

«WHY DID I WRITE?»: ARGUMENTA AD HOMINES AS A STRATEGY  
OF SELF-REPRESENTATION IN AN EPISTLE TO DR ARBUTHNOT

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**Abstract**

This paper contextualizes the *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* (1735) and details the themes and objectives of Alexander Pope through contrastive analysis and research on literary techniques. First, it addresses how the author is concerned about corruption and poor literary practice that is brewing in Britain at poetasters' hands. Secondly, it discusses how the poet defends satirical writing and the literary genre of satire facing the *fabula facta*. Thirdly, the image of the poet which emanates from his work is addressed, either directly or tangentially, forming an *apologia pro vita sua*. The central part of the article analyzes the *sketches* of Atticus, Bufo, and Sporus, interpreting the alter egos that reflect their motivations and their goals. These incursions allow us to infer some facts about Pope's singular literary thoughts.

*Keywords:* Augustan Literature, Satire, Self-expression, Dr. Arbuthnot, Addison, Halifax, Hervey.

«WHY DID I WRITE?»: LOS ARGUMENTA AD HOMINES  
COMO ESTRATEGIA DE AUTORREPRESENTACIÓN  
EN AN EPISTLE TO DR ARBUTHNOT

**Resumen**

Este trabajo contextualiza *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* (1735) desglosando la temática y los objetivos de Alexander Pope a través del análisis contrastivo y de la investigación en sus técnicas literarias. En primer lugar se aborda cómo el autor está preocupado por la corrupción y por la mala praxis literaria que está gestándose en Gran Bretaña a manos de poetastros. En segundo lugar se analiza cómo el poeta defiende la escritura de sátiras así como al género literario de la sátira frente a la *fabula facta*. En tercer lugar se aborda la imagen del poeta que emana del trabajo, bien de modo directo bien de forma tangencial, configurando una *apologia pro vita sua*. La parte central del artículo analiza

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los *sketches* satíricos de Atticus, Bufo y Sporus interpretando los áter ego que reflejan sus motivaciones y sus fines. Estas incursiones permiten inferir algunos datos sobre el pensamiento literario singular de Pope.

*Palabras clave:* Literatura augustana, sátira, autorrepresentación, Dr. Arbuthnot, Addison, Halifax, Hervey.

## 1. INTRODUCTION: ALEXANDER POPE AND HIS AGE

The return of Charles II to England, after his French exile, presupposes the restoration of peace and the promotion of the arts. This return brings new creative, neoclassical principles, which introduce clarity and objectivity in verse. It is the Augustan era, whose champion is John Dryden, and who is followed by a host of writers like Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, and Joseph Addison. The literary work boasts a classical surface under which beats satire and, sometimes, parody.

The poet, a follower of Dryden, was born in London on May 21, 1688 and died on May 30, 1744. This was «a tender and delicate» person with «remarkable gentleness and sweetness of disposition» (Johnson, 2009: 347). His voice stood out since childhood, he being nicknamed<sup>1</sup> «the little Nightingale» (idem), as did his love of reading. The Catholic priest Taverner taught him Greek and Latin.

Samuel Johnson (2009: 349) confirms that «his primary and main purpose was to be a poet», an endeavor that matched the desire of his father. He attended school in Twyford, near Winchester, also attending another school in Hyde Park. The family fled during the Glorious Revolution, due to their Catholic status, and moved to Binfield. Here he shared friendships with other Catholics like John Caryll, who pushed the writer in his poetic career with his encouragement and motivation, even suggesting a topic for composing poetry which will later will be reflected in *The Rape of the Lock*.

## 2. POPE'S LITERARY LEGACY: «WHY DID I WRITE? [...] BUT WHY THEN PUBLISH?»

The English literary model for Pope was Dryden, with whom he frequently conversed in Will's Coffee-house (Covent Garden). Dryden was the professional poet of the Restoration and died in 1700, when Pope was twelve years old. Therefore, Pope discovered poetry at an early age.

Catholics had problems in London at the end of the century. The legislation was repressive with them (Hammond, 1986: 18). The family moved

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Johnson finds this story in *Life of Alexander Pope* by Owen Ruffhead (1769). This is how Thomas Southerne refers to it (Mullan, 2009: 510).

to Windsor Forest (Binfield) where the boy found the *beatus ille* at twelve and reflected on it in his poem entitled «Ode on Solitude» (Pope, 1963: 1), just as in his pastoral poems dedicated to Martha Blount he reflected the abandonment of the city.

