

Poetry
Professor S.P Dhanavel
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras
Lecture 29
Alexandra Pope 2

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Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot



- Selected passages (179-419)
- Irony, Wit and Satire
- **Atticus**/ Addison
- **Bufo**/Halifax, Dodington and Bavius
- **Sporus**/ Hervey
- Self-portrait
- Blessing for Arbuthnot
- An Imagistic Reading
- A Deconstructive Reading



In the second lecture on Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, we will see some selected passages, the second part of epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot with four parts. We will focus on this irony wit and satire, we will also examine specific passages relating to Atticus or Addison, Bufo or Halifax Dodington and Bavius and we will see another passage called Sporus relating to Hervey. Most importantly, interestingly we will see the self portrait of pope. And then we will observe how pope blesses his ailing friend Arbuthnot. Finally, we will have two readings: one we call it imagistic reading, because it deals with the images of disease in this poem. And the next one is called a deconstructive reading and then come to an end.

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Wit and Satire



The bard whom pilfer'd pastorals renown,
180. Who turns a Persian tale for half a crown,
Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
And strains, from hard-bound brains, eight lines a year:
He, who still wanting, though he lives on theft,
Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left:
185. And he, who now to sense, now nonsense leaning,
Means not, but blunders round about a meaning:
And he, whose fustian's so sublimely bad,
It is not poetry, but prose run mad:
All these, my modest satire bade translate,
190. And own'd, that nine such poets made a Tate.
How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and chat
And swear, not Addison himself was safe.



We begin with wit and satire; irony is inbuilt throughout the poem.

“The bard whom pilfer'd pastorals renown,

180. Who turns a Persian tail for half a crown,
Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
And strains, from hard-bound brains, eight lines a year:
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190. And own'd, that nine such poets made a Tate.

How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and chafe
And swear, not Addison himself was safe.”

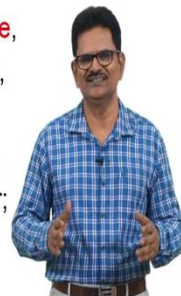
This poem is concerned with bad writing and bad poets. Pope takes upon himself the task of castigating these bad poets. So, he says in general poets have a tendency to steal lines from other writers. So, we have focused on this pilfered, theft, steals. And all that and finally all these borrowings or stealings, they do not amount to good poetry. He calls it ‘is not poetry but prose run mad.’

And sometimes these are in the name of translations whatever they are these bad poets do not allow even Addison to be safe. Addison was considered to be a great writer of the time, known for this periodical writing.

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Atticus/ Addison

193. Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires,
195. Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
Should such a man, **too fond to rule alone**,
Bear, like the Turk, **no brother near the throne**,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
200. **And hate for arts that caus'd himself to rise;**
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;



If Addison was not safe at that time how could pope be? that is his question. But pope does not spare Addison also because he found Addison to be like a dominating literary figure of the time who did not allow other writers to come up. Pope contrasts this Addison with the mythical historical figure Atticus,

193. “Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires

True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires,
195. Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
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And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;

There was a problem between Addison and the pope because Addison was a protestant, pope was a catholic and Addison promoted some writers particularly one Theobald and others who were enemies of pope. So, he found, pope found Addison to be ruling the literary world like a Turkish tyrannical ruler who would not allow his own brother to live. So, in this context we find that Addison is presented to us in a bad light. Because Addison who rose by his writing did not allow good writers to flourish in his time.

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Atticus/ Addison



203. *Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,*
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
205. Alike reserve'd to blame, or to commend,
A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading ev'n fools, by flatterers besiege'd,
And so obliging, that he ne'er oblig'd;
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
210. And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and templars ev'ry sentence raise,
And wonder with a *foolish face* of praise.
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
214. *Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?*



We find this satire on Addison continuing here. He comes to touching his personal characteristics;

203. “Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitates dislike;
205. Alike reserv'd to blame, or to command,
A tim'rous foe and a suspicious friend;
Dreading ev'n fools, by flatterers besieg'd,
And so, obliging, that he ne'er oblig'd
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
210. And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and templars ev'ry sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise.
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?

214. Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?

