



## Dryden'in "Dramatik Őiire Dair" Denemesinin Analitik İncelemesi

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**Özet:** Dryden, *Dramatik Őiire Dair* adlı denemesinde Neoklasik Çağın başlangıcında tartışılan temel kritik konuların kısa ve öz, esprili de olsa bir özetini sunmaktadır. Platon'un Devlet veya Sempozyum adlı çalışmaları gibi, bu eser de diyalog biçiminde yazılmıştır. 1665'teki büyük bir savaşın arifesinde geçen olayda ve bir tekneyle Thames nehrini geçerken günün meselelerini tartışan dört adamla ilgilidir. Bu dört adam ayrıntılar üzerinde anlaşamaları da, hepsi sanatın bir taklit biçimi olduğunu, öğretmesi ve memnun etmesi gerektiğini ve görgü kurallarına gevşek ya da sıkı bir şekilde uyması gerektiğini kabul eder. Tartışmanın ilk konusu kadimlerle olan ilişkileriyle ilgilidir. Yakından taklit mi etmeliler? Onları aşabilirler mi? Konuşmacılardan biri antiklerin kötü kopyalarından başka bir şey olmadığını iddia eder ve bizim erdemlerimiz onların erdemleri olduğunu ve kusurlarında bizim kusurumuz olduğunu belirtir. Bir diğeri, sanatı ilerlettiğimizi ve geliřtirdiğimizi söyler çünkü hem doğaya hem de Antik Çağ'ın taklit edebileceğimiz şeylere sahip olduğumuzu, oysa onların yalnızca doğaya ihtiyacı olduğunu varsayar. Dönemin tarihsel arka planına ilişkin kısa bir incelemenin ve Fransa'daki bazı benzer tarihsel eğilimlere hızlı bir bakışın ardından, bu makale Dryden'in *Dramatik Őiir Denemesi* (1668) adlı eserini ana meselerini analiz etmektedir. Dryden'in çalışmasında, üç birliğin merkezi kavramı ve bu kavramın hem Dryden'in çağı hemde Antik Çağ'ındaki arasındaki ilişkiyi keşfetmenin hem Fransız hemde İngiliz neoklasizminin ayrımlarını karşılaştırmanın bir yolu olarak kullanılması sunulmaktadır. Yine de herkes antiklerin onurlandırılması ve dikkate alınması gerektiği konusunda hemfikirdir. Üç birlik dikkate alındıkça diyalog daha da belirginleşmektedir. Zaman, yer ve eylem birlikleri Aristoteles ve Horace'ın açıklamalarından türetilmişti ama aslında Corneille, Racine ve Boileau gibi Fransız neoklasikçiler tarafından kodlanmıştı. Zaman birliğine göre sahne zamanının gerçek zamana mümkün olduğu kadar yakın bir şekilde taklit edilmesi gerekirken; her halükarda on iki saatten fazla olmaması da tartışma konuları arasındadır. Mekan birliğine göre sahnede aksiyon tek bir mekanda sınırlı kalmalı; şehirden şehre, bölgeden bölgeye sıçramamalı. Eylem birliğine göre, karmaşık olmayan veya alt olay örgülerinin iç içe geçmesiyle sulandırılmayan bir ana olay örgüsü olmalıdır. Çalışma, tüm bu noktaları analiz edecek ve Dryden'in Neoklasik çağdaki kritik konuları esprili bir şekilde tartışması aracılığıyla dramaya bir yaklaşım getirecektir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Dryden, *Dramatik Őiir Denemesi*, Neoklasik Çağ, birlikler

