

# Ideology, RSA, and ISA in Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The present study aims to focus on Alexander Pope's controversial mock epic, *The Rape of the Lock*, to investigate the effects of Repressive and Ideological State Apparatus on the formation of characters' identities in this 18th century poem. It seeks to analyze the ideological atmosphere in *The Rape of the Lock* and discusses the complexities of notions such as materialism, virtue, womanhood and conciliation in characters' actions, words and belief on the basis of Louis Althusser's theories of interpellation and Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses. It analyses the details of the poem to determine Alexander Pope's views as a social critic who tries to question the ideologies of his time by his satirical portrayal of the superficial social interactions, the corrupted political system and the process of women's identity formation in this poem. The analysis reveals that Pope manages to resist being interpellated and avoids judgment of the characters by depicting the ambiguous nature of the sociopolitical ideologies and by resorting to the ideals of art instead.

**Keywords:** Ideological State Apparatus; Repressive State Apparatus; interpellation; Louis Althusser; Alexander Pope.

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## Introduction

*The Rape of the Lock* is a mock epic written by Alexander Pope. It was published in 1712 and revised in 1717. *The Rape of the Lock* narrates the story of an aristocratic girl a lock of whose hair is cut by one of her suitors in the court. This narrative poem is regarded as one of the true manifestations of high burlesque in the literature due to its epic structure and trivial subject. Although Pope's purpose was to satirize the shallowness of the arguments in aristocrat families, this poem proved controversial at the time and is still open to various interpretations. The purpose of the present study is to shed light on the meaning of the poem from a new perspective. The poem is analyzed as a critique of the dominant ideologies of the time and their crushing effect of individual identities.

*The Rape of the Lock* is a portrayal of the human folly in a most bizarre and satirical atmosphere. The great effect of this work is still relevant today due to the atmosphere of the work which resembles the consumer culture of our era. Belinda as the heroine of this work is entangled with many restricting definitions attributed to a woman, and her social value is defined by her looks and appearance. The heroine of the work is respected as long as she accepts her inferiority to men and from the time she begins to deviate from the accepted norms, she is punished not only by the male forces, but also by a significant female character. Pope's purpose as a critic is to portray a controversial picture of a heroine in a mock epic style and criticize the social atmosphere of his time by focusing on Belinda. He is believed to have written the poem to mock the shallow trivialities of the arguments in upper-class families, but his critical portrayal of the socially determined roles of the characters make a more complex contribution to the ultimate effect of the poem.

This paper investigates the role of the dominant ideological forces in the 18<sup>th</sup> century England on the formation of the characters' identities in *The Rape of the Lock* and searches for the significance of the effect of interpellation on the characters. Althusser's theories on Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) and interpellation are discussed first and then they are used in an analysis of *The Rape of the Lock*. Hence, this study analyzes the characters especially the heroine of the poem on the basis of the binary oppositions forced on them by the dominant ISA of the time to examine Pope's attitude faced with those ISAs and to investigate the reasons of his refraining from judging the characters' personalities and mistakes.

Previous discussions on *The Rape of the Lock* did not focus entirely on the dominant ideological forces which overwhelmed all characters and defined their identities. Earlier studies were more concerned with the problems of judgment, chastity and virtue, religious allusions, and psycho-analytical readings. Yet, a number of these studies have pointed to some of the sociopolitical binaries that inform the present study.

Deborah C. Payne's 1991 article studies *The Rape of the Lock* in the light of feminist debates and points to the binary oppositions between coquettes and virtuous housewives. The complex patriarchal hints of the work "function as a

parable for women –but from a distinctly feminist perspective” (Payne, 1991, p. 20). Payne reflects the conflict in gender and class in her article by referring to the social rules and the accepted beliefs in Pope’s time, and also discusses the concerns of feminism by referring to the real person who inspired Belinda’s character, named Arabella Fermor, and her reactions after reading the work.