Pope was fourteen when he composed *Windsor Forest*. His precocious talent can be compared to that of Cowley or Milton. Pope befriended the playwright William Wycherley, who reviewed his poetry (Muller, 2009: 511) before it was published. However, the author of *The Country Wife* was not receptive to the advice of the young talent.

His friendly circle also included the poet and translator Henry Cromwell, Elizabeth Thomas, and the politician and writer William Walsh<sup>2</sup>, who would review his first verses and was named as «the Muse's Judge and Friend» in *An Essay on Criticism* (I, 729). The pastorals were printed around 1709 in a volume entitled *Tonson's Miscellany*. The bookseller Jacob Tonson had remarkable vision, and he was attentive to the developments of contemporary poets, editing several anthologies of poems.

The training that Pope treasured is also seen in the pages of his other works from this period, such as *Essay on Criticism*. Here his love for modern culture and mainly for classical sources can be seen. The poem is a compendium of literary criticism that signaled a milestone in the history of English literature. Warton (I, 1806: 98) in the *Spectator* notes that «the observations in this essay are some of them uncommon». He delves into the nature of poetry, the rules of art, taste, and the relationship between poetry and painting. He attacks the bad literary critics while deploring the contributions of poetasters. In this regard, as will be seen below, the *Essay on Criticism* connects with some of the ideas that will be analyzed in *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*.

*The Rape of the Lock* dates back to 1714 and stands out as an example of «ludicrous poetry» (Johnson, 2009: 357), or mock-epic poetry. Pope shows a capacity for innovation, as acknowledged by the philosopher Berkeley, among others. The poem was included by the bookseller Bernard Lintot<sup>3</sup> in a miscellaneous volume. At this time, Pope wrote his poem of Chaucerian lineage entitled *Temple of Fame*.

Pope approached the Greek and Latin poets when looking to produce an «authoritative translation» (Hammond, 2011: 76). Pope made some transla-

<sup>2</sup> William Walsh went with Dryden to Will's Coffee House (Muller, 2009: 519).

<sup>3</sup> Bernard Lintot was a bookselling rival of Jacob Tonson. He paid part of the earnings that Pope would obtain from his *Iliad*. The same Lintot, in spite of the many pirated editions, also made a significant profit from this translation (Muller, 2009: 513).

tions of classical literature that earned what was for the time a huge amount of money<sup>4</sup>. Roy Porter (1991: 242) calls attention to this fact. While John Milton secured for *Paradise Lost* a first installment of five pounds and a second installment of five more pounds at the end of the first edition, «just half a century later the astute Alexander Pope made £4,000 each out of his *Iliad and Odyssey*»<sup>5</sup>. By 1721 he had edited the works of Shakespeare, also selling them by subscription.

His work on Shakespeare was heavily criticized by Lewis Theobald in *Shakespeare Restored*, provoking the poet to challenge Theobald in his next major work, *The Dunciad* of 1728. Theobald appears as Tibbald. Pope modified the work to a version in four books from 1642. The central theme of this poem is related to *An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* because he recounts how the goddess Dulness reigns Great Britain<sup>6</sup>.

By 1733, Pope offered the first installment of *An Essay on Man*. This is a philosophical poem that delves into the individual, the universe, the society, and the happiness. Evoking Pattison (1936: 11), it is a reformist neoclassical work that echoes even Newtonian developments (Morrissey, 2008: 296). At this time he also published his *Imitations of Horace*, endorsing his appreciation of the Roman satirist. Further evidence of his appreciation for the Latin world is the ironic piece «Epistle to Augustus» (1738) which outlines some literary ideas and ends with a eulogy of the mock-heroic character George Augustus, corresponding to George II (Gerrard, 2001: 47).