Who would not weep, if Atticus were he? This is a kind of Addison willing to wound yet afraid to strike; double characteristic or double-edged characteristic. A timorous foe and a suspicious friend, the antithetical literary style that we can notice more here. “Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?” “foolish face of praise,” he would laugh at people, he would sneer them but he would not allow them to feel that sneer. That is a kind like Cato, the roman senator he would make laws and make everybody obey. This is a kind of life that Addison lived.

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Bufo and Bavius

231. Proud as Apollo on his forked hill,
Sat full-blown Bufo, puff'd by every quill;
Fed with soft dedication all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.
235. His library (where busts of poets dead
And a true Pindar stood without a head,)
Receiv'd of wits an undistinguish'd race,
Who first his judgment ask'd, and then a place:
Much they extoll'd his pictures, much his seat.
240. And flatter'd ev'ry day, and some days eat:



From this Addison his colleague, contemporary Pope moves on to roman characters like Bufo and Bavius with reference to contemporary characters he would not mention them directly.

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Sat full-blown Bufo, puff'd by every quill;
Fed with soft dedication all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.
235. His library (where busts of poets dead,
And a true Pindar stood without a head,)

Receiv'd of wits an undistinguish'd race,
Who first his judgment ask'd, and then a place:
Much they extoll'd his pictures, much his seat,

240. And flatter'd ev'ry day, and some days eat:"

Bufo is kind of patron and Bavius was a bad poet, so the interaction between a bad patron, a pretending patron and a pretending poet that is what we have in this context. In this place we have some busts of poets they do not have the head so it can mean any poet they would say this is Horace, that is Pindar but actually this may not be true. This is a fashionable life of that time.

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Bufo and Bavius



Till grown more frugal in his riper days,
He paid some bards with port, and some with praise,
To some a dry rehearsal was assign'd,
And others (harder still) he paid in kind.

245. Dryden alone (what wonder?) came not nigh,
Dryden alone escap'd this judging eye:
But still the great have kindness in reserve,
He help'd to bury whom he help'd to starve.

250. May some choice patron bless each grey goose quill!
May ev'ry Bavius have his Bufo still!



The attack on Bufo and Bavius continues:

“Till grown more frugal in his riper days,
He paid some bards with port, and some with praise,
To some a dry rehearsal was assign'd,
And others (harder still) he paid in kind.

245. Dryden alone (what wonder) came not nigh,

Dryden alone escap'd this judging eye
But still the great have kindness in reserve,
He help'd to bury whom he help'd to starve

250. May some choice patron bless each grey goose quill!

May ev'ry Bavius have his Bufo still!

This every Bavius is a very bad poet; this Bufo is a bad patron a pretentious patron. So, when they meet, they would have some kind of exchange of poetry; exchange of some drinks; food items and things like that. It depends on the relationship between the pretender, poet and pretender patron. Pope remembers Dryden, even Dryden had some difficulty at some point of time but in return Dryden was able to help people who did not really help him. That is the kind of friendship or good poets that Pope identifies.

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Sporus/ Lord Hervey

Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,

310. This painted child of dirt that **stinks and stings**;

Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,

Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys,

So well-bred spaniels civilly delight

In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.

315. **Eternal** smiles his **emptiness** betray,

As **shallow streams** run dimpling all the way.

Whether in florid impotence he speaks,

And, as the **prompter** breathes, the **puppet** squeaks;

Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,

320. Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,



Here we have a very personal attack on one gentleman called Lord Harvey who was close to queen Anne, the first Prime Minister of England Robert Walpole. He is presented to us in the name of Sporus

“Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
 310. This painted child of dirt that stinks and stings;
 Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
 Yet wit ne’er tastes, and beauty ne’r enjoys,
 So, well-bred spaniels civilly delight
 In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
 315. Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
 As shallow streams run dimpling all the way
 Whether in florid importance he speaks
 And, as a prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
 Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
 320. Half froth, half venom spits himself abroad.”

Lord Harvey was an effeminate person he was a morally corrupt person like this corrupted Prime Minister Robert Walpole. So, ‘stinks and stings’ complaints and also smells very bad. Harvey was controlled by Robert Walpole and so the dubious behavior of these people duplicitous behavior of these people is reflected in eternal smiles is emptiness betray. Shakespeare could say ‘smile and smile and yet be a villain’ and here you see ‘eternal smiles is emptiness betray as shallow streams run dimpling all the way.’

