

Pope as a Satirist

Satire predominates in the works of Pope. Even a cursory glance at his poetry reveals that the major part of it consists of satire or is satiric in spirit. 'The Rape of the Lock', 'The Dunciad', 'moral Essays', 'Satires and Epistles of Horace' imitated are the best of his satires.

There were various factors which gave a satiric turn to the genius of Pope. The spirit of the times favoured the growth of this literary form. Literature was allied to politics, nearly every writer of the day was used by the two political parties - the Whig and the Tory to hurl abuses and invectives at each other. Moreover, it was believed that the function of literature is not merely to entertain but also to reform. Authors tried to improve the manners and morals of the people. Thus the aim of Addison was

to enliven morality with wit and wit with morality. The result was the predominance of satire and Pope could not escape the influence of the age. The circumstances of Pope's life and his character also predisposed him to satire. He suffered from a number of disabilities. He was weak, sickly and deformed. His life was long disease. He suffered much at the hands of his enemies who spared neither his family, his works, nor his personal deformities. He wanted to be even with them. His ill health made him ill-tempered and peevish. He was quick to take offence. He was extremely vindictive. The aim of his satire is to cause pain to his enemies. His vindictive nature did not spare even ladies with whom he had once been on friendly terms. Moreover, he was a Catholic and Catholics in the age suffered from a number of handicaps.

They could not lead a full normal life. Pope wanted to have his revenge upon the Protestants, too, who were the cause of much of his misery and undeserved suffering. He, therefore, used the weapon of satire to have his revenge upon them.

The end.

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