Pope published *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot: Prologue to the Satires* in 1735. The thematic and stylistic background of the poem are found in Horace. An example of teaching that Pope received from Horace looms on *Verses Address'd to the Imitator of Horace*. There are more classical sources. The quotation that heads the poem, taken from the sixth book of *Re Publica* (Cicero) is eloquent regarding the wave of literary criticism and opinion circulating in London<sup>7</sup> at the time. Although Pope claims to be ignoring «vulgar crown's gossip» («neque sermonibus Vulgi dederiste»; Pope, 2008: 93), the writer

<sup>4</sup> Regarding the target poem of this article, Sutherland (1948: 46) declares «new poems of the length of Pope's *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (419 lines) were usually first published in folio or quarto and sold at eighteen pence».

<sup>5</sup> Interested readers may consult the work titled «Alexander Pope: Literary Translator and Editor, from Binfield to Twickenham», in *Alicante Journal of English Studies*, 26, 2013, pp. 271-293 where the author delves into the status change of the poet, thanks to his translations, through whose sale he is integrated at this stage of his life into the literary market.

<sup>6</sup> Valerie Rumbold (2009: 1-19) has studied Pope's book from an aesthetic, ideological, cultural and historical viewpoint.

<sup>7</sup> The complete citation reads: «Neque sermonibus *Vulgi* dederis te, nec in *Praemiis* humanis spem posueris rerum tuarum: suis te opotet ille cebris *ipsa* *Virtus* trahat ad verum decus. Quid de te alii loquantur, ipsi videant, sed loquentur tamen» (Pope, 2008: 93).

responds to some of the attacks he received in the course of his life. Although the author insisted that «you should not put your trust in human rewards for your writing» («nec in Praemiis humanis spem posueris rerum tuarum», idem), the desire and purpose of Pope throughout his poem indicates the opposite. Although he writes that «quid de te alii loquantur, ipsi videant, sed loquentur temen» (idem), his response is focused precisely on containing such gossip and criticism using satire and the quality of his work as antidotes.

Thus, the poem begins by warning that it is «a sort of bill of complaint» (Pope, 2008: 92). Certainly, Pope repeats the various attacks by his enemies during his lifetime directed toward his work and toward himself (Hammond, 1986: 72). Under these premises, the poem must be understood as a defense of his poetic career. It is Pope's apology (Sitter, 2011: 109).

The first 68 lines seek the empathy of the reader. This feature appears later on two occasions (109-124, 271-182). After, the poet defends writing satires, up to line 108. A third segment of the poem is dedicated to present other writers, such as Atticus (193-214), Bufo (231-248), and Sporus (305-333); these are «satiric instances» (Hammond, 1986: 73) or *sketches* (Sitter, 2011: 104). Another thematic section which differs in the poem is the writer's own claim to fame which he spreads over 25 verses; the first request appears from line 249 down to line 270, and the second desire appears in the final stretch, from line 406 to the end.

Maynard Mack (1951: 80-83) emphasises the value of the rhetoric in the work of Pope and studies the existence of three people in *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*. One voice corresponds to «an ingénu» or «naif» which is characterized by its innocence and because it tells the truth; another voice comes from a character in *bona vita*, a *vir bonus*, «a man of plain living» (Sitter, 2001: 104), and the third voice matches the hero or the public defender<sup>8</sup>, belligerent when facing the corruption that grips the country and the predicament of the satirist. Following the tenets of John Sitter, it is inferred that the voices overlap in the poem, coming together in one *dictum* to fight literary vice and corruption. In the words of Sitter (2011: 105): «we tend to be somewhat obsessively interested in self-representation». It also clarifies the critical attention focused on the defense of the poet himself.

Pope goes beyond self-defense of the poet because another relevant issue that stands out in the poem is the allegation by the satirist and the

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<sup>8</sup> The voice of «public defender» or «satirist as hero» (Sitter, 2011: 221) is identified by Maynard Mack as the voice of the poet within *An Essay on Criticism*. It deals with the person who is erected as a fighter against bad criticism, as the defender of the *res publica* who confronts the danger which grips the country.

genre of satire, as a spokesperson for the truth. Concretely, we read: «Who reads, but with a lust to misapply, / Make satire a lampoon, and fiction lie» (301-302)<sup>9</sup>. This is a distinction that is set in the English literary tradition<sup>10</sup> which Dryden himself preaches and which will appear in the *Dictionary* of Samuel Johnson, since the difference between «proper satire is distinguished, by the generality of the reflections, from lampoon, which is aimed against a particular person» (Sitter, 2011: 106, 226). Pope stresses the truth that satire contains, in contrast to the *fabula facta*, preferring *history* and a reflection of the real world over fiction.

