

**AUTHOR:** DAVID GELINEAU

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Unlike other Restoration dramatists, John Dryden knew artistic and commercial success in both comedy and tragedy. Yet *Amphitryon*, one of his greatest comic successes, has received surprisingly little critical attention. As a play published shortly after the revolution and Dryden's fall from political favor, it portrays the standard attitude of "gloomy Tory satirists" for the next fifty years toward Lockean Whiggery. Despite the fall of his ideological center—the king—Dryden defiantly maintains in *Amphitryon* concerns that are in opposition to the emergent neoclassical ideology typified by the Whigs and their apologist John Locke. Dryden reminds the Whigs and all those who dream of a classicism of their naïveté. When *Amphitryon* was written, historical forces that arrayed themselves under the names of clarity, authenticity, and property were replacing the older Baroque order of the Stuart monarchy. Through a drama of identities, which for the Whigs was the primary form of property, the play unravels the pretense, or farce, of order that a belief in property, authenticity, and clarity erect; *Amphitryon* refuses to accept the naïve conception of authenticity and property of this new ideological system, and defiantly depicts as dupes or "cullies" (to use *Sosia's* word) those who refuse to acknowledge the pervasive force of absence and its attendant inauthenticity in the construction of all meaning.

Most of the criticism of this play touches lightly on its political context.(FN1) However, recently David Bywaters has given an excellent detailed study of the allegorical and political nature of the play that places the play's satirical targets firmly within the short time between the Glorious Revolution and the play's first performance.(FN2) In this paper, I would like to focus on an aspect of that political context—identity—that the play addresses and that leads me to a different conclusion about the allegory.

The unusualness of this particular play—a half-translation, half-adaptation farce—for its period in Restoration drama is the first thing to notice when attempting a reading of it. As Susan Staves remarks in her *Players' Scepters*, the drama of the Restoration as a whole can be seen as divided into three periods dictated by the shifts in political loyalty and changes in allegiances to the monarchy.(FN3) Most of the plays of *Amphitryon's* moment were "democratic romances" that applauded the new ideology of the Whigs' Glorious Revolution. Coming from the pen of a poet who supported the losing side of the revolution, Dryden's *Amphitryon* unsurprisingly fits into this scheme only with several conditions attached; in this era filled with serious romances that reflect a positive attitude toward the revolution, Dryden defiantly produced a farce. James Winn points out that Dryden, in his epilogue to Aphra Behn's play *The Widdow-Ranter*, which was written shortly before *Amphitryon*, implies that he thought William's government was exactly that, a farce: "he who sent me here, is positive, / This Farce of Government is sure to thrive."(FN4) Therefore, in reading *Amphitryon* one should keep in mind that Dryden was commenting upon the farcical condition of the immediate political situation, and he does so in an incredibly sophisticated and, in some sense, a prophetic way. Dryden was not looking back on the preceding age with scorn, as some critics have assumed,(FN5) but looking forward to the Whigs and the incredible changes their revolution was ushering in.

Dryden makes his engagement with his own political situation obvious in the first act of the play, which is almost entirely his own creation, totally diverging from Molière's

original. Dryden's first act is essentially a meditation upon the effects of arbitrary power, not merely of the gods but also of kings; this concept is entirely missing from Molière's prologue (which corresponds to the action in Dryden's first act). In this opening scene, Mercury makes clear that Jupiter is the classic arbitrary ruler of seventeenth-century Europe:

Phoeb. Since Arbitrary Pow'r will hear no reason, 'tis Wisdom to be silent.---  
 Merc. Why that's the Point; this same Arbitrary Power is a knock-down Argument; 'tis but a Word and a Blow; now methinks our Father speaks out like an honest bare-fac'd God, as he is; he lays the stress in the right Place, upon absolute Dominion: I confess if he had been a Man, he might have been a Tyrant, if his Subjects durst have call'd him to account: But you Brother Phoebus, are but a meer Country Gentleman, that never comes to Court; that are abroad all day on Horse-back, making Visits about the World; are drinking all Night, and in your Cups are still rayling at the Government: O these Patriots, these bumpkin Patriots, are a very silly sort of Animal.(FN6)

Dryden's invention of this scene slants the play toward an interpretation that must deal with the question of arbitrariness and political order raised by the Glorious Revolution, as the anti-Williamite "Grumbletonian" and "Patriot" references make explicit. Like so much of Dryden, the irony of the first act is complicated. We cannot assume that he is merely saying the opposite of what he means and, therefore, that we should look to Phoebus and, in the real political world, the "Patriots," with their wholehearted support for James II, as representing the satiric norm of the play, as Bywaters does.(FN7) While it is true that Dryden was, in a qualified way, a Jacobite, his support was never as naïve as that of the Irish Patriots, who, regardless of James's actions, supported his return and openly opposed William and Mary. In other words, Dryden is actually asking us to consider Phoebus and those he represents as "silly sort[s] of Animal[s]," just as, only four years before in *The Hind and the Panther*, he had considered fellow Catholics who had uncritically supported Father Petre as similarly silly.