The hollowness of these politicians, patrons of art and all that Pope condemns; he calls this venom, poison to even this is a satanic character, that is, what he refers to in the name of this ‘at the year of eve familiar toad’ that is Satan. We have in paradise lost.

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Sporus/ Lord Hervey



321. In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
His wit all see-saw, between *that* and *this* ,
Now high, now low, now Master up, now Miss,
325. And he himself **one vile antithesis**.
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,
Fop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,
Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
330. Eve's tempter thus the rabbins have express'd,
A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest;
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust.
333. Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust.



The attack on Lord Harvey continues further

321. “In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,

Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.

His wit all see-saw, between that and this,

Now high, now low, now Master up, now Miss
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Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,

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This is considered to be one of the pictorious passages in this poem ‘Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.’ Lord Harvey was such a pathetic figure for Pope. He writes about him as ‘amphibious thing’ neither male nor female, walking like a lady, walking like a man, once an angel at another time a devil. So, ‘a cherub’s face a reptile all the rest.’ All these good and bad qualities are combined in Lord Harvey. But when we weigh the qualities Lord Harvey falls on the negative side, a very shocking personality of the time.

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Objective Self-Portrait



Not fortune’s worshipper, nor fashion’s fool,
335. Not lucre’s madman, nor ambition’s tool,
Not proud, nor servile, be one poet’s praise,
That, if he pleas’d, he pleas’d by manly ways;
That flatt’ry, even to kings, he held a shame,
And thought a lie in verse or prose the same:
340. That not in fancy’s maze he wander’d long,
But stoop’d to truth, and moraliz’d his song:
That not for fame, but virtue’s better end,
343. He stood the furious foe, the timid friend,
The damning critic, half-approving wit,
345. The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit;
Laugh’d at the loss of friends he never had,



After attacking Addison and Harvey also attacking this Bufo and Bavius, Pope gives an account of his own self; what kind of poet he is; what kind of person he is; he gives an account, a self-portrait he gives. Pope is,

“Not a fortune’s worshipper, nor fashion’s fool,

335. Not lucre’s madman nor ambition’s tool,
Nor proud, nor servile, be one poet’s praise,
That, if he pleas’d, he pleas’d by manly ways;
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343. He stood the furious foe, the timid friend,
The damning critic, half-approving wit,
345. The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit,
Laugh'd at the loss of friends he never had,"

Pope's enemies had lots of gossips, rumors about Pope. So, he mentions this 'laugh'd at the loss of friends he never had.' He was 'a furious foe or a timid friend.' He was an independent person or a poet on his own. He need not had to say yes to anybody, he could follow a virtuous path as he had quoted from Cicero. He was a man by himself primarily because he was considered to be a very successful professional writer.

He did not need anybody's approval. The public was willing to buy his writings because no one was writing like him and probably no one could ever write after him like this. This kind of heroic couplet, rhythmic heroic couplet, sensible heroic couplet touching upon all kinds of life particularly the individuals; topics like friendship; topics like well-being of the society, nobody could.

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Objective Self-Portrait



347. The dull, the proud, the wicked, and the mad;
The distant threats of vengeance on his head,
The blow unfelt, the tear he never shed;
350. The tale reviv'd, the lie so oft o'erthrown;
Th' imputed trash, and dulness not his own;
The morals blacken'd when the writings 'scape;
The libel'd person, and the pictur'd shape;
Abuse, on all he lov'd, or lov'd him, spread,
355. A friend in exile, or a father, dead;
The whisper, that to greatness still too near,
Perhaps, yet vibrates on his sovereign's ear:--
Welcome for thee, fair Virtue! all the past:
359. For thee, fair Virtue! welcome ev'n the last!



He continues his self-portrait like this further;

347. “The dull, the proud, the wicked and the mad;

The distant threats of vengeance on his head

The blow unfelt the tear he never shed;

350. The tale reviv'd, the lie so o'erthrown;

The imputed trash, and dullness not his own;

The morals blacken'd when the writings 'scape;

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The whisper, that to greatness still too near,

Perhaps, yet vibrates on his sovereign's ear:-

Welcome for thee fair Virtue! all the past:

359. For thee, fair Virtue, welcome ev'n the last!

Pope gives so much importance to virtue and virtuous life. Nothing to do with dullness, not to do with pride nor wickedness or madness or even vengeance. Though this poem has an element of vengeance by attacking his friends, but it is not so bad. He has given an account of himself; it is to some extent reasonable.

