

Department of English

7th June, 1969

Dear Professor Hope,

I keep coming across references to your long satire "Dunciad Minimus" ; may I ask if you intend to publish this some day soon? Or otherwise, can I somehow get access to a copy?

Let me assure you that I am not writing a Ph. D thesis on your published or unpublished work! I am merely a delighted reader of your poetry. I had hoped to meet you at the Brisbane "National Identity" conference last year, but you (no doubt wisely!) stayed away.

Since coming to Australia from Britain two years ago I have myself been stimulated towards satire (Queensland is especially provocative in this direction). I enclose a Socratic dialogue (just written) on censorship; I have also done an imitation of Swift's Modest Proposal on the subject of our racial problems.

As for the sincerest form of flattery, all I can offer are the lines that follow. I am a poet only in the old-fashioned sense of a man who occasionally perpetrates a trifle in metre and rhyme. Your work strikes me as the kind of thing I would like to do if I had more talent that way (incidentally, I have used some of it in class -- to wit, your Elegy, which furnished a highly interesting comparison with Donne's XIX).

Dum spiro...

What virtues drawn from cloudy heaven
Fit bards and readers in these times?
What aptitudes for lines uneven
Or regular and decked with rhymes?

Do we lack Faith? No, we've too much
Of faith in those profundities
The dragomans of double Dutch
Interpret for their Ph. D's.

Is Charity more needful then?
Where shall we find it in this era?
The follies and the crimes of men
Inspire small love in bard or hearer.

No, let us rather wield, and praise,
Swift's anger, and the art of Pope,
And strive, despite these iron days,
To write and read refreshed with Hope.

Yours very sincerely,

David J. Lake (Mr.)

(Lecturer - specializing in stylistics.)