If one were to pursue—as I will not—the naïve "Patriot" reading of the play's attitude to arbitrary power, which posits Dryden as Phoebus, the target of the play's satire would be Jupiter, arbitrariness personified; from this assumption, then, one might be able to construe that the arbitrary order Jupiter represents is being opposed to an authentic order that the satirist is implicitly supporting. Perhaps James Garrison's "ideals," which can only be returned by a new Hercules,(FN8) or quite simply as Bywaters's "truth,"(FN9) could be identified as this "authentic order." Granted, this is consonant with the voice of Phoebus in the play: rational, moralistic, authentic, and in opposition to the arbitrariness, deceit, and hypocrisy of Jupiter:

Phoeb. But what necessitates you to this Love,  
 Which you confess a Crime, and yet commit?  
 For to be secret makes not sin the less.

.....  
 Jup. I Love, because 'twas in the Fates I shou'd.

Phoeb. With reverence be it spoke, a bad excuse:

Thus every wicked Act in Heav'n or Earth,

May make the same defence; but what is Fate?

Is it a blind contingence of Events?

Or sure necessity of Causes linck'd,

That must produce Effects? or is't a Pow'r

That orders all things by superior Will,

Foresees his Work, and works in that foresight?

(I.i.87-101)

However, does the play ultimately confirm Phoebus's pedantic scholarliness? Doesn't Phoebus seem more of a parody and the play more of a satire upon his naïve belief in ideals and truth, amongst everything else? Bywaters, while asserting that Dryden is Phoebus and one of these "Patriot" Jacobites, unintentionally betrays a real difference between Dryden's play and the Jacobite rhetoric of the period, which consequently should distance Dryden from Phoebus's voice. Bywaters claims that "in both [Don Sebastian and *Amphitryon*] Dryden figures the political rivalry between William and James as an amorous rivalry the values of which may readily be transferred to a Jacobite view of the Revolution."(FN10) Quoting in a note from an article on the Jacobite writings in the period, Bywaters suggests that Dryden's portrayal of what happened between Alcmena, as England in the allegory, and Jupiter/William is somehow consonant with "the polemical and sensational image of rape" used repeatedly by the Jacobite propagandists.(FN11) However, is Alcmena's case a "sensational" rape? While the parallel to political events is necessary, Dryden is at pains to make Alcmena's case seem anything but. The play creates a situation where it is impossible to say just exactly what has happened to Alcmena. Is it rape? Was she true to "*Amphitryon*"? Who is *Amphitryon*? What is identity itself and how can it be secured? The play is asking us to apply these problems and questions to England. However, the dramatic situation Dryden presents makes the political situation too murky and problematic for the naïveté of Phoebus's voice to be able to address them, and thus makes the position of hysterical Jacobites who scream "rape" appear similarly naïve and silly. For Dryden, a return to James's rule would not be a return to an Edenic state where these questions would never occur. The play, as J. Douglas Canfield has observed, is an "[a]bsurdist satire" that "peels back the layers of illusion and grants us a glimpse of the abyss of meaninglessness that lies underneath man's verbal systems. It reveals as well the arbitrariness of those systems at the same time as it reveals their necessity."(FN12) The play is asserting a level of sophistication toward questions of meaning, truth, and their arbitrariness that Phoebus is not sophisticated enough to address.

So ultimately this more problematic reading of the "rape" should lead the reader back to the question, What should the audience's attitude be toward Jupiter's "sin"? The scene's development leaves little doubt that once Phoebus runs up against Jupiter, the former's logic of right and wrong no longer makes sense. Jupiter firmly enunciates the logic of the world that exists under the facade of Phoebus's ideals and that reveals itself in the remainder of the action of the play:

Jup. Fate is, what I

By vertue of Omnipotence have made it:

And pow'r Omnipotent can do no wrong:

Not to my self, because I will'd it so:

Nor yet to Men, for what they are is mine.

This night I will enjoy *Amphitryon's* Wife:

For, when I made her, I decreed her such

As I shou'd please to love. I wrong not him

Whose Wife she is; for I reserv'd my Right,

To have her while she pleas'd me; that once past,

She shall be his again.

(I.i.102-12)

It is important to remember that Phoebus's naïve sense of authenticity had political adherents on both sides of the contemporary ideological fence. For example, Jupiter's notion of order is directly opposed to that of the Cambridge Platonists, whose attempts to rationalize the universe and God later became much a part of the Whig way of

looking at the world. This strain of thought considered that God is motivated and, therefore, limited by goodness; consequently, he is merely a rational extension of goodness, not an arbitrary dictator of what goodness is.(FN13) Dryden's Jove behaves in the opposite fashion, constituting goodness through his will. As a result of Jove's pronouncement that his arbitrariness is supreme, Phoebus's voice and the competing Cambridgesque logic of authenticity it represents are banished from the world of the play:

Phoeb. If there be no such thing as right and wrong,  
Of an Eternal Being, I have done -----  
But if there be -----  
Jup. Peace thou disputing Fool.  
(I.i.119-22)

From this point on arbitrariness has its way. The world of the play is totally that of Jupiter's arbitrary will.

