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ALEXANDER POPE: AN IMAGE OF A MAN AND A WRITER

The article examines the impact of specific interpretative techniques offered within contemporary Literary Theory on the works of Alexander Pope. The present study focuses on Feminist and Psychoanalytic literary criticism and their one-sided analysis of Pope as both a male and a cripple. The conclusions reached by such theoretical approaches do not appear to reflect the historical truth but offer, for the most part, a distorted image of the poet. By exploring the partial images of Pope depicted by selected scholars of eighteenth century literature, the article demonstrates the awkward and disjointed depiction of the poet developed in recent times.
Keywords: Alexander Pope, feminist literary criticism, psychoanalysis, eighteenth-century literature, interpretation, Literary Theory

Introduction

20th-century Literary Studies, similar to other academic fields, was carried on a powerful wave of development; the metaphoric 'wave' being the constantly flourishing sub-field of the Theories of Literature. Even a casual glance at one of the recently published companions to Literary Theory reveals a plethora of available concepts, approaches and ideas: New Criticism, Formalism, Structuralism, New Historicism, Postcolonial Theory, Globalization Studies, Gender Studies, Psychoanalytic Criticism, or theories based on Ecocriticism and Posthumanism[1]. Induced mainly by the writings of Jacques Derrida the variety of interpretations represents the results of his approach to understanding the relationship between text and meaning; an approach which depends on the concept of deconstruction. Deconstruction acknowledges that within the complexity of language, ideal concepts such as truth or justice are impossible to determine. These observations inspired a range of theoretical approaches in literary criticism precisely because such a variety of interpretations are easily justified within the framework of such a broad concept. What is offered by an individual theory is a particular approach towards literary works and their authors; in other words, it proposes one of many possible interpretations and in doing so distorts the common sense rule that

[1] *A Companion to Literary Theory*, ed. D.H. Richter, Oxford 2018.

"The first qualification for judging any piece of workmanship from a corkscrew to a cathedral is to know *what* it is – what it was intended to do and how it is meant to be used"[2]. The root of this distortion is embedded in the methodology of deconstruction. The questions about the essence of the work, its scope and its further usage are approached but because the set of premises being employed offers such a limited perspective, the answers logically are 'partial' and, as a consequence, provide a 'partial' interpretation depending on the theory according to which a given work is analysed. For example, this can be clearly observed in relation to feminist literary criticism which would seem to have a significantly greater impact on the interpretation of male writers and their image. Though the subject of literary theories is not limited to any particular period in history, it is eighteenth century literature that enjoys a particular popularity within contemporary literary scholarship. The reason for this somehow privileged position is simply due to the fact that "the long eighteenth century was a germinal period for the formation of Western sexualities and genders"[3].

The second half of the 20th century witnessed a range of publications on 18th century literature by feminist scholars, such as Katherine Rogers, Laura Brown, Helen Deutsch and Laura Mandell. In applying the theoretical background of feminist literary criticism, the subject was, more often than not, treated from a very limited and often subjective perspective with the immediate result of reaching definitely new but, at the same time, rather unlikely conclusions given the available evidence and supporting bodies of work. This article aims at demonstrating how such a partial approach led to deconstruction and, as a result, propagated a false image of Alexander Pope.

Alexander Pope: objectification of women

Laura Brown in her essay *Capitalizing on Women: Dress, Aesthetics and Alexander Pope* referred to the early eighteenth century aesthetical theory and explicitly stated that it can be read "for its attention to classical models, its concern with hierarchies and rules, or its consistent appeal to authority, order, and decorum"[4]. From this perspective Brown justifies her attempt at

[2] C.S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost,* London 1942, p.1.
[3] D. Kavanagh, U.L. Klein, *Introduction: Swift's Queerness*, "Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies" 2020, vol. 43, no. 3, p. 275.
[4] L. Brown, *Ends of Empire. Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature*, London 1993, p. 103.

