

“Judging Well”: John Dryden’s *The State of Innocence and Fall of Man*

By Nicholas Escobar

In his preface to the opera *Albion and Albanus* (1685), John Dryden lays out his “rules” for writing an opera. He writes that “the necessity of double rhymes, and ordering of the words and numbers for the sweetness of the voice, are the main hinges on which an opera must move”. He continues by saying that this art is not taught, but inherited by Nature who imbues “the poet with that nicety of hearing, that the discord of sounds in words shall as much offend him as a seventh in music would a good composer.”¹ The “nicety of hearing” that Dryden describes forms a connection between the art of music and the art of poetry. The sound of words reflects the notes in music. Dryden places stress on the words themselves, writing that “it is my part to invent, and the musician’s to humour that invention” (278). Words come first and music follows. It is not surprising that while composing the lyrics for an opera, Dryden understands how music will later work with the words. He is on the lookout for the discord of certain words, and with a scientific eye, he is forced to “coin new words, revive some that are antiquated, and botch others” if the female or double rhyme are not “natural to our tongue” (278). The lyrics that Dryden has penned are therefore intimately connected to the music that would later be composed. The musician’s job to “humour” Dryden’s invention is an important one, because the music brings out and makes relevant the intense work and effort Dryden put into composing those words for the human voice. In judging a work without a musical score, the task to understand Dryden’s artistry is muddled. This is the case with Dryden’s 1674 semi-opera *The State of Innocence and Fall of Man*. In adapting John Milton’s 10,565 line poem *Paradise Lost* into a semi-opera, Dryden’s

¹ John Dryden, *Preface to Albion and Albanus*, pg. 277.

artistic vision was grand but it never truly came to fruition. Without the music specifically composed for Dryden's lyrics and stage directions, *The State of Innocence* cannot possibly be judged fairly. This is because there is a clear relationship between how verse is set to music. Therefore the songs that were meant to be sung in *The State of Innocence* are being viewed as just regular lines of verse. When analyzing these songs, scholars must have in mind how 17th century theatrical composers blending verse and music. The work can be understood through the rules that Dryden laid out in the *Preface to Albion and Albanus*. Dryden's invention can finally be humoured.

The State of Innocence was written in 1674, just seven months after John Milton's *Paradise Lost* was published, Dryden's semi-opera is a work written largely in rhyming heroic couplets. Milton's *Paradise Lost* was purposefully written in heroic verse *without* rhyme. And yet, in the same year that *Paradise Lost* was published in its second edition, Dryden wrote his operatic adaptation in rhyming heroic couplets. Dryden's work would not be published until February 12, 1677. The reason for this gap is that the play was never actually performed. In fact, it was never even completed. The libretto that Dryden published in 1677 features only one song with written lyrics. There is another moment between Act I and Act II in which Dryden references what a song could include, but never actually wrote lyrics for it. By 1677, Dryden knew his opera would never be performed. The text that exists today, though the title page proudly proclaims it as "AN OPERA", is merely an incomplete shadow of a production that never actually happened. The text itself is difficult to fully comprehend. It is both a static poem and also the skeleton of a larger spectacle. In performance, there would have been fabulous costumes, professional singers, a large orchestra (perhaps matching the 27 violins in Thomas Shadwell's 1674 production of *The Tempest*), elaborate painted sets, and machines to simulate

flying as well as numerous actors. This incomplete text is therefore a mere part of a larger whole, and should be viewed as such.

A crucial way of understanding *The State of Innocence* is to look at its historical context. Analyze how the work would have been viewed at its publication in 1677. As a whole, critics seem to agree that Milton's *Paradise Lost* had not yet achieved fame by the time Dryden registered *The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man* into the Stationers' Register in the spring of 1674. The first edition of *Paradise Lost* was supposedly finished in 1663 and first published in 1667, just 7 years prior. James Winn suggests in 1674 *Paradise Lost* was "a relatively new poem, regarded by many as an odd effusion from a notorious regicide."² Dustin Griffin believes that *The State of Innocence* was published well before *Paradise Lost* had won universal acclaim.³ Some critics believe that *The State of Innocence* actually drew attention to the recently published *Paradise Lost*.⁴ Therefore, Dryden's composition of *The State of Innocence* could also be considered an act of *canonization*. Dryden was claiming that *Paradise Lost* was a classic, just seven years after its publication.⁵ Not only that, but John Milton was still living at the time of the composition of *The State of Innocence*. He would not die until November of that same year. Dryden was declaring Milton's work worthy of its place in the English Canon. This act of canonization is even clearer in a 1719 letter by John Dennis:

² See James Winn's *John Dryden and His World* page 255.