In an odd way, a peculiar elision goes on here that does not divide neatly along political lines; authenticity (i.e., the nonarbitrary) here, as represented by Phoebus, can be said to represent potentially either side in the political debate, the Whiggish Cambridge Platonists or the Jacobite Grumbletonians. The important distinction to make is not so much that the political alliances are being attacked, but rather that an attitude toward the question of authenticity and arbitrariness that either side of the political debate might adopt or be condemned for adopting is being attacked. Perhaps this schism is representative of the upheaval and confusion in loyalties, especially in the Tory ranks, that occurred when James left the throne vacant. But the most important thing to keep in mind is that Dryden is not presenting a naïve belief in truth, represented by Phoebus, as the moral norm of this satire.

Every relationship in Jupiter's political world demonstrates the completely arbitrary nature of the social order, the complete absence of "right and wrong, / Of an Eternal Being," the complete inability of any sense of an authentic order to establish itself. The play's many subplots are thematically united through their attempts to expose the cynical determination of the authentic in this arbitrary world. A metaleptic inversion of truth occurs in this world: over and over, instead of truth constituting power, power constitutes truth, or, as *Amphitryon* more colorfully puts it, "Nothing but the Truth, and the whole Truth, so help thee Cudgel" (III.i.46-7). Under the duress of a beating, Sosia recognizes that truth is determined by simple force and in the interest of those that apply the force: "I am but a Slave, and you are Master; and a poor Man is always to lye, when a rich Man is pleas'd to contradict him" (III.i.6-7), a statement that he repeats later in the play (III.i.137-40). Phaedra knows that only the rich and powerful are beyond being held to any truth because it is they who determine what truth is (V.i.382), just as Bromia knows there is no point in swearing by any God except Jupiter because he is the most powerful (I.ii.48-51) and thus the arbiter of truth. And Justice, a presumed source of inviolable truth, is replaced with a mobile form of justice administered by "Justice-brokers" who sell it to the highest bidder, as does Judge Gripus (IV.i.316). These "vices" are all caused by the inability to secure any sense of authenticity, any sense of the nonarbitrary. Nothing is permanent or secure in this world, even what is normally considered beyond the human; as in the Hobbesian vision of the world, everything is in motion. Even the night and day can be rearranged (I.i) in order for Jupiter to have a long night with Alcmena, thereby undermining the foundations of presumably the most stable and permanent realities.

But at the center of Jupiter's assault on the nonarbitrary is, above all, the question of the stability of personal identity. On this point the crux of the drama plays itself out, not so much on economic or moral questions, or at least not as obviously so. The play

is, after all, based on the errors that occur in misreading someone's identity for someone else's and its attendant disorder in *Amphitryon's* household. Order functions on the assumption of the naturalness of its own dictates, the assumption, as Phoebus puts it, that there is "right and wrong" that is linked to "an Eternal Being." The arbitrary is a dangerous and external force that is by definition inimical to social order. Morality and economics are merely secondary in importance to the stability of the world of the play when compared to the more privileged problem of subjectivity. "Subject," as Michel Foucault points out, has two meanings: "subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge." (FN14) These two terms are intimately related and form the basis for the ideological drama of the play, as both Sosia and *Amphitryon* demonstrate when their identity is cast radically into doubt and they learn the impossibility of being a "proper subject."

In a hierarchical system such as England's in the 1690s, identity is even more obviously a political question than it is for Foucault in the twentieth century; the concept of identity as obviously linked to political order is not an anachronistic imposition on the period. For example, as Locke's system for government was entirely based on property, so was his definition of identity. In fact, identity was the primary form of property. James Tully summarizes Locke's position this way: "The free man does not make his person in thinking and acting. The criterion of personhood is the consciousness which always accompanies thought and action. Consciousness is not made; it is something for which a man is obliquely responsible in virtue of thinking and acting. As agents, we have consciousness and this 'makes everyone to be what he calls self' (2.27.9). Nonetheless, since the identity of a person is consciousness of thought and action, and the thought and action are his workmanship, it is his consciousness, not another's, and so his property. Therefore, nobody has any right to it but he himself (2.27, 1.52)." (FN15) From this assumption, all Locke's theories about property and political order flowed. This, of course, was the philosophical basis for Whig politics. Furthermore, it is important to remember that Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* and *Essay concerning Human Understanding* were published in 1690, the same year as Dryden's *Amphitryon*, and that the *Two Treatises* had been circulating in various forms since the Exclusion Crisis, almost ten years before.

