

Alexander Pope's
The Rape of the Lock

ENGLISH LITERATURE (I) WEEK 16

Pope's Age

- Enlightenment: rationalistic, scientific/Kant, Hume, Rousseau, Franklin
- England: life hard; 1/4 children alive/ tuberculosis the English disease
- Education: Limited to the few
- The first Daily in 1702

Neoclassicism

- Aristocratic courtliness: high breeding and training
- Here and now
- Urbanity
- Balance of the Useful and the Ornamental
- Artifice
- Critical and Analytical

Pope (1688-1744)

- Physical deformity
- Rancorous satires: “The Wicked Wasp of Twickenham”
- Roman Catholic

Alexander Pope (1688-1744)

- “The Essay on Man”: to justify the way of God to man
- A philosophical poem
- Heroic couplet
- Man’s understanding limited
- Translation of *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into English

“The Rape of the Lock,” Background Story


- Lord Petre
- Arabella Fermor
- John Caryl (Petre’s relative) suggests Pope to write a verse.

Mock Epic

- Mock-heroic style: brings the quarrel into absurdity
- Gap: the silliness of the episode and the characters' seriousness
- Social Critique of Everyday Life
- “witty, urbane satire”

Epic

- Hero
- Theme
- Setting
- Action
- In Medias Res
- Catalogue of Warriors
- Formal Speeches
- Epic Simile
- Supernatural forces

- 
- Invocation of the Muse
 - Objective Poet


“The Rape of the Lock”, Images for Mockery

- China: fragility/beauty
- Silver: vanity/value
- Sun: pretension

Invocation of the Muse, Canto I, Lines 1-12

What dire offense from amorous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing---This verse to Caryll, Muse! Is due:
This, even Belinda may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.

>>NEXT



Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred lord to assault a gentle belle?
Oh, say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord?
In tasks so bold can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?

Ariel Speaks to Belinda in her Dream, Lines 21-26

‘Twas he [Ariel] had summoned to her silent bed
The morning dream that hovered o’er her head.
A youth more glittering than a birthnight beau
(That even in slumber caused her cheek to glow)
Seemed to her ear his winning lips to lay,
And thus in whispers said, or seemed to say:

Satirizes Rosicrucian Belief, Lines 37-39

- Some secret truths, from learned pride concealed,
- To maids alone and children are revealed:
- What though no credit doubting wits may give?

4 Kinds of Supernatural Creatures/Women, Lines 51-56

Think not, when woman's transient breath is fled,
That all her vanities at once are dead:
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And though she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.
Her joy in gild chariots, when alive,
And love of ombre, after death survive.


Lines 59-66

The sprites of fiery termagants in flame
Mount up, and take a Salamander's name.
Soft yielding minds to water glide away,
And sip, with Nymphs, their elemental tea.
The graver prude sinks downward to a Gnome,
In search of mischief still on earth to roam.
The light coquettes on Sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the fields of air.

Echoing *Paradise Lost*, Lines 67-78

“Know future yet; whoever fair and chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some Sylph embraced:
For spirits, freed from mortal laws, **with ease**
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please.
What guard the purity of melting maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treacherous friend, the darling spark,

>>NEXT



The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music softens, and when dancing fires?
'Tis but their Sylph, the wise Celestials know,
Though Honor is the word with men below.

Critical of the Prudes, Lines 79-90

“Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their
face,

For life predestined to the Gnomes’ embrace.


These swell their prospect and exalt their pride,

When offers are disdained, and denied:

Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,

While peers, and dukes, and all their sweeping train,

>>NEXT




And garters, stars, and coronets appear,
And in soft sounds, your Grace salutes their ear.
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,
Teach infant cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a beau.

Sylphs' Jobs, Lines 91-104

“Oft, when the world imagine women stray,
The Sylphs through mystic mazes guide their way,
Through all the giddy circle they pursue,
And old impertinence expel by new.

What tender maid but must a victim fall
To one man's treat, but for another's ball?
When Florio speaks, what virgin could withstand,
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?

>>NEXT



With varying vanities, from every part,
They shift the moving toyshop of their heart;
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-
knots strive,
Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.
This erring mortals levity may call;
Oh, blind to truth! the Sylphs contrive it all.

A Warning Dream, Lines 105-128

“Of these am I, who thy protection claim,
A watchful sprites, and Ariel is my name.
Late, as I ranged the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear mirror of thy ruling star
I saw, alas! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main this morning sun descend,
But Heaven reveals not what, or how, or where:
Warned by the Sylph, O pious maid, beware!

>>NEXT

Hyperbole

This to disclose is all thy guardian can:
Beware of all, but most beware of Man!”