³ Griffin, Dustin H. *Regaining Paradise: Milton and the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986. pg.144.

⁴ George McFadden writes in *Dryden's "Most Barren Period"*: "Dryden could not have expected to traffic upon the fame of *Paradise Lost*, which in seven years had not gone into a second edition; if anything, the notoriety (in manuscript) of his rhymed adaptation called attention to Milton's epic." (283-4). The second edition of *Paradise Lost* would be published in 1674. Anthony Welch writes in *Losing Paradise in Dryden's State of Innocence* then one possible reason for its composition is that its shorter form would make Milton's epic "more accessible to the Restoration reading public" (222). Winn agrees writing, "Dryden was generously popularizing Milton's work by making an operatic version, which might well have encouraged members of the audience to read the original" (225)

⁵ See Winn's *John Dryden and His World* page 265.

Mr. Dryden in his Preface before *The State of Innocence*, appears to have been the first... who discover'd in so publick a Manner an extraordinary Opinion of Milton's extraordinary Merit (76)⁶

Dennis believed that Dryden was the first to discover in a “publick” manner the brilliance of John Milton. This places a great amount of importance on the 1677 publication of *The State of Innocence*. In Dennis' view, Dryden helped popularize Milton to the masses.

Therefore declaring, as Anne Davidson Ferry does in her essay *Milton and the Miltonic Dryden*, that *The State of Innocence* is “an offensive vulgarization of *Paradise Lost*” is grossly misinformed (Ferry 21). The play was incredibly popular, for we know it was reprinted at least five times.⁷ Griffin goes as far as say that there were 11 editions of the play by 1703. Dryden himself references “many hundred copies” of the play “being dispersed abroad without [his] knowledge or consent: so that every one gathering new faults, it became at length a libel against [him];” (Dryden 178). These copies were manuscript copies, which shows the intense popularity *The State of Innocence* enjoyed in the 1670's. So the question of whether *Paradise Lost* was as popular in 1674 as it is today is undisputed: it was not. In fact, one could even say that *The State of Innocence* actually *helped* canonize Milton's epic, through Dryden's public appreciation of the work and his act of canonization through operatic adaptation.

Placing ourselves in the late 17th century illuminates the clear fact that *The State of Innocence* was a popular piece of writing. This is however still analyzing the semi-opera on the page. Turning to the hypothetical, we must consider if *The State of Innocence* could have been performed. Anthony Welch believes that the stage machinery was too elaborate to be produced

⁶ You can read Dennis's letters here:

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/ecco/004891057.0001.001/1:20?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>

⁷ See Marion H. Hamilton's in depth analysis of the five known republications of *The State of Innocence* in her essay “The Manuscripts of Dryden's ‘The State of Innocence and the Relation of the Harvard Ms to the First Quarto”.

in any theatre in London.⁸ Bernard Harris goes as far as to say *The State of Innocence* is a “dramatic adaptation of a work never intended for theatrical presentation” and that the work never “demanded such performance” (Harris 119). However, Curtis Price insists that the dramatic effects in the opening scene of the opera “would have been well within the capabilities of Restoration stagecraft.”⁹ James Winn writes that the play wasn’t performed probably due to financial reasons. This is far different from saying the work was not able to be performed.

James Winn looks on *The State of Innocence* as an accomplishment, commending Dryden’s radical compression of the material, while still managing to preserve the complexity of the story.¹⁰ The amount of care that Dryden put into the semi opera is also clear through his adaptation of Milton’s non-rhyming blank verse into rhyming heroic couplets. Most of the rhyming words are Milton’s, and many of the words were plucked from the middle of Milton’s lines.¹¹ This shows that the work was *not* hastily written.

