

"Rape of the Lock" Canto - I. Explanation
B.R. Part - I, Paper - II, Eng (H), Part - III
(of Canto - I)

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The First Canto of the Mock-Epic poem "Rape of the Lock", introduces the traditional, conventional epic subject of War and Love and the dedication of mankind to it but the tone of the poem indicates that it is not the occasion of serious war or love conflict but rather exhibits a trivialised version of it. Words and emotions of Greek war heroes are trivialized and it represents a version of mockery of it. The word mighty for instance in the poem has been used only in its ironical sense. The card game and flirtations taking place in the Hall has been described by Pope as a war zone on the battlefield of ancient grome and Greeks and Belinda is been humorously compared to the Helen of Troy, "The face that launched a thousand ships". Here it is a face that is although very beautiful but it manifests a lot of ridiculous nonsense. In this manner the first canto emphasizes the comic undertone of the serious epic tradition of poetry writing.

There are clear references in the poem that has been by Pope to ridicule the subject matter of the poem.

Belinda has been introduced in the poem as a
treasure which is worshipped by many supernatural
elements, the Sylphs think that it is their utmost
duty serve in the honour of Belinda.

These supernatural

powers have the capacity to alter the actions and
events, the spirits that are guarding over Belinda
are mimicing the Gods and Goddesses of Roman
and Greek tradition. The Canto also talks about the
traditional system of hierarchy where women were
considered inferior. ~~The~~ Ariel says that when woman
personality were representatives of lower kind of
humour and are converted into a particular kind
of spirit. They are: Sylphs, gnomes, Salamanders and
earthly elements Air, earth, fire and water. These
airy Sylphs are ~~the~~ creatures who in the
life were "light coquettish". They have
a particular concern for Belinda because
Belinda represents that kind of
Temperament. The Poem is centrally discussing
this kind of feminine nature.

Pope was quite
dissatisfied with the English Society that was
busy creating and celebrating trivial and fickle
personality in women; they were limited to only
social entertainment and nothing substantial.

"Rape of the lock" In Context (Part III of Goto - I)

The "Rape of the lock" ridicules the tradition of its contemporary society. Pope had laughed at it in the final part of Goto - I. He mocks at the tradition of womanhood existing in that society. Pope is continuously discussing the feminine standards of beauty which he found ridiculous. He felt that women in his contemporary society living an artificial life. But was not deaf, they were busy in make-up, card games and flirtations. They were busy in looking yet attracting men to them by keeping their chastity intact. He mocks at the concept of chastity too. He was not only mocking at women but also criticising the entire social structure that was socializing the concept of such women. Thus it was not only the women but the men the society was targetted by Pope too.

Pope felt that the artificiality of the society can be seen in the trivial affairs such as card games, parties, where English Society had chosen to spend their time. Thus it was a satire to bring a positive change in society by exposing the follies of it.