This is not to say that there is a direct cause-and-effect link between Locke's two publications, which Dryden may or may not have read, and *Amphitryon*. I only wish to assert that the question of identity was a political issue or, at least, was identified with fundamental political philosophizing, and, therefore, it was likely to be considered by Dryden as well as his audience as a political question, not merely a psychological or philosophic one. Locke was as much an effect of the political forces he supported as one of their causes, and the desire to "fix identity" in the way that Locke attempted was part of a larger ideological shift that Dryden can be seen to oppose. (FN16)

As Felicity Nussbaum chronicles, the self that Locke and those of his persuasion were trying to construct was one that attempted to remove a person from his or her immediate social and historical moment and to provide a transcendent, ahistorical self; not coincidentally, this change of identity was often opposed on the same grounds that the growing influence of money was opposed: the dissolution or effacement of relations that were historical and social in nature. Summarizing one anonymous opponent of Locke's, Nussbaum writes, "Arguing against Locke, the author bases his urgent refutation on the necessity for gaining a life after death. Quite specifically he fears the implications of Locke's ideas will bring an end to moral obligation, to debts and gratitude, to rewards and punishment. Thus, according to this author, both personal salvation and the social contract that binds individuals requires [sic] them to possess firm notions of identity and obligation." (FN17) Not that all those who opposed Locke did

not want to fix identity as well, but the identity they would fix placed the person within a specific political-historical frame. Both sides of the argument recognized the political implications of a realignment away from what Tories would call a "substantialist" view of identity toward that of identity defined by consciousness, as touted by Locke; despite Locke's claim that he was attempting to create a stable self,(FN18) his opponents feared that he had created a self that was "a mere external imaginary Denomination, and nothing at all in reality."(FN19) For their part, the Tory substantialists viewed human identity as "made up of both mind and body, material and immaterial substance. The immaterial substance or soul is by no means the whole person in this construct, but it is that indivisible and immortal part of him which assures his personal continuity and ontological permanence."(FN20) According to John Sitter, this unification of the material and the immaterial is the defining distinction that the Tories maintained against their Whig counterparts, whom the Tory writers saw as engaged in the flighty abstracting of reality that he calls "abstract materialism."(FN21) Contrarily the Tory elements in society, he says, always return to the body in an attempt to reunite it with any abstractions: "Augustan wit calls attention in many ways to the bodies of people and things to insist that the truly human environment be recognized. It tends to portray the desire to transcend or penetrate the surfaces of bodies available to humans as in fact the most hazardous superficiality."(FN22)

In opposition to the substantialist "self," Locke said "that self is not determined by Identity ... of Substance ... but only by Identity of consciousness."(FN23) Thus Locke, believing he has moved to something more profound, attempts to dispose of the body in his definition of identity as if it was merely a trivial surface.

The "hazardous superficiality" of the Whigs is the central preoccupation of the satire in Dryden's play, the hazard lying in rejecting the surfaces of human existence, with all their arbitrariness. As opposed to the Whig superficiality, the whole world of the play learns that meaning exists only in surfaces; thus, the characters of this world learn to acknowledge the importance of these surfaces and to admit one's inability to move beyond them. In the play, Sosia starts out believing that surfaces are trivial, but he loses this naïve belief in his encounter with Mercury. Sosia, like *Amphitryon*, begins with the certainty that his identity is inalienable, his property, as a Whig would say. Eventually, Sosia learns that one's identity is entirely superficial, something that can be arbitrarily repeated successfully.

Sosia first achieves this perception, then *Amphitryon*, and consequently the whole world of the play. To begin with, these two central characters experience an impossibility in the Lockean conception of identity as consciousness because their doubling violates identity's status as property. Locke claims, "For I have truly no Property in that, which another can by right take from me, when he pleases, against my consent."(FN24) Sosia learns, in very forceful terms, that his own identity is arbitrary, not authentic or proper, therefore not truly his property; it literally is taken from him in his encounter with Mercury.

This theft of the proper occurs through language, pointing to the intimate connection between identity, its linguistic construction, and, therefore, the necessarily constitutive capacity for arbitrary doubling and its attendant inauthenticity. Upon first meeting Mercury, Sosia is confused and scared, but he soon gathers up the courage to interrogate the god upon his claim of identity. Mercury answers each of Sosia's questions, creating a verbal representation of Sosia's life. Only through this representation in language (granted, the visual appearance is important, but it also is merely another text, and, one might add, not the one that convinces Sosia that there are two of him) is Mercury able to pass himself off as Sosia, to create himself as Sosia. At the end of the interrogation Sosia admits, "Well, you are Sosia; there's no

denying it; but what am I then? for my Mind gives me, I am some body still, if I knew but who I were" (II.i.278-80). Sosia's authentic sense of self has disappeared to such an extent that he can only constitute his identity through the "Other": "I'll rather beat it back upon the Hoof to my Lord Amphitryon; to see if he will acknowledg me for Sosia; if he does not, then I am no longer his Slave; there's my Freedom dearly purchas'd with a sore drubbing; if he does acknowledge me, then I am Sosia again" (II.i.295-9). In the most personal and intimate sense, what is true, immediate, and proper in this world—one's identity—becomes completely decentered and arbitrary, inauthentic and absent, determined by the whim of others, who in turn will judge Sosia's identity on the same textual evidence that has led him to doubt it. No abstract space outside of language exists for any one to refer to for stable meaning.