### A Critical Analysis of Dryden's "Of Dramatic Poesy"

**Abstract:** In his essay *Of Dramatic Poetry*, Dryden writes the essay as a dialogue like Plato's Republic or Symposium by summarizing the main points debated in the early Neoclassical period. It is important to note that although the four men disagree on the specifics, they all agree that art is a form of imitation, that it should educate, please, and govern morality outside of laws, whether they are simple or rigid. The first argument is the relationship with the ancients. Should they be closely imitated? Can they be disputed? One of the participants says that we are but poor old-fashioned artists: our merits are theirs, while our faults are our own. Another says that we have progressed and improved art, because we must imitate our style and the ancient, while theirs was natural. After a brief survey of the historical context of the period and a quick discussion of some similar historical developments in France, the present paper examines Dryden's *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*'s main arguments. The study is presented as a way of comparing and contrasting neoclassicism. The speakers agree that the classics should be respected and honored. As the three unities are considered, the discussion becomes more sophisticated. It is also worth mentioning that the unity of time, space, and action began in the work of Aristotle and Horace but was actually developed by such French neoclassicals as Cornell, Racine, and Boileau. According to spatial

homogeneity, the action on stage should be confined to one location; It should not spread from one city to another or one region to another. Through unity of action, the main story should not be complicated or simplified by combining smaller details. The analysis will explore all of these points, providing a perspective on the play through Dryden's playful discussion of important issues in the neoclassical period.

**Keywords:** *Dryden, Of Dramatic Poesy, Plato, Neoclassical Age, unity*

## **Introduction**

The beginning of the narrative of *An Essay on Dramatic Poesy* is as follows. A battle is going on between England and the Netherlands. Four gentlemen namely Crites, Eugenius, Lisideius and Neander are travelling by boat to see the battle and start a discussion on modern literature. Crites opens the discussion by saying that none of his contemporaries can equal to the standards and the rules set by ancient Greeks and Romans. Eugenius restrains him from wasting time on finding demerits. He asks him to find relative merit in Greeks and Moderns. Crites favors classical drama of Aristotle who believed that drama is "imitation of life". Crites believes that drama of such ancients is successful because it depicts life. He claims that both classical and neoclassical favor rules and unities of time, place, and action. According to Crites, modern dramatists are shadows of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Seneca, and Terence. For instance, Elizabethan dramatist Ben Jonson borrowed from Classics and proud to call himself modern Horace. The classical is more skillful in language than their successors.

On the other hand, the second participant Eugenius favors modern dramatists. Yet, instead of talking about the virtues of moderns, he is critical of the faults of Classical playwrights. The Classical drama is not divided into acts and also lacks originality. Their tragedies are based on worn-out myths that are already known to the audience and their comedies are based on overused curiosity of stolen heiresses and miraculous restorations. There disregards poetic justice. Instead of punishing the vice and rewarding the virtue, they have often shown prosperous wickedness and an unhappy devotion. The classical drama also lacks affection. The Heroes of Homer were lovers of appetite, food while the modern characters of French drama gave up everything for the sake of love. Lisideius favors French drama of earlier 17th century. French drama led by Pierre Corneille strictly followed unities of time, pace, and action. The French dramatists never mixed tragedy and comedy. They strictly adhered to the poetic justice, rewarded the virtue and punishment of the vice. For this, they even altered the original situation. The French dramatists interweave truth with fiction to make it interesting bringing elements that lead to fate and borrow from history to reward the virtuous which he was earlier deprived of. They prefer emotions over plots. Violent actions take place off stage and are told by messengers rather than showing them on stage.

Neander, the mouthpiece for Dryden, contradicts Lisideius' arguments favoring the superiority of French drama. He talks about the greatness of Elizabethans. For him, Elizabethans fulfil the drama's requirement like imitation of life. French drama raises perfection but has no soul or emotions as it primarily focuses on the plot. For Neander, tragicomedy is the best form of drama. Both sadness as well as joy are heightened and are set side by side. Hence it is closest to life. He believes that subplots enrich the drama. This French drama having a single plot lacks the vividness. Samuel Johnson, who defended Shakespeare's disregard of unities, believed that adherence to unities prevents depth. According to him, deviation from set rules and unities gives diverse themes to drama. Neander rejects the argument that change of place and time diminishes dramatic credibility in drama. For him, human actions will seem more natural if they get enough time to develop. He also argues that Shakespeare is "the man who of all the modern and perhaps ancient poets, and largest and most comprehensive soul". Francis Beaumont and John Fletchers' dramas are rich in wit and have smoothness and polish in their language. Neander says, "I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived at its highest perfection". If Ben Jonson is a genius for correctness, Shakespeare excels him in wit. His arguments end with the familiar comparison, "Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare." Thus, for him, Elizabethans are superior because they have a variety of themes, emotions, deviations, wit. They do not adhere to rules as well. Thus, their drama is really an imitation of life. Through Neander, Dryden's commitment to the neoclassical tradition is presented in this study. The paper examines Dryden's treatise's main