a wholly new interpretation through asserting the "relative isolation of aesthetic discourse [...] secluded from the most obvious or evident connections with history, whether in the form of political allusion, historical topicality, allegorical reference, or even a narrative shape". What is more, assuming that "this implied distance from history [...] makes aesthetic theory an ideal subject for a strong reading of the status of the imperialist ideology in this period, and of the crucial role of gender in the constitution of that ideology"[5]. Brown argues that in eighteenth-century aesthetic writing "the figure of the woman is the discursive means to the connection of imperialism"[6]. Early eighteenth-century aesthetic theory, as Brown admits, is "perhaps the most canonical of the discourses concerning art in English literary culture"[7] and developed as a result of the multitude of theoretical works published by prominent authors of the period, including Alexander Pope. The key word, the usage of which in Pope's aesthetic writing is the subject of Brown's in-depth analysis, is "dress" as used in his famous couplet: "True wit is nature to advantage dress'd,/What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd"[8] and repeatedly employed by the poet to denote a formulation of thought. The ground for an alternative analysis of Pope's aesthetical writing lies in the literal rather than metaphorical understanding of this word. What is more, although 'dressing up' is an activity performed by both sexes, the meaning of it was associated with women exclusively. Such a partial understanding of the word 'dress' is further exemplified and justified by numerous citations from Pope's works which for Brown proves his base objectification of women in his support for imperialism through the self-attested pure realm of art.

Drawing on Pope's couplet, cited above, Brown implicates the poet's intention to separate *Nature* and *True Wit* and demonstrates them to be in opposition to one another. However, it is clearly stated by Pope that "True wit *is* Nature to Advantage drest" (my emphasis), which clearly indicates that these two terms are far from being contradictory. True Wit 'is' the product of Nature, even if "drest". Despite the relatively clear meaning of Pope's couplet, its compactness might leave considerable space for its various interpretations, apparently against the author's intentions. In the introduction to "Essay on man" Pope, for example, explains the reasons for choosing verse as the vehicle for his ideas and observations:

[5] *Ibidem*.
[6] *Ibidem,* p. 104.
[7] *Ibidem,* p. 103.
[8] A. Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, Aucland 2010, p. 22.

This I might have done in prose; but I chose verse and even rhyme [...] I found I could express them [principles] more shortly this way than in prose itself; and nothing is truer than that much of the force, as well as grace of arguments or instructions, depends on their conciseness[9].

The compactness of his principles and precepts subjected to the rules of iambic pentameter and rhyme took the form of poetry and, perhaps, should not be explained or interpreted literally. Nevertheless, even if such an attempt was undertaken, the words should be read exactly as they were understood in the eighteenth century. Samuel Johnson's dictionary offers a number of possible meanings of *wit*[10]*, nature*[11] and *to dress*[12]*.* However, whatever combination of them happens to be employed, there are no grounds on which to to treat *true wit* and *nature* as "incommensurate categories", separate and contradictory ideas, or to associate the term 'drest' with women's clothing exclusively.

Brown's statement trivialising language "as merely an elegant form of expression" again disregards the eighteenth century meaning of 'express'. Among the various explanations provided in Johnson's publication there is none which would associate *express/expre'ss (adj.)* with elegance[13]. The meaning is strictly referred to representing, uttering, denoting; namely activi-

[9] A. Pope, *Essay on Man,* ed. M. Pattison, Oxford 1881, p. 26.

[10] To dress: 1. To clothe, to invest with clothes, 2. To clothe pompously or elegantly, 3. To adorn; to deck, to embellish, 4. To cover a wound with medicaments, 5. To curry, to rub, 6. To rectify, to adjust, 7. To prepare for any purpose, 8. To trim, to fit anything for ready use, 9. To prepare victuals for the table https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/.

[11] Nature: 1. An imaginary being supposed to preside over the material and animal world, 2. The native state or properties of any thing (to oryginalna XVIII-wieczna pisownia), by which it is discriminated from others, 3. The constitution of an animated body, 4. Disposition of mind; temper, 5. The regular course of things, 6. The compass of natural existence, 7. Natural affection, or reverence; native sensation, 8. The state or operation of the material world, 9. Sort; species, 10. Sentiments or images adapted to nature, or conformable to truth and reality, 11. Physics; the science which teaches the qualities of things, J. Samuel, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 1755 https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/.

[12] Wit: 1. the powers of the mind; the mental faculties; the intellects, 2. Imagination; quickness of fancy, 3. Sentiments produced by quickness of fancy, 4. A man of fancy, 5. A man of genius, 6. Sense, judgement, 7. In the plural. Sound mind; intellect not crazed, 8. Contrivance: stratagem, power of expedients, J. Samuel, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 1755, https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/.

