

📖 Topic Page: [Dryden, John \(1631 - 1700\)](#)

Definition: **Dryden, John** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

English poet and playwright. He became known for his *Heroic Stanzas* on Oliver Cromwell's death (1658); diplomatically followed by *Astraea Redux* (1660), praising Charles II. He was poet laureate from 1668 to 1688, when James II was ousted in the Glorious Revolution. Other poems include *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), the satires *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), the allegory *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), and the ode *Alexander's Feast* (1693). Dryden also wrote numerous fine plays, his best-known are *All for Love* (1678) and *Marriage à la mode* (1673).

Summary Article: **Dryden, John**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

English poet and dramatist. He is noted for his satirical verse and for his use of the heroic couplet. His poetry includes the verse satire *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), and 'A Song for St Cecilia's Day' (1687). Plays include the heroic drama *The Conquest of Granada* (1672), the comedy *Marriage à la Mode* (1673), and *All for Love* (1678), a reworking of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Dryden was born in Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire, and educated at Cambridge. In 1657 he moved to London, where he worked for the republican government of Oliver Cromwell. His stanzas commemorating the death of Cromwell appeared in 1659 and *Astraea Redux*, in honour of the Restoration, was published in 1660. He followed this with a panegyric (poem of praise) in honour of Charles II's coronation in 1661. Dryden's work reflects his changing political and religious allegiances, which were often influenced by popularity and acceptance. He was much involved in the intellectual spirit of the 'new age', being an early member of the Royal Society and committed to the society's ideal of making the language more clear and straightforward. He was one of the first to liken the reign of Charles II to that of the Roman emperor Augustus, from which the title of 'Augustan' has attached itself to the writings of Dryden's generation and that of their immediate successors. As a Roman Catholic convert under James II, lost the post of poet laureate (to which he had been appointed in 1668) after the Revolution of 1688.

Critical works include the essay 'Of Dramatic Poesy' (1668). Later ventures to support himself include a translation of the Roman poet Virgil (1697). His first play, in prose, *The Wild Gallant* (1663), was a failure, but *The Rival Ladies*, in verse, produced in 1664, was more successful. In 1664 he also collaborated with Robert Howard to compose *The Indian Queen*, and he married Elizabeth Howard in 1665. *The Indian Emperor*, solely Dryden's work, appeared in 1665 and was a great success. He also adapted *Paradise Lost*, by English poet John Milton for the stage as *The State of Innocence* (1677). Dryden's many plays during this period may be divided into those which followed the general tendency of the day, with much disrespectful humour if little genius, and those dramas founded on striking incidents of world history and mythology; with the latter he enjoyed great popular success.

Among the plays produced at this time are *Secret Love* and *Sir Martin Mar-All* (both 1667), *An Evening's Love* (1668), *Tyrannick Love* (1669), and *The Assination: or Love in a Nunnery* (1672). *Aureng-Zebe* (1676) was the last of his rhymed plays. In *All for Love* he used parts of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, but recast the whole into a neoclassical mould. It lacks the breadth and grandeur

of Shakespeare's work but is a fine achievement on its own terms. Other plays by Dryden are *Oedipus* and *Troilus and Cressida* (both 1678), *The Spanish Friar* (1680), *The Duke of Guise* (1682), *Amphitryon* (1690), *Cleomenes*, *The Spartan Hero* (1692), and *Love Triumphant* (1694).

quotations

Dryden, John

weblinks

Selected Poetry of John Dryden (1631–1700)

audios

Dryden, John Zimri: the Duke of Buckingham

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Dryden, John. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/dryden_john_1631_1700



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Chicago

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