

The Anti-Jacobin and its Parodic Strategies: Parodying Jacobin Ideas and Authors

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Abstract:

This study highlights the parodic skills employed in the literary section of *The Anti-Jacobin* (1797-1798), a periodical edited by William Gifford, written mainly by G. Canning, J. H. Frere and G. Ellis and supported even by Prime Minister William Pitt. Parody is its main mechanism, being generated across an extraordinary range of genres beyond poetry and scholarly and popular prose, thereby demonstrating its malleability and creativity in the Romantic era and demonstrating its versatility and originality. Due to its peculiarity, it is necessary to provide a description of the work's nature and structure, while examples are selected and analysed in order to clarify this original use of the parodic resource in the literature-politics binomial.

Keywords: *The Anti-Jacobin*; romantic parody; Southey; Fox; Canning;

1. Introduction

In order to understand the spirit of *The Anti-Jacobin*, it is necessary to start from the term “Jacobin”, used in France, the origin of which Jarrells clarifies stating that “a Jacobin was originally a friar of the order of St. Dominic” (2005, 6). He also explains that the term would later be used to identify the members of the political club focused on the principles of “extreme democracy and absolute equality” (2005, 6), constituted in 1789 in France, that met in the convent of St. Jacques. Morley, at the end of the nineteenth century, in the part devoted to “Canning and Frere from 1788 to 1798” in his edition, describes them thus: “The revolutionary Jacobins, who took their name from their club quarters, were politicians pledged to root and branch reform” (1890, 149). Their originally utopian ideas of reform, equality and democracy evolved into radicalism and influenced English ideology as Bohls (2013) explains: “The Jacobins were the most famous political club of the French Revolution; moderate at first, they turned radical and implemented the so-called Reign of Terror in 1793-4. The term came to be used pejoratively for leftists and suspected French Revolution sympathisers during Britain’s conservative reaction” (13).

That said, the French liberal spirit found shelter in radical groups in England, where in the 1790s the Jacobin movement—“a group of liberal intellectuals who sympathised with the revolutionary principles of liberty and equality” (Lázaro 1998, 102)—was linked to important essayists and novelists such as Burke, Paine, Godwin and Wollstonecraft who are fundamental to understanding the parody in *The Anti-Jacobin*. Wallace (2008) describes its effect on the so-called “Jacobin novels” that between 1790 and 1805 were sympathetic to the reformist projects associated with the French Revolution. The term, which became generalised following the studies of Gary Kelly (1976) and Marilyn Butler (1975), describes narratives mainly written by Godwin, Wollstonecraft, Holcroft, Mary Hays, Elizabeth Inchbald, Robert Bage, Charlotte Smith, Eliza Fenwick and John Thelwall. Lázaro (1998) analyses many of their works, highlighting their low satirical impact, whilst also pointing out that they promoted an excess of sensitivity that, logically, resulted in many parodies that form part of the Romantic canon.

Rooted in literature, the radical or revolutionary ideas of British Jacobin sympathisers were reviewed, criticised and made the focus of attacks in *The Anti-Jacobin*. The parodic exposition of these ideals and the direct attacks on their representatives make this periodical a rich source of detail for reflecting on the political situation of the time in literary and intellectual terms, and a voice against those that were not in favour of the conservative government of Pitt the Younger.

Edited by William Gifford (1756-1826)—a self-taught satirist who did not hesitate to use the publication to attack the liberal works and attitudes of the day, and considered by Strachan to be “the foremost classical satirist of the age and a worthy successor to Alexander Pope” (2003, 4, xiii)—*The Anti-Jacobin* published 36 weekly issues that covered the vicissitudes of the parliamentary year from November 20, 1797 to July 9, 1798, among many other topics. Its subtitle, *The Weekly Examiner*, indicates its role in the conscientious week-by-week monitoring of political news through a literary sieve that raised the tone of creativity and depth of its texts, mixing the seriousness of political, historical and social witticisms with imitation of Romantic authors, texts or ideologies across very different genres.

Gifford’s ideas and intentions synchronised well with those of the main authors: George Canning (1770-1827), the leading voice, statesman and major contributor to the publication; John Hookham Frere (1769-1846), diplomat and man of letters, a great connoisseur and imitator of classical literary sources, and George Ellis (1753-1815), the most literary of the three. United by ties of friendship and work, they had a high degree of intellectual preparation and were well connected in the political arena. Canning was Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office from 1796 to 1799, a position which he combined with his active contribution to *The Anti-Jacobin* through accentuating the mockery in the portrayal of English and French republicans. However, as Thompson (2013) asserts, Canning was in fact more restrained in the periodical than the public realised. He was recognised for his commanding wit and difficult character. He had the backing of William Pitt from 1792 on and had won his seat in 1793. He was greatly influenced by Burke, which made him wary of the consequences of the French Revolution. Frere was Canning’s colleague not only at Eton, but also at the Foreign Office. He later became a diplomat and was recognised as a great poet, an admirer of Byron, a writer of epic mockery and a translator of Aristophanes. Ellis also worked under Canning at the Foreign Office and had demonstrated his qualities as a liberal satirical versifier in *The Rolliad, in Two Parts: Probationary Odes and Political Eclogues* (1795).