[13] To express: 1. To copy; to resemble; to represent, 2. To represent by any of the imitative arts: as poetry, sculpture, painting, 3. To represent words in words, to exhibit by language; to utter; to declare, 4. To show or to make known In any matter, 5. To utter; to declare, with reciprocal pronoun, 6. To denote; to designate, 7. To squeeze out; to force out by compression, 8.To extort by violence, J. Samuel, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 1755 https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/page-view/?i=746.

ties connected with the basic role of language: communication. What is more, Johnson uses Pope's couplet to illustrate the meaning of "to express" understood as "to represent words in words, to exhibit by language; to utter; to declare" which provides direct information on how Pope's words were perceived by his contemporaries. The conclusion relating to Pope's trivialization of language stems from the literal understanding of the expression: *Nature dresst*. However, what should be emphasized is the fact that Pope employs poetry as his vehicle of expression and 'dress' does not necessarily include the notion of elegance. Indeed, while communicating 'dress' or 'nature' with the use of words, the more aptly (not elegantly) it is done the better 'true wit' is noticeable.

Interpretation of the relationship between nature and wit while assigning language the trivial role of a mere tool for improving nature (making it more elegant) appears contradictory not only to Pope's intentions, but to the eighteenth century state of mind. Reading Pope from the perspective of 20th century ideas on the relationship between text and meaning can lead to such false formulations as Brown's rather unfortunate conclusion that "Pope's couplet is systematically uninformative"[14]. The questions about the relation between wit and nature and the arbitrariness of advantage in connecting these two concepts "are raised and kept open"[15], but they were raised in the 20th century. For the 18th century readers, but first and foremost for Pope, the answers were clear and precisely formulated in an *Essay on Criticism*:

The face of Nature we no more survey,
All glares alike, without distinction gay:
But true expression, like th' unchanging sun,
Clears, and improves whate'er it shines upon,
It gilds all objects, but it alters none[16].

This statement defining the relation between wit and nature, undeniably giving the priority to nature, can be also found in the context of female dress code. In an essay published in *The Guardian* no. 149, attributed either to Gay or Pope, the art of dressing and the art of poetry were analysed and compared with the conclusion that "The sciences of poetry and dress have so near an alliance to each other, that the rules of the one, with very little variation,

[14] L. Brown, *Ends of Empire...*, *op. cit.,* p. 106.
[15] *Ibidem*.
[16] A. Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*..., *op. cit.,* p. 22.

may serve for the other".[17] The relation between nature and ornamentation is aptly defined in the excerpt devoted to the process of manufacturing a dress from its design, additional elements, through to its reception as a whole:

> The 86 milliner must be thoroughly versed in physiognomy; in the choice of ribbons she must have a particular regard to the complexion, and must ever be mindful to cut the head-dress to the dimensions of the face [...] The mantua-maker must be an expert anatomist [...] she must know how to hide all the defects in the proportions of the body, and must be able to mould the shape by the stays, so as to preserve the intestines, that while she corrects the body, she may not interfere with the pleasures of the palate[18].

An interesting element of the cited passage is the use of terms related to poetry in describing the art of dress making. As its explicitly demonstrated, the maker (a dressmaker or by analogy a poet) in dressing or the use of ornamentation is bound to nature, as it is a natural human body which untouched has to be only 'corrected' though without interference within its natural constitution. The priority of nature is indisputable. The ornamentation (dress) should correct but always with regards to nature (body). The essay illustrates Pope's attitude towards women in the context of the development of the mercantile industry, and it does not appear to underestimate the role of women or objectify them. On the contrary, what is emphasised is women's genius in relation to dress and that this was the acknowledged and praised genius that impacted, to England's benefit, on the developing textile industry: 'The ladies among us have a superior genius to the men; which have for some years past shot out in several exorbitant inventions for the greater consumption of our manufacture"[19].

The metaphor of dressing used by Brown for illustrating the emergence of a discourse of eighteenth century poetic theory in the "context of gender and even sexuality that it evokes"[20] may perhaps be found in Gildon's *The Complete Art of Poetry* (1718) with its passage aimed at explaining the rules of poetry "by pleasing and familiar Dress" as plainly as "to the Capacity of a Lady, who had not any Learning, and nothing but good Sense to direct her"[21]. Strikingly enough, the canon of writers mentioned by Brown as the flagship

[17] *The Guardian*, A Corrected Edition by Alexander Chalmers, vol. II, London 1806, p. 354.
[18] *Ibidem*, p. 360.
[19] *Ibidem*, p. 354.
[20] L. Brown, *Ends of Empire...*, *op. cit.,* p. 110.
[21] Ch. Gildon, *The Complete Art of Poetry*, London 1718, Introduction (n.p).

promoters of the 'commodisation of women", including Gildon, Mandeville, Addison and Defoe (all politically engaged Whigs), not only represent an approach contradictory to Pope's, but even the chapter's title *Capitalizing on Women: Dress, Aesthetics and Alexander Pope* actually suggests the domination of Pope's literary outcomes in strengthening the objectification of women in support of imperialism. Whig views on imperialism, consumerism or industrial/economic development of Great Britain as well as their approach towards women did not fully correspond with the conservative and Tory Pope. Such an erroneous conclusion is the inevitable result of de-fragmenting Pope's literary output and adjusting lines, taken out of context, to satisfy the requirements of a literary theory.