At this time, it was a common procedure to direct poems at a specific person, «as if that person were the audience the poet had in mind» (Hunter, 2001: 29). Therefore, Pope selects a recipient who, as a synecdoche, exemplifies the audience of the poem<sup>11</sup>. John Arbuthnot was the founder of the Scriblerus Club whose literary creed was to ridicule bad writing<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, Pope (Hunter, 2011: 14) departs from the premise that readers are aware of the rivalry between writers and literary groups of the moment.

### 3. THE POET'S IDENTITY IN *AN EPISTLE TO DR ARBUTHNOT: FROM THE ADVERSARIA TO THE SELF-REPRESENTATION*

The image of the poet is one of the favorite themes of Pope. The piece begins with an «Advertisement» which reads «the necessity to say something of myself» (Pope, 2008: 93). The issue in this case is his own configuration, either directly or tangentially, through what he thinks about others. It is his energetic defense. It is the «self-revelation» in the words of Dustin H. Griffin (1978: 12):

<sup>9</sup> All of the citations of the poem are made in parenthesis, indicating the verse number, in the edition by Pat Rogers. POPE, Alexander (2008): *Selected Poetry*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>10</sup> Sir Philip Sidney (2002: 103) proclaims: «for the poet, nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth», in his *Defense of Poesie* (1595). The proximity to that which is true was named by Horace in *Ars poetica* (2012: 106, line 339): «ne quodcumque uolet poscat sibi fabula credi», proclaiming a rejection of that which is absurd (lines 1-13) (González Iglesias, 2012: 22).

<sup>11</sup> In this sense, one must take into account the expansion of literature. B. Hammond (2011: 75) establishes: «an aspect of metropolitan consumerism developed in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the appetite for reading, which generated a market for imaginative writing and a cadre of professional writers willing and able to supply for that market».

<sup>12</sup> In principle, Pope celebrates his friendship with the *Whig* gang (Addison's circle) as well as with the Scriblerians, composing of John Gay, Swift, Thomas Parnell, the *Tory* minister Robert Harley, and John Arbuthnot (Gerrard, 2001: 38). The friendship with the *Whigs*, however, does not last, as around 1713 «this neutrality was impossible to maintain», so much so that Addison becomes enemies with Pope, while Richard Steele becomes enemies with Swift (idem), thus generating two antagonistic literary circles.

The metaphor of testimony —a recurrent one in his letters— serves best to characterize Pope's autobiographical impulse. Self-revelation in his poems and letters is almost always a carefully calculated performance, acted out in a public arena and designed to persuade an audience. Pope's particular kind of rhetoric, especially in the latter poems, is defensive: apology for his works and person.

If from his corpus we had to take a sample text to show his literary personality, the most sensible and thorough choice would perhaps be *An Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* or, *Prologue to the Satires*. With this poem, we know firsthand views that Pope holds on literary criticism, satire, sponsorship, patronage, even going so far as to feel his vision as a poet and his place in the context of his time. This is covered in 419 lines of personal thought. He distills his message about poetasters, and his literary intentions shine, positioning themselves on those who criticize and applaud while at the same time giving answers to questions of utmost importance as the reason for his writing or publication of the work, among others. Through this poem, we get to know Pope better because it objectifies many of his ideals, desires, and literary feelings. Here his purposes and many of his ideas about the creative act are made tangible. There are self-resonances as well as those of others.

The assertions inserted into the verses are interspersed with information about his physical state<sup>13</sup> and statements about his job as a writer. Essential questions are contained in lines 125 and 135: «Why did I write? [...], But why then publish? [...]». Here he retrospectively questions the purpose of his work.

*An Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*<sup>14</sup> (1735), positioned as a portico for his book titled *Imitations*, incorporates the *laudatio* which the poet dispenses with exchange for family life, when the tumult of business is changed for the peace and quiet of forced country retirement. This poem lists the literary achievements of Pope with references to famous characters like Lord Hervey, under the guise of Sporus, the essayist Joseph Addison, published under the pseudonym of Atticus, as well as Bubb Dodington, and Lord Halifax emerging as Bufo. These figures are presented in the verses as a synecdoche, *pars pro toto*, to show symbolically and metaphorically the literary reality of his time. The first letters of the poem mention a set of bad poets that erode and corrupt the literary republic.