He said; when Shock, who thought she slept too
long,

Leaped up, and waked his mistress with his tongue.

‘Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first opened on a billet-doux;

>>NEXT


Arming of the Hero

Wounds, charms, and ardors were no sooner read,
But all the vision vanished from thy head.

And now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.

First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncovered, the cosmetic powers.

>>NEXT




A heavenly image in the glass appears;
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears.
The inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride.

Image of the Sun, Canto 2, Lines 1-29


Not with more glories, in the ethereal plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launched in the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs and well-dressed youths around her
shone,
But every eye was fixed on her alone.

>>NEXT



On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those:
Favors to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.

>>NEXT




Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide:
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.

>>NEXT

Description of Belinda's Weapon

This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourished two locks which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
With shining ringlets her smooth ivory neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.

>>NEXT




With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.

The Baron's Sacrifice, Lines 29-46


The adventure Baron the bright locks admired,
He saw, he wished, and the prize aspired.
Resolved to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask if fraud or force attained his ends.

>>NEXT



For this, ere Phoebus rose, he had implored,
Propitious Heaven, and every power adored,
But chiefly Love — to Love an altar built,
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves.

>>NEXT




With tender billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three amorous sighs to raise the fire.
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The powers gave ear, and granted half his prayer,
The rest the winds dispersed in empty air.

Hyperbole, Lines 47-55

But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides,
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And softened sounds along the waters die.
Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay.

>>NEXT




All but the Sylph — with careful thoughts oppressed,
The impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
He summons straight his denizens of air;

The General's Speech, Lines 73-90


“Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief give ear!
Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Daemons, hear!
Ye know the spheres and various tasks assigned
By laws eternal to the aerial kind.
Some in the fields of purest ether play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day.

>>NEXT



Some guide the course of wandering orbs on high,
Or roll the planets through the boundless sky.
Some less refined, beneath the moon's pale light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,

>>NEXT




Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
Or o'er the glebe distill the kindly rain.
Others on earth o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide:
Of these the chief the care of nations own,
And guard with arms divine the British Throne.

Ariel's Job, Lines 91-100

“Our humbler province is to tend the Fair,
Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care:
To save the powder from too rude a gale,
Nor let the imprisoned essence exhale;
To draw fresh colors from the vernal flowers;

>>NEXT




To steal from rainbows e'er they drop in showers
A brighter wash; to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs,
Nay oft, in dreams invention we bestow,
To change a flounce, or add a furbelow.

Juxtaposition, Lines 101-136

“This day black omens threat the brightest fair,
That e’er deserved a watchful spirit’s care;
Some dire disaster, or by force or slight,
But what, or where, the Fates have wrapped in
night:


Whether the nymph shall break Diana’s law,

>>NEXT




Or some frail china jar receive a flaw,
Or stain her honor, or her new brocade,
Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade,
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;
Or whether Heaven has doomed that Shock
must fall.

>>NEXT



Haste, then, ye spirits! to your charge repair:
The fluttering fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her favorite Lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.

>>NEXT



“To fifty chosen Sylphs, of special note,
We trust the important charge, the petticoat;
Oft have we known that sevenfold fence to fail,
Though stiff with hoops, and armed with ribs of
whale.


Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.

>>NEXT

Compare the Hades

“Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o’ertake his sins,
Be stopped in vials, or transfixed with pins,
Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedged whole ages in a bodkin’s eye;

>>NEXT




Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clogged he beats his silken wings in vain,
Or alum styptics with contracting power
Shrink his thin essence like a riveled flower:
Or, as Ixion fixed, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below!”

Juxtaposition, Canto 3, Lines 1-14

Close by those meads, forever crowned with
flowers,

Where Thames with pride surveys his rising towers,
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighboring Hampton takes its name.
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign tyrants and of nymphs at home;

>>NEXT



Here thou, great **Anna!** whom three realm obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take — and sometimes tea.

Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a court;
In various talk the instructive hours they passed,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;

Queen Anne

- Queen Anne: James II's daughter
- Queen Anne's War: Duke of Marlborough won victories against Spain.

Social Criticism, Lines 19-33

Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine;
The merchant from the Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labors of the toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two adventurous knights,

>>NEXT

Battlefield

At ombre singly to decide their doom,
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.
Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,
Each band the number of the sacred nine.
Soon as she spreads her hand, the aërial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card:

Battlefield, Lines 67-74

His warlike amazon her host invades,
The imperial consort of the crown of Spades.
The Club's black tyrant first her victim died,
Spite of his haughty mien and barbarous pride.
What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread?
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And of all monarchs only grasps the globe?