arguments. The analysis will explore the points discussed and provide a perspective on the treatise through Dryden's playful discussion of important issues in the neoclassical period.

### **Issues in *Of Dramatic Poesy***

When Sidney wrote his "Apology" in 1583, England was about to enter its golden age. In less than a century, England would produce Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, John Donne, John Milton, and many others. The art form suffered a setback when the theaters were closed by Puritan revolutionaries led by Cromwell (1642). Art was revived when Charles II restored it in 1660. After the Restoration, poetry and drama moved with great vigor into the upper classes of society, to return to Greco-Roman painting to the royal character of the court. Thus, fashionable, and trendy art based on Aristotle and Horace reached its former glory. From the 1660s to the last decades of the eighteenth century, England entered its neoclassical period which is also known as the Age of Reason, the Renaissance and the Seventeenth Century, and the Age of Enlightenment. The rise of this period is usually marked by the reign of Queen Anne (1702–1714). At the same time France's Neoclassical period was composed of medieval dramatists such as Racine, Boileau and of other famous critics. Playwrights/critics such as Cornhill, the classical literati attempted to better model the discussions in terms of how drama is supposed to be. Indeed, there was a French "air" to British culture in the eighteenth century.

*Of Dramatic Poesy* offers a broad overview of neoclassical theory. The work is written as a dialogue between four people. The subjects that arose ranged from classical and modern, forms of solidarity, French drama and English drama, tragedy's breakdown to comedy and finally the metaphorical approach to drama. One of the contenders, Eugenius begins with an admiration of the modern rather than the ancient. He argues that the modernists surpassed the classical in establishing their models and criticizes classical playwrights for failing to adhere to literally established rules in response to Crites' claim that the ancients established fundamental values. Lisideus argues for the superiority of French over English drama, based on the French author's firm adherence to the classical division of comedy and tragedy. Thus, the point is lost, plot overwhelmed, and one gets lost during the course of the play. For Lisideus, a play is "a just and lively image of human and the change of fortune to which it is subject for the delight and instruction of mankind." Neander is the last to speak and acts as a mouthpiece for Dryden who favors moderns but appreciates the contribution ancients made. Neander is critical of French by stating: "those beauties of the French poesy are such as will raise perfection higher where it is but are not sufficient to give it where it is not: they are indeed the beauties of a statue, but not of a man." (Dryden, p. 8). He claims that French practice is more concerned with aesthetics and rigid rules than the work itself. Thus, such adherence to rules makes it beautiful but deprives it of its vividness.

Neander defends by stating that "they send to each other when brought close together. Keep tugging at each other; we've discovered, expanded, and developed a more interesting approach do write for the stage;" (Dryden, p. 9). In response to Lisideus, he argues that the only requirements "without small story, the tendency to show little action, and the strict adherence to unity, the lack of story is narrow-mindedness" (p. 12) are all characteristics that ultimately make English drama superior to French. Neander shows the superiority of English over Europe, in that no European country can compare to English in drama for its authenticity. However, Neander argues Shakespeare was better than Johnson because he had "the largest and most comprehensive soul," (p. 13), while Johnson was the most educated and judicious writer any theater has ever had." (p. 13). Thus, Johnson lacked the imagination and creativity of Shakespeare. Neander favors Shakespeare for his 'greater scope', his 'greater faithfulness to life', as compared to Jonson's 'small scope' and French tendency to deal in "the beauties of a statue, but not of a man" (Atkins, 1997, p. 123).

