satire. In *The Modest Vindication &c.*, the satirist uses allegory to paint an unflattering view of Oates as a wandering hermit. Underhill, writing as Elephant Smith, the clasp-maker and unworthy labourer in the affairs of the good old cause, chose a funeral sermon as his method of attack. The sermon is complete with text (from *Hudibras Canto* rather than the Bible) and epitaph. Unfortunately, it was a bit premature as Oates did not die until 1705.

Grimalkin, or, The Rebel-Cat: a Novell Representing the Unwearied Attempts of the Beasts of His Faction Against Sovereignty and Succession Since the Death of the Lyons in the Tower. London: Printed for the author, 1681.

The Last Will and Testament of Anthony King of Poland. [London]: Printed for S. Ward, 1682.

A Modest Vindication of the Earl of S . . . y, in a letter to a Friend Concerning his Being Elected King of Poland. London: Printed for Smith, Bookseller in Chief to his Majesty Elect of Poland, 1681.

A Modest Vindication &c. (Not printed before 1678).

Underhill, Cave. *Vox Lachrymae: A Sermon Newly Held Forth at Weavershall, Upon the Funeral of the Famous T.O., Doctor of Salamanca.* London: Reprinted for T. Davies, 1682.

L'Estrange, Roger. *A Hue and Cry After Dr. T.O.* London: Printed for Alex. Banks, 1681.

L'Estrange, Roger. *Discovery Upon Discovery; in Defence of Doctor Oates Against B.W.'s Libellous Vindication of Him, in His Additional Discovery and in Justification of L'Estrange Against the Same Libel in a Letter to Doctor Titus Oates.* The second edition. London: Printed for Henry Brome . . . , 1680.

Mowbray, Lawrence. *The Portraiture of Roger L'Estrange Drawn to the Life as it was Taken in the Queens Chappel.* London: 1681.

The English Guzman, or, Captain Hiltons Memoirs: with Several Other of the Grand Informers. London: Printed for R. Oswel, 1683.

Musae Ludentes in Ludovicum XIV, Galliae Regem Cogomine Magnum Hostem Imperii Romano Germanici Maximum: Ab Aliquot Retro Annis Collectae & in Scenam Productae an MDCLXXXIX. 1689.

Atwood, William. *A Speech According to the Answerer's Principles, Made for Parliament at Oxford.* London: 1681.

Roger L'Estrange was more of a controversialist than a satirist. In his feuds with various opponents, he often used satire as a means to make his opponent appear ridiculous. L'Estrange's most bitterly fought contest was with Titus Oates and his fellow informers involved in the Popish Plot. L'Estrange was one of the few who sought to expose Oates during the height of the Popish Plot. In his attempt to expose Oates, satire was a weapon he often wielded. The first example is a seemingly light-hearted wanted notice for Oates. *A Hue and Cry for Dr. T.O.* gives a description of the habits and haunts of Oates. The second satire is not quite so light-hearted. Although purporting to defend Oates against the 'detractions' of a vindication of him, this work succeeds in blackening Oates's character even further.

This satire is a by-product of L'Estrange's controversy with Titus Oates. Lawrence, in his work, turns the tables on L'Estrange and satirizes him. He accused L'Estrange of being Catholic and involved with the Popish Plot, and in fact borrows from Miles Prance's *L'Estrange a Papist*, one of several works written to malign L'Estrange's character.

Informers were an unpleasant fact of life during the Restoration, particularly during the hysteria of the Popish Plot in which several innocent people were prosecuted simply on the word of informers. This work is a bitter indictment against those who informed against Catholics and dissenters. In addition, the author of this work has followed a common practice of the period. He has modelled his work on someone else's. The Guzman in the title refers to Guzman de Alfarache, the hero of a romance by Mateo Aleman. Aleman, like his English copier, included a sarcastic commentary with his hero's adventures.

France, particularly during the latter half of the seventeenth century, was England's bitterest adversary, so it is not surprising to find Louis XIV the subject of a satire. The satirist, drawing on Suetonius's *Twelve Caesars*, created a mocking biography of Louis XIV, complete with fulsome and overdone praise.

Originally appended to Atwood's *Ius Anglorum ab Antiquo*, this work formed part of Atwood's defense of William Peyt's *Antient Right of the Commons of England Asserted* against an attack by Robert Brady. Brady's reply to Peyt revealed his anti-parliamentarian views, which are ridiculed in this mockery of a scholarly work which is characterized by many unnecessary citations and Latin phrases.

William III ruled England from 1689 to 1702 and gained the respect, if not love of the English, particularly after the chaotic reign of James II whose Catholicism and high-handedness lost him the crown. Although satirical works on rulers are by no means uncommon, this work is unique, since it is in fact a eulogy for William III, while stating on nearly every page its intention to satirize the king. It is certainly a telling tribute to William III—a satire that cannot ridicule, but praises instead.

This satire, probably published at the very end of the seventeenth century, appears to be a small exhibition catalog listing works to be viewed. A closer look reveals that the artists are notables of Queen Anne's reign and the titles of their works are telling phrases about their character and accomplishments. For example, this exhibit includes *A Judas by L. B-11---broke*. Bolingbroke was infamous for his wavering between the Jacobites and the Whigs. Although contemporary readers may have found this work easy to decipher, the author's penchant for initials instead of full names and the emphasis on Classical allusions make it challenging to present-day readers.

A Satyr Upon King William: Being the Secret History of His Life and Reign. Third edition. London: 1703.

A Collection of Several Pictures by the Best Hands which were Lately to be Viewed Adjoining to the Court of Requests: And When the town Fills, Will Be Exhibited There Again to Publick View. [Great Britain: 17?].