There was a sense of artistic craft to *The State of Innocence*, and a large part of the artistry came from adapting blank verse into heroic couplets. It is, however, important to note that John Milton specifically wrote *Paradise Lost* in blank verse. In the second edition of *Paradise Lost*, published in 1674, Milton included a section entitled “The Verse” before the poem even begins. In it, he declares rhyme is “no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame meter” (Milton 255). He goes on to say that rhyme is “to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of

⁸ See Anthony Welch’s *Losing Paradise in Dryden’s State of Innocence* page 222

⁹ See Price’s book *Music in the Restoration Theatre*, page 11. Winn also agrees with this fact, stating in *John Dryden and His World* that while this opening scene “specifies four different kinds of music, flying on wires, and a rapid scene change” and “would certainly have required expensive outlays”, it was “no more elaborate than the opening of the operatic *Tempest*” (written by Thomas Shadwell in 1674), page 262.

¹⁰ See James Winn’s *John Dryden and His World* page 266.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 266.

syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings” (Milton 255). Rhyme, in Milton’s mind, represented barbarous shackles that were useless and against the ethics of poetry itself. The “fit quantity of syllables” limits a poet’s voice, and the sense is unbounded from verse to verse. Rhyme is simply an ornament, and an instrument of “lame meter”. This damning review is all the more intriguing with Milton’s addition of “no true *musical* delight”. This phrase is unexpected, because rhyme in itself is meant to be musical. Dryden certainly feels that there is a distinct musical quality to verse, as previously stated. But Milton believes the opposite. Rhyme is *not* a musical delight, and therefore should not be used in poetry.

But Dryden chose to do exactly what Milton was against. Not only did he write a piece of prose in rhyming heroic couplets, but his intended goal was to add music for the work. This was never accomplished, but it is important to understand how adding music to rhyming verse can have an effect on the poetry and the work as a whole. Mark Van Doran believes that poetry in itself has a musical quality. He sees poetry as words arranged in a manner that they can “produce the effects of music” (Van Doran 57). Therefore, poetry *without* added music can create the effect of music simply through prose. This effect can backfire however, when the author relies “upon a kind of musical attachment, both to furnish them with a constant pitch and to ring occasional changes suited to the sense” (57). In over-attempting to *add music* to the verse, the effect is distinctly unmusical.

John Dryden addresses the different critical views on verse on the stage in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*. One chief argument lies in the fact that “rhyme is unnatural in a play, because dialogue there is present the effect of sudden thought: for a play is the imitation of Nature” (91). The consequence is that “the hand of art will be too visible in it, against that maxim of all

professions...that it is the greatest perfection of art to keep itself undiscovered” (92.) Rhyming, in this critical perspective, displays the author’s craft, and therefore takes the audience out of the reality being represented on stage. A similar phenomenon is shown through French theatre in the period, which avoided set changes and large time jumps between acts, to show theatre in real time.¹² Another critical viewpoint concerns the nature of a *serious* play. Dryden writes that a serious play “is indeed the representation of Nature, but ‘tis Nature wrought up to a higher pitch” (Dryden 100). He therefore concludes “heroic rhyme is nearest Nature, as being the noblest kind of modern verse” (Dryden 101). This is truly *his* viewpoint on the matter. One of his critical views of prose in serious plays is that “it is too near the nature of converse: there may be too great a likeness; as the most skillful painters affirm, that there may be too near a resemblance in a picture” (Dryden 114). A serious play connotes a departure from reality in Dryden’s mind.

