MODERN CHIVALRY: THE FORM
MARY S. MATTFIELD

PART TWO

One dramatic structural device for exhibiting a spectrum of opinion is the figure procession, or the representative cross-section of humanity. The narrative frame of Modern Chivalry provides a convenient mechanism for bringing together a number of conflicting viewpoints, since the Captain's adventures lead him repeatedly into crowded public scenes. These are often more plausible and less static than comparable contrivances in other Menippean satires—such as the interminable banquet of Petronius or the country-house gatherings of Peacock—for the occasion is invariably related closely to the central theme. The marketplace, the legislature, the town meeting or the court of law furnishes an appropriate forum for canvassing those democratic institutions and principles which were most in question during this period "when the United States was enacting the drama which we now refer to—sometimes too casually—as self-determination." 34 The number of voices raised and the resultant confusion go precisely to Brackenridge's point: the dangers in the republicanism he advocated. Though the marshalling of an articulate mob skillfully reinforces the theme of the perils of mobocracy, the voices in the procession are no less stereotyped than those in any traditional satire of this type. The episode of the village fair, for example, furnishes the occasion for a number of characteristic dialogues on revolution, on learning, on economy in government and on the role of the politician (pp. 417-443 passim). The figures in the varied choruses include the Chapman, Tom the Tinker, a "moral drawing man," the "drolling person," O'Dell the Revolutionist, a Frenchman, a vendor of patent medicines, a rude man, a wise man, a naturalist—to identify only a few of the professional or temperamental attitudes thus represented.

The group which surrounds the Captain during much of the second part of Modern Chivalry is characterized in slightly greater detail, and their reappearances allow Brackenridge greater scope for indirect commentary. The Latin schoolmaster who joins Farrago's

ill-assorted band of migrants to the new settlement functions as a caricature of one aspect of the Captain, and indeed of Brackenridge himself. The Latin tags which make up almost his entire contribution to the dialogue are unintelligible to the crowd and — more significantly — usually only remotely relevant to the immediate problem. The scene of the Lay Preacher's sermon (pp. 577-79) to the frontiersmen illustrates the schoolmaster's usual role. The Preacher has cautioned the settlers against the indolence which leads to intemperance: Horse jockeying, shooting matches, and all elections, are an inlet to this. Shew me a man that frequents the county town, much, and I will shew you one that is in the way to contract the habit of intoxication. The little peltry he may have got to buy himself a hunting shirt, or a little tea, and sugar, for his family, goes into the whiskey bottle.

Now to the application, said Harum Scarum, this will do for the body of the sermon.

As to application, said the Preacher, I will leave that to every man to make for himself. You can all apply the doctrine as well as I can.

"Non omnia possumus omnes."

Said the Latinist.

Will not that fellow be quiet yet? Said the Sexton, drive him out. (p. 578)

Farrago is wiser, and his training in the "old school" of the classics has made him a thoroughly respectable gentleman with high ethical standards. Teague's setting up as a doctor outrages his master's concept of morality (p. 379) even though his practical friend, John Murdoch, "speaking as a man of the world," assures him that "medicine is much indebted to quacks." Although by the conclusion of the book the Captain grows impatient enough with his people to rebuke their excesses soundly (pp. 782-84), his naiveté when confronted by the realistic conditions of backwoods life provides one of the chief strands in the intricate texture of Modern Chivalry. The gulf between classical tradition and the American frontier situation appears also in the author's ironic use of parallels drawn from Greek and Roman history, in his observations on the ingratitude of governments (pp. 588-94), on the suitability of the custom of the levee to a free nation (pp. 201-03), on the right of impeachment (pp. 737-43; 744-46). Here the ambiguity in the two voices of Brackenridge is functional. The naive author is the pedant whose response to a crisis is to retreat to the language and the mores of a vanished civilization. He ornaments his observations with Latin quotations for the artless love of ornament (pp. 583-87; 720), and he reacts to the brutality of the mob toward Teague the Exciseman with a learned dissertation upon the antique origins of tar and feathers (pp. 306-07). The sophisticated author, in contrast, is equivalently a classical scholar, but in his case the serious values of the past are seriously related to the present, and
the noblest classic concepts of law (p. 542), of honor (pp. 480; 535), of patriotism (p. 415), and especially of democracy (pp. 530-37), furnish the legitimate precedents for Brackenridge's ideal of an American government. In this balancing of irony with sincerity, extremes are reconciled and the theme of reason is reinforced.

