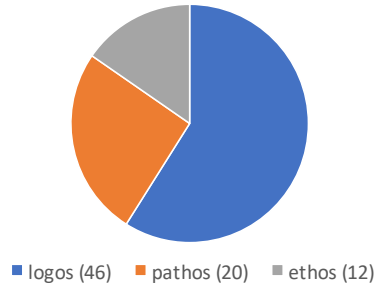


Discussion Question

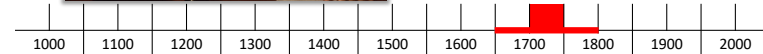
Which type of appeal do you find most persuasive in *A Modest Proposal*?



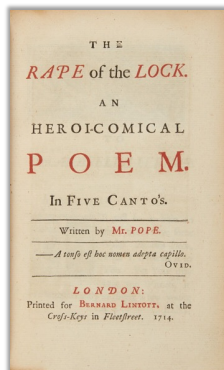
Alexander Pope (1688-1744)



- born in London to a linens merchant; plagued with illness and disability from a young age
- a Roman Catholic, he could not attend university or hold office
- wrote verse from his teen years; first English poet to make writing a full-time, life-long career
- a denizen of the coffeehouses of the day, formed the Scriblerus Club in 1714 with Swift and others to satirize “false learning” (NAEL C517-20)



Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* (1717)



- based on an actual episode that provoked a quarrel between two prominent Catholic families
- Lord Robert Petre had cut a lock of Arabella Fermor’s hair, prompting her indignation
- exists in two versions:
 - 1712: 2 cantos, 334 lines
 - 1714-17: 5 cantos, 794 lines
- playfully elaborates a trivial episode with epic grandeur, Pope’s effort to soothe ruffled tempers with humour
- considered the most nearly perfect mock-heroic poem in English (NAEL C517-18)

Arabella Fermor (1696-1737)



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- daughter of a marriage between two Catholic families in England, the Fermors and the Brownes
- her beau Lord Robert Petre brought about the dissolution of their engagement by stealing a lock of her hair
- married Francis Perkins ca. 1715; bore one daughter, Arabella, who died as a child, and five sons
- Lord Petre married sixteen-year-old heiress Catherine Walmesley before dying of smallpox at age 23 (Wikipedia)

epic vs mock epic

epic

- a long narrative poem celebrating the great deeds of legendary heroes, in a grand ceremonious style
- the godlike hero performs superhuman exploits in marvellous battles or voyages, saving nations or the world
- “secondary” epics (e.g., Milton’s *Paradise Lost*) are based on “primary” epics of Virgil (*The Aeneid*) and Homer (*The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*) (Baldick 119)

mock epic

- a poem employing the lofty style and the conventions of epic poetry to describe a trivial or undignified series of events
- a kind of satire that mocks its subject by treating it in an inappropriately grandiose way
- often include epic conventions such as invocations, battles, supernatural machinery, etc.
- most famous example in English is Pope’s *The Rape of the Lock* (Baldick 229)

Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* (1717)

epic convention	mock-epic adaptation	rhetorical device
heroes and heroines	beaux and belles	alliteration (Baldick 8-9)
supernatural machinery	Sylphs	polysyndeton (284)
epic games of misadventure	civilized card game	periphrasis (273)
journey to the Underworld	journey to the Cave of Spleen	anaphora (14-15)
war	drawing-room intrigue	parody (268)

Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* (1717)

“Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux” (1.138)

- **juxtaposition:** On Belinda’s dressing table can be found both trivial items (“Puffs, powders, patches ... billet-doux”) as well as sacred items (“Bibles”), suggesting she invests equal authority in them
- **alliteration:** Pope links together these items by means of an alliterative “p” sound (unvoiced plosive) shifting to an alliterative “b” sound (voiced plosive), suggesting their equal status in Belinda’s life
- **parody:** In *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes chaos as “Rocks, Caves, Fens, Bogs, Dens, and shades of death” (2.621), suggesting that Belinda’s dressing table is a site of chaos, at once personal and cosmic
- **asyndeton:** Pope omits the conjunction “and” before the final item, again emphasizing their equal level of influence as far as Belinda is concerned

asyndeton, polysyndeton, and anaphora

asyndeton

- the omission of connecting words, usually conjunctions, between words or clauses (Baldick 28)

polysyndeton

- the opposite of *asyndeton*
- the repetition of conjunctions to link together a succession of words, clauses, or sentences (Baldick 284)

anaphora

- a rhetorical figure of repetition in which the same word or phrase is repeated in successive lines, clauses, or sentences
- the repetition usually occurs at the beginning of the lines, clauses, or sentences (Baldick 14-15)

periphrasis

scissors

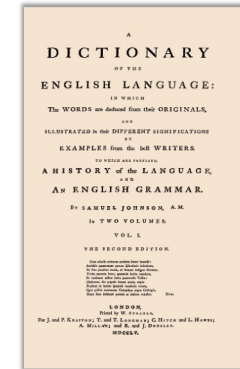
- “A two-edged weapon” (3.128)
- “The little engine” (3.152)
- “the glittering forfex” (3.147)
- “the fatal engine” (3.149)
- “the shears” (3.151)
- “The meeting points” (3.153)

- Greek for “roundabout speech”
- a meandering or circumlocutory way of speaking or writing
- the use of many or very long words where a few or simple words will suffice
- often used deliberately to achieve a comic effect and/or to develop character (Baldick 273)

Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755)

spleen

1. The milt; one of the viscera, of which the use is scarcely known. It is supposed the seat of anger and melancholy.
2. Anger; spite; ill-humour.
3. A fit of anger.
4. Melancholy; hypochondriacal vapours.



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