Alexander Pope's sexual obsession

The previous section demonstrated the interpretation of Pope's aesthetical writings as a discourse deliberately used not to enrich the ideas in aesthetics but rather serving to take advantage of its relative isolation from other subjects designed to express the materialist approach towards women by objectifying them in relation to the development of imperialism. However, the exposition of the real scope of Pope's aesthetic discourse was approached from another perspective, nevertheless based on the same methodology of analysing the lines taken out of context or comparing the passages from thematically different works. An illustrative example of this technique is the striking analogy between two excerpts taken from Pope's *Sermon against Adultery* and *Essay on Criticism* aimed at pointing to the variety of men's tastes. The men's sexually alluded preference expressed in the following lines on adultery

Nothing in nature is so lewd as Peg,
Yet for the world she would not show her leg!
While bashful Jenny, e'en at morning prayer,
Spreads her fore-buttocks to the navel bare.
But different taste in different men prevails,
And one is fir'd by heads, and one by tails[22]

becomes a point of reference when discussing the aesthetic preferences among critics: 'Expression is the dress of thought, and still/ Appears more

[22] A. Pope, *A Sermon against Adultery*, in: *The Poetical works of Alexander Pope*, vol. III, Boston 1875, p. 130.

decent, as more suitable;/[...] For diff'rent styles with diff'rent subjects sort,/As several garbs with country, town, and court"[23]. Juxtaposition of these two passages was to illustrate how "the sexual ambivalence in the trope of the naked and the dressed is equated with the problematic of aesthetic theory"[24]. What has been understood as "the tensions of aesthetic theory [...] vested in the anxieties about sexualities raised by the elusive or duplicitous operations of female dress and adornment"[25] suggests a somewhat inadequate reading of the explicitly clear meaning of Pope's message. In the *Essay on Criticism* the repeatedly used term 'dress' is employed either to denote the activity or the art of decoration, or generally to clothes, without specifically connoting female dress. In the *Sermon against Adultery*, Pope, in his straightforward criticism of lewdness, does indeed write about female clothes and displays the female body either dressed or undressed. Thus the topic of the poem – adultery – justifies enough the engagement with the physicality of the human body. What is worth noting, however, and which appears to be ignored by Brown, is the fact that Pope structured the poem in a way to point out that acts of adultery are not 'performed' by women only. In addressing this issue he is careful to indicate both parties: "women and fools are always in extreme"[26]. Similarly to the essay in *The Guardian* quoted earlier in the article, women are presented not as objectified figures, but as conscious 'experts' (regardless the field of expertise) and out of the two sexes it is men that are clearly labelled as fools. However, Brown's reading of the two cited excerpts leads her to the rather reductive conclusion that "the true artist speaks for the penis and vice versa; what the poet contemplates in the act of true art is the same as what the penis wants in a woman"[27].

A similarly alleged sexually alluded rhetoric in Pope's writing is exposed in Laura Mandell's study of misogyny among eighteenth century writers.[28] The author, in searching for Pope's sexual obsessions, attempts to decode the real meaning of his aesthetical writings and offers to substitute "penis" for "Weapon" in that Pope's description of satire in *Epilogue to the Satires* demonstrates that, for the poet, satirizing has become "a (mono)sexual act":

[23] *Ibidem*, p. 23.
[24] L. Brown, *Ends of Empire...*, *op. cit.,* p. 129.
[25] *Ibidem*.
[26] A. Pope, *A Sermon..., op. cit.,* p. 130.
[27] L. Brown, *Ends of Empire...*, *op. cit.,* p. 129.
[28] L. Mandell, *Misogynous Economies, The Business of Literature in Eighteenth-Century Britain,* Lexington 1999.

O sacred Weapon! left for Truth's defence,
Sole Dread of Folly, Vice, and Insolence!
To all but Heav'n-directed hands deny'd,
The Muse may give thee, but the Gods must guide.
Rev'rent I touch thee! but with honest zeal;
To rowze the Watchmen of the Publick Weal,
To Virtue's Work provoke the tardy Hall,
And goad the Prelate slumb'ring in his Stall.