On the subject of blank verse, which is the verse John Milton uses in *Paradise Lost*, Dryden writes that it is “indeed, the nearer Prose, but he is blemished with the weakness of his predecessor. Rhyme...has somewhat of the usurper in him; but he is brave, and generous, and his dominion pleasing” (Dryden 115). So Dryden’s view of blank verse is that it resembles prose and has some of the disadvantages, but is still a noble form of writing. Indeed, a small section of *The State of Innocence* is written in blank verse. Dryden would later refer to rhyme in his prologue to *Aruengzebe* in 1675 writing that he was to quit his “long-loved mistress Rhyme” (Saintsbury 55-56). Saintsbury believes that it would appear “at this time Dryden was thinking of deserting not merely rhymed plays but playwriting altogether” (Saintsbury, 55-56). It is important to note this

¹² Dryden writes in his “An Essay on Dramatic Poesy”, “Farther, by tying themselves strictly to the Unity of Place, and unbroken scenes, they are forced many times to omit some beauties which cannot be shown where the act began... and therefore the French poets are often forced upon absurdities; for if the act begins in a chamber, all the persons in the play must have some business or other to come thither, or else they are not to be shown that act; and sometimes their characters are very unfitting to appear there”.

is just a year after Dryden's writing of *The State of Innocence*, a play for the stage written almost entirely in rhyme.

A heroic couplet consists of two lines of iambic pentameter. When spoken on the stage, the rhythm of the rhyming verse is quite obvious. However, there are ways to deviate from this pattern. A triplet rhyme consists of an extra rhyming line added to a heroic couplet. Alexandrines consist of 12 or 14 lines instead of 10. Finally a Fourteener contains 14 lines. When these deviations are added to the verse, the line *stands out* because it is naturally breaking the heroic couplet pattern.

The State of Innocence contains 15 Alexandrines, 1 Fourteener and 12 Triplet Rhymes. Van Doran writes "Dryden's triplets and Alexandrines have been sources of worry to critics and of satisfaction to enemies (77). Thomas Babington Macaulay in his article "Dryden" for the Edinburgh Review in January 1828 spoke ill of Dryden's triplets and Alexandrines writing that "In his best pieces, we find false rhymes, -- triplets, in which the third line appears to be a mere intruder, and, while it breaks the music, adds nothing to the meaning, -- gigantic Alexandrines of fourteen and sixteen syllables..."¹³ Macaulay saw a triplet rhyme as an intruder in the writing, and even described it as breaking the music. Van Doran's point about the text itself being musical becomes even more important in this context. The idea of breaking the musical rhythm of the writing draws attention to it, but in Macaulay's view, this attention results in no further effect. The moments where triplet rhymes and Alexandrines occur in *The State of Innocence* are scarce, which demonstrate a pointedly specific use for them.

¹³ Read the entirety of this article here:
<http://spenserians.cath.vt.edu/CommentRecord.php?action=GET&cmmtid=12224>

In Act II of *The State of Innocence*, Adam has just awoken in “A Champaign Country”. Raphael descends and tells him of Paradise. In this description, he employs the use of a triplet rhyme and one alexandrines (in the last line of the triplet):

The soil luxuriant, and the fruit divine
Where golden Apples, on green branches shine,
And purple grapes dissolve into immortal wine

As stated by Van Doran: “Sometimes [Dryden’s] Alexandrines and fourteeners served little or no purpose, being most likely unconscious echoes of the French heroic lines. At other times they contributed a flourish of burlesque grandeur” (78). Saintsbury adds, “The Alexandrine proper has no burlesque effect unless very clumsily handled” (390). Van Doran also mentions that they “were calculated to yield an effect of splendor” (78). He specifies, “triplets closing with Alexandrines frequently succeed in imparting a compendiousness to compliment” (79). When looking at this specific triplet, we see that Raphael is describing the all-encompassing awe of Paradise. He closes the stanza with “Ascend: and, as we go, / More wonders thou shalt know”. Adding more wonder to the stanza, he concludes with two lines of iambic trimeter, which equally breaks up the iambic pentameter. The iambic trimeter adds a sense of finality to the speech. Raphael is tempting Adam with the overwhelming image of Paradise *through language*. When speaking the lines out loud (as it was meant to be acted on stage), the words fall out of one’s mouth on a waterfall of language. The word “luxuriant” stands out since it has the most syllables of any word in the triplet. The meaning behind that word fits the categorization of “burlesque grandeur” and “splendor” that Van Doran maps out.