Significant smaller-scale contributors to the periodical also participated, the so-called “loyal correspondents”, among them, many illustrious Members of Parliament and figures from politics and the military. These included John Hiley Addington, Henry Hiley Addington’s brother, a friend of Pitt, who became Prime Minister; Bragge-Bathurst, Pitt’s minister; Sir Brooke Boothby, a friend of Erasmus Darwin and a landowner; Sir Archibald Macdonald, Attorney-General and Member of Parliament for Pitt’s term of office; and Prime Minister Pitt himself contributed through full-length issues such as “Lines Written by a Traveller” or by writing lines in shared contributions such as “New Morality” (No. XXXVI).

The parodic effect in *The Anti-Jacobin* also extended to the contributors, or rather through the inclusion of fictitious *personae* who also commented on the state of the country, and supposedly anonymous contributors who supported or attacked the paper. Prominent among the former is “Mr. Higgins,” a so-called poet, philosopher and playwright who represents the extreme values of Jacobinism and who, as a mass agitator, defends exaggerated ideals and represents selfish altruism in very exalted language. Also significant is the role of “Letitia Sourby”— a lady who complains bitterly about the disgrace and domestic consequences of having a father turned Jacobin, as well as the simple, deluded “Sam Shallow”, son of a cobbler, who recounts his father’s upheaval, metamorphosed by the radical ideas of the day.

Canning had Pitt’s approval for the publication. The Government did not at the time possess such a propaganda weapon and through *The Anti-Jacobin* it would be able to show the public a different version of the liberal newspapers of the day, versions that sounded credible and logical, defended conservative principles and incorporated apt jokes and mockery “to set the mind of the people right upon every subject”, as Stones (1999, lii) states in his edition of the periodical—volume 1 in the collection *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, collection edited together with Strachan. It is this edition of *The Anti-Jacobin* by Stones the one used throughout this study.

Produced stealthily at first, *The Anti-Jacobin* was composed secretly in an empty house next to that of J. Wright, who was in charge of publishing the paper. The location and address, however, were made public so that it could act as a point of reference and receive contributions, as stated in its launch issue: “Published by J. Wright, No. 169, opposite Old Bond Street, Picadilly; by whom Orders for the Papers and all Communications of Correspondents, addressed to the Editor of the ANTI-JACOBIN, or WEEKLY EXAMINER, will be received. Sold also by all the Booksellers and Newsmen in Town and Country” (Stones 1999, 10).

Group composition favoured not only the particular and individual structure of this cooperative miscellany, but also the diversity of styles and the variety of content addressed in different issues. Hawkins commenting, in the 3 May issue of *Notes & Queries* (1851), how *The Anti-Jacobin* was written and edited recounted that: “What was written was generally left open upon the table, and as others of the party dropped in, hints or suggestions were made; sometimes whole passages were contributed by some of the party present, and afterwards altered by others, so that it is almost impossible to ascertain the names of the authors” (348). Stones, however, in his 1999 edition, has rigorously identified the authors of the literary contributions in *The Anti-Jacobin*, noting only 8 texts whose authorship is unknown. This volume encapsulates the 36 issues that were published between 1797 and 1798, with an annotation in each issue of the

corresponding month and day of the week. It included the “Prospectus”, the initial promotional issue and marketing strategy of the newspapers of the time that announced the content and purpose of the magazine in the first issue of its publication—this was a custom that was advocated throughout Romanticism for the dissemination of works and authors, as Hudson (2016) demonstrates when analysing the prospectus and biography of Byron in the first two issues of *The London Magazine*. And it proffered novelty and truth as the key to the falsehood of other newspapers, specifically therefore challenging the seven journals of the time that opposed the government, among them *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Morning Post*, *The Courier* and *The Star* (9). Issues are not dealt with to the same extent in terms of number of words, nor with regard to the genre of the text. In general, though, they fall into the following categories: LIES, MISREPRESENTATIONS, MISTAKES, POETRY, FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE, FINANCE and MISCELLANEOUS. This variety does not, however, break the common thread of the compendium, which is based on a sustained attack on any hint of a radical attitude against the government.

The “Prospectus” and the introductions of the editors in certain issues are fundamental to establishing the serious and direct tone, or the open creative mockery, of the merciless diatribes against any ideology or political act that was counter to the policies of conservative government. These sections are fundamental in some of the issues to mark the serious and direct tone or the open creative mockery of a merciless diatribe against any ideology or political act that was counter to the ideas of the conservative government. As such, parodic texts contrast with serious texts in support of the ruling conservatism. This includes political poems, Latin verses by Wellesley and translated by Lord Morphet, letters, epigrams and songs co-authored by Canning, Ellis and Frere. There were also eulogies to the periodical itself, and a proud defence of the British fleet in issue XXXV “De Navali Laude Britanniae,” in Latin and with translation.

While the overall effect is a display of pride in the homeland in the face of the external French incursions that were seen as damaging England’s supremacy, the periodical is essentially a Romantic product due to its genius in creating a symbiosis of political propagandistic effect through creative literary parody. The miscellaneous nature of *The Anti-Jacobin* also entertains and demonstrates the knowledge and cultural level of both the authors and the publication’s readers, who would be able to identify both the parodies based on Horace’s odes, popular songs, letters to the editor and the verses of Southey, the most parodied author in this publication. All this was an attempt to ridicule those attitudes that encompassed different degrees of rebellion against the government including religious reactions, Francophile idealism and literary novelties. In Lessenich’s words, “Dissent, Romanticism and ‘Jacobinism’ often went hand in hand” (2012, 42). Thus, *The Anti-Jacobin* made

multiple references to the context of scientific research and discoveries of the time such as those of Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802)—grandfather of the well-known Charles Darwin (1809-1882)—and other similar figures in science in order to ridicule the political overtones of English Jacobinism and the implantation of ideas in England about the revolution in France.