### **Historical context and Superiority of British Drama**

The 17th century witnessed a series of political upheavals and great transformations in England. In response to all of those changes, English literature tried to withstand foreign influence. As a poet of 17th century Dryden tried to put forward the idea that English literature is immaculate on several aspects. There are three major arguments in the treatise for English literature's acclaim and superiority in this respect. The first is that the English poesy is far beyond the poesy of the so-called ancients; English

poesy is richer than French poesy; finally, the immaculateness of English poesy. As such the English plays surpasses the ancients and is worthy of high praise. This becomes most evident when Eugenius says “there is no man more ready to adore those great Greeks and Romans than I am, however, I cannot think so contemptibly of the age in which I live, or so dishonorably of my own country, as not to judge we equal the ancients in most kinds of poesy, and in some surpass them; neither know I any reason why I may not be as zealous for the reputation of our age, as we find the ancients themselves were in reference to those who lived before them” (Dryden, 1889, p. 14-15). Eugenius is not trying to condemn the ancients, on the contrary he accepts their accomplishments and pays tribute to them and further gives equal credit to English authors. Eugenius later states that “nothing seems easier to him, than to overcome those whom it is our greatest praise to have imitated well, for we do not only build upon their foundations, but by their models” (Dryden, 1889, p. 18). Here, he further praises ancients by suggesting that a great opportunity lies in following their footsteps. The mouthpiece of Dryden, Eugenius states that “first taught us to mold our thoughts into easy and significant words, - to retrench the superfluities of expression, - and to make our rime so properly a part of the verse, that it should never mislead the sense, but itself be led and governed by it.” (Dryden, 1889, p. 16). Those statements are a foreshadowing of romantic approach to poetry which outlines the significance of everyday language in poems. The precision and clarity of a poem allow the availability of it. A language devoid of superficial heaviness, unnecessary statements and languages in English poesy would convey the meaning easily and automatically. Without any glorification or decoration what is meant is said directly.

Other than the ancient poets against whom Dryden locates most of his arguments, French literature is used to compare and contrast the superiority of English poesy. French literature should be relegated to compare with the English. In the inaugural “To the Reader” part, Dryden states: “The drift of the ensuing discourse was chiefly to vindicate the honor of our English writers, from the censure of those who unjustly prefer the French before them” (Dryden, 1889, p. 7). Thus, Dryden attempts to show a new school of poetry by claiming a new set of approach to poesy: developing English poesy and comparing it against the background of its own authors. Eugenius mentions Sir John Suckling, Mr. Waller, Sir John Denham, and Mr. Cowley whose language he accepts as “even”, “sweet”, “flowing”, “majestic”, “correct”, “elevated”, “copious”, and “full of spirit” (Dryden, 1889, p. 16) in comparison with the French. Neander points out the difference between both literatures and challenges French poesy: “Tis true, those beauties of the French poesy are such as will raise perfection higher where it is, but are not sufficient to give it where it is not: they are indeed the beauties of a statue, but not of a man, because not animated with the soul of poesy, which is imitation of humor and passions” (Dryden, 1889, p. 54). He proclaims that French lack soul and a proper articulation of ideas. Furthermore, French literature lacks a range of scope and unable to thrive. Its influence is limited as it cannot evoke any inspiration. While the French limit themselves to imitation of ancients, English add their own hue. This is precisely why Neander believes French poesy is similar to the beauties of a statue while English literature to a living person. French poesy lack spirit and have inability to blend genres, As Neander states, “life is not based only on one genre – tragedy or comedy. Life has a soul when it embraces both poles, sometimes at the same time. And when the French have come to understand it, maintains Neander, they started to imitate the English: “But of late years Moliere, the younger Corneille, Quinault, and some others, have been imitating afar off the quick turns and graces of the English stage. They have mixed their serious plays with mirth, like our tragicomedies, since the death of Cardinal Richlieu” (Dryden, 1889, p. 55). In his conclusion Neander states that English poesy has reached a point where it sets an example to the rest. However, as Neander states, even though there is a glimpse of comedy in French tragedies, it is so “thin-sown” (Dryden, 1889, p. 55). As a matter of fact, French poesy remains reluctant to changes and transformations to their own dismay.