Language and its constitutive role in this system of the arbitrary construction of meaning are directly acknowledged by Sosia. While he tries to explain to Amphitryon what he has gone through in his encounter with Mercury, Sosia must resort to the metaphors of rhetoric:

Sos. Have not you seen a Six-pence split into two halves, by some ingenious School-Boy: which bore on either side the Impression of the Monarchs Face? now as those moieties were two Three-pences, and yet in effect but one Six-pence — Amp. No more of your villanous Tropes and Figures. Sos. Nay, if an Orator must be disarm'd of his similitudes —

(III.i.96-102)

One is invited to add, "he can say nothing." The villainy of tropes and figures is that they are also arbitrary, and yet they are absolutely necessary; language's similitudes make two of one thing. And, in turn, it is precisely this constitutive possibility of language that has made two of Sosia.

Steven N. Zwicker, in his *Politics and Language in Dryden's Poetry*, claims that disguise in political discourse in this period was a symptom of this very insecurity about meaning itself and ultimately a function of a changing attitude toward language. In other words, the insecurity about identity was a function of new attitudes toward language. Language was seen as merely arbitrary, displaced from its earlier status as divinely motivated, and this view led to an overarching concern for disguise in the political realm.(FN25) Dryden makes this link between language, identity, and politics explicit in *Amphitryon*, linking them to the constitutive necessity of disguise. For Dryden, in an arbitrary world, fixity of meaning is only ever guaranteed by disguise or fiction, whether one calls it the "Sovereign" as Thomas Hobbes does, or "the logos of the poet, that necessary angel of supreme fiction" as Canfield does.(FN26)

In their discussion of metaphors and tropes, Sosia and Amphitryon are engaged, in a slightly disguised form, in the famous debate about the nature of language and metaphor and their use and abuse that the Royal Society started and to which, of course, Locke returned. Behind this debate and its attitude toward "Tropes and Figures" were two competing conceptions of reality and the self. Locke distrusted metaphors and tropes precisely because they stood in the way of "truth."(FN27) Despite his own proscriptions against such a possibility for language elsewhere in the *Essay*, a naïve transparency of language was the ideal for Locke's theory of knowledge because the arbitrary nature of language destabilizes human knowledge. As Sitter says, Locke attempts "to put the knower and the known in a direct relation, unmediated by community or language" in the *Essay's* definition of knowledge.(FN28) The pure presence that the Lockean vision of the self asserts is undermined in the play because language is demonstrated to be constitutive of identity; language is not a transparent element that gives access to reality; it is reality. In Sosia's encounter with language as identity, Dryden is drawing Sosia—and in turn the audience—away from

the Whiggian delusion that meaning is unmediated by community and language. This impulse back into the rhetoricity of language, away from its transparency, is identified by Sitter as generally a literary observation most typical of Tory satirists but also shared by a Whig writer such as Joseph Addison.(FN29) Locke and, more importantly, those of his political persuasion were pursuing the delusion that language was transparent and, therefore, that the self was stable. One only needed to be in contact with one's own consciousness to be truly oneself. Even if language had some part in identity, it could always be ignored because language was potentially transparent. Contrarily for Dryden, language and identity are based on similitudes; in some sense one is only like oneself; therefore, the one self-identical self is impossible. Identity, as a function of language and, of course, a series of other social and historical factors, is always open to the possibility of arbitrary doubling. Consciousness as the stable source of identity is denied; the materiality of language will always interrupt this stability.

In the play, everything that was presumed to be guaranteed by its own self-presence has found itself the victim of iterability. The simple possibility of mimesis undermines the most intimate and central construct of personal and political order: identity. The gods are able to "become" any character they choose because they know that all identity is constituted socially, in the iterable world of language, not in self-present consciousness. All structures of self-present meaning, starting with identity and radiating out toward the larger social order, come to be exposed for the fictions of authenticity that they are. To use Jacques Derrida's term, everything in the play falls prey to the forces of *différance*. However, Dryden does not embrace this force with Derrida's enthusiasm. For Dryden, the collapse of all sources of ideal meaning leads to the conclusion that what he and his contemporaries would call arbitrary power, here personified by Jupiter and the lesser gods, inevitably structures social order. Those who claim otherwise are engaged in the greatest of political farces and are opening up the possibility that society could collapse into the Hobbesian world of man against man if the surfaces that protect that world, though they are only disguises and fictions, are pulled down.

With its puzzling, and what most critics consider morally dark, resolution, the last scene of the play rips the lid off the delusion of motivated and authentic order and affirms the impossibility of the authentic, the proper. Here Jupiter appears to Alcmena and Amphitryon, and reveals the falsehood he has perpetrated upon them, doing so in a glorious verse speech that is attended by all theatrical tricks available (i.e., noise and machines). The elevation of tone is to set Jupiter off from the ridiculous farce that he has been engaging in up to this point. Jupiter raises the insignificant act of his own lust into a grandiose metaphysical delusion. This petty, lustful, bullying god dresses his actions in the farce of metaphysics, poetry being one of its mainstays. Yet the preceding action's obvious irony will not let this voice go unchallenged. Mercury and Sosia respond in prose to Jupiter's rather poetic appearance. Sosia, having accepted the gods' revelation of the arbitrary nature of order, points to the false covering of reality that metaphysics provides: "Our Sovereign Lord Jupiter is a sly Companion; he knows how to gild a bitter Pill" (V.i.411-2). Then Mercury points out the comically arbitrary foundation of Jupiter's claim to virtuous order and suggests the only solution to combat the arbitrary construction of meaning, silence: "Keep your Congratulations to your selves, Gentlemen: 'Tis a nice point, let me tell you that; and the less that is said of it, the better. Upon the whole matter, if Amphitryon takes the favour of Jupiter in patience, as from a God, he's a good Heathen" (V.i.423-7).