Variety also applied to the number of victims parodied and imitated—a gallery reminiscent of those later used by Peacock in his novels and essays. The long list includes radical poets such as the aforementioned Southey, liberals such as William Roscoe, Francis Russell—Duke of Bedford and friend of Fox—and representatives of religion, politics and science, groups of demagogues, explorers and philosophers. The parody also extended to Godwin and his defence of anarchy, Paine's simple style, Erasmus Darwin's flowery style and Payne Knight's philanthropic ideas, as well as to well-known works and authors of essays, such as Cobbett and Lamb, and to important political figures such as, logically, Pitt's antagonist, Charles Fox—"a controversial figure with civil and religious liberties as cardinal tenets of his political creed," as Howe (2019, 4) describes him.

The compendium recomposes and transforms genres and also uses themes that are in vogue, such as the sensationalist dramas of the time. It appropriated well-known literary discourse formats—German tragedy, the Gothic novel, Latin epigrams, odes, sonnets, etc.—popular discourses—fashionable songs, letters to the editor—political discourses—harangues, minutes of radical societies, etc.—and mixed them arbitrarily over the months of its publication. This structure of such a diverse range of subject matter ensured that each issue stood in stark contrast to others, although the same political background of course pervaded the entire journal and the leitmotif of the French Revolution appears in parodies in many forms and on many occasions.

Also significant is the periodical's creative use of letters, the authors posing as loyal or enemy contributors. All of them parody the epistolary pressure of the public at the time and are used to exaggerate the calamities endured by supposed citizens who complain to the editors about the harmful effects of the exalted English Jacobins.

2. Parodic Strategies

Stones lists the extraordinary range of genres through which parody is generated, many of them categories that today would be difficult to find in literary journals, including "attentive travesties, Horatian odes, epigrams, doggerel songs, mock-medieval ballads, political diatribes in verse, spoof drama, bogus reportage, bitter sarcasm, sham correspondence, new sciences harried into absurdity, old ones hauled from obscurity, mandarin classicism, captivately silly didactic

epics, slander, libel, blasphemy, and grace” (1999, lv-lvi). Selected examples of parody are analysed below to clarify the original use of the resource in the literature-politics binomial.

2.1. *Parodying Jacobin ideas and authors: Southey*

Issue I of *The Anti-Jacobin* sets the tone and purpose of the literature selected to fill its pages, which over the course of the 36 becomes progressively more sophisticated. The introduction, written by Canning in an excellent burlesque tone, gives voice to the editors of the periodical, who present themselves as admirers of literature. They claim to be looking for good poets among the radical versifiers whom they derisively call “Bards of Freedom” (13). They justify their use of imitation as proof of their admiration. But they confess that they cannot find a good example of Jacobin poetry—“we have not been able to find one good and true poet, of sound principles and sober practice” (12). They warn of the danger of the poem they have finally selected— —“an expedient full of danger, and not to be used but with the utmost caution and delicacy” (13)—and present a poem by Southey along with, for the edification of the reader, “our own imitation” (14).

These two contrasting poems set the initial scene for *The Anti-Jacobin* not only in terms of the technique that will be followed in subsequent issues, but they also highlight the fact that each issue focuses on the presentation of a current burning issue. In this issues, this is the debate about laws that imposed severe punishments without taking into account the degree of wickedness in the crimes, something that the authors recognise as a matter of general interest that has transcended the political sphere and entered the literary: “This principle has of late years been laboured with extraordinary industry and brought forward in a variety of shapes, for the edification of the public. It has been inculcated in bulky quartos, and illustrated in popular novels” (19).

The mechanism of parody works impeccably, and the authors boast of having given Southey’s poem a twist, or a “poetical dress” (19). The rhetorical effect in this first issue is striking because it not only inaugurated the newspaper with a parody of a well-known poet associated with Jacobinism, but also because it represented a direct attack on those liberal Jacobins who questioned the execution of judicial laws.

The well-known poem on which it is based is “INSCRIPTION. For the Apartment in Chepstow Castle, where Henry Marten, the Regicide, was imprisoned thirty years”, a tribute by Southey to Marten, one of those responsible for the imprisonment of King Charles I and the person who signed his death warrant. The tone of admiration for Marten is undeniable, and Southey defends the individual’s desire for freedom against the authority and domination of the king. Marten is depicted as a victim in prison: “He never saw the sun’s delightful

beams” (15) and his crime is exaltedly explained with a touch of emotion, and as an impossible dream:

Dost thou ask his crime?
He had REBELLED AGAINST THE KING, AND SAT
IN JUDGEMENT ON HIM; for his ardent mind
Shaped goodliest plans of happiness on earth,
And peace and liberty. Wild dreams! (15)

The wholehearted support for his cause is reinforced by quotations from authorities such as Plato and Milton on freedom, and the poem concludes with the hope that freedom will be achieved at the final judgement “When Christ shall come, and all things be fulfil’d!” (15).