Symbolism, Lines 87-90

- The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,
- And wins (oh, shameful chance!) the Queen of Hearts.
- At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook
- A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;

Belinda Wins, Lines 99-110

The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sly,
The walls the woods, and long canals reply.

O thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate:
Sudden these honors shall be snatched away,
And cursed forever this victorious day.

>>NEXT

Hyperbole

For lo! the board with cups and spoons is
crowned,

The berries crackle, and the mill turns round?

On shining altars of Japan [small, lacquered tables]
they raise

The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:


From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,

While China's earth receives the smoking tide.

Clarissa's Scissors, Lines 125-133

But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill!
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edged weapon from her shining case:
So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with reverence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread.

Symbolism, Lines 139-146



Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought;
As on the nosegay in her breast reclined,
He watched the ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he viewed, in spite of all her art,
An earthly lover lurking at her heart.
Amazing, confused, he found his power expired,
Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired.


A Sylph Cut in Two, Lines 149-52

- Even then, before the fatal engine closed,
- A wretched Sylph too fondly interposed;
- Fate urged the shears, and cut the Sylph in twain
- (But airy substance soon unites again):

Baron's Speech, Lines 155-178

Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend the affrighted skies.
Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast,
When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last;
Or when rich china vessels fallen from high,
In glittering dust and painted fragments lie!
“Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,”
The victor cried, “the glorious prize is mine!

>>NEXT



While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,
Or in coach and six the British fair,
As long as *Atalantis* shall be read,
Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed,
While visit shall be paid in solemn days,
When numerous was-lights in bright order blaze,
While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
So long my honor, name, and praise shall live!

>>NEXT



“What time would spare, from steel receives its
date,

And monuments, like men, submit to fate!

Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.


What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hairs should
feel,

The conquering force of unresisted steel?

To the Cave of Spleen, Canto 4, Lines 11-24

For, that sad moment, when the Sylphs withdrew
And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite
As ever sullied the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repaired to search the gloomy Cave of Spleen.

>>NEXT



Swift on his sooty pinions flits the Gnome,
And in a vapor reached the dismal dome.
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded east is all the wind that blows.
Here in a grotto, sheltered close from air,
And screened in shades from day's detested glare,
She sighs forever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head.

Satire? Lines 47-54

Unnumbered throngs on every side are seen
Of bodies changed to various forms by Spleen.
Here living teapots stand, one arm held out,
One bent; the handle this, and that the spout:
A pipkin there, like Homer's tripod, walks;
Here sighs a jar, and there a goose pie talks;
Men prove with child, as powerful fancy words,
And maids, turned bottles, call aloud for corks.

The Hero Boasts, Lines 55-78

Safe passed the Gnome through this fantastic
band,

A branch of healing spleenwort in his hand.


Then this addressed the Power: “Hail, wayward
Queen!

Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen:

Parent of vapors and of female wit,


Who give the hysteric or poetic fit,

>>NEXT



On various tempers act by various ways,
Make some take physic, others scribble plays;
Who cause the proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray.
A nymph there is that all your power disdains,
And thousands more in equal mirth maintains.
But oh! If e'er thy Gnome could spoil a grace,
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,

>>NEXT




Like citron-waters matrons cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game;
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds,
Or caused suspicion when no soul was rude,
Or discomposed the headdress of a prude,
Or e'er to costive lapdog gave disease,
Which not the tears of brightest eyes could ease,
Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin:
That single act gives half the world the spleen."

Compare Odysseus's Bag, Lines 79-94

The Goddess with a discontented air
Seems to reject him though she grants his prayer.
A wondrous bag with both her hands she binds,
Like that where once Ulysses held the winds;
There she collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues.
A vial next she fills with fainting fears,
Soft sorrow, melting griefs, and flowing tears.

>>NEXT



The Gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to day.
Sunk in Thalestris [Queen of the Amazons] arms
the nymph he found,
Her eyes dejectes and her hair unbound.
Full o'er their heads the swelling bag he rent,
And all the Furies issued at the vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.

Belinda's Speech, Lines 147-176


“Forever cursed be this detested day,
Which snatched my best, my favorite curl away!
Happy! Ah, ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton Court these eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
By love of courts to numerous ills betrayed.
Oh, had I rather unadmired remained
In some lone isle, or distant northern land;

>>NEXT

Juxtaposition


Where the gift chariot never marks the way,
Where none learn ombre, none e'er taste bohea!
There kept my charms concealed from mortal eye,
Like roses that in deserts bloom and die.
What moved my mind with youthful lords to roam?
Oh, had I stayed, and said my prayers at home!
'Twas this the morning omens seemed to tell;
Thrice from my trembling hand the patch box fell;

>>NEXT



The tottering china shook without a wind,
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!
A Sylph too warned me of the threats of fate,
In mystic visions, now believed too late!
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!
My hands shall rend what e'en thy rapine spares.
These in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck.

