

ALEXANDER POPE

1688-1744

Personality

- Representative of early 18th century poetry
- Roman Catholic and Tory
- Translation to make a living
- Crippled by tuberculosis

Poetry - genres

- Satire and mock epic
 - *The Rape of the Lock* (1712/1717)
 - *The Dunciad* (1728)
- Didactic
 - *An Essay on Criticism* (1709)
- Pastoral
 - *The Pastorals* (1709) (ordered nature and love)
- Philosophical
 - *An Essay on Man* (1733)

Poetics

- Speaking “I” ≠ Alexander Pope
 - Partly fictional figure sharing the authors’ traditional values
 - Vs urban class and bourgeois values
 - Aloof from his contemporaries
 - Mouthpiece of classical ideals

- Poetic style and rules

- Heroic couplet
- Rhythmic variety – iambs, trochees, spondees
- Precision and harmony
- Concision of expression and complexity of meaning
- Musical combination of words
- Sound figures of speech

The Dunciad

- Dunce = ignorant man
- Critique of contemporary critics and writers
- Attack on
 - ✓ Vulgarisation of taste
 - ✓ Commercialisation of literature
 - ✓ Cheap literature
 - ✓ Hanoverian monarchy, state corruption, immoral customs and *nouveaux riches*

The Rape of the Lock

- Genre
 - Occasional (trivial turned into epic)
 - Mock epic / “*heroi-comical poem*”
- Intertextuality
 - *Iliad* and *Odyssey*
 - *Paradise Lost*
- Hyperbolic and parodic representation of upper-class life

EPIC // MOCK EPIC

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. War | 1. Drawing-room war // war of the sexes |
| 2. Heroes and heroines | 2. Beaux and belles |
| 3. Supernatural agents | 3. “machinery” // Sylphs and Umbriel |
| 4. Conflicts and battles | 4. Word-and-glance conflicts |
| 5. Journey to the otherworlds | 5. Journey to the Cave of Spleen (hypochondria) |