<sup>13</sup> Line 132 of the first block affirms that he suffers «a long disease» which makes clear reference to his biography. In verse 116 also: «I cough like Horace, and, though lean, am short».

<sup>14</sup> The 419 lines of *An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* cost 18 pennies, in its initial folio and quarter publication.

The historical field that contextualizes poems and portraits of each of the contemporary characters is due precisely to the aforementioned knowledge of the poetic and literary rivalries that existed at the time. In this sense, one can conclude that this text is integrated into the public poetry that Dryden introduced, which is not restricted to a select group of aristocrats and courtiers<sup>15</sup>. Pope cultivates —just like Dryden— issues «of cultural news, sometimes like a story of social criticism» (Torralbo-Caballero, 2013b: 220), which matches his transparent style, and at times he clearly adopts a conversational tone, for example at the beginning of the poem.

Firstly, the Atticus<sup>16</sup> *sketch*, the passage from line 193 to 214, represents Addison, who wants to captain and monopolize criticism about writing, hence a comparison with Cato: both are full of pride in continuing the struggle to achieve their goals. Atticus thus appears akin to Cato the Younger who embodies the values of stubbornness and a certain patriotism that led him to oppose the triumvirate of Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus. Moreover, *Cato* is the title of a tragedy by Addison (1713) which contains a prologue by Pope. According to Plutarch, Cato commits suicide —in a horrible way— in order to avoid life under Caesar's rule, tearing out his own intestines since he could not take his life with his own sword. There is a proliferation of antitheses and paradoxes («Damn with faint praise») to highlight the weakness of the subject, just as a fear of tyrants and dictators. The episode demonstrates failure in several areas of the character's life ranging from the most lively portrait to the moral sphere. In the end, the narrator shows his confusion —he does not know whether to laugh or mourn (206-214):

A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;  
Dreading ev'n fools, by glatterers besieged,  
And so obliging, that he ne'er obliged;  
Like Cato, give his title senate laws,  
And sit attentive to his own applause;  
While wits and templars every sentence raise,  
And wonder with a foolish face of praise—  
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?  
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he!

One of the explanatory reasons of the disdain which Pope dispenses to Addison is tracked in promoting the critical takes on the version of the first book of the *Iliad* by Thomas Tickell (1715). The response of the poet

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<sup>15</sup> This can be seen in other poets who write as a hobby in their free time (see John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester) (Dietz, 1989: 45-67) just as by other courtiers whose approach to creative fact is more amateur and occasional than professional.

<sup>16</sup> The choice of Roman names supports the idea of classical approach.



is found here, in this portrait of Atticus, whose voiceless plosive phoneme doubling /t/ chimes with the voiced plosive phoneme repetition of Addison, /d/, linking him with the Roman friend of Cicero and, then, Augustus to show the need for a magistrate that breaks the ideal of the fair and just censor. From the critic, we move on to sponsors or patrons.

Bufo is another figure that requires a detailed study. The first thing worth mentioning is its etymology and its Latin origin. It (bufo, bufonis) means toad. Therefore, this is an amphibian. Bufo stands for the patrons of art who, with their economic wealth, help writers such as George Bubb Dodington and the Earl of Halifax (231-248):

Proud as Apollo on his forked hill,  
 Sate full-blown Bufo, puffed by every quill;  
 Fed with soft dedication all day long,  
 Horace and he went hand in hand in song.  
 His library (where busts of poets dead  
 And a true Pindar stood without a head)  
 Received of wits and undistinguished race,  
 Who first his judgment asked, and then a place:  
 Much they extolled his pictures, much his seat,  
 And flattered every day, and some days eat:  
 Till grown more frugal in his riper days,  
 He paid some bards with port, and some with praise.  
 To some a dry rehearsal was assigned,  
 And others (harder still) he paid in kind.  
 Dryden alone (what wonder?) came no nigh,  
 Dryden alone escaped this judging eye:  
 But still the great have kindness in reserve,  
 He helped to bury whom he helped to starve.