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Closing Lines

406. O friend! may each domestic bliss be thine!
Be no unpleasing melancholy mine:
Me, let the tender office long engage
To rock the cradle of reposing age,
410. With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,
Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death,
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
And keep a while one parent from the sky!
On cares like these if length of days attend,
415. May Heav'n, to bless those days, preserve my friend,
Preserve him social, cheerful, and serene,
And just as rich as when he serv'd a queen.
Whether that blessing be denied or giv'n,
419. Thus far was right, the rest belongs to Heav'n.



We come to the end of this poem on Dr. Arbuthnot:

406. "O friend! may each domestic bliss be thine!
Be no unpleasing melancholy mine:
Me, let the tender office long engage
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Whether that blessing be denied or giv'n,

419. Thus far was right and the rest belongs to Heav'n.

Pope blesses his friend Dr. Arbuthnot because, he was terminally ill at that time and he was writing these final lines. He wanted to dedicate this poem for his friend. All that the friend needed was divine blessings. So, he gave him these blessings through his poem. He also remembers his own father, mother. Father passed away and mother alone is alive. So, he wants to have this bliss for himself and for his friend and probably he also has his intention of blessing all good poets and good friends.

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Thematic Contrast

- Gifting and thieving [the poet lives on theft, 183]
- Poetry and prose
 - "It is not poetry, but prose run mad:" (188)
- Genius and dullness
- Friend and enemy
- Wit and stupidity
- Patron and poet
- Remedy and poison
- Male and female
- Praise and dispraise
- Happiness and melancholy
- Right and wrong



Here again, we have this thematic contrast as we saw earlier in the first part 'gifting and thieving' is an interesting theme in this poem. How do poets live? Where do they get their ideas? Where do they get their words from? We have an answer. Poets pilfer from other writers. Shakespeare is an excellent example but they should be humble enough to accept it. They should

be original enough to turn all these borrowings into their own thoughts and ideas. Pope did that, Pope excelled in these ideas borrowed from roman Greek authors. So, at one point of time he says the bad poets do not write poetry.

So, he says it is not poetry but prose run mad. He contrasts genius with dullness, friend with the enemy, wit with stupidity, patron with poet, remedy with poison, male with female, praise with the dispraise, happiness with melancholy, right with wrong. In one of his poems, he has said ‘whatever is, is right. That kind of mellowness, that kind of understanding of life probably he has got at the end.

However, he is unable to bear the kind of torture from his enemies, all kinds of gossips, rumors about his parents, about himself, about his writings, about his friends. How could one tolerate? So, Pope was vindicating himself through his satire on such a society for his friend and for himself. This satirical writing has some sense of humanity, that is why it appeals.

When we refer to this wit and stupidity, when we compare Dryden with Pope, we can find some kind of refinement in pope, which is evident in the kind of measured, polished attack on Atticus and Harvey, even though it is really disturbing at some times.

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Poetic Devices

- **Metaphor:**
 - The bard whom pilfer'd pastorals renown (179)
- **Antithesis:**
 - A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend; (204)
- **Paradox:**
 - He help'd to bury whom he help'd to starve (248)
- **Rhetorical question:**
 - Heavens! Was I born for nothing but to write? (272)
- **Satire:**
 - Sporus, that mere white curd of Ass's milk? (306)
- **Simile:**
 - Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way, (315-316)



Pope is able to use a number of devices to make his writing pleasant. He uses metaphor, so he says in one context, ‘the bard who pilfered pastorals renown.’ Poets borrowing the ideas from

pastorals, from roman authors. Antithesis; we have this famous line 204, ‘a timorous foe and a suspicious friend.’ We have this paradox; referring to Dryden, ‘he helped to bury whom he helped to starve.’ We have a rhetorical question in this line 272, ‘Heavens! Was I born for nothing but to write?’

Pope also had some personal responsibility to his friend, to his father, to his mother that other poets did not appreciate. They thought he had time enough for everybody else. The satire is most pungent when it comes to Sporus; ‘Sporus, that mere white curd of ass’s milk?’ we have it in 306. We do not have it in the selected passages but this is a line through the mouth of Arbuthnot we have.

