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**S. No 5 B.A.Part-1 English (Hns)Topic: *Rape of the Lock*: Social Satire  
Dr Umesh Prasad Singh, Assistant Prof of English, D. B. College  
Contact No 7250460920, Email-ID [drumeshsingh131@gmail.com](mailto:drumeshsingh131@gmail.com)**

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*Rape of the Lock as Social Satire*

*Rape of the Lock* is a mock epic. It is a mocking poem in which Pope mocks not only at the unguarded follies of the fair sex, but the artificial life of 18<sup>th</sup> century London as a whole. The fashion the artificiality, the vanity and frivolity of the age is exposed and ridiculed with the unfailing grasp of a master.

*Rape of the Lock* is the triumph of the insignificant. The mockery arises from the exaltation of the trivial. At every step there is skilful meaning of the great with trivial. For example we are told the scream of Belinda, when the lock is cut, is as loud as the shriek which rends the skies,

“when husbands or lapdogs breathe their last.”

The mockery here arises from bringing together of husbands and lapdogs, the insinuation being that ladies like Belinda, cares as much perhaps more, for her lapdogs as for her husband. Excessive fondness for the fair sex for the lapdogs is satirised.

Pope has not very high opinion of the fair sex and in the essay of character of women he wrote, “every woman at heart is a rake”. They are like grown up children now tempted by one and now tempted by another toy.

“ With varying vanities from every part’

They shift the moving toy shop of their heart.”

Their vanities have no end .They love not for worth of character, but for coaches, sword knot, and such other glittering bubbles:

“Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword knots strive,

Beaux vanish beaux and coaches coaches drive.

They have nothing useful to do. They have their be late in the day , and the only drudgery they know the drudgery of toilet which is generally lengthen out till afternoon. The power they use is the cosmetic power. The objects that load the toilet table have been brought from all over the world.

“This caseket India;s glowing gems unlocks,

And all Arbia breathes from yonder box”.

The poet has his fling at their fashion too especially at the puffed up hoop petticoat:

Oft we have seen that seven fold fence to fail

But even the seven fold fence has not got power enough to guard their chastity. Eighteenth century Romeos, too, come in for the scathing attack. They have no business but that of love making. The poet tries to make them realise their follies. So he continues from the beginning to the end to correct their follies by mocking at them. The aim poet is the correction and amendment of eighteen century follies.

*Rape of the Lock* is the best satire extant which contains the truest and liveliest picture of eighteenth century lives. The subject matter is artfully conducted than any other mock epics on social vices.