At the end of the play, the nondivine characters have a perception that is essentially different from what they started out with and that creates a permanent wound in the

naïve belief in motivated order; the ending is not a comic reintegration of the characters into society but a deconstruction, leaving all the parts of the machine of order exposed. At one level the text interrogates the Whiggian order and its naïve assumptions but then suggests silence, the end of interrogation, as the solution. The play in a sense is a neutron bomb: the world that was assumed to be in place at the play's beginning is silently destroyed and only the shell of that order is left standing at the end. Or perhaps more accurately, it points out that the shell was all that was ever there. There is a reaffirmation of order, but an order of a very different kind from the naïve Whiggian one that was assumed to be operating at the play's beginning. The structure of social order is no longer believed to be motivated by Phoebus's "right and wrong" in the abstract, transcendent realm of the "Eternal Being." Rather, as Jupiter, the representative of that "ideal" realm, declares, all is arbitrary, all is inauthentic. Truth of whatever kind is found in the historically contingent now, not in a Lockean "abstract materialism."

It is fitting that Sosia gets to deliver the message of the play; buffeted about because of his delusory belief, Sosia has learned the superficiality of all things to the point of being able to don verse, to talk in a voice other than his own "proper" voice, and enunciate the lesson of inauthenticity: "In fine, the Man, who weighs the matter fully, / Wou'd rather be the Cuckold, than the Cully" (V.i.443-4). Sosia is giving us the option between knowledge and ignorance, but not the comforting knowledge of a reinstated authentic order, rather the knowledge of its impossibility. One can know the inauthenticity and historical contingency that structures everything, in other words, be the cuckold as Amphitryon learns to be;(FN30) or one can be the cully, completely deceived by the structural inauthenticity of meaning, and foolishly believe in an ideal realm that grants meaning to this one. No return to the ideal is possible in this world, and as Mercury underlines in applauding Amphitryon and Alcmena's reaction to Jupiter's news, silent obedience is the wisest response to this hollow order. Being the cuckold is the subject's proper position to authority.(FN31)

Dryden's attitude toward the kingship of England, as represented in the allegory by the Jupiter/Amphitryon plot, is emblematic of Dryden's attitude toward meaning and how it is fundamentally opposed to the new classicism. An obvious and important link exists between the world of the play and the political scene in England in the early '90s, that of the doubled ruler: Amphitryon and Jupiter in the play, William and James in England. This instance of the political "sosies," or doubles, was as much an issue for the country as it is for Dryden's play. And the questions about order it reveals are equally profound in the two worlds. The play can be seen as a political allegory of England's situation and Dryden's place within it, and as a meditation upon a kind of power that is threatened and confused by the same complication that England was experiencing due to Whig naïveté. Instead of being the symbol of the true motivated relation between the divine and the human, that link between Phoebus's "right and wrong" of the "Eternal Being" and the temporal world of man, the king was obviously an ambiguous and arbitrary sign. The kingship looked less upward toward an ideal than downward to the constitutive arbitrariness of the social order which existed in the failure of that ideal, in the constitutive inability of any stable, abstract correspondences.

A reinstatement of stable correspondences is the hallmark of all classicisms. The search for the unmediated contact with absolute values that attempts to escape the historical and its attendant arbitrariness is obviously what Locke proposed, and to call Locke and the period he ushered in neoclassical is in no way inappropriate. However, it is unacceptable to use such a term for Dryden, who in every way opposed Locke's politics and beyond that the whole ideological complex that supported them. Against the clarity and unmediated contact with transhistorical truth that classicism proposes,

Dryden's opposition is founded upon an attack on the presumption of the neoclassical model of understanding, an understanding that moves man outside his social and historical place. Earlier in this essay I typified Dryden's own position as Baroque. In the simplest terms, a recent critic defines the Baroque in opposition to the Classical: "By 'Classical' I basically mean the categories of judgments that are strongly oriented toward stably ordered correspondences. By 'Baroque,' on the other hand, I mean those categories that powerfully 'excite' the ordering of the system, that destabilize part of the system by creating turbulence and fluctuations within it and thus suspending its ability to decide on values."(FN32) The clarity of neoclassicism and its presumed stability of meaning are what *Amphitryon* ridicules. What Dryden's Baroque Jupiter perpetrates upon *Amphitryon* and *Alcmena* creates the inability to decide on the morality of the issue. Is *Alcmena* an adulterer? Was she "true"? To what? This instability of values, Dryden is pointing out, is not some effaceable aberration of meaning, but a constitutive function of his metaphysics, one that the characters must learn to live with by the end of the play.

