

# Good example of essay on prospectus

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## **Annotated Bibliography**

Bohn, William E. “ The Development of John Dryden’s Literary Criticism.”

PMLA 22. 1

(1907): 56-139.

In Bohn’s article, the author discusses Dryden’s critical essays, particularly in terms of his use of satire. Here, Bohn notes the way in which Dryden used a satire as its own form of criticism; “ satire is itself but a sort of criticism; it has always been the form assumed by the highly trained, versifying prose-understanding” (118). Dryden was never one to give literary judgments one at a time, but rather to convey his ideas in a more abstract way, which is where his satire came in – breaking rules of respect and morality in order to illustrate his points. In works like *MacFlacknoe*, Dryden would create fictionalized versions of himself and his opponents in order to mock them; by using these strategies he could successfully ridicule those whose ideologies he opposed by setting them up as ridiculous strawmen.

Bohn’s primary focus is on elucidating the various periods of Dryden’s literary criticism, from romantic to rationalist and historical – all fine methods for satire, though his rationalist mood was ideal for it (as it created works like *MacFlacknoe*). This work is very important for showing Dryden’s relationships with his contemporaries, as well as his approach to satire, which was often apologist and inaccurately attributed to him.

Knight, Charles A. *Literature of Satire*. Cambridge University Press, p. 270.

In the concluding chapter of *Literature of Satire*, Knight discusses the basic principles of satire, describing it as a conflicts between “ words, ideas and actuality.[operating] as both object and vehicle of scrutiny” (270). Great

satirists exploit these conflicts, seeing the gaps in relationships as their appropriate targets for satire. Quality satire, it is said, uses pre-existing genres in order to confront the audience with the familiar, while also spinning it to attack its target. Satirists eschew realism or self-consciousness; satire is not self-aware, but must be presented organically and earnestly or it does not work. “ Satire is insistently historical in nature,” says Knight, and therefore understanding of satire is placed firmly (but not strictly) within historical context (271). Satire comes from either a “ satiric exile” or a “ satiric nationalist,” both of whom engage in satire in different ways – there is a social or political boundary that must be crossed between target and satirist (272). Satire, by crossing these boundaries and pointing them out to the reader, makes these differences in perspective known, and allow people to escape the prisons of ideology they may find themselves in. This resource will be used to denote the fundamental nature of satire, which will be explored through these other authors, like Swift, Gay and Dryden. Landa, Louis Al. “ A Modest Proposal and Populousness.” *Modern Philology* (November 1942):

161.

In Landa’s article, the author examines the link between A Modest Proposal’s satirical views and Swift’s earnest belief that populousness in Ireland is a “ vicious economic condition,” as evidence in his other work *Maxims* controlled in Ireland (162). In essence, Landa discusses how the satire in A Modest Proposal stems from his anger at England’s forcing of certain conditions on Ireland so as to make the outlandish suggestion of eating children a reasonable one. People are likened to a source of riches, and the

populousness of Ireland stemmed from the false building up of this maxim by others, including England, to set up the terrible economic conditions Ireland found itself in. To that end, *A Modest Proposal* is said to be a satire against that maxim that 'people are the riches of a nation,' taking it to its logical conclusion by reducing the population through cannibalism in order to increase opportunities for them. In this way, the satire is a concrete and coherent expression of Swift's true desires, instead of a strictly ironic take on the issues being discussed. Swift used this satire to show that he truly believed in Ireland, according to Landa, and that he wished it to succeed; the eating of children is a smokescreen for his real suggestion of underpopulation to foster more economic opportunity.

Phiddian, Robert. "Have You Eaten Yet? The Reader in *A Modest Proposal*."

*Studies in*

*English Literature, 1500-1900* (1996): 603-621.

Phiddian's essay deals with satire as a means of comedy and introspection, looking at *A Modest Proposal* to discern these aspects of satire. Satire of the kind Swift purveys is meant to confuse the reader into listening, according to Phiddian; by writing such outrageous demands, the reader is unsettled, which then forces them to reconsider their existing understanding of the world as they know it. Satire makes abstractions out of ordinary extreme statements, and Swift's *Modest Proposal* works by making the reader vulnerable and uncomfortable, only after lulling them into a false sense of security. Swift does an impeccable job of administering satire in the work by positioning the reader in a certain viewpoint and then pulling the rug out from under them; Phiddian's article guides the reader through this

positioning and explains the various ironies and choices Swift takes one on through the pamphlet. This article in particular will come in extremely handy when examining Jonathan Swift's work, a primary focus of the paper, and how it administers satire.

Porter, Peter. "The Reasoning Engine: Poetry and Philosophy." *Essays in Criticism* 57. 2 (April 2007): 83-113.

Porter's article examines "A Satire Against Reason and Mankind" in its opening, noting tone and lyricism as essential components of satirical poetry. He argues that Rochester's beauty of satire comes from his use of form and poetry as essential elements of satire, forming philosophical points about truth and inspiration and using rhyme to poke fun at reason.

Rochester's brand of satire is said to be a sobering "chastening of humanity," as if the understanding or belief that we are superior because of our ability to reason is foolish (101). Comparing this older approach to satire with that of today's, Porter notes that there is an uncertainty regarding how modern poets relate to their asymmetrical way of living, which makes satire through form much more difficult.

While this article is primarily about poetry and philosophy, it raises many interesting questions about satire and how it is applied. The use of rhyme and syntax as a strategy for satire allows for more than just content to be satirical; the Earl of Rochester's command of form in "Satire Against Reason and Mankind" adds extra bite to its established satire of man's foolish reason by its own measured insults. This is inextricably tied to philosophy, as satire is the stealth expression of an alternative philosophy using the trappings of

its target; “ Satire”’s command to form is the vehicle by which the chaos of mankind is expressed.

When many people think of satire, they understand that it is a subversive approach to a certain social or political issue through the use of irony. Works like the Earl of Rochester’s “ A Satire Against Reason and Mankind,” Jonathan Swift’s A Modest Proposal or John Dryden’s MacFlecknoe all make fun of some perceived failing of its audience, whether it be the “ Satire”’s poking fun at rationalism and reason, Swift’s pointing out of the problems facing Ireland as a result of English ignorance, or Dryden’s lampooning of his contemporaries’ inadequate literary criticism.

However, to what end do these works make their points? Ostensibly, the idea is to improve society by pointing out its flaws; however, is that the goal of all satirists, or is the point just to acknowledge our shortcomings and move on?

In the following paper, I wish to argue that it is a mixture of both; Swift’s work, for example, is a way to point out the ridiculousness of Ireland’s treatment in order to advocate for systemic change. On the other hand, Rochester’s poem points out the flaw in deciding that we are wholly rational creatures, and that we should simply be more in touch with our irrational sides (or at least not take as much smug superiority over our sense of reason). Dryden points out the dullness of his rival Shadwell as a way to advocate for a more sensible way to conduct poetry and literary criticism. With an examination of these works and others, as well as a basic exploration of the nature of satire, the proposed paper would discuss the plurality of purposes that satire has as a means to a sociopolitical end. The aforementioned works by Dryden, Rochester and Swift are the primary

subject of this analysis, backed by scholarly literature exploring their attributes, as well as the basic nature of satire.