The brilliant anti-Jacobin parody is called “IMITATION. INSCRIPTION. For the Door of the Cell in Newgate, where Mrs. Brownrigg, the Prentice-cide, was confined previous to her Execution.” The burlesque imitation mimics all aspects of Southey’s poem, while altering key elements and transforming them. It democratises the protagonist and invokes the ideas of French liberty as the only hope against the penalties imposed by an unjust England. The historical and well-known character of Elizabeth Brownrigg, a matron of the poor in the parish of St. Dunstan’s, whose famous trial demonstrated her cruel mistreatment of her apprentices and the murder of two of them, is used. The parody automatically unsettles Marten’s status by presenting a counterpart who is a hard-working usurer. The “Regicide” of Southey’s poem seeks its alternative in a working woman of popular character, in this case the “Prentice-cide”, i.e., “apprentice-killer.” The tragic issue of royalty in the first poem becomes domestic in the second, and its contextualisation—the questioning of laws in the face of the misuse of freedom—is evidently related to negative influences from France. The praise of Marten in the first poem is undermined by the presentation of the criminal Brownrigg with her shouting, profanity and dependence on gin, along with her low-life environment. The lines questioning her crime are repeated with the same exaltation as Southey does with Marten, but with evidently different tones:

Dost thou ask her crime?
SHE WHIPP’D TWO FEMALE PRENTICES TO DEATH.
AND HID THEM IN THE COAL-HOLE. For her mind
Shaped strictest plans of discipline. Sage schemes! (16)

The parody follows the model faithfully and, in addition, it includes quotations from weighty classical authorities such as the Greek lawgiver Lycurgus, and

Milton. Like in the model, the poem concludes with despairing wishes for hope, but this time imagining that harsh laws will be eradicated by the French influence, which will put an end to all legislation: “Harsh laws! But time shall come, / When France shall reign, and laws be all repeal’d!” (16).

Thus, it is not only Southey’s lines that are parodied, but also French radical ideals and the desire for democratisation and uncontrolled equality. The parody works consciously through the witty comparison of the defence of Marten, the instigator of the king’s execution, and the trial of a popular figure, also found guilty under the law. The effect of this parody would be further amplified in issue II, where the basis of criminal justice is again alluded to, whereby the reader guesses at the systematic and subliminal attack on the Jacobin ideas of Godwin, known for his work *Poetical Justice* (1793). Stones notes the important relationship between Southey and Godwin, describing the latter as his “intellectual mentor” (11), which allows us to better understand the parodic attack in the first issue. This one creatively exposes not only the exalted reception of Jacobin ideas, but the original and creative literature that grew from them. Clearly, this starting point in the first issue revitalised the use of parody and established the indissoluble line between literature and politics that is played with in the rest of the issues.

2.2. *Parodying ideas of equality: rich vs. poor*

Issue II sets an exaggerated scene that questions Godwin’s ideas through a parody of another poem by Southey. Godwin’s authority and arguments were proverbially well-reasoned, but the anti-Jacobins represent the potential danger of their blind application of a system of equality that recognises no faults and sets out no penalties. They argue that liberal principles were spreading dangerously. In this issue, the authors specifically focus on the analysis of the extreme defence of equality between social classes, in italics in the editorial comment: “Another principle no less devoutly entertained, and no less sedulously disseminated, is *the natural and eternal warfare of the POOR and the RICH*” (19). This understanding, they argue, is based on the Jacobin’s exalted ideas: “He considers every rich man as an oppressor, and every person in a lower situation as the victim of avarice, and the slave of aristocratical insolence and contempt” (19). They also point out the ease with which Jacobin rhetoric can convince the needy classes: “A human being, in the lowest state of penury and distress, is a treasure to a reasoner of this cast” (19). Thus, they exaggerate and parody this idea of equality by imitating and manipulating Southey’s Sapphic verse, whose authority is therefore undermined. They offer a stanza of the original, conscientiously marking the imperfections of the Sapphic metre, and then announce their creation: “We proceed to give our imitation” (20). The parodic effect is further amplified by the subtitle—

“IMITATION. Sapphics. *The Friend of Humanity and the Knife-Grinder*”—where the protagonists are presented not with proper names, but with designations that associate the former with the universal benevolence and good nature of the Jacobin as opposed to the representative of the working class, a grinder.

