

JOHN DRYDEN

1631-1700

Personality

- Representative of Restoration literature (1668: Laureateship)
- Eclectic figure
- Royalist till the end and Catholic sympathiser

Poetry - genres

- Occasional
 - Celebration or critique of specific events
 - *Annus Mirabilis* (1667)
- Verse satire
 - Political satire and allegory
 - *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681)

Poetics

- vs intimist poetry
- *In medio stat virtus*
 - Balance between extreme emotional excitement and metaphysical complexities
 - Balance between precise metrical forms and rhythms of speech

“the expression of a poem designed purely for instruction ought to be plain and natural, yet majestic”

Theatre

- Influence of the classics – Aristotle
- Rhymed heroic plays – criticised
- Comedies of intrigue
- Great tragedy in blank verse: *All for Love* (1677)

Criticism and translation

- Samuel Johnson: “the father of English criticism”
- Justification of his own ideas and choices
- Critique of contemporary trends
- Reflection of specific aspects:
 - Process of creation
 - Forms of poetry and drama
 - Poetic diction and rhetoric
 - Previous authors