In addition to the Latin schoolmaster, the representative procession to the back country includes Harum Scarum the duelist (pp. 525; 773-75). His first role is to supply the settlers with food, but in the wilderness deer and other game do not behave like opponents on the field of honor, for the artificial conventions of a formal ritualistic culture do not apply in a new world. The implication is inescapable that Brackenridge's essential conservatism extends only to institutions and values which are still viable.

In the group also is O'Fin the Irishman, who helps to lead the procession into the new town and to establish the Captain as the governor, largely by means of the young tree he bears on his shoulder by way of shillelagh. O'Fin's response to all events is of a piece with this stereotype (p. 636). The usefulness of the singleminded and aggressive man of action during a period of revolution is not minimized, but these are not the methods which establish a stable and rational republic (p. 414), and the Captain must moderate O'Fin's aggression as Brackenridge wished to temper the zeal of contemporary reformers (pp. 336; 765).

The blind lawyer is another of the several partial masks of Brackenridge himself. Because of his affliction he plays to some extent the role of the privileged fool, whose wisdom is tolerated when other lawyers and judges are expelled by the settlers who resist the rule of law (p. 435). He is blind as justice herself is, but there is a suggestion that this occupational affliction is at least in part a judgment of the author upon the lawyer. Although the lawyer is learned and can instruct Farrago in human nature as well as in the intricacies of the law (pp. 362-66; 372-73), the Captain — like Judge Brackenridge — is not concerned with acting upon legal grounds alone but on ethical and moral as well (p. 379).

Clonmel the ballad singer reflects still another role which Brackenridge himself had often played in the history of his time and place. He moves men to act or averts disaster35 not by reason or by force or by legal means, but by the emotional appeal of his songs and

35 As Brackenridge himself did during the Whiskey Insurrection. For an account of his attempts to moderate the irresponsibility of the crowd, see: Newlin, *Life*, 148-49.
his wit (pp. 527-28). Ironically, what the Captain sometimes cannot do by an appeal to reason, Clonmel does irrationally, for this is in many respects a world like Burton's, "turned upside downward," and the Captain must often control by "a deception of the people for their own good" (p. 765).

*Modern Chivalry* is a huge canvas, crowded like a scene by Hogarth with innumerable caricatures. Many appear for only a moment to make their contribution to the dialogue and then depart, yet each is sharply if briefly realized: the mad poet, the senator, the German farmer, the scurrilous printer, the lady of fashion, each is spokesman for a point of view in Brackenridge's long parade of American types, and each — overtly or indirectly — contributes to the major theme by extending the irony. The figure procession, though a stock element of traditional satire, here becomes an organic part of a work depicting the struggle to forge unity from diversity.

Irony may be further introduced into a work such as this through a number of other traditional techniques. While Brackenridge's strategy depends specifically upon an irony of inversion permitted by the use of the implied author and contrasting points of view, a formal satire included such additional structural and rhetorical elements as invective, parody, burlesque, allegory, all of which appear to some extent in his pages.