>>NEXT




The sister lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own;
Uncurled it hang's the fatal shears demands,
And tempts once more thy sacrilegious hands.
Oh, hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!"

Reaction of Belinda's Audience, Canto 5, Lines 1-8

She said: the pitying audience melt in tears.
But Fate and Jove had stopped the Baron's ears.
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?
Not half so fixed the Trojan could remain,
While Anna begged and Dido raged in vain.
Then grave Clarissa graceful waved her fan;
Silence ensued, and thus the nymph began:

Pope's Teachings? Lines 9-34

“Say, why are beauties praised and honored most,
The wise man's passion, and the vain man's toast?
Why decked with all that land and sea afford,
Why angels called, and angel-like adored?
Why round our coaches crowd the white-gloved
beaux,
Why bows the side box from its inmost rows?
>>NEXT




How vain are all these glories, all our pains,
Unless good sense preserve what we the front box
grace,

‘Behold the first in virtue as in face!’


Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,
Charmed the smallpox, or chased old age away,

>>NEXT



Who would not scorn what housewife's cares
produce,
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?
To patch, nay ogle, might become a saint,
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.
But since, alas! frail beauty must decay,
Curled or uncurled, since locks will turn to gray;

>>NEXT



Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a man must die a maid;
What then remains but well our power to use,
And keep good humor still whate'er we lose?
And trust me, dear, good humor can prevail
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding
fail.

Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul.”

War, Lines 35-38

So spoke the dame, but no applause ensued;
Belinda frowned, Thalestris called her prude.
“To arms, to arms!” the fierce virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.

War, Lines 55-64

Propped on the bodkin spears, the sprites survey
The growing combat, or assist the fray.

While through the press enraged Thalestris flies,
And scatters death around from both her eyes,
A beau and witling perished in the throng,
One died in metaphor, and one on song.

>>NEXT

Social Criticism?

“O cruel nymph! a living death I bear,”
Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,
“Those eyes are made so killing” — was his last.

Epic Convention Again, Lines 71-74

Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the men's wits against the lady's hair;
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.

Battle of the Champions, Lines 79-86

But this bold lord with manly strength endued,
She with one finger and a thumb subdued:
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;
The Gnomes direct, to every atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose.

Belinda Wins, Lines 87-110

“Now meet thy fate, “incensed Belinda cried,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
(The same, his ancient personage to deck,
Her great-great-grandsire wore about his neck,
In three seal rings; which after, melted down,
Formed a vast buckle for his window’s gown:

>>NEXT

History of the Sword


Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.)

>>NEXT

Baron Succombs

“Boast not my fall,” he cried, “insulting foe!
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low.
Nor think to die dejects my lofty mind:
All that I dread is leaving you behind!
Rather than so, ah, let me still survive,
A burn in Cupid’s flames — but burn alive.”

>>NEXT



“Restore the Lock!” the vaulted roofs rebound.
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roared for the handkerchief that caused his pain.”
But see how oft ambitious aims are crossed,
And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost!
The lock, obtained with guilt, and kept with pain,

>>NEXT

Belinda's Lock, Lines 123-132

But trust the Muse — she saw it upward rise,
Though marked by none but quick, poetic eyes
(So Rome's great founder to the heavens withdrew,
To Proculus alone confessed in view);
A sudden star, it shot through liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's locks first rose so bright,
The Sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
And pleased pursue its progress through the skies.

Lines 133-140

This the beau monde shall from the Mall survey,
And hail with music its propitious ray.
This the blest lover shall for Venus take,
And send up vows from Rosamonda's Lake.
This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless skies,
When next he looks through Galileo's eyes;
And hence the egregious wizard shall foredoom
That fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.

Question 1

- What does Pope criticize?

Question 2

- Rather than returning the hair to Belinda, Pope has it transported into the sky. Why is this ending better?

Question 3

- How does Pope mock his heroes and heroines?

Question 4

- What are the mock-epic elements in this poem?

Question 5

- In which way is this poem a sexual allegory?

Question 6

- Why is the heroic couplet a good tool for satire? (Note those juxtapositions.)

Question 7

- Can you find examples to support the argument that the subject of this poem is the ephemeral life?

Question 8

- Do you agree that Pope's characters are narcissistic?