Another major reason for French literature’s backward nature is its rigidity in plots and contents. While the English plays are crowded in terms of content; there are several characters and plots. Neander claims: “‘Tis evident that the more the persons are, the greater will be the variety of the plot . . . you will find it infinitely pleasing to be led in a labyrinth of design” (Dryden, 1889, p. 59-60). To Neander the plethora of character and plot serves to the audience’s pleasure. Audience finds pleasure and amazement in complexity of the plot: “I know not; but they will scarcely suffer combats and other objects of horror

to be taken from them.” (Dryden, 1889, p. 61). Audience identifies and responds with fear, empathy and such elements serve to establish soul of poesy. Another category in the treatise that the speakers dwell upon is the notion of the rhyme in poesy. The speakers fall into a disagreement and Neander claims: “that rhyme enriches a piece of work: I deny not but blank verse may be also used, and content myself only to assert, that in serious plays where the subject and characters are great, and the plot unmixed with mirth, which might allay or divert these concernments which are produced, rhyme is there as natural, and more effectual then blank verse” (Dryden, 1889, p. 84). In response, Crites fiercely defends the priority of blank verse instead of rhyme while Neander finds rhyme “as natural as an authentic speech”. He gives an example of Fletcher, who wrote in verse (Dryden, 1889, p. 84). Crites claims that rhyme is not natural, and that ordinary people do not speak in rhyme when they converse in ordinary life circumstances, Neander responds by saying that in that case neither blank verse nor rhyme is natural: “neither does any man speak in blank verse, or in measure without rhyme” (Dryden, 1889, p. 86). However, Neander accepts rhyme’s inappropriateness for the comedies. At the end of the Essay, Neander states: “Thus then the second thoughts being usually the best, as receiving the matures digestion from judgement, and the last and most mature product of those thoughts being artful and labored verse, it may well be inferred, that verse is a great help to a luxuriant fancy, and this is what that argument which you opposed was to evince” (Dryden, 1889, p. 99). Therefore, rhyme is the form through which a poet transforms his ideas to the reader, and which finds a positive response from Dryden.

Crites argues the superiority of antiquity, stating that his contemporaries would never amount to Greeks or Romans. He declares that he prefers the drama of Elizabeth and Jacobean era to the present. He says: “Drama, as Aristotle wrote, is an imitation of life and is successful as long as it reflects human nature” (Dryden, 1889, p. 25). This point is accepted and appreciated by all the other participants. He describes that cooperation that “could have a play in one place for a day or embrace one plot” (p. 26). But he opposes the use of words in plays, even though moderns have scientifically surpassed the classical period as “the true age of poetry” (p. 23) in which he does not consider it, it should not be performed on the stage either,” (p. 24). Crites quotes Aristotle when he says that “it is better to write a tragedy in this kind of verse...in the near future. prose in a play for blank verse” (p. 26). The reason why rhyme is avoided is that blank verse is still preferred because it is “nearer to nature”(p. 27): rhyme cannot express the larger idea naturally. As such, verbosity should be avoided for the sake of taste as it creates a natural flow of ideas. Responding to Crites' anti-rhyme argument, Neander acknowledges that tedious verses are inappropriate for a play of natural verse, however, it is appropriate for a play to be about non-dramatic poetry: form the best way to discover the "naturalness" of the verse is by seeing 'how well the rhymes are chosen.'(Crane,1995 p. 76.) As long as the rhymes are carefully chosen, they are desirable and appropriate.

