

## The Adverse Effects of the Popish Plot.

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### Describe the adverse effects of the Popish Plot.

In John Dryden's (1631-1700) satirical poem "Absalom and Achitophel" (1681), the Popish Plot serves as a stage to criticize and condemn contemporary political events. This poem describes the biblical story of Absalom's rebellion against his father, King David. Let us discuss its effects.

**The Popish Plot:** The Popish Plot was a manufactured conspiracy in 17th-century England. A plot was to assassinate King Charles II and replace him with his Catholic brother, James, Duke of York.

**Manipulation of Public Opinion:** Achitophel manipulates Absalom (representing the Duke of Monmouth) by playing on his ambitions and the public's fears. This mirrors how political figures used the Popish Plot to further their own agendas. Dryden illustrates this:

*Auspicious prince! at whose nativity*

*Some royal planet rul'd the southern sky.*

### Social Division

: The manufactured plot deepened divisions between religious and political groups. Dryden highlights this division:

*By buzzing emissaries, fills the ears*

*Of list'ning crowds, with jealousies and fears.*

### The Undermining of Authority

: The Popish Plot led to a loss of trust in the monarchy and established institutions. Achitophel's actions in the poem reflect this erosion of authority:

*The people's pray'r, the glad diviner's theme,  
The young men's vision, and the old men's dream!*

### **False Accusations and Persecutions**

: Many innocent people were falsely accused and crushed during the Popish Plot. In the poem, Achitophel's deceitful tactics were seen as an analogy to these wrongful accusations:

*For close designs, and crooked counsels fit;  
Sagacious, bold and turbulent of wit:*

In short, Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel" shows how the lies and tricks of the Popish Plot caused many problems for everyone. They messed up society, hurt politics, and made leaders untrustworthy.