Composed by Frere and Canning, its originality lies in the transformation of the dialogue of Southey’s original poem, “The Widow” (1797). Halliwell describes how this poem describes “the effect of the war against France upon rural society by focusing on the experience of the widow who represents an underclass of dispossessed and abandoned females” (2008, 46). The parody, however, exalts the melodramatic elements of the original poem and instead of creating empathy towards the disadvantaged class, the knife-grinder, it shows their authentic way of acting while revealing the hypocrisy of the Jacobin, defender of equality. The parody questions the ideas of equality that are challenged in the conversation between the compassionate “Friend of Humanity” who in the first five stanzas seems to pity the poor grinder, whom he calls “Needy Knife-grinder” or “Weary Knife-Grinder.” He blames the deplorable state of this worker on a long list of oppressive class figures. He begins by asking, “Did some rich man tyrannically use you?” (21) and goes on to run inquisitively through possible culprits, cataloguing the different strata of power—“squire”, “parson of the parish”, “the attorney”, “covetous parson.” He even goes so far as to enquire about the grinder’s knowledge of liberal ideas: “Have you not read the *Rights of Man* by Tom Paine?” (21) and urges him to reveal his sorrows—“Drops of compassion tremble on my eyelids/ Ready to fall as soon as you have told your/Pitiful story” (21). The parody then goes on to present the opposite of what the reader expects as the grinder explains that his miserable state is due to the previous night’s drunkenness, and openly displays his indifference to political issues—“I never love to meddle/ With politics, sir” (22). He bluntly asks the “Friend of Humanity” for a sixpence so that he can drink to his health. This causes the exalted Jacobin to burst into expletives and harsh epithets in the final stanza that show his true opinion of the deprived classes: “Sordid, unfeeling, reprobate, degraded/ Spiritless, outcast!” (22). This effect is amplified by the sarcastic, theatrical remark that brings the poem to a close and describes the Jacobin’s assault on the grinder and his ironic exit from the scene: “*Kicks the Knife-Grinder, overturns his Wheel, and exits in a transport of Republican esthusiasm and universal philanthropy*” (22).

Evidently, Southey’s original poem recreating the tragic and pitiful complaint of a widow—“a poor Wanderer struggled on her journey/weary and way-sore” (20)—is in this way burlesquely undermined. The parody transforms this original character into a drunken grinder involved in street fights who must be imprisoned as a vagabond by the parish who must take care of him. The grinder, moreover, represents the total ignorance and indifference of the workers

to the abstract ideas of universal benevolence that characters like the “Friend of Humanity” represent. The philanthropic republican enthusiasm of the latter collapses Jacobinism into open mockery.

This same pattern is repeated in similar parodies in other later issues. Issue V includes the poem written by Canning and Frere, “The Soldier’s Friend,” which takes as its protagonist another member of the most deprived classes, a soldier at war, and departs from Southey’s original poem “The Soldier’s Wife.” In addition to mocking Southey as a versifier, the parodic recreation of the poem aims to present liberal ideas as empty of content in a real world where the army is precisely fighting to avoid their implementation. The opening text of the introduction of this issue mentions the existence of a “Jacobinical Sect” characterised by its lack of charity and alludes, as an example, to Southey—ironically referring to him as “The Bard”—who reveals little empathy with the protagonist: “the Bard very calmly contemplates her situation which he describes in a pair of very pathetic stanzas” (48). Not only is the erroneous versification in the computation of the dactyls shown, but the parody is contextualised by reference to a naval mutiny and rebellions in the artillery, underlining the attack on Thomas Paine’s ideas in *The Rights of Man* (1791).

The pathetic and tragic image of the soldier’s wife in the original poem is radically transformed in the parody poem in a dialogue where a soldier’s friend encourages the drummer to carry into the trenches “[n]ice clever books by Thomas Paine, the philanthropist” (49) and pamphlets communicating that a mutiny of sailors is in progress. As the drummer walks away, the soldier’s friend intones in the last stanza of the poem a set of absurd dactyls, imitating the humming of a nursery rhyme. The list of important values fought for is thus reduced to a banal and absurd song that seems to have no end:

Liberty’s friends thus all learn to amalgamate,
Freedom’s volcanic explosion prepares itself,
Despots shall bow to the Faces of Liberty,
Reason, philosophy, “fiddledum diddledum,”
Peace and Fraternity, higgledy, piggledy,
Higgledy, piggledy, “fiddledum, diddledum.”
Et caetera, et caetera, et caetera. (49)

Later, issue VI mockingly reiterates the effect of this parody in another of the periodical’s many “late Jacobinical Imitations” (52). It offers a twist again on Southey’s poem “The Soldier’s Wife.” Written by Canning and Gifford, it announces itself with a straightforward title—“IMITATION”—and a long ironic subtitle: “Quintessence of all the Dactyls that ever were, or ever will

be published.” It invokes the mediocre composer of such original sonnets as “Wearisome Sonneteer, feeble and querulous” and “Moon-stricken Sonneteer,” and directly attacks his composing: “Dactyls, call’st thou ‘em? ‘God help thee, silly one!” What is of interest in the parody is not only this direct literary attack, but also its clear connection with politics, as vain attempts to expose democratic ideas of equality through bad versification are exposed: “Painfully dragging thy demo-cratc lays” (53).

2.3. *Parodying Jacobin meetings and Fox*

Issue IV gives a clear indication of another focus of attention that the government feared: the spread of Jacobin ideas, either through the creation of societies based on Jacobin ideas or through the attractiveness of their hymns, songs and popular expressions. Written by Canning and Frere, they highlight the ideas of the Liverpool Francophile William Roscoe (1753-1831) in their song “La Sainte Guillotine: A New Song, attempted from the French.” Roscoe was a figure admired by Fox and supported the letters that the so-called “Friends of Parliamentary Reform” sent to Paris expressing their support for the Revolution. His effusive and exaggerated style is maintained in the parody, which the editors describe as a “specimen of Jacobin Poetry,” as well as imitating songs by Roscoe that were sung at Jacobin meetings. The parody recreates joyful voices watching Jacobin ideas enter England:

How our bishops and judges will stare with amazement,
When their heads are thrust out at the National Casement!
When the National Razor has shaved them quite clean,
What a handsome oblation to Sainte Guillotine! (31)

The effect of this song is multiplied because it is introduced as a hymn that will be useful at a future meeting: “We are informed (we know not how truly) that it will be sung at the Meeting of the Friends of Freedom” (30).

