

UNIVERSITY OF MUSTANSIRIYA

JOHN DRYDEN'S SATIRICAL POETRY

**A THESIS
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Abstract

John Dryden (1631-1700) is one of the great figures in English literature. He predominated his age, i.e. the Restoration period, as much as Alexander Pope (1688-1744) did in the following age. Dryden's satirical poems cover a large scale of topics. They, however, may be generally divided into three categories: political, personal, and religious or doctrinal satires. In political satire, Dryden is unsurpassed; while in the other types of satire, he can be placed only next to Pope.

Dryden's satirical poems are indisputably regarded as masterpieces in English poetry. They have, however, often been studied as individual poems taken separately. The need for a comprehensive investigation of all kinds of Dryden's satire (political, personal and religious) sounds urging. In addition, this tendency to study Dryden's satirical poems separately has prevented many Dryden-fans from discovering some regular patterns that appear repeatedly in his poetry. Dryden's satirical poems have often been studied with excessive references to Dryden's satirical plays, while the real need is to have an insight into his poetry regardless of his plays. The present study attempts to avoid those two procedures.

The thesis falls into three chapters and the Conclusion. Chapter One is introductory. It is divided into two sections; Section One is a critical survey of satire, while Section Two deals with Dryden's views on satire as expressed in his A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire.

Chapter Two is concerned with Dryden's political satires. It investigates Absalom and Achitophel and The Medal. Chapter Three is devoted to Dryden's personal and religious satires. This chapter studies MacFlecknoe, Religio Laici, and The Hind and the Panther.

The Conclusion points out the major findings reached through the study. The thesis ends with the References.