Because *The State of Innocence* is an adaptation of *Paradise Lost*, it is possible to find the sections of Milton's text that Dryden draws from. Given the similarity of words and message, these lines from Book IV match up quite nicely:

Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess, o'er which the **mantling vine**
Lays forth her **purple grape**, and gently creeps
Luxuriant; meanwhile murmuring waters fall
Down the slope hills, dispersed, or in a lake,
That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned,
Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams. (IV, 257-63) (bold added)

I have bolded words that match up with the triplet. "Mantling vine" is bolded because of its similarity to "branches shine", and "fruit divine", since they all have the same rhyme. Milton's use of "mantling vine" differs greatly from Dryden's rhyming similarities. In Milton's *Comus* in 1637 he writes "I saw them under a greene mantling vine/ That crawls along the side of yon small hill" (line 295-6). The mantling vine in *Paradise Lost* has a similar action of crawling, seeming to have its own self-awareness. There is darkness to the vine. Dryden's matched-up rhymes, however, show a surface-level response to the beauty of Paradise. We see that Milton and Dryden are accomplishing a similar act in these two passages: describing the *excess* of Paradise. The question lies in which method (blank verse or rhyme) can accomplish this more successfully. Milton brings the word "Luxuriant" to the forefront, simply by placing it after an enjambment. The word jumps off the page, and molds one's perception of this entire section. Dryden's method of allowing this word to take hold on the reader's focus is by allowing it have the most syllables in the triplet, and also allowing it to push the line to become an Alexandrine. One benefit to blank verse, is that through enjambment, lines can seamlessly flow into one another. With Dryden's rhyming verse, there are clear endings to each line. When spoken aloud,

“And purple grapes dissolve into immortal wine” creates the image of a waterfall of wine as the luxuriant number of syllables flows off the tongue. The process of merely speaking the line aloud creates an image in one’s head of Dryden’s description of Paradise. Equally, the added rhyme to the heroic couplet makes this third line stand out against the heroic couplet pattern, catching the audience’s attention. Through rhyming, Dryden is able to accomplish this.

Dryden expresses his distaste for blank verse in his *Epistle Dedicatory of the Rival Ladies* (1664):

The great easiness of blank verse renders the poet too luxuriant; he is tempted to say many things, which might better be omitted, or at least shut up in fewer words; but when the difficulty of artful rhyming is interposed, where the poet commonly confines his sense to his couplet, and must contrive that sense into such words, that the rhyme shall naturally follow them, not they the rhyme (Dryden, 8)

When looking back at the examples of Milton’s original blank verse segment of *Paradise Lost* and Dryden’s heroic couplet triplet rhyme of the same passage in *The State of Innocence*, we can see Dryden’s point. Milton is indeed adding a sense of luxury to his prose, the lines do seem to flow into one another and the effect is less concrete and more nebulous. Dryden’s triplet rhyme is structured, and communicates the point of the passage in fewer words. Even with the rhyming lines, Dryden succeeds in not being a slave to the rules. The rhymes naturally make sense. They flow into each other just like Milton’s prose but with more structure. Both Dryden and Milton had clear arguments as to why their poetic process was better than the others. *The State of Innocence* represents a clash between the literary ethics of two of the greatest writers of the 17th century.

In Dryden’s dedication of the *Aeneis* he writes the following concerning triplet rhymes and Alexandrines:

Spenser has...given me the boldness to make use sometimes of his Alexandrine line... It adds a certain majesty to the verse, when it is used with judgment, and stops the sense from overflowing into another line...I take another license in my verses: for I frequently make use of triplet rhymes, and for the same reason, because they bound the sense. And therefore I generally join the two licenses together, and make the last verse of the triplet a Pindaric; for, besides the majesty which it gives, it confines the sense within the barriers of three lines, which would languish if it were lengthened into four. (Van Doran 78)

Dryden wishes to *bind the sense*, and break down a supposed four lines into three to avoid excess. But, his description of Paradise is in itself a description of excess. He brings to life Golden apples on shining vines, grapes literally dissolving in front of one's eyes into everlasting wine. Dryden's intention to bind the meaning in three lines instead of four somewhat backfires to great effect in this passage. This is because the meaning (i.e. luxury) actually is unbounded given Raphael's language. This description of Eden as an unbounded realm, overfilled with luxury undercuts the idyllic nature of the setting.

