

Bk - Part I - Period - VII (12-10)

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The Rape of the Lock as a mock heroic poem.

The rape of the lock is a mock heroic poem. This poem differs from poems which are parodies. It mocks on all class of poetry. Herein lies its superiority to a mere travesty such as 'Batrachomyomachia'. In view of Warton the true predecessors of 'The Rape of the Lock' are the 'Rape of the Basket' French poem rises to the level of a national satire.

The mock-heroic comical poem is a sort of poem for which elevated Queen Anne style is suited. Here its affectation and insincerity are part of the humour in which the poet writes. Pope's poetic diction is seen in one of its happiest applications in 'The Rape of the Lock'. In it, trivial accidents and frivolities are purposed. As poet says:

And chiefly thou, O'spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples th'uprightly heart and pure.

'The Rape of the Lock' is a mocking poem. Its literary affiliations are of a complicated kind. Lycidas is pastoral elegy. It falls into a simple literary context. It joins friends like minded to itself. It joins the guise of the epic as puck joins the human beings in 'A Mid Summer Night's Dream'. It is not Homer's wrath of Achilles or Virgil's 'arms and the man'. The poem is a civilised one, for mockery is civilised implying a criticism. Mockery is far from being in its simplest form. It seems that mockery of the epic - manners is old as the epic manner itself. Pope began with the Homeric Battle of the Frogs and Mice. Burlesque and mock-heroic become popularly in 17th century 'Don Quixote'.

'The Rape of the Lock' is mock-heroic in form. It mocks at maximum epic. Apart from the general

mockery the epic manner is varying. The form of 'the Rape of the Lock' combines the quality of satire. This poem is perfection of mock-heroic. Dryden observes:

"A heroic poem truly such is undoubtedly the greatest work which the soul of man is capable to perform."

"The Rape of the Lock" thus is a witty parody of the heroic in poetry.