There is a simile, “Eternal smiles his emptiness betray, As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.” Shallow streams; they do not have depth, so the smiles of these people, polite society or fashionable people they are not of profound depth, they are shallow, they are empty. So, he compares the smiles with shallow streams.

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Rhyme, Rhythm, and Meter



- **Rhymed couplets:** 361-362
 - A. Why insult the poor? affront the great?
 - P. A knave's a knave to me in ev'ry state;
- **Enjambment and caesuras:** 193-194
 - Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
 - True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires,
- **Repetitions (words and sounds):** 261-262
 - Oh let | me live | my own, | and die | so too
 - (To live | and die | is all | I have | to do)!
- **Rhymed iambic pentameter:** heroic couplet



We also have wonderful rhyme, rhythm and meter. The meter is iambic pentameter, the rhythm is related to this heroic couplets and rhymed couplets two lines rhyme with each other. So, we have one example for these rhymed couplets. ‘Why insult the poor? affront the great?’ ‘A knave is a knave to me in every state.’ So, actually, first line is spoken by Arbuthnot, second line is

spoken by Pope. We have chosen this example to show how rhyming couplet can show the bondage of friendship between the two. ‘Why insult the poor? affront the great?’ asks Arbuthnot; Pope replies, ‘a knave is a knave for me in every state. Knave, a bad person.

Enjambment and Caesura, we have in these lines, line number 193 and 194.

“Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires

True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires”

Fires continues with the true genius candles and peace to all such we have a caesura, a pause, a strong pause we have. Fair fame is a kind of alliteration. We have some repetitions this is something unique that you can see. Some words are repeated, some sounds are repeated for specific effects. This is a real rhetorical strategy that we can see how badly he is affected by people.

“Oh let me live my own, and die so too

(To live and die is all I have to do)!

This is a kind of helpless position that pope explains through these two lines. “Oh let me live my own and die so too to live and die is all I have to do.” We have this iambic pentameter in rhyme form, so making it fantastic heroic couplet that we have in English literature.

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Overall Impression



- Pope satirizes poets who steal from other poets badly and call themselves good poets.
- Bad patrons (Lord Halifax, Dodington), bad poets (Cibber), and leaders (Addison, Hervey, Lady Montagu) have their coteries to promote each other.
- A corrupt society corrupts everything, including poetry and politics.
- A true poet who is affected by a corrupt society has the responsibility of defending himself by informing the public about true judgment of poetry and poets.



To sum up the impressions that we can form from this a poem, let us look at these points we have. Pope satirizes poets who steal from others badly and call themselves good poets or great poets. Most poets steal from others that is a different story but how good, how bad, how originally, how poetically we convert borrowed ideas into our own poems is what matters for that one requires wit, for that one requires imagination.

Pope exemplified whatever is required to make great poets. Bad patrons we have this example of Lord Halifax and Dodington through that reference to Bufo. We have bad poets in the name of Colley Cibber. He became a poet laureate who is forgotten now. But poets like Dryden had to be thrown out of this poet laureateship or Pope could never imagine becoming poet laureate, because he was a catholic.

So bad patrons and bad poets and leaders of literary circles like Addison, Harvey, Lady Montagu, have their own coterie to promote each other. Pope did not have such a coterie. A corrupt society corrupts everything including poetry and politics, that was a huge worry for Pope. Robert Walpole ensured corruption everywhere and he did not allow good people to flourish.

Robert Walpole was here target for pope in his poem, 'The Dunciad.' A true poet who is affected by a corrupt society has the responsibility of defending himself by informing the public about true judgment of poetry and poets. Who is a good poet? Who will tell this? Dryden could write a document of criticism but people who came after him did not value those ideas principles. Poets are identified good or bad based on their ideological positions or connections. Pope was horrified by this kind of attitude in 18th century society.

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An Imagistic Reading



- Mengel finds five images of **animal**, **filth**, **disease**, **persecution**, and **virtuous man** in the poem, and argues:
- “The animal image yields the filth, the noxious element out of which disease arises, disease turns into persecution, and persecution reveals the virtuous man.”
- Animal images to poetasters: animals, worms, and insects
 - like trained hawks, whistled off my hands! (254)
 - like frogs living on flies
 - like word-catchers living on syllables (166)
 - like spiders living in their own filth (89)



We have an imagistic reading offered by one critic called Mengel. He identifies five images: animal, filth, disease, persecution and virtuous man. In the poem this particular critic Mengel argues, based on this identification he argues that “the animal image yields the filth, the noxious element out of which disease arises, disease turns into persecution and persecution reveals the virtuous man.”