A lengthy recreation of such a meeting is the subject of the following parody. Written by Frere, it describes, in journalistic style, a meeting of many liberal reformers, with no shortage of dull speeches by speakers such as Fox. The narrator’s mockery is evident when he describes the difficulty of recording Fox’s words, as they are so full of sentiment: “while we do justice to his sentiments and general style of argument, it is impossible for us, in a report of this kind, to give our readers any idea of the language in which those sentiments were conveyed” (38). The chronicle covers a meeting where Jacobin values are exalted and details of the attendees Francophile admiration are recreated. Fox’s speech

and the audience's response to it are recorded. To the justification of the French Directory's action, the French insurrection and even the defence of a possible invasion of England, the audience responds with applause: "Fresh life and vigour had been infused into the whole system [...]—they were now preparing for the invasion of this country! (Loud applauses)" (35). The reader is able to recognise the hints of exaggeration, mockery and sarcasm in the transformation of this peculiar chronicle. Not only is the exaggerated enthusiasm of the audience, carried away by Jacobin ideas, mocked, but so too is the repetitive sequence of speeches by the audience:

Lord John made a very neat, and Lord William a very appropriate, speech.
Alderman Combe made a very impressive speech.
Mr. Tierney made a very pointed speech.
Mr. Grey made a very fine speech. He described the Ministers as "bold bad men"—
their measures he repeatedly declared to be not only "weak, but wicked."
Mr. Byng said a few words" (39)

Furthermore, with respect to detailed and lengthy speeches, such as those by Erskine, Frere specifies not only their duration, but also their effects on the audience—"successive fits of fainting between the principle subdivisions of his discourse" (42).

The last long speech recreates the pomposity with which the possible reforms of Parliament are described. It is a caricature of Sir Mackintosh, a friend of Fox's called Mr. Macfungus in the periodical who explains the poetic and exaggerated vision of a temple of liberty that will rise from the ashes of tyrants: "Cemented with the blood of tyrants and the tears of aristocracy, it will rise a monument for the astonishment and veneration of future ages" (44). The anti-Jacobin author also emphasises the exaggerated sentimentality of the arguments. Hence, after a long speech where the tone is fanatical and increases in passion as it progresses he ends like this: "Then peace, and freedom and fraternity, and equality, will pervade the whole earth; while the vows of republicanism, the altar of patriotism, and the revolutionary pontiff, with the thrilling volcanic sympathies, whether of holy fury or of ardent fraternal civism, uniting, and identifying, as if it were, an electric energy" (45).

The end of the chronicle presents a "progressive and patriotic festivity" (46), a euphoric moment where songs are sung with jubilation and the Jacobin spirit pervades the mood of the attendees, who rejoice with toasts, chants and lively conversations, far removed from the political concerns discussed.

In the depiction of the Jacobins' meetings throughout the periodical, many scenes are repeated that relate to events that took place around Fox. For example,

“Mr. Fox’s Birthday”, called by Stones “a spoof account” (94) is another chronicle that recounts the dinner on Fox’s birthday on January 24. *The Anti-Jacobin* delights with presenting this account by popular demand: “The public, distracted with the various accounts of the celebration of Mr. Fox’s birth-day, naturally turn to us for an authentic detail” (100). The parody begins by presenting the story as “a genuine narrative of the whole proceeding” (100), which will describe the chosen venue—the Smithfield neighbourhood—the price of admission—“eight shillings and six pence per head” (101)—and a whole series of tumults including a liberal who tries to enter by presenting his speech instead of the ticket and the fact that all those waiting discover that their wallets have been stolen. Against this chaos, only the figure of a waiter tries to bring order.

The longest part is a parody of the chronicle of the speeches. The Duke of Norfolk praises Robespierre, Collot d’Herbois and Fox, who is continually referred to in pompous tones by his full name, Charles James Fox. The parody also incorporates details that accentuate the alcohol intake due to the large number of toasts: “This was drank with three times three” (103). Fox’s speech is parodied, reproducing his words which include slogans in favour of Jacobinism—“at the sight of so numerous and so respectable a body of free and independent citizens” (103), as well as against its enemies, *The Anti-Jacobin* itself, which is labelled a “contemptible publication” (103). The parodic transformation is emphasised by the fact that Fox’s speech will end with a song, which will be followed by a series of songs about many well-known liberal figures. All those present are described as being in a drunken state, especially Captain Morris, whose state is recorded comically in Latin, as “*sumno, vinoque gravatus*” (105). As well as the known members, however, there are naïve ones such as one referred to as Citizen Gale Jones who tries to advertise his book and repeatedly toasts the health of Horne Tooke, who tries to bring order (106). The final point is the well-known toast of Norfolk, who instead of toasting the health of the sovereign, toasts the health of “The Majesty of the People,”, which causes a commotion that makes the narrator put an immediate end to the scene: “A disgusting scene of confusion and uproar followed, which we shall not attempt to detail.” (108). This parodic journalistic chronicle also highlights the denunciation of *The Anti-Jacobin*, and its sign in favour of the “royalist” attitude also indicates a continuing unease associated with the chaos with which this kind of gathering is associated.