It suggests the prototypical person being flattered day after day, paid both literally in cash and kind. This is a boastful figure, as if it were Apollo himself, who is pleased to see his name in ink on the sheets. The lexical-semantic level does not treat him very favorably (proud, full-blown, puffed, flatted) and his support is not governed by models of good taste. Bufo is the epitome and synecdoche of the literary climate that Pope denounces. Bufo is «a composite character whose debased patronage epitomizes an unhealthy literary climate» (Sitter, 2011: 104).

Against this background of tinsel and false gloss, Pope prefers to take the road of independence, remaining autonomous with respect to the prevailing circles, being outside the range of patronage and the court by choice (261-270):

Oh let me live my own, and die so too!  
 (To live and die as all I have to do:)

Maintain a poet's dignity and ease,  
 And see what friends, and read what books I please:  
 Above a patron, though I condescend  
 Sometimes to call a minister my friend:  
 I was not born for courts or great affairs;  
 I pay my debts, believe, and say my prayers;  
 Can sleep without a poem in my head,  
 Nor know, if Dennis be alive or dead.

The mention of John Dennis in the final line of this passage responds, among other reasons, to criticism<sup>17</sup> that the essayist and London playwright made of his first critical work (*An Essay on Criticism*), which in contrast was highly praised by Addison in *The Spectator*.

The next portrait is that of Sporus. John Hervey, the eldest son of the Earl of Bristol, appears in the work of Pope under different aliases, either as Adonis, Narcissus, or Lord Fanny, as well as in the form of Sporus, which is how he is named in this work<sup>18</sup>. Lucy Moore has discussed the bisexuality of Hervey<sup>19</sup>. This facet along with the singular genius of the character<sup>20</sup> and his prosperity as a pseudo courtier is what Pope describes in the following extracts (305-308, 317-321):

Let Sporus tremble — 'What? That thing of silk,  
 Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk?  
 Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?  
 Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?'  
 [...]  
 Whether in florid impotence he speaks,  
 And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;  
 Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,  
 Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,  
 In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,  
 Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.

<sup>17</sup> The piece by John Dennis is *Reflections Critical and Satirical upon a late Rhapsody Called, an Essay upon Criticism*. It is noteworthy that the playwright appears reflected before in *An Essay on Criticism* under the name Appius (since Dennis had published a tragedy titled *Appius and Virginia*).

<sup>18</sup> Some critics (such as Martin C. Battestin, in his introduction de 1967 Wesleyan University Press edition of *Joseph Andrews*) have suggested that the character has carried over by Pope's friend, Henry Fielding, into the character of Beau Didapper in *Joseph Andrews*.

<sup>19</sup> See her *Amphibious Thing: The Life of Lord Hervey* (2000) where she explains that as well as his matrimonial relationship with Mary Lepell, he had relations with Anne Vane, even living for a period with Stephen Fox. He exchanged passionate letters with Francesco Algarotti. William Pulteney denounced Hervey's behaviour.

<sup>20</sup> In the British television series (1999) *Aristocrats* Hervey appears, played by Anthony Finigan, as the protector of Henry Fox.

His wit all seesaw, between that and this,  
 Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,  
 And he himself one vile antithesis.  
 Amphibious thing! [...]

His approach to the court is shown by an intertextual quotation from Milton, specifically taken from line 800 of the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*. Eva represents Queen Caroline in this poem and the reference singles out Satan as a toad. Her beauty is evident, in the verses quoted, which refer to her «cherub's face», even though she has the character of a snake. The ability of Hervey as a writer is sullied by the conceptualization of wit that appears, with clear ups and downs and as a seesaw<sup>21</sup>, which is repeated in the next line by the adverbial and adjective phrases of «now high, now low».

The venom and disdain which Pope applies to Hervey is best understood if the verses that Hervey and Montagu wrote together against Horace's impersonator are read. Sitter (2011: 104) states that «much has been written about the vehemence of this climactic character sketch», some of the most disapproving remarks made by critics who seem not to have read the Hervey-Montagu Verses [...].

The wording of the fragment matches the vagueness of the character, hence the disjunctive set of links that appears seven times in two lines (321-322) and especially the explicit reference of «master now up, now miss» (324) which is described by the noun «antithesis», and the adjective «amphibious». The same nickname chosen for the character is satirical. «Sporos» means «sowing» (σπόρος) and its along female counterpart (σπορά) means «seed». In history, Sporus was an effeminate male lover of the Emperor Nero (one of the *puer delicatus*).

