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English

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Research Paper-Alexander Pop

# Background

Alexander Pope was born in London on May 21, 1688. He is a renowned poet and satirist from the Augustan Period. His best poems are "An Essay on Criticism," "The Dunciad" and "The Rape of the Lock" (Baines, n.p). He was born into a Catholic family. Pope's father was a cloth merchant. His family lived in London until a state law repositioned the Catholics away from the city. After Shakespeare, Alexander Pope is the most quoted poet in the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations.

When he was 12 years old, he suffered from significant health problems. Pott's disease defamed the body of the poet and stopped his growth. He was also suffering from respiratory diseases, fever, reddened eyes and stomach pain (Nicolson and Rousseau, p.15). Pope was 4’6” in height and humpbacked. Due to his poor health conditions, he avoided socializing and stayed at home. However, he had some female friends, and he used to write letters to them. He never married in his life. He learned reading and writing from his aunt and also attended Catholic Schools until his illness attacked his spine. He focused the classics of Horace and Virgil (Sherburn,n.p). Although he could not participate in the University due to his religion but he managed to learn Latin, Greek, Italian and French classics.

Furthermore, due to his religion, he has attached some influential people like John Caryll and Martha Blount (Sherburn,n.p). Somehow his friends had persuaded the poet to write few his famous pieces like "The Rape of Lock." In 1709, the poet was able to earn fame because of his written work “Pope’s Pastorals” (Baines, n.p). After two years of great success, he was able to publish "An Essay on Criticism" that received equal publicity. It is an epic exposition of the literary theory, poems and the philosophy based on moral grounds. Burrowing the ideas and themes from the history of Philosophy, poet has described the culture and fall of that period. He also aimed to restore the ethics cited in the literature.

However, in 1712 he came up with the Rape of Lock” (Browning et al., n.p). It is focused because of its themes of grasping individuality and conspicuous consumption that dominates acquired possessions over the ethical action. He was a neoclassical writer, and he would not know about the era during his lifetime. Due to his fierce satire and continuous criticism of influential personalities, he made many enemies during his lifetime. He was never afraid to express his thoughts regardless of all the criticism he received throughout his life.

Moreover, he used to mock the literary works of other writers of that time as degeneration of art and culture. He would criticize the publishers of London through his satirical critique. His literary work was debated throughout his life, and later on, the generations assessed his work. Likewise, his work managed to live in the literary world. However, Pope's poems and satires were different from the Victorian and Romantic visions that focus loyalty and emotions. The poor health of Pope never gets better, with so many diseases Pope died at Twickenham in 1744.

**"The Rape of the Lock"**

It is the most famous poem of Pope initially published in 1712, but it was revised in 1714 (Griffin, p. 24). It is mock-epic that represents a quarrel between Arabella Fermor and Lord Petre from the higher class of the society. The poem reflected on the fashionable community of England in the 18th century (Thomas, p. 56). The poem was revised and extended to make the subject of the poem clearer. In Mock-epic poetry, humor is used by referring the classical works in order to create a new point. The Mock-epic poetry mostly focuses the contemporary society, culture, religion, and societal issues. Likewise, this poem is sarcasm that mocks the subject in a meaningful style.

However, the poem is a brief letter to Arabella in a letter form. Pope has also explained in the poem that why he wrote it and the circumstances that led to the publication of the letter. The poem starts with Belinda; the main character of the poem is beautiful and rich. She awakes from a late sleep and remembers that she saw Ariel, her guardian nymph in her dream. She remembers that Ariel was warning her about some disaster and assures to protect her from it. After getting dressed up, Belinda sails through Thames River and reaches Hampton Court Palace. Hampton Palace was a royal residence of that time, and all the wealthy people of London would gather there. Here, Baron enters. He is the young businessman, and he is here with the intentions to steal a lock from Belinda's hair. After, performing all his morning rituals, he is he has arrived at the party. Pope further describes the scenarios of the party in terms of a rich culture of that time. However, Baron manages to find a pair of scissors. He cuts a lock from Belinda's hair. After finding out the truth, Belinda fights with her friends and makes a dram in the party (Baines, n.p). By the end of the poem, Pope reveals that Lock of hair was not stolen; instead, it flies to heaven.

This poem was an effort by the poet to reunite the families that had been alienated by the incidence. There is an ironic interpretation of the social life of the wealthy people of that era. Poet has used satire to point out the foolishness and worthlessness of that society. It also explains the moral grounds using different themes in the poem.

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