In *Modern Chivalry*, raillery or invective is not a prominent feature of the satire. In contrast to the figures of Hudibras and Ralpho, Captain Farrago and even Teague are gently handled, and there are no Yahoos even in the back settlement. Brackenridge was aware that his use of an "Irish clown" might arouse resentment among some of his readers, and in his role of the created author he discusses the reasons for his choice and cites the stage tradition of the stereotype (p. 405). Characteristically, he also debates its propriety through the voices of two minor characters, Irishmen themselves. One takes offense violently, but the other recognizes the intention and the accuracy of the portrait and argues that it is no reflection upon the Irish in general (pp. 506-07). Teague is truly the low comedy stage bogtrotter, in appearance, manners, and brogue; the subject of the satire, however, is his combination of ignorance and self-assurance, and this trait is found among characters of all ethnic backgrounds in *Modern Chivalry*, including Brackenridge's fellow Scots. National origin is unimportant to Brackenridge (p. 89), and the Lay Preacher speaks for him when he discourses on "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego":

These are the Hebrew names for Tom, Dick, and Harry, and applicable to this settlement, which is a colluvies of all nations: Mac's, O's, and Ap's; Erse, Irish, and Welsh. But as in a garden, a variety of seeds, and plants, is desirable, so in a settlement, where the human species is about to be cultivated, and this is not only for the sake of what pleases the fancy, but what is useful for the kitchen, or for medicine. So let no uncharitableness prevail among you, and one cast up to the other, their origin, former occupation, or character. I presume there would be but little to gain or lose on a fair balance, and set off, as the lawyers say, among you. But it is best to consider all accounts squared, and set out in a new partnership. (p. 577)

To Brackenridge, a "plain man of good sense" possessed the necessary qualifications for a voter or a legislator (p. 296). In the caricature of Teague O'Regan there is none of the bias which infected most popular fiction a century later; Brackenridge was rational and moderate in his religious views (pp. 41-42; 121-22; 259; 559; 610; 719). Although he could rally the clergy with being too prone "to begin with Genesis, and end with Revelations; to prove their doctrine as they go along, by an enchainment of texts; and to say the same thing over again, in many different words" (p. 429), the only religious manifestation which really repelled him was the extravagance of the backwoods camp-meeting (pp. 608-10). This rational quality and his tolerant detachment prevented Brackenridge from much use of gross invective as a tool of satire.

Another element of classical verse satire, and one which is used to far greater effect in Modern Chivalry, is the formal set-piece of parody. In this respect, as in so many others, Brackenridge shows the influence of Swift. Like Gulliver's Travels, Modern Chivalry is itself incidentally an extended travesty on a genuine travel narrative, for — although it is told in the third person — it follows the form of the genre as it typically appeared in the eighteenth century. It includes imitations of the usual encomia upon the natural beauties and phenomena of the regions explored. The mountain retreat of the émigré Marquis de Marnessie is inevitably described as "romantic" (p. 309); the beauties of frontier life in the new settlement are enhanced by the natural beauty of the scene, and described in terms appropriate to a colonization tract (pp. 555-57). The primal innocence of the new land is explicitly equated with Eden (p. 759) in the manner of the typical sentimental traveler. Within this frame of the travel narrative appear individual parodies on nearly every major genre: the sermon, both in the traditional plain style with text, doctrine, and applications (pp. 102-03), and in the less orthodox manner of the unschooled camp-meeting preacher (pp. 577-78); the oration (p. 168); the hudibrastic (p. 621) and the ballad (p. 571); the learned disquisition (pp. 720-27); the lecture (p. 362); the
pomposities of congressional debate (pp. 123-24). The incidental brief encounters of the Captain with the melancholy young man at the inn (pp. 63-67), and with the unfortunate young woman betrayed by an unequal match, are parodies on the themes and the diction of the sentimental novel. The young woman, discovered in a brothel to which the Captain has gone in search of Teague, tells her story in precisely the detail and the tone of a Pamela or a Clarissa, and the Captain replies like the proper man of sensibility. After her suicide and funeral, he apostrophizes the earth which covers her and the world which has so cruelly censured her, and concludes with a romantic "Farewell, lovely form, whom late I knew; and let the grass grow green upon thy grave . . ." (pp. 108-13). Brackenridge's later picture of the infatuation of Miss Mutchkin for Teague, and his rules for fathers and guardians of such misguided young ladies (pp. 228-42) offer the healthy corrective of satire to the excesses of the romance.

