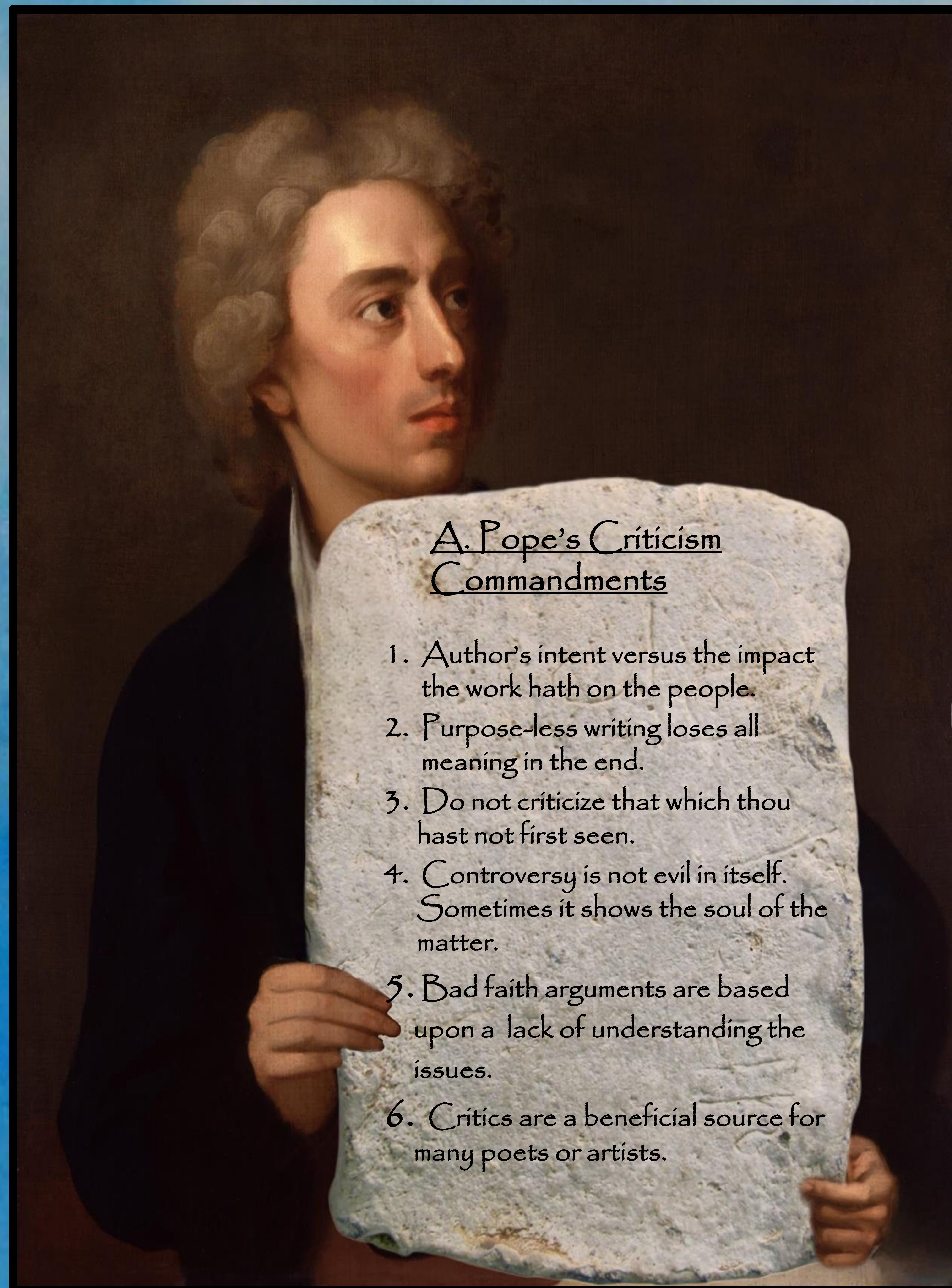


The Not-So-Bright Side of Life:

Using Pope's *Essay on Criticism* to Understand *The Life of Brian* Controversy



A. Pope's Criticism Commandments

1. Author's intent versus the impact the work hath on the people.
2. Purpose-less writing loses all meaning in the end.
3. Do not criticize that which thou hast not first seen.
4. Controversy is not evil in itself. Sometimes it shows the soul of the matter.
5. Bad faith arguments are based upon a lack of understanding the issues.
6. Critics are a beneficial source for many poets or artists.



Controversies Surrounding the Life of Brian

Life of Brian caused many controversies. The Monty Python crew knew that, but where they intended to criticize those who blindly follow a religion, without being able to think for themselves; there was no way of foreseeing how the movie's intention would be taken seemingly out of context and misinterpreted.

Brian accidentally being mistaken for the Messiah was a premise that many religious groups were not too happy with as the core of a comedy movie. Many countries banned the showing of the movie, such as Norway and Ireland, and some countries even went as far as to have a ban that ended up lasting decades, like Italy. Many people supported the banning of the film, though they had little to say about the film besides that it was "blasphemous."

One of the more controversial moments has become one of the most iconic: when the crucified men on the crosses all sing one of the now most influential and memorable songs in the film, "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life."

By: Taylor Ward