The chronicle, therefore, is a parody of subjective sign that is intentionally designed to relate incident after incident involving a group of unworthy politicians in chaotic scenes reminiscent of Fielding’s pitched battles in *Tom Jones*, the mayhem in Rowlandson’s cartoons or the headlong comic scenes Peacock inserts in his novels. Disorder and carnivalesque chaos, confusion and noise surround the portrayal of well-known figures amidst alcoholic effluvium where Jacobin slogans are ridiculed.

This unfortunate toast will reappear later in Ellis and Canning's XVIIIth issue, "ODE." Parodying Horace's Ode 25, Book III, which copies the original structure of the poem and offers an amusing dialogue with Bacchus, who is asked about the inspiration of Fox and North that night.

2.4. *Ad hominem* parodies: *anti-Jacobins* vs. *Fox*

Of all the focuses, the most repetitive and exacerbated is the direct attacks on Fox, the symbol of liberals and of opposition to the government. Issue XII includes "A Bit of an Ode to Mr. Fox" written by Ellis. The author clearly shows his interest by starting from an imitation: "*The Poem is a free translation, or rather, perhaps, imitation of the 20th Ode of the 2d Book of Horace*" (97). The swan of the poetic voice of Horace's ode is transformed in the parody into a "grey goose" (98). This image presents the flight of a bird that follows in the footsteps of Adair, the spy sent by Fox to different places in Europe and Russia. This bird is ironically presented as being erudite "well form'd from Burke's best books—/From rules of grammar (e'en Horne Tooke's)" (98) and the animal metaphor is clearly and logically maintained by relating it to Fox's name:

I mount, I mount into the sky,
 "Sweet bird" to Petersburg I'll fly:
 Or, if you bid, to Paris;
 Fresh missions of the *Fox* and *goose*
 Successful treaties may produce;
 Though Pitt in all miscarries. (99)

Attacks on Fox are also made in the realm of parody by commenting on his friendships and animosities with his own colleagues. Issue XIII, "Acme and Septimius; or the Happy Union," written by Ellis, imitates Catullus' poem 45. The original characters were Septimius and his beloved Acme, who receives promises of love from her beloved, who will leave Britain for her. The parody recreates this love affair by changing the protagonists to Fox and Tooke, originally considered Fox's enemy. The voices of these "lovers" are recorded exchanging promises of eternal love in the title poem "ACME AND SEPTIMIUS OR, THE HAPPY UNION Celebrated at the Crown and Anchor Tavern." Tooke's amorous response includes his passionate admiration for Jacobin reform:

So, my dear Charley, may success
 At length my ardent wishes bless,
 And lead, through Discord's low ring storm,

To one grand RADICAL REFORM!
 As, from this hour I love thee more
 Than e'er I hated thee before! (110)

The final point of the poem leaves the narrator enraptured by the union of these two souls, which makes the reader reflect on the false relationship of convenience in politics as opposed to the portrait of true love that Catullus distilled in his verses. The differentiating element is what makes the reader enjoy the witty parallels.

In issue XIV the parody starts from a composition published by the *Morning Post*: “Lines, written under the Bust of Charles Fox at the Crown and Anchor” which had praised Fox’s blameless nature—“Fox is above all Price” (117). The parodic attack of the anti-Jacobins is not only based on the ridicule of the poetic composition, which they call “miserable doggerel”, but also on the mocking transformation of the content. They present the counterpart by also describing other lines written under an apparently unidentified bust—“a certain Orator”—which the reader will come to guess the identity of from allusions to Fox. The title is thus altered in the parodic composition, now long and sophisticated—“Lines written by a Traveller at Czarco-zelo, under the Bust of a certain Orator, once placed between those of Demosthenes and Cicero”—where Fox, as an enemy, has lost the status and dignity to be among classical orators. Four stanzas praise Demosthenes’ triumph in his time as “The Grecian Orator” and present Cicero as “The Roman Sage,” pointing to the extraordinary deeds they each undertook for their respective cities:

Their country’s peace, and wealth, and fame,
 With patriot zeal their labours sought,
 And Rome’s or Athen’s honour’d name
 Inspired and govern’d every thought. (118)

In contrast, the last two stanzas question Fox’s validity as a political leader, presenting him as “The advocate of foreign power” or “The Catiline of modern times” and comparing him to Cicero’s enemy, the flamboyant consul Lucius Catiline. The wit of the mockery of the English politician through the imagining of lines on his bust, imitating those that extolled classical orators, denigrates Fox, his person and his authority and political action. Published in a journalistic format, it would reach an audience that would easily relate elements and understand the parodic play.

A final composition on Fox is in issue XXV and entitled “Brissot’s Ghost.” Composed by Frere, it parodies the poem “Admiral Hosier’s Ghost” by Richard Glover (1712-1785). In the original, the dead from the battlefields and those

buried at sea were solemnly invoked as witnesses to praise the important role in the war against Spain of Admiral Hosier, who had succeeded in preventing the Spanish from seizing English treasures. In the parodic poem, the battered spirit of Jacques Pierre Brissot, a French writer and political leader who was the leader of the Girondins during the French Revolution, appears to Fox's crew. Described as "Brissot's injur'd Ghost" (185), he warns the English against Jacobin speeches and the radicalism of the politician.