Eugenius states that scientific progress coincided with artistic progress. He insists on the superiority of modern English playwrights: "The moderns have benefited from the rules of the ancients but have exceeded them" (Crane, p. 90). He discusses the paradoxes of harmony, and the Aristotelian approach which has four parts: 'Introduction, narrative tightened, turned, and destruction” (Crane, p. 77). But somewhere along the way, he points out, and thanks to Horace, five acts became plays. As for actions, he argues that they are transparent, the contents are common knowledge; that Roman tendency came from Greeks. For instance, deus ex machina is not a good way out as in Greek tragedies. Regarding spatial unity, he argues that the ancients did not emphasize it as much as the French did, and that its strict enforcement led to a tendency to ignore time unity on both sides. Regarding the use of language, Eugenius criticizes Crites: "Even if we don't know all the context, good writing is always good, wisdom is always evident, if done well."(Crane, p. 89). He adds that the ancients, although they depicted many feelings and actions, failed to portray the theme of love, which "has the greatest passion" (Tilyard, 2020, p. 45) and everyone knows that he speaks of Fletcher and Shakespeare as being passionate in his depiction of the theme. Eugenius, on the other hand, always presents some of the shortcomings of antiquity and some of the sublimities of modernity. The first objection is that the modernists have leveled the classification of drama and divided their plays not only into acts but also into patterns. In doubt, they imitate nature, but their imitations are only one dimensional and partial – as they only imitate the eyes or the hands and dare not indulge in facial lines, or bodily shapes. They are inferior to the English moderns in all these respects. By failing to give adequate details, they failed to reach moderns.

Eugenius is also critical of the three ancients: Plato, Aristoteles, and Horace. For instance, Horace and Aristotle did not speak of unity of place. Even the ancients did not always strictly realize the unity of time. Euripides, the great dramatist, confines his action to a single day, but then, he makes many unrealistic implications. Another important point that Eugenius makes is on the issue of action. There are too many details and instead of conveying important information to the audience through conversation, elders often do so by means of a joint talk. As a result, their performances are monotonous and tedious for the audience to pay attention. The last major point that Eugenius makes concerns the Ancient's failure to have a main point as well as teaching a lesson which are some of the drama's functions. There is no poetic justice in their plays whatsoever: "Terrible punishment and virtue were rewarded, and they often displayed successful vice and tragic piety" (Tillyard, 2020, p. 98). On the other hand, Eugenius and Crites agree that justice cannot be served in plays and the language of the ancients were adequate. The language did not suffice because it is dead and many of their words, customs and manners did not serve their purposes for its lack of clarity. They do, however, have some. Only advanced terms already in use and common terms were used, and new terms should be formulated only when absolutely necessary. Horace himself recommended this rule, but the ancients often violated rich and ordinary use of language.

Lisideius supports French playwrights and criticizes English. While he solemnly acknowledges the superiority of early English drama, he fails to glorify modern plays. The English had their 'Johnson, Beaumont, and Fletcher. But after them the English drama declined. English drama left nothing but "terrible ages of bloodshed and violence," and poetry is "the art of peace" (Tillyard, 2020, p. 88). No English dramatist can think of it as well as Cornell. Thus, he argues that France has the highest level of modern antiquity. "We can't so easily remember going for another 'happy smile' after a picture of great excitement and anxiety, and reveling in something with its joy," (Dryden, p. 8) he argues. That play is a "fair and vivid portrait of man, the transformation of wealth whose theme is happiness, the teaching of humanity and what it will explain" (Dryden, p. 29). The French are staunch conservatives of full integration and reject tragic irony. Because they pursue unity, they are better than the rest of Europe. Thus, the French drama is superior for several reasons: first, it followed the footsteps of the ancients. Secondly, they carefully observe the unity of time. When it comes to spatial unity, great care is taken. The plays are fully unified, as if all the action is taking in one single place. The process was clear. The plays are never superimposed with subplots which is common in English drama in which English dramatists are constantly distracted from scene to scene. This double action mistake ends up with another mistake. Lisideius concludes that "there is no drama in the world so absurd as the English tragic comedy." (Dryden, p. 28) He argues that the French base their tragedy on a 'known history' and combine fiction and reality that allows them to express a reality. Of Shakespeare's historical plays, he argues, "they are rather the stories of many kings" (p. 29). He believes that French is superior to English in many respects. First of all, they have a story about an event that happens on its own but English language includes all kinds of actions and can't follow the main story. French focuses on one character with a connection to other characters, keeping a total unity on the whole story. Also, French uses characters to report what happened in terms of battle and death, which is ridiculous for Lycidas when it is staged and if such references are inaccurate, it can as well be removed from it.