In “Alexander Pope and *The Rape of the Lock*: Conciliation or Judgment?”, Dawn Watkins (2011) argues in favor of Pope’s refusal of any absolute judgment about the characters (p. 265). Watkins discusses Pope’s motivation as an outcast of the society due to his religion (belonging to the Catholic minority) in satirizing his contemporary social rules by avoiding any absolute moral judgment in the end of the poem and making the poem open to many interpretations.

However, Megumi Ohsumi (2016) believes that Alexander Pope living in the ideological atmosphere of his own time could not be fully free from the accepted life style, though the focus of this study is mainly on the orientalist ideology of the time (p. 215).

The significance of the present research lies in its in-depth analysis of the ideological function in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and its power to form the identity of various characters of the poem which was not carried out in any of the previous studies, as well as in proving Pope to be a critic of such ideologies. The analysis shows how people define themselves and live in accordance to the ISA without knowing their subjection. Previous studies discussed women’s roles or the ethical debates on having the right to judge correctly. Their concern was mostly based on the theoretical or ethical outcome of the work, but the focus of this article is entirely on the causes of these social conflicts which define the identity and position of everyone in the society and the poet’s deviation from the dominant ideology. In addition, this study proposed a novel perspective since Althusser’s theories were not previously used in reading this poem.

## Conceptual Framework

Louis Pierre Althusser (1918–1990), the French Marxist philosopher, in an essay named “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus” in his book *On the Reproduction of Capitalism*, introduces the notions of Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), and interpellation, which are used in the present study (Althuess, 2014/1969).

Marx is the first thinker to theorize the concept of ideology in materialist perspectives and his interest is less in the “human ideas” than in “the forces and relations of production into which men and women enter in order to maintain and develop their material lives” (Ferretter, 2006, p. 13). The forces of production are “the materials and the instruments of production” (p. 13) and ‘relations of production’ can be understood in “the way in which the members of a society are organized in order to produce their lives with these materials and instruments” (p. 14). It is “the sum total of these relations of production” which builds

up the socioeconomic structure that becomes the “the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness” (Marx, 1977, p. 425). The identity of the people who are living in such a materialistically conditioned community is defined by the place allocated to them *in* the system *by* the very same system. So there are no essential criteria in the soul and minds of people to define their position in the society. It is not the person who decides where in the social structure they should stand. In Marx's well-known words, “it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness” (Marx, 1977, p. 425). Ferretter defines ideology as “a discourse of class interest” (Ferretter, 2006, p. 18), a discourse which can be reinforced (or at times challenged) by the literary and cultural products of the society.

In Althusser's theories, too, ideology has a central part. The function of ideology in Althusser's view is of high importance because all our life and attitude is based on it. For him, ideology is “the way in which people understand their world” and “the set of discourses [which] constitutes the world of our experience, our ‘world’, itself”, which ultimately constructs an illusion, “a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (Ferretter, 2006, p. 77).

Althusser takes the connotation of the word ‘desire’ from Lacan's psychoanalysis theory to invest the meaning of ‘ideology’. He believes that in ideology, we misrepresent the reality because we *want* to misrepresent and there is some reward for this misrepresentation which is the approval we receive from the ideology. In *For Marx*, Althusser explains that “in ideology the real relation is invariably invested in the imaginary relation, a relation that expresses a will (conservative, conformist, reformist or revolutionary), a hope or nostalgia, rather than describing a reality” (Althusser, 1969/1965, p. 234).

In *On the Reproduction of Capitalism*, Althusser argues that this misrepresentation (or one might say unconscious self-deception) has its root in material existence. “An ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material” (Althusser, 2014/1969, p. 184). Ideology is not limited to the mind as an abstract concept, but all these imaginary ideologies present themselves in practices and have material existence. People's choices, attitudes and behaviors are informed by the ideologies in which they believe. It appears that the individual “participates in certain regular practices which are those of the ideological apparatus on which ‘depend’ the ideas which he has in all consciousness freely chosen as a subject” (Althusser, 2014/1969, p. 259).