The instability of value that was a function of Baroque culture and that culture's constitutive disregard for property affected not only the economic aspects of life. The insecurity of property was also accepted at the heart of all value—personal, economic, and social—during the Baroque. Yet when Dryden wrote this play, the Baroque was ending, and property in all its forms was being redefined, whether in the economic sense, by the Whigs and their monied interests; in the philosophic sense, by thinkers such as Locke; or in the closely related sense of propriety, which was being enforced by most elements in English society, from puritanical voices like Jeremy Collier's to King William's (in a speech to Parliament, William declared that the end of the War of the League of Augsburg had left him time to "discourage profaneness and debauchery").(FN33) According to Lord Godolphin, King James, at the other political extreme, considered the new views about property subversive and the primary reason for the failure of his government and the ensuing revolution. Godolphin, who claimed to have seen the letter that James II wrote just before his second and final escape from England, reported that James "threw the blame of all that had happened on the malice of William and on the blindness of a nation deluded by the specious names of religion and property."(FN34) For a Baroque culture, the concept of property was closer to that enunciated by Hobbes: "for they say, that justice is the constant will of giving to every man his own. And therefore where there is no own, that is no propriety, there is no injustice; and where there is no coercive power erected, that is, where there is no commonwealth, there is no propriety."(FN35) Here, as in *Amphitryon*, power, not the self, is what constitutes property. Property is not some innate human reality, as it becomes for the Whigs.

Restoration comedy has often been condemned for its impropriety and immorality, but these are only symptoms of the general lack of property in the age, or at least a completely different concept of property from what we have now. For example, *The Country Wife*, while as "improper" as Dryden's *Amphitryon*, is like Dryden's play in a more profound way. The characters who are rewarded learn not to be "cullies" of the theatrics of order; they look beyond the deceitful authenticity of order and are cuckolded—i.e., forced to maintain fidelity to something that is false—by it. What is "proper" in these dramatic worlds is problematic and left so at the end of the plays.

Contrary to the Whigs' political world, in Dryden's, theatrics, or an essential lack of correspondences, were constitutive of order; in the next century, theatrics were looked upon as disruptive and dangerous, or the opposite of proper order. Neoclassical writers point to the possibility of an authentic or proper order; for Dryden, the search for the proper essence of a thing and then allowing that essence to dictate its place in order

were impossibly naïve. Amidst all the doublings in *Amphitryon*, the theatrical is the only possibility. For the neoclassicist, the theatrical obfuscates the authentic order of society; in Dryden, it is the authentic order of society. The self-presence and authenticity that guarantees meaning in the eighteenth century is meaningless in Dryden's play, where we see enacted the privileging of the appearance over reality, signifier over the signified. In the Baroque, therefore, all forms of meaning are constructed in the same way the theater constructs its meaning. Meaning is necessarily theater, not merely theatrical.

Regarding the dramas of the period specifically, Staves observes the same move toward classicism and its desire for a stability of meaning outside history. In the plays of the '90s, a more "proper" and benign form of nature, not a mere reinstatement of traditional morality, replaces the ruthless Hobbesian man-against-man view that dominated earlier Restoration drama. Staves claims that "[t]he nature by which [man] is to order his behavior is not a transcendent and hierarchical nature of abstract forms, but an immanent nature of the passions and sensations familiar to him within himself." (FN36) But Dryden obviously and pointedly is rejecting this general ideological trend to classicism. Dryden's Jove remains a Hobbesian character of absolute power, not the Lockean god of benevolent reason. Dryden remained an eloquent spokesman of the Baroque sensibility, at odds with the new naïve conception of property and the naïve belief in stable values. Whether with material objects or with individuals, once property is called into doubt then all value becomes arbitrary, as the example of Sosia's loss of his "proper" name in the arbitrary reshuffling that Mercury engages in shows.

*Amphitryon* enunciates the Tory position toward power that would become typical of later Tory satirists, who opposed the overwhelming ideological change that the Whigs represented. *Amphitryon* establishes a dichotomy between the Baroque cuckolds and the neoclassical cullies. The Whig concept of property, the linchpin of their new authentic order, is dismissed at the level of identity; order is only "a Word and a Blow," as Mercury says, facade and force. Whether one can recapture an authentic moral world and determine the correspondence between human behavior and Phoebus's "Eternal Being" is the question the play dismisses, leaving the audience with the option of either being cuckolds or cullies of language, either knowingly upholding the facade of identity it creates or being the unwitting victims of its deceitful authenticity.

#### ADDED MATERIAL

David Gelineau's current research, of which this article is a part, focuses on Dryden's relationship to the Baroque.

