

Piii6 Yee snarling Satyrs, cease your horrid yells

Notes. This poem, addressed to the libellers—the “snarling Satyrs”—who celebrated Buckingham’s murder, invokes contemporary stereotypes of libels (raw in style, unreliable in content, socially disreputable and “popular”) to help delegitimize the posthumous attacks on the Duke and the concomitant lionization of his assassin.

“Thalassiarchiæ Manium Vindiciæ”¹

Yee snarling Satyrs,² cease your horrid yells

O’re this sad hearse, all such prodigious knells³

Be hush’t, and tongue-ty’d; but yet if your rymes

For issue itche, goe lash the petulant tymes

With whippes in salt, and sulphur steep’d the⁴ need

A scorge to urge them either blush, or bleed.

And tell me men of misaffected braines,

What starr wrought your misguidance to these straines

Of sawetooth’d sarcasmes against the ghost of him

Whose hart did in a purple deluge swim?

Is’t not enough to see a villaines steele

Gall’d⁵ in his gore? Doth’t not suffice to feele

His wounds wyde orifice, or viewe a flood?

Cannot ah! cannot all this satisfie

But you must wound his posthume memorie

And retransfix his Manes⁶ with the dint⁷

Of sharpe invectives? Men (if men) of flint

Or adamantine hart strings know ’tis base

And fitly Emblems the dead lyons case

With whose beard-haires the fearefull Hares did play

Or neere alludes those yelping currs,⁸ which bay

The midnight Moone caroching⁹ in her spheare

Toward the counter-pacers.¹⁰ can you heare

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The ill tun'd organs of some tongues to chyme
 Peans of joy in honor of a cryme 25
 Soe horrid and piacular,¹¹ yet lett the spiritt
 Of passion paulle, and with them call't a meritt,
 Why? this is more then vice did ever doe
 To love the Treason, and the Trator too.
 Suppose him (as your fancie shap's him) ill 30
 Leacher, and treacher;¹² or what ere you will
 In sootie language style him (though I knowe
 You many, most, or all, such notions owe
 To banques of common credit; and are found
 To take them upp at third, or fourth rebound) 35
 Yet, shall a phrenzi'd Miscreant¹³ that pretends
 His countries good (mixt with sinister ends
 Of private spleenie hartburns)¹⁴ darr to carve
 Revenge to his owne trencher?¹⁵ May hee starve
 (who ere that catiffe¹⁶ be) approves the dyett 40
 Which murder cook'd with sauce of blood & ryott.
 I doe not wooe, nor court you to deplore
 His lives breife sceane, or sadde deathrights¹⁷ more
 Then that Hee had soe fewe short minutes given
 To cast, and cleere the audit-booke of heaven;¹⁸ 45
 I knowe the tydes of some ranke Gall¹⁹ swell highe
 Cause Jove soe longe affected Mercurie²⁰
 And that his deepe ingagements in the Myene²¹
 Of seacreet state, did wariely declyne
 The damp²² of popular²³ lungs; but lett this race 50
 of ulcer'd spiritt (giveing o're the chace
 Of Priviledg'd Fame beyond death's verge)²⁴ returne
 And cease to cast foule urin to his urne
 Lest they styrr hornetts: For, eclipsd Sunns

Result with double shaddowes; and their runns 55
A thunderbolt with lightning. Nor do I
depricate His, but theire worse destiny
For what, if they (or one that basely shrouds
His face in foggs of thicke Tobacco clouds)
Shall pace the suburbs with aspurgal'd²⁵ newes 60
And sprinkle Pasquills²⁶ in the Burse,²⁷ or Stewes²⁸
Alas! those gloewormes, elfe-fire²⁹ flashes shall
But like faint sparkles, on danke tinder fall.
When there Producer (after all the throwes
Of his obstruct Minerva)³⁰ never showes 65
The spurious issues Parent, his great name
Shall Lawrell-like³¹ even crackle midd'st the flame
Of scorching calumnie, and Tyme relate
How rich hee dy'd in styles of powerfull state
Soe trodden greatnes shall ascend still higher 70
And dyeing lamps with mounting flames expire.

Source. Bodleian MS Malone 23, pp. 128-130

Other known sources. BL Add. MS 15227, fol. 21r

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¹ *Thalassiarchiæ Manium Vindiciæ*: “The Vindication of the Admiral’s Ghost”.

² *snarling Satyrs*: i.e. Buckingham’s libellers.

³ *knells*: the sounds of funeral bells; here, the noise of the libellers’ verbal assaults, over the Duke’s dead body.

⁴ *the*: probable scribal error; read “they”.

⁵ *Gall’d*: probably intended literally as a reference to the knife penetrating the Duke’s body (one meaning of “gall” is “to break the surface of”), but perhaps also invoking a figurative meaning, to “vex,

harass, oppress” (*OED*).

⁶ *retransfix his Manes*: stab again his ghost, his shade.

⁷ *dint*: blow.

⁸ *currs*: vile dogs.

⁹ *caroching*: literally, riding in a carriage; here, more loosely, meaning travelling, journeying.

¹⁰ *counter-pacers*: the Antipodes.

¹¹ *piaculer*: i.e. piacular; sinful, wicked, requiring atonement.

¹² *treacher*: traitor.

¹³ *phrenzi'd Miscreant*: i.e. Felton.

¹⁴ *pretends...private spleenie hartburns*: critics of Felton (including the prosecution at his trial) commonly made this allegation. Felton indeed had personal grievances against the Duke; in particular, he blamed Buckingham for repeatedly blocking his promotion from lieutenant to captain.

¹⁵ *trencher*: plate.

¹⁶ *catiffe*: i.e. caitiff; villain.

¹⁷ *deathrights*: i.e. death rites.

¹⁸ *that Hee had soe fewe...of heaven*: even some of those who welcomed Buckingham's death were troubled by the fact that the assassination left the Duke no time to repent his sins before dying.

¹⁹ *Gall*: bitterness.

²⁰ *Cause Jove soe longe affected Mercurie*: the god Mercury was the messenger for Jove, the king of the gods. Here Jove is the English king, Mercury the favourite Buckingham.

²¹ *Myene*: i.e. mine.

²² *damp*: noxious exhalation.

²³ *popular*: the people's. In seventeenth-century usage, “popular” also had connotations of seditious or unruly.

²⁴ *verge*: boundary, range, jurisdiction.

²⁵ *aspurgal'd*: i.e. asperged; sprinkled.

²⁶ *Pasquills*: libels.

²⁷ *the Burse*: generally speaking, a meeting place for merchants; in seventeenth-century London, “the Burse” referred either to the Royal Exchange or the New Exchange.

²⁸ *Stewes*: brothels.

²⁹ *elfe-fire*: will o’ the wisp or “ignis fatuus” (foolish fire); a deceitful thing.

³⁰ *his obstruct Minerva*: this curious phrase probably means something like “his impeded wisdom”; Minerva was the goddess of wisdom.

³¹ *Lawrell-like*: the laurel leaf was believed to repel lightning.
