"A Ballad" is a good example of Restoration ad hominem criticism. Safe in his anonymity, the poet derides eight of his fellow scribblers, all well-known writers of libels; the result is personal invective, not literary criticism. With the usual superiority of the courtier, the poet rates "lampooning" above the writing of prologues, probably because he and his fellows valued satiric wit above mere dramatic wit.

Although in manuscript the satire is dated 1683, the last stanza, dealing with the Pulteney-Howard duel, July 8, 1682, gives the impression of immediate contemporary comment. Perhaps the poem was written c. August, 1682.

The copy text, dated 1683, is Harleian MS. 7319, p. 248. The satire is dated 1683 also in MS. Rawl. Poet. 159, f. 54.

The King, Duke, and state
Are so libeled of late
That the authors for Whigs are suspected;
For women in scandal
By scribblers are damned all,
To Court and to cunt disaffected.

Some say 'tis the labor
Of sly Mr. Baber,
Who's a plaguy sharp writer of satire;
But for one to say true,
Give the devil his due,
He's a Tory and can't be a traitor.

His best friend to jeer
He can hardly forbear,
And that way employed his pen is.
Once I did hear whisper
A brisk holy sister,
“He’s better at that than at tennis.”

But most people now
Do lay’t on Jack Howe;
So would I too if he could write better
Than when he was long
On a senseless song
And feigned from Richmond a letter.

Some Falkland have guessed at,
As doggerel he’s best at;
Lampooning’s a thing much sublimer.
His prologues are such stuff
As show plain enough
He’s a poor detestable rhymer.

Some Mordaunt will have,
But he is too brave
Of scandal to be a mean railer;
For the world knows he writes
As well as he fights;
He’s a poet as good as a sailor.

Sour Frazier’s by nature
A libeling creature,
And should therefore be given to lampooning;
But his wit falling short
Spoils a good deal of sport,
So for nothing he’s fit but buffooning.

Where he mimics and acts,
He basely retracts,
Which argues his sweet disposition. Though Dorset and Fleet
Set him up for a wit,
They'll ne'er set him up for physician.

Fleet has lived long in town,
Yet has less wit than clown,
And severest on civil behavior;
But I should not care
If me he could spare,
No more than he did our Savior.

Now from France he is come,
He teases at home
All the world with his wise observations;
King and Court ridicules,
Swears his Council are fools,
And the French good for nothing but fashions.

Henningham writes, some say;
Believe it you may,
You that still hear him talk like a parrot.
If fortune he gets,
Beholden to's wits,
He'll be left then to's footman and chariot.

Will Fanshaw's at leisure
To scribble for pleasure,
Who was sharp on the murder of Denham.
Learn of him, for shame,
Who in private declaim,
And in public spit out all your venom.

Lampoons are grown tedious
And damnable odious,
And now scarce worth the resenting;
A BALLAD

I'll therefore have done
And stanza add one,
Another lampoon for preventing.

Let Poultney nor Howard
Pass now for a coward,
But let their fierce challenge be boasted.
They who to the field go
And there nothing do
Deserve ten times more to be posted.

8. **Baber.** John, son of Sir John Baber, royal physician. In July, 1683, young Baber ran away with and married Sir Thomas Draper's daughter. See below, "Satire on both Whigs and Tories."

17. **holy sister.** An ironic name for a prostitute. The entire image is sexual, from "pen is" to "tennis." Court, or royal, tennis was a very complicated game: a player could score points by driving the ball over the net, by bouncing it off the walls of the court, or by driving it into certain openings in the walls.

20. **Jack Howe.** John Grubham Howe, a vicious satirist.

24. **Richmond.** Frances (Stuart), widowed Duchess of Richmond. For the episode of the "letter" see Appendix, Howe.

25. **Falkland.** Anthony Carey, Viscount Falkland (1656–94), Treasurer of the Navy. His only known prologue before this date was to Otway's *The Soldier's Fortune*, March, 1680.

31. **Mordaunt.** Eccentric Charles, Viscount Mordaunt (1658–1735), became famous later as Earl of Peterborough. He had served without distinction in the royal Navy, and in 1681 he was captain of his own ship of war, the *Loyal Mordaunt*. He was brave, but an unsuccessful duelist. On August 1, 1681, he fought a duel with James Douglas, Lord Arran. Arran took a sword thrust through the thigh, and Mordaunt was wounded in the arm and body, "but, it is believed, not mortal" (*Ormonde MS, N.S.*, VI, 117).

37. **Frazier.** Charles Frazier, son of Sir Alexander Frazier, royal physician, took his M.A. at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1674, and was created M.D. by royal mandate in 1678. In 1684 he was admitted as a Fellow in the College of Physicians (William Munk, *The Roll of the Royal College of Physicians of London*, 1878, I, 432). The poet's opinion of Frazier is echoed in "To Julian. 1682" (Harleian MS. 6913, p. 301),

Frazier, the pimp, buffoon, or politician,
Frazier that's anything but a physician.

46. **Dorset.** Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset (1643–1706), and his protégés, Charles Frazier and facetious Fleetwood Shepherd, composed a threesome of cronies.
See, for example, “Dorset’s Lamentation for Moll Howard’s Absence” (Harleian MS. 6913, p. 293), in which Frazier and Shepherd are described as Dorset’s pimps.

55. from France. Shepherd accompanied his patron, the Earl of Dorset, who went to France for his health in August, 1681. On November 21, 1681, Wood recorded a rumor “that Fleetwood Shepherd was either hanged or broke upon the wheel at Paris for some roguery that he had committed” (Life and Times, II, 560). Dorset’s party returned to England in mid-February, 1682 (Harris, Dorset, pp. 83–86), and apparently Shepherd annoyed his friends by his derogatory comments on the King of France, his Court, and his Council. See Prior, “On Mr. Fleetwood Shephard’s Killing the French King,” Dialogues of the Dead, ed. Waller, 1907, p. 288.


67. Fanshaw. William Fanshaw was at leisure to write because in July, 1681, he had been dismissed from his post as a Master of Requests “for talking little less than treason upon all occasions that he can” (Ormonde MS, N.S., VI, 98). I have not found his verses on the “murder” of Lady Denham, supposedly poisoned in a cup of chocolate, January 6, 1667.

79. Pultney. “On Saturday [July 8, 1682] young Pultney and one Mr. Howard (of what family I know not) met and had an encounter and Howard is killed” (Seventh Report, p. 497B). According to Luttrell (I, 205) the fight was on account of “a gentle­woman which the said Mr. Pultney hath married.” A third account states that “a Mr. Hayward,” who pretended a contract to an heiress Pulteney had married in France, challenged him, but Pulteney refused to fight. However, when the two met near St. James’s Square, they drew and fought. Afterward Pulteney fled (CSPD, 1682, p. 287). John Pulteney, second son of Sir William Pulteney of Miskerton, Leicestershire, married Lucy Colvile of Northamptonshire. See Appendix, Pulteney.

84. posted. To post was to affix in a public place a document accusing an enemy of cowardice.