Like the parody, the burlesque plays an important part in the composition of Modern Chivalry. This traditional technique of satire by comparison had been widely used in both verse and prose by many of Brackenridge's favorite models. He himself consciously employed the method of high burlesque, or the mock-heroic manner, throughout his work. "Is it nothing to be able to shew how easily I can elevate small matters?" he demanded (p. 492), and the most trivial subject — the etymology of his surname (pp. 799-800), the proper cut of coat for a speaker (p. 724), the proportions and design of the governor's log house (p. 788) — could call forth his loftiest eloquence. Placing Teague O'Regan in exalted situations to which he was totally unequal, at the President's levee in his torn and dirty overalls (p. 199), or on the bench dispensing justice with his shillelagh (pp. 546-47), served to ridicule the pretensions of the unfit by means of comparison with nobler personages.

Brackenridge was equally successful in his use of low burlesque, in his treatment of elevated subjects through trivial comparisons. This hudibrastic technique is especially striking in the repeated diminution of man by paralleling him to animals. The beast-fable was a familiar device of classical satire, and Brackenridge recalled the tales of Aesop through which useful instruction was conveyed "under the similitude of beasts, and birds speaking" (p. 756). The lengthy section in the 1815 edition of Modern Chivalry in which is developed the richly ironic picture of enfranchised farm animals, and of cattle elected to the legislature, seems curiously to have puzzled Brackenridge's biogra-
The narrative is in part a brilliant example of mock-logic: if a man's qualifications for the right of suffrage or election are to depend (as some constitutions would have it) upon the extent of his property, then in reality "is it not his property that votes? If this property consists in cattle, can it be said that his cattle do not vote? Ergo, a cow or a horse, in some communities have the privilege in the enacting laws" (p. 717). (The same conceit has in the twentieth century often formed the basis for satirical editorials and cartoons advocating the redistricting of rural areas.) The Captain's constituents are carried away by this notion, and by the zeal of the "Visionary Philosopher" who believes beasts can be educated to fit them for citizenship and public office. In the broadly farcical episodes of this burlesque, Brackenridge satirized the advocates of the doctrine of the perfectibility of mankind who would elevate a Teague O'Regan while he was still illiterate and incompetent. The logical sequel is the proposal to send animals to the legislature. "Commend me to a brute beast," exclaims the proponent of the measure:

a buffalo, or sheep that would chew the cud, and hold its tongue. If there were at least a mixture of those, there would be fewer speakers, and take up less time,. . . . if we were to infer from that pithy speech made by Balaam's ass . . . . Is it more against nature to send nominally something else; but, in fact an ass? (pp. 661-62)

The satire is sharp, especially when a monkey is appointed clerk of the court, over the governor's misgivings, and disrupts the courtroom by eating a pippin, snatching the judge's wig, and generally behaving like a monkey. The reader is reminded that Judge Brackenridge once took his colleague, Judge Yeates, to task for munching a pippin on the bench of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, but even in those instances when actual persons are mentioned by name, Brackenridge is not employing the method of argumentum ad hominem. Neither the individual man nor the profession or party is his target. In the voice of the naive author Brackenridge explained his purpose. "It will be said that in all this ribaldry of beasts and birds speaking, I have it in view to burlesque lawyers: not at all, it is to burlesque their defects; and under the guise of allegory to slur a truth . . . ." (p. 699). In any event, he remarked in a delightful example of the litotes which constantly helps to maintain his irony, "I incline to think after all that has been reported to the contrary, that instances of beasts voting were more rare than is imagined" (p. 652).