For Mandell it is irreverent "to insinuate that this passage is an allegory of masturbation"[29]. The freedom of academic discussion enables various readings of literary works; nevertheless, such interpretations should be accurately justified. In the cited passage Pope uses the metaphor of combat and this metaphor can be found in a later part of the *Epilogue*. The interpretation of the lines as being sexually loaded appears to be inconsistent with the rest of the work. Mandell suggests that in these particular lines Pope is satirizing himself as part of a general trend which can also be observed in the works of Swift, to demonstrate "the indistinguishability of satiric persona from satiric object". Such analysis is exactly the critic's method of evaluating a piece of work which Pope warned against in his *Essay on Criticism*: "A perfect Judge will read each work of wit,/ With the same spirit that its author writ,/ Survey the *Whole*, nor seek slight faults to find"[30].

The freedom of academic discussion offers various readings of literary works, nevertheless, such interpretations should be accurately justified. In the cited passage Pope employs the metaphor of battle and this metaphor can be found in the further part of the *Epilogue*, indicating that the sexually loaded reading is inconsistent with the rest of the work. Mandell suggests that in these particular lines Pope is satirizing himself in a general trend denoted also in Swift, demonstrating "the indistinguishability of satiric persona from satiric object"[31] (30). Such analysis is exactly the critic's method of evaluating the piece of work, that Pope warned against in his *Essay on Criticism*: "A perfect Judge will read each work of wit,/ With the same spirit that its author writ,/ Survey the *Whole*, nor seek slight faults to find". Pope did not restrain himself from using sexually loaded metaphors when the subject of a poem allowed for it but this should not serve as the justification for claiming or discovering that all his writings posses a hidden sexual context. Pope pictured

[29] *Ibidem*, p. 28.
[30] *Ibidem*, p. 19.
[31] *Ibidem*, p. 30.

this way rather represents a sexually obsessed and unsatisfied man embittered by – what is not explicitly stated by Mandell but logically concluded from his autobiography – rejection by the "Fair sex" due to his physical appearance.

Alexander Pope diagnosed

Marxist readings of Pope as well as feminist attacks against him were complemented by a sort of psychoanalytic approach demonstrated by Helen Deutsch in her book on the poet[32]. In direct reference to Pope's physical deformity, the author draws conclusions about his literary achievement being strongly influenced and subordinated to his physical being. Indeed, profiling Pope as a man who due to his "physical pain, and his vulnerability to the cruelty of the public gaze" was "deprived [...] of self-control and alienated [...] from his own body"[33]; thus setting a context for further interpretation of his works. This perspective is already revealed in the opening sentence of the book: "Alexander Pope's body was deformed, and with that fact my book begins"[34]. The analysis yoked with ever-present dialectical bias stemming from the dualism between "an active mind in a beautiful head and what he [Pope] called 'this scurvy tenement of my body'"[35] and extended into the juxtapositions of "inimitable original and faulty imitation"[36], leads to the conclusions that deformity, itself, becomes a literary method for Pope and his success stems from practising the poetics of deformity. From this striking perspective the form of the heroic couplet becomes "refined for the orderly discord of the paradox" and through "the Essay on Man", according to Deutsch, "a poetic equivalent of the art of caricature" posed some difficulties which are mirrored in the statement: "what seems to me most monstrous about this poem for its critics is its defacement of invisible truth with visible metaphors"[37].

One may ask, however, if this has not been perhaps the scope for poetry through the centuries. In the ideologically divided literary circles of early eighteenth century England Pope enjoyed the company of writers with similar beliefs and, at the same time, was hated and attacked by adversaries.

[32] H. Deutsch, *Resemblance and Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture*, Cambridge 1996.
[33] *Ibidem,* p. 2.
[34] *Ibidem*, p. 1.
[35] *Ibidem*.
[36] *Ibidem,* p. 2.
[37] *Ibidem*, p. 7.

Indeed, some of his most ardent detractors ridicule his imitations of ancient writings by comparing them to the poet's distorted body. For example, Lady Mary Montagu takes delight in deliberately using Pope's physical weakness in order to laugh at his literary works. Deutsch even reaches the conclusion that: "If Pope's text is a monstrous distortion, then Pope himself is a monster"[38]. Indeed, the number of variations of the word "monster" (monstrous, monstrosity) used in the book, doubtlessly impacts on the portrait of Pope perhaps unconsciously understood by readers but consciously depicted by the author.