Raphael's luxurious triplet rhyme was meant to be spoken, not sung. When triplet rhymes are sung on stage, the break from the normal rhyming pattern is even more obvious to the listener. From Act I of *Albion and Albanus*, we are presented with this triplet rhyme:

Great queen of Nuptial Rites,
Whose pow'r and Souls Unites,
And fills the Genial Bed with chaste Delights

It is important to note that in the context of this triplet, the final line acts in a similar way to an Alexandrine. The first two lines are 6 syllables, and the final line is 10. Therefore the final line of the triplet overflows with language. Looking at Grabu's score (Figure 1), we see that the text is in the time signature of 3/2, meaning that there are three 2-beat-long half notes in each measure. The first two 6 six-syllable lines consist of the same rhythmic pattern (a pick-up half note, followed by a dotted half note, a quarter, a dotted quarter, an eighth note and a whole note).

However, the final line of the triplet contains a different rhythmic pattern, filling the 6 six beat measure with six notes, adding excess to the music.

In Act III of *Albion and Albanus*, (Fig. 2) there is a triplet rhythm that is sung by two characters:

To make him safe, we made his Friends our Prey;
To make him great we scorn'd his Royal sway,
And to confirm his Crown, we took his Heir away

We see the same pattern here of the first two lines containing the same rhythmic pattern, and the third line of the triplet introducing different rhythmic material. In this particular instance, the final line contains more quarter notes following the rhythmic beat. The reason for this is that the final line of the triplet is an Alexandrine. It is important to note that this kind of triplet (one that concludes with an Alexandrine) is the type that Dryden said creates majesty. Musically this is being accomplished through an addition of new rhythmic material. In this particular theatrical moment, two characters are in the process of addition. The first line is “to make him safe”, the second “to make him great”. The triplet rhyme creates a sense of closure to this act of addition and concludes of a definitive declaration. In both of these instances, we see the composer using the final line of a triplet as a chance to introduce a new musical idea, and create finality to the phrase. The sense of finality occurs through the addition of new musical material that builds upon the material previously stated. There is an additive nature to a triplet rhyme that makes the third line feel like a conclusion.

The next example from *Dido and Aeneas* (Fig. 3) presents a different way of setting a triplet rhyme to music. Purcell opts to add a large amount of ornament to the phrase, and repeats the text in the libretto. The triplet reads as follows:

Let Jove say what he will: I'll stay!

Away, away! No, no, away
No, no, I'll stay, and Love obey

Purcell sets this triplet to music in an intriguing manner, because when listening to it sung, one would not realize that it is indeed a triplet: Purcell creates a duet, with Aeneas interrupting Dido's singing of the second line of the triplet. They then repeat smaller phrases of those lines, and finally Aeneas sings the final "and Love obey" in harmony with Dido's repetition of "away". The effect is one of excess, but excess that conceals the original triplet. It is worth seeing how Purcell's musical setting of this triplet looks to the eye:

Let Jove say what he please I'll stay
Away, away! No, no, I'll stay,
Away, away! No, no, I'll stay
No, no, I'll stay,
No, no, I'll stay,
No, no, I'll stay
Away and away love a- obey-way
I'll stay, and (away) Love obey away
I'll stay I'll (to) stay (Death) I'll (fly) and Love obey,
If longer (and) you (Love) delay (obey)

This is an admittedly sloppy way of writing out Purcell's lyrics, but the point is that it was quite difficult to parse out the words here. What were three clear lines in the text turns into at least ten lines of text with a lot of repetition. Regarding Dryden's opinion of triplets as bounding sense in three lines instead of four, Purcell's setting of a triplet rhyme *extends* the phrase and elongates the triplet into far more lines. The sense is therefore unbounded in Purcell's musical setting of a triplet rhyme.