The poet Pope is a virtuous man that is what is revealed finally. His friend is a virtuous man. The poet's family is a virtuous family, his father, mother they were all virtuous people. It is said that these good qualities, moralistic qualities may belong to the past they may not belong to the new world of 18th century. Even then pope is happy with whatever values that he has inherited from his parents.

Animal images refer to poetasters. These are found in terms of animals, worms, insects. We have some similes like trained hawks, whistled off my hands and we also have references like frogs living on flies, word-catchers living on syllables. Similarly, we have one more, spiders living in their own filth in line number 89. So, throughout the poem we have these images. If we consider Dryden's poem Mac Flecknoe as a poem dealing with the dirt, we can to some extent say that, this Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot is a poem that deals with the disease of 18th century society. It is not only the disease of physical disease in one individual, it is a moral disease that you can find in 18th century society.

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Atkins's Deconstructive Reading



- Atkins pays attention to the self-division in the poem.
- Difference between the external and the internal form
- Difference between Pope and his critics: background, motives, character
- Differentiation from the poetasters
- Atkins considers difference a male quality.
- Pope desires to appear a male but presents himself as a female



Douglas Atkins gives a very interesting deconstructive reading. He pays attention to the self-division in the poem. There is a difference between the external and the internal form in the poem. There is also a difference between pope and his critics in terms of background motives and character. Pope distinguishes himself from the poetasters by referring to one male quality. So, this difference itself is a male quality for Atkins. Pope wants to appear as a male in contra distinction to Lord Harvey as an effeminate person. However, a deconstructive reading by Atkins reveals that Pope, although he wants to appear like a male, he presents himself as a female at the end. Is not it interesting?

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Differentiating Strategies



- Effective strategies of character differentiation
 - **Atticus**: not male enough
 - **Bufo**: effeminate (key portrait)
 - **Sporus**: amphibious
 - **Pope**: manly but mother and nurse
- Pope differentiates from and withdraws into himself; Sporus: spore and also seed; impotent and fertile; both positive and negative
- Pope is as self-divided as Sporus.
 - "Sporus is the truth that Pope denies." (134)
 - Absolute difference results in loss of difference.



What are those differentiating strategies? There are many effective strategies of character differentiation. The first one is concerned with Atticus. Pope considers Atticus that is Addison to be not male enough. Next when it comes to Bufo, Pope considers him to be effeminate. Atkins says that this Bufo character is a key portrait for this deconstructive reading. Next one is Sporus amphibious thing, neither male nor female.

Finally, when it comes to Pope, he claims himself to be male but at the end he presents himself as a mother and nurse for his friend, for his mother and father. So, pope differentiates from and withdraws into himself. Sporus has this meaning of spore and also a seed, impotent and also fertile, both positive and negative, so Pope is considered to be self-divided just like Sporus who is attacked by pope.

According to Atkins, Sporus is the truth that pope denies in his poem. Absolute difference results in loss of difference, that is a logic used by Atkins to make this deconstructive reading of An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.

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Summary



- Selected passages (179-419)
- Irony, Wit and Satire
- **Atticus**/ Addison
- **Bufo**/Halifax, Dodington and Bavius
- **Sporus**/ Harvey
- Self-portrait
- Blessing for Arbuthnot
- An Imagistic Reading
- A Deconstructive Reading



To sum up we have discussed selected passages in Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot from 179 to 419 focusing on irony wit and satire with an examination of the famous passages on Addison, Halifax, Harvey and self portrait of pope. And finally, the closing lines where pope blesses his friend Arbuthnot. At last, we had an imagistic reading focusing on the images used in the poem to refer to disease and virtuous man. Finally, we ‘ve looked at a deconstructive reading. Though we spent just a little time the reading of this essay will give you a much more understanding of this poem.

The kind of attention that Pope paid to language, we can see here in this deconstructive reading. That is why certain readings are very interesting and thought provoking. Some references will certainly help you including this deconstructive reading, look at them.

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Hope you will get these references and help yourself. Thank you.