

# Satire and epic conventions

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Alexander Pope was the author who set the trend of the Augustan Age. The poem ' Rape of the Lock' was prompted by a real incident when Arabella Lemore's lock of hair was snipped by Peter, another member of the aristocratic family. This led to the feud between the families and hence Pope was summoned to attempt on reconciliation. The fact lies in a trivial matter blown out of proportion. But Pope extended his courtesy in making a satire of all the possible members who constituted the 18th century aristocratic society. The society once praised for its lofty values came down to spending time on frivolous matters.

Pope vividly describes the occupation of Belinda who wakes up late because of having spent an entire evening courting and alluring men. After she wakes up, she is preoccupied reading the ' billet-doux' that she had received from her admirers. The poem as a mock-epic comes from the description of how the aristocrats spent time playing cards, a mock-epic battle. The society Pope mocks soon followed the heroic epic period where battles were fought to defend honor and pride and heroes became legends. But the society Pope satirizes fell far short of epic glory.

Even morals and values were treated recklessly. Men and women indulged in extra-marital affairs that most husbands suspected that their wives cheated on them with their lovers. Women mourned over their late husbands, as much as they would over their lapdogs. Law and order was also on an imbalanced scale of justice since it was held by irresponsible judges who were eager and quick to pass judgment without investigating. Men of yore exhibited their chivalry by being warriors but during Pope's time men

exposed their chivalry by paying complements to women, flirting and gambling.

Through the character of Clarissa, who actually aids in having Belinda's hair cut off by offering a pair of scissors to Baron, and then later advises that Belinda should pay more attention to her virtues than given into the vanities of her youth. Because it's the virtues that will outlive her while everything else will fade away. The employment of mock-epic is use the form to mock the society. Pope clearly sent the message across to the aristocratic community through his satire and till day 'The Rape of the Lock' remains most popular text of the Augustan Age.