James Winn addresses this phenomenon. He writes "composers [during the Restoration] freely rearranged or altered texts, often repeating short phrases for the sake of musical expression." (Winn 220). Concerning the song in *The State of Innocence*, Winn writes "Dryden attempts to control even that part of the composer's art by writing in such repetitions" (220). By

this, Winn is referring to the repetition of “Look up” during the song in Eve’s dream sequence.

The song begins with an angel singing:

Look up, look up, and see
What Heav’n prepares for thee;

The repetition adds a distinctive beat to the line, which helps to inform how the music will interact with the verse. In regards to repetition within a triplet line, writing the repetition will ensure that the triplet rhymes are not compromised.

Another example of a triplet rhyme that has been set to music is in the 1675 semi-opera *Psyche* (Fig. 4). Thomas Shadwell wrote the libretto Thomas Locke composed the musical score.

The triplet rhyme is at the end of a sung speech by Venus, and reads as follows:

He’ll so resent your cause and mine,
That you will not repine,
But will applaud the Oracle’s Design.

The number of syllables in this triplet varies. The first line has 8 syllables, followed by 6 and ending with 10. The setting of the music reflects this change in syllables, because the second line feels short and rushed while the final long is elongated. As with the previous examples I have listed, the effect of this triplet creates a sense of finality. This piece also ends the first act of the semi-opera, demonstrating the importance of creating finality through a triplet rhyme.

Rhythmically, Locke places “stress” on “So,” “cause,” “mine,” “not,” “repine,” “applaud,” and “Oracle’s.” For me, “stress” in this instance refers to a longer rhythmic note. All the words I listed are set with a dotted quarter or dotted eighth note. The consequence of this is that other words must be shortened, to create an even measure. In this case words like “but”, the beginning of “resent”, the beginning of “repine” and “the” are given less stress as a result. Therefore, the musical setting of this verse follows the iambic pentameter rhythmic pattern. The

stressed and unstressed syllables match up. The music directly is influenced by the rhythmic pattern of the verse, and that is translated in a *rhythmic* form through the use of dotted quarter notes and dotted eighth notes.

The State of Innocence contains only one song with written lyrics. This occurs when Eve is being seduced in a dream by Lucifer to eat the apple. During this song, a group of angels descend and sing to Eve. They sing the following triplet:

Till equal in honour they rise
With him who commands in the Skies:
Then taste without Fear, and be happy and wise.

Examining this triplet now, after having looked at four other prior examples reveals illuminating details. Like the two triplet rhymes in Dryden's *Albion and Albanus*, this one will supposedly be a true triplet rhyme without ornament. It will include similar rhythmic material in the first two lines and contain more complicated rhythms in the final line. And, the desired effect is one of completion. The final line resembles greatly the line "And to confirm his Crown, we took his Heir away", in its sense of finality. Finally, as shown through the *Psyche* example, when musically setting these stanzas, it is important to hear the rhythm of the verse and translate that rhythmically into music. For example, the first line ("Till equal in honour they rise") naturally places stress on the first syllable of "equal", the first syllable of "honour" and "rise". When set to music, these syllables could be a longer note rhythmically from the other unstressed syllables, therefore standing out when sung on stage.

Judgment can be cruel. It is no surprise that in his preface to *The State of Innocence*, Dryden highlights his views on criticism:

Criticism, as it was first instituted by Aristotle, was meant a standard of judging well; the chiefest part of which is, to observe those excellencies which should delight a reasonable reader. If the design, the conduct, the thoughts, and the expressions of a poem, be generally such as proceed from a true genius of Poetry, the critic ought to pass

his judgement in favour of the author. 'Tis malicious and unmanly to snarl at the little lapses of the pen, from which Virgil himself stands not exempted. (179)

He seems to be speaking about the judgment of adaptation. He highlights the fact that criticism is based in the idea of “judging well”. I take this as meaning judging a work fairly. His point that a critic should look at the “excellencies which should delight a reasonable reader” zeros in on a specific audience. The “reasonable reader” is a moderate reader, middle-of-the-pack, and the everyday theatregoer. He is expressing the audience he is writing for, an audience who enjoys heroic writing. He later says that it is “unjust, that they, who have not the least notion of heroic writing, should therefore condemn the pleasure which others receive from it, because they cannot comprehend it” (Dryden 182). He is both defending the genre and condemning the critics who do not even understand the medium but speak ill of it. These critics are not, in his view, “judging well” and judging from the perspective of a general reader.