2.5. *Sham letters*

Issue VI includes "Letter from a Lady," signed by one of the characters acting as voices or *personae* in *The Anti-Jacobin*, Letitia Sourby. The genius of copying the format lies in the reconstruction and imitation of a letter to the editor written by a woman. The authors recreate the dramatic context of this supposed contributor by using her as an example and reflection of a difficult situation—"the misfortune, under which she labours" (55)—that is common throughout the country—"as we fear, so increasing, throughout the country" (55). The parodic effect of the letter intensifies at its close as the supposed lady adds a postscript where she confesses that she can only read *The Anti-Jacobin* in secret at a widowed neighbour's house—"My father would be very angry if he knew it" (58).

The genius of the parody lies in the imitation of a letter to the editor—so common since the eighteenth century in a female voice—like those of Addison and Steele in *The Spectator* and Samuel Johnson in *The Rambler*, with an intimate and personal tone, and therefore closer to the reader. It is the voice of an unhappy daughter who contemplates how her father has fallen into the clutches of Jacobinism. She describes the end of her "domestic felicity" (55). Shocked, she sees her father transformed, speaking of politics with acrimony and violence, and describes how he has been negatively influenced by discourses related to liberty, and how he is enslaved as a member of a Jacobin society—called "the Speaking Society"—through reading pamphlets and books.

The daughter's tragic account lists how his ideas have changed: about marriage—"marriage is good for nothing, and ought to be free to be broken by either party at will" (56), about the oppressed classes—"if they are oppressed, why do they not right themselves?" (57), about religion having turned into a deistic practice—"he bids me gaze up and look around and overflow with divine sensation—which he says is natural religion" (57) and about the defence of the country—"the yeomanry cavalry for the defence of the King and country—which angered my father past all enduring" (57). The father's habits are detailed: he has changed from teetotaler to drinker and has insisted on changing his son's name to give him a French political sound—"on the christening of my little brother Buonaparte

Sourby” (58). Underlying the imitation of the despairing tone of the afflicted lady’s letter is the mockery of all those in favour of Jacobinism, since such supposedly egalitarian values are presented as clear signs of tyranny: “the more he has liberty and independence in his mouth, the more he should be a tyrant” (58).

The wit of this letter is taken up later in issue XXII where there is another *sham letter*, this time by Sam Shallow who has read Letitia’s letter—“a Young woman complaining her father had been misled by these new fangled French doctrines” (158) and describes another similar drama and revolution in the domestic sphere. Entitled “To the Editor of The Anti-Jacobin”, simple Sam’s letter wants to convey his experience by demonstrating how his father and family were affected by the Jacobin influence. He insists, as in behavioural literature, on lending himself as an example: “If you think, Sir, our example may serve as a warning to others, you are very welcome to publish this letter” (160).

The parodic effect arises again with the perfect imitation of a letter to the editor with the story of the progressive transformation of a humble cobbler, his wife and son under the influence of the so-called “Citizen Rigshaw.” The supposed innocence of Sam’s voice as objective narrator describes the Jacobin who abducts the father: “it was Citizen Rigshaw, a member of the Corresponding Society, and occasionally steward of the Whig Club, a great philosopher, and a patriot, and had been sent down to enlighten and reform, and organize (I think he called it) this part of the nation, and father was to help him. Father said it would be a GLORIOUS work! And FULL OF HUMAN WISDOM AND INTEGRITY!” (158).

Sam tells how their lives change, how his father’s discourse takes on a solemn and archaic tone with new slogans. To this end, he convinces his wife that “he would be divorced as soon as the French come” (159) and teaches his son new, liberal concepts: “thou art no longer my child, but the child of thy country” (159). Simple minds—Sam and his mother—assimilate these dictates—called “nonsensical doctrines”—until a gentleman representing judgement and common sense—“Justice of Peace”—brings order to the chaos. The lesson seems to have been learned as Sam shamefully admits the actions they have fallen into and returns to the model advocated by the conservatives: “resolv[ing] to keep to our business [...]; and not meddle with politics, constitutions, or divorces any more. Father has shut his door against all citizens” (160). The revision of Jacobin values in a tone of mockery through parody undoubtedly plays at undermining the foundations of radical politics, albeit from the environment of literary creativity.

3. Conclusion

The value of *The Anti-Jacobin* thus lies in its genius in capturing the essence of radical Jacobin ideas in portraits drawn from parodies of well-known texts. The editors and

contributors were able to capture all positions taken by the extremist liberals in individual portraits and also with respect to the concept of radicalism. Not only do they use various existing styles, texts and genres to emulate and parodically rewrite them, but they revive and drink from contemporary events, whether political issues related to the French Revolution and parliamentary figures of the time or examples of scientific progress or marks of the excessive sensitivity and exaggerated sensationalism of the time, which will be analysed in another study.

In *The Anti-Jacobin*, literary parody becomes a discourse of power. The rhetoric used aims to unseat liberal ideas, to mock them, to expose them with scorn and to use the conservative alternative as the valid one.

In this process, the games played by the protagonists are also essential: not only the literary class in the service of politics, but the mocked enemy of the opposing political group, the intellectual ideas under attack and the representation of the working classes as ignorant victims, all potential and easy baits for the Jacobin ideas criticised.

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