Using a Lacanian concept, Althusser suggests that we find our identities in front of the mirror of ideology. Our subjectivity, our identity as formed by this mirror image, reshapes itself according to the ‘hailing’ and appraisal we receive from the society through the medium of ISA. This hailing is what Althusser calls interpellation: “Ideology hails or interpellates individuals as subjects” (Althusser, 1971/1968, p. 164). Our identities are shaped according to the interpellation we receive in the society and thus we are turned into social subjects. All of

us as subjects are subjected to 'the Subject', which is a kind of complete and absolute notion of subjection, a logos according to which the other subjects understand themselves and their actions. For example, in Christianity, all the subjects find their subjection within the Christian ISA. Thus, individuals learn to think of themselves and find their identity in relation to the absolute Subject which is God in this ideology. So their subjection is relying on that absolute and perfect Subject in that particular ideology and they evaluate their worth, their subjectivity and their identity according to the way in which the Christian ideology hails or interpellates them. This is true about all subjects, either from the proletariat class or the bourgeoisie: "Interestingly, Althusser maintains that there can be no society, no human history without ideology" (Montag, 2003, p. 78).

Apart from the psychological force of interpellation, for Althusser, there are two kinds of forces in the society which compel individuals to act according to the dominant ideology. Repressive State Apparatus, or RSA, includes all the repressive and coercive methods through which the Authority compels people to act according to the rules and structures that ensure and prolong its domination. It often features some form of violence imposed on people by the ruling class. Several familiar examples of RSA are the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc. On the other hand, Ideological State Apparatus, or ISA, is any of the methods through which the Authority non-violently reinforces and propagates the ideological frameworks that are in favor of its domination. When people are surrounded by the representations of those ideologies as natural and correct ideas, beliefs and behaviors, they begin to adopt those ideologies as their own, and act in line with the interest of the ruling class without the need for any external forces. ISA is the persuasion exercised on the minds of individuals. The Ideological State Apparatus are special institutions that impose the ideology indirectly and non-violently such as: the religious ISA (the system of the different churches), the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private schools), the family ISA, and the legal ISA (Ferretter, 2006, p. 84).

The role of educational system in the modern capitalist societies is of high importance because every individual passes many years in the educational system in order to be fit for the needs of the dominant ISA. In the pre-capitalist societies, due to the small number of educational institutes, the heavy burden of imposing ISA was on the shoulder of religious and theological discourse. To Althusser, this transition of the sites of ISA from church to educational institutes results from the violent class crisis (Althusser, 1971/1968, p. 144–45).

Thus, through various manifestations of ISA especially the educational system, every member of the society "is practically provided with the ideology that suits the role it has to fulfil in class society", (Althusser, 1971/1968, p. 147). Clearly, even the ruling class is subjected to The Subject and their subjection is defined by the role they function in the society. And this is evident in Pope's renowned mock-epic.

## Discussion

In Britain, the 18<sup>th</sup> century is known as the age of order and stability. “After the prolonged civil and religious strife of the seventeenth century” the Act of Union in 1707 united Scotland and England (Greenblatt, 2006, p. 2057). However, with the return of Charles Stuart and the restoration of the Church of England, the Protestant Dissenters and Roman Catholics were excluded from social activities.

Due to the dramatic increase in the publication of books and periodicals in the 18<sup>th</sup>, reading turned into the habit of the middle-class and writers started to write in a more ordinary language so that more people would be able to read their works. As a result of the wide readership in this era, writers began to use satire in most of their works to challenge not only the literary norms, but also the social norms of the time. “Deeply conservative but also playful, their finest works often cast a strange light on modern times by viewing them through the screen of classical myths and classical forms” (Greenblatt, 2006, p. 2075).