He also says that the French don't end plays with "transformations" or changes of will" without a proper understanding. However, in English, there will be voluntary changes or changes according to circumstances, so it is not true. French plays are good based on the fact that characters don't go in and out without such common sense in English plays. French directs interest and, but English drama for example Shakespeare, does not adapt its story for dramatic purposes. To satisfy the human soul, a game must parallel reality. While French plays have this kind of realism, English plays do not. The English create great tension in their plays through actions and incidents that have no logical and natural connection with the main action. Lisideius also argues that French is superior to the classics because the 'dull and boring' action of the play is generally inaudible to audiences. Such stories are common in ancient drama. So, the French can't be blamed for using narrative in their plays, as long as they handled it cautiously. Neander is the last to speak. He argues that because acting is an imitative art, it is best to imitate English. It is true French 'poetry is beautiful' but so is image. He argues that the English plays are 'very interesting and instructive' (p. 10) because they have a wonder that the French and older plays lack. He argues that there are more rules to follow, which leads to more obscurity than it prevents.

Neander glorifies the modern, respects the ancient, and challenges fixed rules. He supports breaking the unities because it helps to make dramatic conclusion more interesting. Because French strictly follows them, it has the power of attraction. By evasion, English dramatists are able to give a complete, fair and vivid picture of human nature. Since Aristotle's definition of poetry as an act of imitation, the generally accepted view of poetry is that in Dryden's day, it was that it should be a close imitation of past or present facts. While Dryden has no problem with the prevailing neoclassical bias in favor of truth, he allows more flexibility for poetry. The poet is free to imitate "as he speaks or thinks." (p. 7). He also zealously defends the right of the poet to imitate what it can do or make. In context, he quoted Shakespeare, who used supernatural elements of faith and superstition, as many people held it and used it that way.

As we know, Plato wanted poetry to affect, teach, and eventually lead a catharsis. Horace tried all of those to alleviate entertainment as well as educate. For Dryden though, poetry is ultimately entertainment and a vehicle rather than a pedagogical one. It does not imitate life but gives its own interpretation. The poet, according to Dryden, is "neither a master nor a naked imitator but a creator who uses life as a creature or raw material and creates new things that resemble the original in every way" (p. 9). According to him, 'poetry is art' and not mere imitation. With respect to unities, Neander argues that the English transgression of the three unities adds 'number and variety to English plays. Anglican disdain for homogeneity results in a more 'accurate' and 'transparent' picture of human nature. French plays may be consistent, but they are not as glamorous, casual and exciting as English. Shakespeare's plays, for example, are vivid and appropriate portraits of life and human nature. The English, as Ben Jonson followed the rule and show more skill and artistry than the French. It all depends on the 'talent' or 'skill' of the writer. There is nothing wrong with introducing 'sub-plots', as they add variety, richness and life to the drama. The author can therefore use his flat play to paint a 'correct' and 'warmer' picture than the reality. Neander questions this view and answers: "Why should the human soul be considered heavier than the senses? Doesn't the eye go from the unpleasant to the pleasant at once?" – "Emotional satisfaction is primary, self is secondary" ((Güven, 2019, p.10). Emotional intuition contributes to the creation of fantasies.