36 Newlin, Life, 300-01.
37 Newlin, Life, 280.
The enfranchised beasts form the longest but by no means the only allegory under the guise of which Brackenridge chose to "slur a truth." Since the nature of the Menippean Satire itself requires that all the medley of content be subordinate to or illustrative of the central thesis of the work, it is to be expected that each small drama will have a symbolic function. In Brackenridge's generation, the term allegory had undergone none of the pejoration it has so curiously suffered in our own. "A figurative discourse," Dr. Johnson considered it, "in which something other is intended than is contained in the words literally taken," and years before, Rabelais had urged the reader of Gargantua to "break the bone" of his narrative and "suck out the marrow" of his allegory. The term seems always to have suggested an action of some kind, in which the literal surface reality contains an additional dimension of meaning. Further, such meaning is often useful or instructive, so that allegory takes on a didactic function. It is no doubt this last quality which has caused modern critics to distinguish allegory so sharply from other extended metaphors and especially from the term symbol, yet it is the didactic possibility which makes allegory so fitting a tool for the satirist. (It is significant that one of the most popular political satires in modern literature, George Orwell's Animal Farm, should be an allegory in the form of a beast-fable.) The advantages gained through the use of allegory include heightening the irony by indirection, intensifying the impact by the vivid use of figurative language, conveying general truths compactly by means of particular instances, and permitting the dramatic use of point of view through personification. Brackenridge gains all of these advantages in Modern Chivalry. The entire book has an allegorical function, since the frame narrative is itself an extended metaphor, but the several episodes provide more direct illustrations.

It has been suggested earlier that the new settlement in Modern Chivalry is an allegory for the new world. The governor's problems in maintaining the rule of law under the threats of extremism, false economy, prejudice, and revolution parallel the problems of the emerging nation, and enable Brackenridge to comment eloquently upon history and contemporary politics. Within this general picture, miniature dramas further illustrate the allegorical technique. The episode of the accident at the village fair is brief and effective. A cart had overturned, and the driver needed help in righting it.

38 Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language (London, 1852), 38.
The Chapman, the Toyman, the Potter, the Hardware man, and Tom the Tinker were endeavouring to assist. The Tinker and the Hard-ware man, had set their shoulders, to the cart. They hove it up; but, by too violent a push threw it to the other side. The Chapman, and Toyman, thought to set the matter right, and in the adverse direction, applyed their force, being on the other side the cart; and to do them justice, gave a good hoist; but over-did the matter, as much as was done before; for the cart came back and lay prostrate in the same direction, as at first.

The driver, in the mean time, was dissatisfied. Gentlemen, said he, do you mean to assist, or to injure me? . . . It is all wrong, said the Captain . . . Let the poor man's cart have fair play, and stand upon its own bottom. (p. 418)

Meanwhile, the bystanders express their own views. The misanthrope disapproves of the manufacture the cart carries and therefore believes it is right to overturn the cart. The moral drawing man correctly reads the episode as an image for the state and the dangers it suffers from extremists, but another bystander jeers at him for preaching a sermon upon a cart. In this brief episode, Brackenridge satirizes the weaknesses of all viewpoints represented: the over-zealous patriotism of the tradesmen, the passive conservatism of the Captain, the negativism of destructive hostility, his own sententiousness in the person of the moral drawing man, and the obtuseness of his public which will not see beyond the surface. The literal event has become rich in implications for the satire.

Still another episode will serve to illustrate Brackenridge's use of allegory. Like Fielding, he uses the device of the formal theatrical representation metaphorically, but while Fielding incorporates his image of the puppet show into the action of his novel,40 Brackenridge presents his village Harlequin as pure allegory. The pantomime of the distressed Harlequin groaning under the weight of the people provides a vivid image for one concept of the responsibility of the politician in a free society. The varied comments of the spectators represent a cross-section of typical attitudes. One view is that the people are strong enough to walk alone, without the politician to sustain them. The wise man speaks of the ingratitude of the people and the benevolence of seeking the public good; and concludes that the caricature which ridicules both the politician and the public was "set on by the enemies of the people, and with a view to disparage republican exertions" (pp. 440-41). In a parallel episode in the same chapter, Brackenridge extends his satire by an internal parody. A pedlar, imitating the Harlequin as "the oppressed politician," had "got his stall on his back; and gave out that he had taken an oath, not to set it down, until the people at the fair, had bought off all his goods . . .

