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The Rape of the Lock as a Mock Heroic OR MOCK EPIC poem; DISCUSS

A mock epic poem is supposed to be the inspiration of a Muse, the characters are partly human partly divine and it is a kind of narrative poem which deals with a very trivial theme in a lofty and grand style with a view to satirizing and reformation. It is considered to be a parody of the Epic.

Alexander Pope the representative poet of the 18th Century in England brought mock-heroic poem to its highest peak of perfection in his masterpiece "The Rape of the Lock". The mock-heroic quality of The Rape of the Lock lies in the very beginning of the poem which parodies the conventional epic invocation that we find in Homer's Iliad, Virgil's Aeneid and Milton's Paradise Lost. The opening lines echo classical epic:

"What dire offence from noxious
Causes springs,

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What mighty contests rise from trivial things,

"I sing — This Verse to carry,
Muse! It's due".

The Statement of the Central problem of the poem is presented in an epic manner. The central character, Belinda's dream reminds us of the Eve's dream in Paradise Lost. If Eve dreams of Satan's temptation, Belinda dreams of Ariel's advice and suggestion.

The trait of the mock-epic is that the theme is very trivial and ridiculous. In Iliad, Homer glorifies war and heroism, in Paradise Lost Milton justifies the ways of God or man but in "The Rape of the Lock", Pope deals with the cutting of a lock of hair from the fashionable lady's head, the quarrel and battle between the two opposite sexes. Instead of genuine passions and deep thought, we found mock passions and artificial sentiments.

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and emotions in "The Rape of the Lock."

Another important aspect of a mock epic is its satiric and moral tone and "The Rape of the Lock" satisfies the requirement completely. In the poetry, Alexander Pope attacks the so-called fashionable 18th Century contemporary English society where young men and women passed their time in making flirtations and false love, visiting clubs and parks, drinking and pleasure seeking. Pope exposes the ills and evils, faults and follies of his society.

Pope uses mock heroic aspects in handling the "machinery" or supernatural elements in "The Rape of the Lock". In this poem, Pope has used spirits such as sylphs and gnomes. They play various functions and even take part in the battle of the mortals. In fact his futile function of the spirits cannot but mock us laugh. There is also a mock epic quality in the presentation, description and allusions of combat and

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and battle that takes place between male and female sexes. The heroic bombast of the Baron must parody Hector's orations. Then the battle between the Beau and the Belle is a right royal Homeric battle, even the game of Ombre is a delicate parody of epical fights. Holden observes this mock-epic manner.

Finally, we can say that "The Rape of the Lock" is the finest of all epic poems we have ever read. It is mock heroic not only in content but also in its style. The moral of the poem is: - Life is too short, pay attention to what actually matters; don't steam yourself up over trivial. The story focuses on the central character, Belinda, whose lock of hair is cut off at a social gathering. Thus, it is the triumph of insignificance, the apotheosis of tupperry and folly.

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