

Introduction to *Pope-ular Analysis*

by *Tristen Lam and Jordan Sukkau*



Fig 1: Studio of Michael Dahl, “Alexander Pope” (c1727). Creative Commons image from National Portrait Gallery UK

This journal is an anthology of peer-reviewed pieces by undergraduate students in Simon Fraser University’s English 420 class. It is our firm belief that one’s creations reflect one’s identity; thus, we would like to introduce ourselves, to help readers understand both the ideas that lie ahead in this journal and the choir of voices that fills its pages.

It is our hope that readers come to cherish the literature of Alexander Pope for its richness as we do, and, to this end, our journal offers readers a series of brief reviews of published journal articles discussing problematic aspects of Pope in our modern age. The topics represented in our reviews include urbanity, marginalization, the heroic genre, and mimesis. These reviews, together with our own essays, use a wide range of critical lenses through which to view Pope, with several papers using discourse centered on marginalization and feminist critique to examine the position of women in literary worlds. Many of our essays and article reviews use Pope’s biographical data to assess his poetic identity. Authors who delve into Pope’s illness, his enemies, and his personal life include Faizan Arif, Nina Grant, Aklima Minsariya, Emma Roberts, Brian Young, Xiuneng Wang, and Juan Aguilar, who was the winner of the in-course award for best essay.

Other approaches include viewing Pope across a temporal span in hopes of gaining a less singular, more dynamic view of his poetic identity. The repercussions of time on readers’ perception

of Pope figure in Jordan Sukkau's and Max Puddicombe's essays, and in Max Puddicombe's article review. Some of our authors engage with Pope in a more speculative sense, offering discussions of symbolism based on close readings of his poetry, including Tristen Lam, Vincent Chiu, and Soni Kalair.

The Process

Over the Fall 2019 semester, the students of this course have put forth a comprehensive effort to create and improve on the journal. Students have read over a dozen of Pope's poetic works, discussed them in-depth, and strived to analyze his poetry to acquire a wide field of knowledge on which to base their reviews, essays, and poetry.

Under the supervision of Dr. Nicky Didicher, students have peer-reviewed each other's contributions and conducted editorial tasks for one another such as copyediting and proofreading. By assigning each contribution a different editor for each stage, it was our hope that the criticism generated by the multitude of voices would produce a higher quality end-product. The journal's ability to meet professional standards of workmanship was important to us.

Students in this course have also applied their creative mindset to aspects beyond the journal reviews and essays. Original compositions, influenced by Alexander Pope, form their own section within the journal and can provide a sense of the spark of creative wit present amongst our discussions of Pope this semester.

The undergraduate students of this course were highly involved in the entire process of the journal and are proud to present their work in *Pope-ular Analysis*. The journal cover and artwork was designed by Xiuneng Wang; the journal's formatting was overseen by Vincent Chiu; and the original poetry team includes Nina, Xiuneng, Aklima, Brian, Emma, Max, and Nicky. Special "thank you"s go to Juan and Faizan for organizing an unforgettable launch party, to Soni and for editing this introduction, and to Kate Shuttleworth for donating her time as our advisor on journal licensing. Last but not least, an emphatic "thank you" to Nicky Didicher for generously giving so much of her time to her students, accommodating the extenuating circumstances of her students with compassion, and offering critical advice at a time most needed in our budding writing careers. A final "thank you" to the Public Knowledge Project and SFU Digital Publishing for developing the OJS software that made it possible for undergraduate students to publish their work. Without the level of commitment freely given by the people mentioned, our journal would not exist.



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