The people, out of humanity; credulous to his distress, came from

40 Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Book XII, Ch. V.
every quarter to hear his complaint, and ease him of his goods” (p. 441), and the pedlar — like a venal politician — gained a profit from the credulity of all but the cannier citizens. At the conclusion of the chapter, Brackenridge maintains that “the moral of the distressed politician is obvious to everyone. It is natural for us to suppose that the world cannot do without us” (p. 442), and he draws upon history for instances to prove that no public man is indispensable. Here also he explains his use of such fantastic images as a “figure of the Pedlar and his pack” and the Harlequin. These, he suggests, will “afford a good drawing” when the book comes to be illustrated “a century or two hence” (p. 442). He defends himself once again against the charge of triviality.

The critic will say, what use can there be in such representations? We do not write altogether for grave, or even grown men; our book is not for a day only. We mean it for the coming generation, as well as the present; and intending solid observations, we interlard pleasantry to make the boys read. (p. 443)

One final instance of Brackenridge’s allegorical pleasantry may be found in the parable of the frontier clergyman’s ground-clearing and “frolic.” Needing help in cutting the timber on his land, he held “an assemblage for labour, and a feast at the same time” (p. 791). This gathering furnishes a fitting image for the cooperative building of the new nation. The great soup kettle which is suspended over an open fire, and to which each worker adds his choice of ingredients — “venison, and beef, and pork, and some fowls, and vegetables, and articles of seasoning” — is explicitly equated with the Constitution. When the kettle is taken off the fire, “some thought the broth had too much salt, or pepper, or cabbage; others too little. The proportion of every article of fish, flesh, or fowl was found fault with by some one” (p. 792), but the master of the proceedings reconciles all their differences of personal taste by his own addition of a flask of whiskey.

Brackenridge the Scot had written humorous verse in the manner of Burns in defense of usquebaugh,41 and his sympathy for the rebels during the Whiskey Insurrection was familiar to his contemporaries. Here he plays upon the notion of the “spirit” of harmony and compromise essential to the success of a constitution in a democracy. This final brief allegory has a vigorous native quality which makes it an appropriate conclusion to the narrative.

41 Newlin, Life, 176-83; 228-29.
American satire has undergone a very material change since the time of Brackenridge. In some ways, that change was anticipated by *Modern Chivalry* itself. During the Revolutionary period, satire in America had for the most part been still neo-classic, still "cast in traditional forms," which included high burlesque of the mock-heroic poem, the hudibrastic tradition, the periodical essay. The essay often took the popular English forms of the dream vision, the beast-fable, or the prose allegory. Thus, although "so many... achieved a comparable mastery of form and matter that for the moment it seemed as if America had declared her literary independence from Britain, too," this independence was still distant. Though a greater freedom was beginning to develop, the popular forms were still those traditional in England and based upon the methods of classical satire.

As an American system of government and an American national consciousness emerged (in both of which developments Hugh Henry Brackenridge played his part), classical satire became a less and less appropriate genre. A romantic period was dawning, but this fact alone does not fully explain the decline. The Menippean Satire has persisted in English literature to the present day — in the fictions of Thomas Love Peacock, Aldous Huxley, Evelyn Waugh, C. S. Lewis, among others — yet in America the critic of society has chosen different means to achieve his subject. It has been suggested that "no country... has greater need of a satirist today than the United States of America," yet few nations have been and are so prone to collective self-censure and self-castigation. It is not the critical purpose but the formal satirical method which has all but disappeared.