#### FOOTNOTES

1 For example, see Frank Harper Moore's *The Nobler Pleasure: Dryden's Comedy in Theory and Practice* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 207; Abdel-Rahmen Shaheen, "Satiric Characterization in John Dryden's Later Comedies," *Forum H* 17, 2 (Spring 1979): 2-10, 6; Laura Brown, *English Dramatic Form, 1660-1760: An Essay in Generic History* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), p. 35; and Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, *Producible Interpretations: Eight English Plays, 1675-1707* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1985), p. 220.

2 David Bywaters, *Dryden in Revolutionary England* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991). As Bywaters notes, James D. Garrison and Irvin Ehrenpreis also have observed the political allegory in the play but do so with only limited thoroughness (pp. 177, 180). See Garrison's "Dryden and the Birth of Hercules," *SP* 77, 2 (Spring 1980): 180-201; and Ehrenpreis's *Acts of Implication: Suggestion and Covert Meaning in the Works of Dryden, Swift, Pope, and Austen* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1980), pp. 39-42.

- 3 Susan Staves, *Players' Scepters: Fictions of Authority in the Restoration* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1979), p. 51.
- 4 John Dryden, epilogue to *The Widdow-Ranter, or The History of Bacon in Virginia*, by Aphra Behn, lines 5-6; quoted in James Anderson Winn, *John Dryden and His World* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1987), p. 438.
- 5 See, for example, Moore, p. 207, and Shaheen, p. 6.
- 6 Dryden, *Amphitryon; or, The Two Sosias*, in *Plays: "Albion and Albanus," "Don Sebastian," "Amphitryon,"* vol. 15 of *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. Earl Miner, textual ed. George R. Guffey, associate ed. Franklin B. Zimmerman (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976), pp. 221-318, l.i.131-43. All further references to the play are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text by act, scene, and line numbers.
- 7 Bywaters, pp. 62-3.
- 8 Garrison, pp. 195-6.
- 9 Bywaters, p. 63.
- 10 Bywaters, p. 66.
- 11 Bywaters, p. 181 n. 42, quoting Howard Erskine-Hill, "Literature and the Jacobite Cause," in *Ideology and Conspiracy: Aspects of Jacobitism, 1689-1759*, ed. Eveline Cruickshanks (Edinburgh: James Donald Publishers, 1982), pp. 49-69, 49.
- 12 J. Douglas Canfield, *Word as Bond in English Literature from the Middle Ages to the Restoration* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), p. 281.
- 13 For an example of this sentiment, see Staves's quotation from Ralph Cudworth, p. 269.
- 14 Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," afterword to *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, 2d edn. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 208-26, 212.
- 15 James Tully, *A Discourse on Property: John Locke and His Adversaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980), p. 109; parenthetical references are to John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*.
- 16 Felicity A. Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1989), p. 38.
- 17 Nussbaum, p. 46.
- 18 Christopher Fox, *Locke and the Scriblerians: Identity and Consciousness in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988), p. 30.
- 19 Samuel Clarke, quoted in Fox, p. 19.
- 20 Fox, p. 15.
- 21 John Sitter, *Arguments of Augustan Wit* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), p. 143.
- 22 Sitter, p. 124.
- 23 Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 345.
- 24 Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1960), pp. 138-9.
- 25 Steven N. Zwicker, *Politics and Language in Dryden's Poetry: The Arts of Disguise* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984), pp. 7-8.
- 26 Canfield, p. 310.
- 27 For example, Locke's oft-quoted passage on metaphoric language in *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, p. 508.
- 28 Sitter, p. 59.
- 29 Sitter, p. 70.
- 30 From the historical reference to cuckolding that Brown makes—the public, free use that nobles made of common citizens' wives (the nobles were not afraid of the

husbands due to the inferior social standing, and the practice was widely acknowledged) (p. 35)—and from the ending of the play, where *Amphitryon* knows that he is cuckolded and maintains the knowledge in complete silence, I think one must read the cuckold reference to mean one who knows he is being cuckolded. Certainly that is *Amphitryon*'s condition when the comment is made. This conclusion assures that "cuckold"'s opposition to "cully," which can only mean dupe, makes sense.

31 Unlike Garrison, Bywaters, and Canfield, I see this attitude toward the subject and his silence as constant in Dryden, not as a change after the revolution. This attitude was in Dryden both before—as in the ending of *Religio Laici*, or *A Laymans Faith* (in *The Poems and Fables of John Dryden*, ed. James Kinsley [London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962], pp. 273-93, line 450)—and after—as in the preface to his translation of *Virgil* (William J. Cameron, "John Dryden's Jacobitism," in *Restoration Literature: Critical Approaches*, ed. Harold Love [Methuen and Company: London, 1972], pp. 277-308, 289)—the Glorious Revolution.

32 Omar Calabrese, *Neo-Baroque: A Sign of the Times*, trans. Charles Lambert (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1992), pp. 25-6.

33 Quoted in David Ogg, *England in the Reigns of James II and William III* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), p. 440.

34 Thomas Babington Macauley, *The History of England*, ed. Charles Harding Firth, vol. 3 (New York: AMS Press, 1968), p. 1242.

35 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Michael Oakeshott (New York: Macmillan, 1962), p. 113.

36 *Staves*, p. 302.