In replying to Crites, Dryden takes up little space and is wise enough to respect the classics. He reveals the perfection of the ancients and the gratitude of the moderns. Thus, it clearly shows the comparative advantages and disadvantages of each. The superiority of the ancients is established only by the fact that the moderns imitate them and build on the foundation on which they were laid. The ancients are the accepted models of modernity. The ancients had exceptional dramatic talent and could achieve perfection in their particular branch of poetry. When they excel in drama. Third, poetry was more highly esteemed in ancient Greece and Rome than any other branch of knowledge. Frequent competitions encouraged poets to excel in their field. Judges were appointed and playwrights were rewarded according to their merits. But in modern times, there is no such sense of competition and fair judgements. The poets are not properly honored or rewarded. Ancient drama is good because the ancients observed nature well and faithfully represented it in their work. Modernists do not carefully observe and study nature and therefore distort and bastardize nature in their plays. The rules of dramatic composition which moderns now follow have come down to them from ancients. Crites deals primarily with unity, time, space, and action. The ancients followed these rules, and the results are satisfying and enjoyable. But modern dramas violate temporal unity and tend to cover the entire period of time in which the action of the play took place.

The ancients could structure their plays well. We cannot appreciate the art and beauty of their language, simply because their customs, stories are unbeknown to us. There is much in their language that is so precise and beautiful, but we cannot appreciate it adequately, because their language is dead and remains only in books. At the end of the magnificent poem, Crites and Neander discuss the mastery of rhyme and verse. While Crites rejects the jargon used, he firmly believes that it sounds artificial and far from reality. However, Neander replies that if one wants to rhyme, he needs to forsake certain features. Neander supports the idea that it is okay to avoid rhetoric in comedy, but a bold tragedy must have a rhythm that evokes certain emotions in the audience. Neander also argues that the more time a writer spends thinking about words, the more artificial he or she becomes.

## Conclusion

Dryden's *Essay on Dramatic Poesy* explicitly states in the begin that its aim is to have our English writers to stay away from those who prefer French over English. The essay is a debate on the use of rhyme in the drama that took place originally between Sir Robert Howard and John Dryden. However, there are four characters in the essay: Eugenius, Crites, Lisideius, and Neander, which are originally identified as Charles Sackville, who was a patron of Dryden and poet himself, Sir Robert Howard, Dryden's brother-in-law, Sir Charles Sedley, and Neander, Dryden himself, respectively. Of the various that this debate concerns itself, one the typical issue of ancients and moderns. In neoclassical times, supporters of ancients believed that modern society has corrupted the man and society and looked for answers in the old texts. Moderns, on the other hand, were breaking away or abandoning the old ideals completely. They saw the modern world as the development of human nature because of Renaissance ideals. Other issues that the essay deals with are the classical model of 'unities of time, place and action', the classical distinction of genres such as tragedy and comedy, etc. The essay shows a shift in the definition of drama from classical to modern with Lisideius defining it. A mention of delight, humor and representation of human nature are found missing in the classical definition of drama. So, a movement towards a modern kind of drama is evident. On the other hand, Crites argues that everything/every rule that we know about drama is told to us by Aristotle, Horace, and others. He believes that we have nothing new to offer except calling our wit to be superior. In his opinion, modern plays are failures. By calling moderns to be the ones who don't indulge in mere imitation of the ancients, Eugenius becomes the first to defend the moderns. Modern do not follow ancients in order to create something, they have nature and humans to draw inspirations from. He believes that with the wisdom of the ancients, we also have our own experiences of the world to understand it. On the point of French versus English, Lisideius prefers French and Neander (Dryden) defend the English. Lisideius argues that French drama follows all the unities, provides a variety of emotions, He argues that French has the right way of dividing the time among narration, action, dialogue. Dryden, in his support of English drama, doesn't refute any claim made by Lisideius in favor of the French; on the other hand, argues that all that is considered erroneous in the English drama is actually a virtue that surpasses traditional techniques.

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