The phrase “be generally such as proceed from a true genius of Poetry” is quite vague. This “true genius” could be a general writer, John Dryden, or John Milton. I feel that the most interesting interpretation would be that Dryden is acknowledging the fact that “this poem has received its entire foundation, part of the design, and many of the ornaments, from [Milton]” and that the work should be viewed as an *extension* of Milton himself (Dryden 178). He mentions, “design,” “conduct,” “thoughts,” and “expressions,” which are similar components to “foundation,” “design,” and “ornaments”. Therefore, a critic that disregards *his* work is also disregarding the *other* author (Milton). They “ought to pass his judgement in favour of the author” and this author could indeed be Milton himself. Dryden clearly views his work as catered to a certain audience, and it angers him when people who don’t like, and don’t understand, that genre or style of the work pass judgment on it. I argue that it is not surprising Dryden speaks so

critically about critical practice in his preface to *The State of Innocence*. He is defending his artistic venture, and the merits of his grand theatrical experiment that never came to pass.

The State of Innocence can be analyzed from a different perspective, one that places importance on the artistic craft and the use of rhyming heroic couplets, instead of simply discounting it as a knock-off of its far more famous contemporary. Dryden firmly believed in the interaction of prose and music, and specifically kept this in mind while crafting lyrics. The Eve's Dream sequence was composed with music in mind, even though the music was never actually composed. With this in mind, the sequence takes on an entirely different meaning. It is not simply written prose, but would have been sung on a spectacle-filled stage. The words themselves, were meticulously written to allow for a composer to set them to music. Dryden's insecurities on judgement, and the idea of judging well, is still occurring over 300 years after his death. A semi-opera should be approached with the perspective of music in mind, even if the music does not actually exist. Perhaps the reader must humour Dryden's invention, to fully understand it.

Figure 1: Albion and Albanus, Act I (1680)

Augusta.

Great Queen of Nuptial Rites, whose Pow'r the Souls u-nites, and

dore thee.

The BASS continued.

fills the Ge-nial Bed with chafst Delights; see, we fall be-fore thee, pro-

The BASS continued.

Figure 2: Albion and Albanus, Act III (1680)

The musical score consists of three identical systems. Each system includes a vocal line and a bass line. The vocal line is marked with *Tyranny* and *Democracy*. The lyrics are: "Laws. To make him great, we" and "Laws. To make him safe, we made his Friends our Prey;". The bass line is labeled "The Bass continued.".

Figure 3: Dido and Aeneas, Act III (1688)

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thought of leav - ing me. *f* A-

AENEAS *f*
Let Jove — say what he please, I'll stay!

way, a-way! a - way, a-way! No, no, no, no, no,
No, no, I'll stay, no, no, I'll stay, I'll stay, I'll stay,

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no, a-way, a-way, a - way, a - way, a-way, To Death I'll —
I'll stay, and Love o - bey! I'll stay, and Love o - bey, I'll stay, I'll stay, —

fly — if long - er you de - lay. *f* A-way, a-way! *mosso* But
Exit Aeneas
— and Love o - bey, and — Love o - bey. *p*

Figure 4: *Psyche*, Act I

ade. He'll represent your cause & mite, that you will not repine, but

will applaud the Oracles designe.

The image shows a musical score for a scene from 'Psyche, Act I'. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff is a vocal line with lyrics: 'ade. He'll represent your cause & mite, that you will not repine, but'. The second staff is a vocal line. The third staff is a vocal line with lyrics: 'will applaud the Oracles designe.'. The fourth staff is a vocal line. The music is written in a historical style with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat.

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