Conclusions

The portrayal of Pope from the perspective of feminist literary criticism presents little more than a 'partial' or even grotesquely distorted image of the writer, leading to rather surprising interpretations of his works. Such unlikely or distorted conclusions, despite the evidence otherwise, were made possible due to the fact that Pope was first profiled as a man and only then, as a writer. In terms of feminist criticism, his literary output has been characterised in terms of demonstrating fierce hatred towards women, along with the poet's sexual obsession and bitter frustration due to the apparent deformity of his body. The one-sided image of Pope proposed by feminist critical theory serves to prove that despite the good intentions of expanding literary studies in offering a fresh perspective on the 18th century, the wider scope and depth of critical analysis this necessitated has been largely missing. One of the major flaws of the critical works discussed in this article is the almost complete disregard for studies produced by non-feminist scholars. Indeed, much of the feminist criticism applied to eighteenth century literature lacks the necessary scientific background on which these new interpretations can properly challenge the body of research on Pope conducted thus far. For instance, when Ian Gordon writes that Pope's art is derived from "the poet's passionate concern for the state of society and his undying commitment to a moral order in civilized life"[39], it leads one to doubt that these beautifully crafted poems could simply be the product of a "warped mind in a warped body". Indeed, it could be argued that feminist criticism, within literary studies, has become somewhat narrow in its approach and more circuitous, in that it refers pri-

[38] *Ibidem* p. 23.
[39] I. Gordon, *A preface to Pope*, New York 1993, p. XIV.

marily to other feminist literary texts and theorists rather than looking more broadly at its intended subject. We can also see this in the fact that these critical works are often embedded in publications that are closed to other interpretive approaches. Thus, such readings tend to disregard the analyses offered by non-feminist scholars who have already built up a constructive and detailed body of work on the various sexual illusions in Pope's poetry.

The possible direction for the development of studies on Pope was proposed by Howard Weinbrot who, in one of his essays, concluded that

> we should reconsider the beatification of a genteel, mythic, Pope [...]. As Pope's contemporaries, especially his victims, testified, he was more eclectic, hostile, and both sublime and vulgar[40].

If the purpose of feminist studies has been to show this 'vulgar Pope', then surely its interpretations have gone too far in reductively offering an image of Pope as a sexually obsessed misogynist who takes advantage in his literary talent to carry out an "almost onanistic fantasy to be the chosen scourge of God"[41]. This rather barebones and simplistic reading of the Poet's art is taken further when it is considered to be the mere expression of his frustration and desire to be revenged on women due to his physical disabilities. Such an image is proof that the eighteenth century has been deconstructed and re-defined, no matter how far this might lead some scholars from historical truth. Pope during his life experienced severe treatment and attacks which were little connected with his published works, leading him to admit that "The life of a Wit is a warfare upon earth"[42]. Modern attempts at reassembling deconstructed Pope have proved unsuccessful and lead to a false picture that cannot be proved by historical evidence.

The ending of Deutsch's book seeks to demonstrate that Pope was the master of the poetics of deformity. The conviction that he deformed the very culture of his time is cruelly devoid of any real scholarly objectivity, as confirmed in the Deutsch's grain of regret that he should have finished "his literary career with the fourth book of the *Dunciad*'s apocalyptic vision of the end of the form"[43]. Perhaps the most evident proof for the need of more realistic perspective's on both Pope's work and image can ironically be found within

[40] H.D. Weinbrot, *Eighteenth-Century Satire*, Cambridge 1988, pp. 142-143.
[41] L. Mandell, *Misogynous Economies...*, *op. cit.,* p. 30.
[42] A. Pope, *The Complete Poetical Works of Alexander Pope with a Memoir of the Author*, ed. W.C. Armstrong, Boston 1879, p. 147.
[43] H. Deutsch, *Resemblance...*, *op. cit.,* p. 217.

his poetry, which warns against de-fragmentation of the literary work so aptly presented in the *Essay on Criticism*, and the above mentioned apocalyptic vision in the *Triumph of Dullness* in which he appears to predicted the contemporary chaos in literature studies along with his own posthumous fate:

She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold
Of *Night* primeval, and of *Chaos* old!....
Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
The meteor drops, and in a flash expires….
Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
Art after *Art* goes out, and all is night.
See sulking *Truth* to her old cavern fled,
Mountains of casuistry heaped o'er her head! […]
Nor public flame, nor private, dares to shine;
Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!
Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos is restored;
Light dies before thy uncreating word:
Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall;
And universal darkness buries all[44].

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