To account for that disappearance we need disparage neither the wit nor the scholarship of our writers. We may instead look for the key in the same comparison with which we began: the comparison of Brackenridge with his "model," Swift. Both laugh, like Democritus, so that they may not weep at the follies of their fellowmen. Like Juvenal, however, Swift despises mankind in general, while Brackenridge, like Horace, tells the truth with a smile in order to reach and to influence the great mass of his contemporaries — "Tom, Dick and Harry in the woods" (p. 471). The nature and the necessities of a democracy require a wider, even a mass audience if the satirist is to be

43 Granger, 305.
effective. That the character of his medium should alter does not represent a mere concession to the vulgar taste but indicates a search for a genuinely national literature. Opinions vary widely as to the type of environment in which satire flourishes best, but there is good evidence that a relatively stable society (in at least that portion of the social order inhabited by the writer) provides the best setting for formal satire.\textsuperscript{45} Most great satirists have written for and from a select group within a distinct social class. Hugh Brackenridge, in contrast, was committed to a highly unstable form of government which in its turn was committed to a totally new concept of class structure. Instead of satirizing the vices and vanities of courtiers, as Jonson did, or the errors of opposing religious factions, like Dryden — sure of a sympathetic hearing from his own group at least — Brackenridge was in the more difficult position of satirizing the weaknesses of the democracy to which he was dedicated and of the countrymen he valued and served. “Why should I undervalue democracy . . . I that am a democrat myself” (p. 506), he protested sincerely. His potential audience was the mass of men from all segments of society who were also his targets, for only by reaching them could he serve his serious purpose.

To reach the American public required a certain degree of tact, and an increased emphasis upon the comic element. “Let me get a man to laugh, and I put him in good humour” (p. 479), Brackenridge confided to justify his comedy. It is hardly surprising that in his “opus magnum” (p. 727), Modern Chivalry, the comic aspect should be strong and the sense of detachment should be carefully cultivated through the use of the created author and other devices. Though Modern Chivalry in one sense stands at the end of the classic tradition of satire in America, it stands also at the start of a new and indigenous development, at once cruder and more hopeful. “In the United States the way satire has made itself irresistible is to be humorous. Invective, paradox, wit and direct appeals to the intellect may work elsewhere, but in America satire is typically humorous, disarming . . .”\textsuperscript{46} This quality has often been misinterpreted. In one British judgment on the United States “no country has a greater output of humour, good and bad, which is wholly devoid of any satirical quality.”\textsuperscript{47} This is quite simply not true. In typical American satire the “elements (sharp criticism and humor) are there, but the criticism has become merely

\textsuperscript{45} Leonard Feinberg, \textit{The Satirist} (Ames, Iowa, 1963), 302-305.
\textsuperscript{46} Carlisle, p. xv.
\textsuperscript{47} Knox, 42.
the 'material' of the performer or writer — who is wholly indifferent to the object of his attack, if not actually fond of it." 48 This feigned indifference is an effective characteristic of the voice of the naive author in *Modern Chivalry*, and Captain Farrago's fondness for the irrepressible Teague prevents the satire from becoming unpalatably cruel. Thus the shift in emphasis and perspective which was to mark later American satire was present as early as *Modern Chivalry*.

Form as well as emphasis was to change. The elements of classical satire at which Brackenridge excelled — the irony of inversion, and extravagant burlesque — were those which were to continue to prove most congenial to the American temperament. The vehicles for these elements, however, were to become the journalist's sketch, the tall tale of frontier humor, the novel, the political cartoon. From Seba Smith and Augustus Longstreet in the generation which followed the last volume of *Modern Chivalry*, to Finley Peter Dunne and Will Rogers, E. B. White and Walt Kelly, the tone and themes were to continue as Brackenridge had established them. Nor has it been the humorists alone who have shown that the ironic voice of satire speaks truth. Even Nathaniel Hawthorne was to adapt the techniques of ambiguity and the satirical allegory to the uses of the romance, as Henry James was to do for the novel. The grimly comic vision of Melville and Thoreau, Mark Twain and William Faulkner, reflects the spirit of "... the sort of satire which is genuinely, sometimes profoundly, though almost always comically critical of life as it has been and as it happens to be in the U.S.A. Admittedly, today it is not easy to find this strain" 49 unmixed, but as a brilliant thread it has run through the work of nearly every major American writer who has sought to understand the meaning of the American experience and the condition of mankind. As a contribution to that understanding, Hugh Henry Brackenridge's satire merits a fresh reading.

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48 Carlisle, p. xv.
49 Carlisle, p. xv.