The portrait of Sporus denounces «attractive vice in high places» (Sitter, 2011: 104) and serves as a counterpoint to the description of Pope himself which follows in the next 25 verses (334-359) contrasting in this way the outlandishness of Hervey with Pope's virtue; later the writer alludes to even his father (388-405).

In the rest of his work, representational shapes of the writer himself, or the autobiography, also appear in flashes. The first-person voice, which expands his echo along the poem, is different as he advances in age, maturity, and literary achievements. First, the self-image is that of a humble poet. Afterwards, the autobiographical note that resonates in his poetry is that of a writer of public and social recognition, with his own genius and

<sup>21</sup> Regarding the concept of antithesis, as a literary figure, Pope briefly discusses in the tenth chapter of his *The Art of Sinking in Poetry* (2011: 41-48; particularly p. 47).

uniqueness. The reference that the author himself makes at the beginning of *The Rape of the Lock* («If she inspire, and he approve my Lays») (Pope, 2008: 20), in a more generic style, is not the same as the portraits he draws in his future works, as seen in *The Dunciad*, which is colored by his own personality. It follows that the «humble Muse» appearing in line 427 of *Windsor Forest* strengthens his character and increases his firmness and motivation through the rotundity of his claims in other future works.

The positioning and simple recreational theme which is found in *The Dunciad* demonstrates a technique of self-representation by the poet. *The Dunciad* presents the myth of Grub Street. Like *An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, the work celebrates the «metropolitan energy as it is a critique of it» (Hammond, 2011: 81). This is a matter that deserves special treatment as it descends to the very core of the rising literary market through printed paper and addresses the fleeting consideration of this new informative and lucrative business. It is an attack on literary modernism, the emerging practice of selling the work to the publishing market, components of Grub Street, who—seen as nitwits—are equated with the world of stupidity. It is the image of a way of acting and a devalued morality, like literary values represented through the eyes of Pope.

From line 249 of *An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, the writer integrates the issue of sponsorship in these terms: «May some choice patron bless each gray goose quill!» In this fragment they conflate both good and bad poets: «May dunce by dunce be whistled off my hands!» (254). Brean Hammond (1986: 73-74) states that:

Pope ironically expresses the wish that the patronage system—the system that made writers into clients of wealthy and the powerful, often exchanging literary praise for hard cash—should continue, because the self-consuming symbiosis of proud potentates and bad poets will soak up the idiots who would otherwise be pressurising him.

The author, in fact, is not free from the new commercial way of selling his work and effort for a living. However, the note of independence is that which is emphasized in a comprehensive look at his life and his work. It is glaring the predicament of the poet in the verses quoted above, «Oh let me live my own, and die so too!» (261). His quality is the difference when compared to the scribblers. Pope reaches his peak as a professional when he sells his translations of Homer on the modern literary market while appearing as a landmark independent poet<sup>22</sup>. He is projected as a «gentleman-poet» who

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<sup>22</sup> We can apply to it Lefevere's concept of «undifferentiated patronage» (Lefevere, 1992: 17-29): with respect to the servile system of patronage (patrons with first names and sur-

emerges free from the pressures of both market and sponsors or patrons. This uniqueness together with his poetic voice transforms his marginal position into a central one. He is not interested in power or seeking patrons. He is not a metropolitan poet in the physical sense, as he lives isolated from the city. Pope receives no payment from the state or the royal family for his literary work, as evidenced by lines 115 and 116 of *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace* imitated: «And I not strip the gilding off a knave, / Unplaced, unpensioned, no man's heir, or slave?» (Pope, 2008: 91).

In addition to the extract on the clientele and servile system (249-270), the speaker again cries for help, also using the subjunctive and vocative resource. The last fragment of the poem begins: «O friend! May each domestic bliss be thine» (406). The visage of the poet appears as an honest son, dedicated to the care of his parents. The writer begs for his mother, for Dr. Arbuthnot, and for himself: «Me, let the tender office long engage / To rock the cradle of reposing age» (408-409).

Pope's poem is a literary exploration of the London of his time. As confirmed by J. Paul Hunter (2001: 14): «The poem is immediate, present-centered, and urgent; the speaker feels besieged because of his poetry and his social position, and the poem quickly goes on to describe authorial rivalries and the prominent place of writing in contemporary London». Evoking the *dictum* of Brean Hammond (2011: 81), it can be deduced that in the background of the poem the reader can find «Pope's vision of the eclipse of all knowledge in a new age of barbarism» and «transcends it in the creation of a cityscape that mythologises poor scribblers, those who employ and those who patronize them, as the enemies of civilized culture».

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The poem exhibits a first segment focused on the context of the writer and his circumstances (1-124), then lays out his story through to line 230. From here to verse 260, the reader perceives Pope's situation in society. Then, the artistic and creative program of Pope (261-367) can be seen, and, in the end, the claim of human literary values<sup>23</sup>.

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names) this new system consists of an innominate patronage which is the market, dependent on the masses.

<sup>23</sup> At the beginning of the work, a division into five parts following the studies of Brean Hammond has been proposed, which would permit the extraction of satirical references to each one of the characters addressed in the poem. In this section of conclusions, another division is presented —also in five parts— suggested by John Sitter (2011: 104), who also relates the poem to «Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift» (Sitter, 2011: 100-107). In this sense, the critic from the University of Notre Dame traces a parallelism between Walpole (in the lines by Swift) and Hervey (in the verses by Pope).

Pope defends the craft of the satirist, but goes further by also defending the genre of satire. The poet integrates seventy lines in defense of satire which are followed by other components of similar amplitude dedicated to exemplifying the work of satirists. He highlights how satire captures the truth of matters. The resources considered seek the attention and empathy of the reader circumscribing the circumstances of the speaker while two segments are shown incorporating the pleas of the author. It can be seen as an *apologia pro vita sua* (Hammond, 1986: 73).

In *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, flashes of firm affirmation of the writer and self-representation appear through (*argumentum ad hominem*) arguments *ad homines*, *ad poetas*, which he carries out against the characters in the play (*adversaria*), Atticus, Bufo, and Sporus. The poem contains a strong autobiographical echo. The conceptualizations about «self-consciousness» (Sitter, 2011: 12) and about «self-reflexive poetry» (Id, 114-132) are very appropriate for these deductions. Pope criticizes the commercial aspect that he himself exploited in his time as a translator (Torralbo-Caballero, 2013a: 273-293) while defending his writing career, bitterly revealing the corrupt model of patronage (as exemplified by Sporus) which loses strength with the fall of absolutism, the emergence of political parties, and the gestation of the incipient literary market. Clearly, Pope did not expect to commercialize libels, but rather the authorized translations of the classics. Likewise, he also attacked the Walpole regime which generates new forms of support to writers from the same government and through booksellers-editors, whether by publication in the newspapers or by nearby nobles in power. Bolingbroke, Pope's friend who lived near Twickenham—in Middlesex (Darley Farm)—, sponsored the belief in government support for lesser writers.

Pope opts for real life, for verisimilitude, fleeing the too fanciful fictions and artifacts. Pope prefers truth to fiction, history to invention. The poet is aware of the durability of his work and the need to clarify certain metaphors, similes, and masks. Therefore he accompanies it with notes —«they are essential to the claims of truth-telling»— for future generations (Sitter, 2011: 106).

In this sense, *The Spectator*, a witness of his time (Wall, 2011: 100-101), is a political instrument serving the power structure which, despite declaring in its pages neutrality in dealing with the issues, promotes and enhances the values and interests of the ruling politicians («Whigs», Walpole). It is noteworthy the affiliation of Pope, Swift, Gay, Fielding, Thomson, and even the young Samuel Johnson, to the *Tory* side. In fact, this sympathy is loudly expressed by some writers, such as Addison, who cover up their verdict by revealing collaborations with the poet in the *Guardian*, which is edited by Steele.

Pope, while he has prospered economically thanks to the serial sale of his translations, criticizes the publishing market. In this sense, the concept of «undifferentiated patronage» theorized by Lefevere (1992: 11-26) may be applied to him. This ambiguity the poet expresses in the poem is determined by two factors, since it does not depend on the court or the sponsors of the political grouping around Walpole. For that reason, the poem lashes out against panegyrics and, seeking the consent of the powerful and the propulsion of the poet's literary career, those that celebrated them.

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