With the advent of the Age of Reason and the expansion of empiricism based on Francis Bacon’s “An Essay Concerning Human Understanding”, and its new principles for prioritizing experience and observation as the most reliable sources of knowledge, people started to question the traditionally divine rights of the monarchy and the church. With people’s heightened awareness of the rights of individuals in the society, the ideological frameworks of the Britain began to change. The ruling ISA started to change the direction of people’s minds from churches to education and industry. “By the end of the century many issues of politics and the law revolve around rights, not traditions” (Greenblatt, 2006, p. 2066).

Another change in the ruling ISA was due to the commencement of women’s movements. With the rise in the popularity of empiricist beliefs, women as well as men started to challenge the clichés and restrictions which were imposed on them by the religious and sociopolitical powers. For example, all women were “barred from universities and faced innumerable other disadvantages and varieties of repression” (Greenblatt, 2006, p. 2068), which was questioned by many thinkers of the time. The social clichés also prevented women from showing their talent in arts and literature, but writers such as Mary Astell protested against many notions of the patriarchal society and “challenged many orthodoxies, including the ideas that women should not be educated, that they are intellectually inferior to men” (p. 2833). As a consequence, women began demanding better education and social life which lead to many debates by the social critics of the time.

The class conflict and consumerism were the major issues at that time because England, Scotland, and Wales were united as The Great Britain by the 1707 Act of Union and due to the vast commercialism of Britain, many merchants grew rich and formed a powerful middle class. The class conflict turned out to be a problem for the poor people: “Sugar and coffee from the East Indies, tea from India and slaves... formed the backbone of imperial trade” of the Britain (Houston, & Pincus, 2001, p. 150). Ireland and Scotland were united with

England, but their natural resources were usurped by the English aristocrats and middle class merchants who played as the RSA of the ruling power.

These sociopolitical realities had a great effect on the life of Alexander Pope and the formation of his identity as a poet in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. "Attending university, owning and inheriting land, and holding positions in public office were the distinguishing characteristics of upper-class males in Pope's society" (Watkins, 2011, p. 251). But with the intense hostility raised by the political and religious system of that time, Pope as a catholic could not have many of these credits like other upper-class men. He had to study at home and could not have any possessions to influence and attract others. But this situation also gave him an opportunity to be less exposed to the educational ISA than many of his contemporaries. This situation persuaded him that the only source of power left to him was his genius and art. As a consequence, he began to not only turn into an influential poet, but also a brilliant and popular satirist who mocked the ideals of his society and attracted, amused and educated many readers. The ISA with all its forces affected the subjection of Pope not to become an obedient conformist, but a critical individual who pictures the gross picture of consumerist ideology in his time. He was against the modes and conventions of his society no matter if they had catholic or orthodox roots, and tried to challenge the shallowness and trivial matters which made a destructive chaos in the social life of people.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century in Britain with all the underlying religious and class conflicts was an age of stability and consumption. Urban life started expanding. Cities were much more crowded and merchants became rich. The middle class issues and challenges began to attract the attention of many, and people wanted to become more involved with various aspects of their society. With the improvement of industry and commercialism, many ideologies of the dominant culture began to change, such as gender issues (especially women's education, rights and positions in the society), the place of religion in the life of individuals and its adaptation to the consumerism, and the political attitude of the court mostly in domestic affairs. Many of these problematic ideological issues are tackled in Pope's poem.

*The Rape of the Lock*, based on the true story of the quarrel between two aristocrat Catholic families on a trivial matter, aimed to reveal the trivial and artificial values in the aristocrat families.

Religious manners and people's shallow faith in Christianity in the society is mocked by Pope throughout the poem. The ideology of the time changed the ISA of religion from a pure understanding of God to a shallow religious perspective which adapted to the consumerist ideology of the time. The appearance of religiousness was enough to ensure social respect and true Christian values like humility were not important any more. In *The Rape of the Lock*, Bible is placed next to Belinda's cosmetics to reveal the equal value of the cosmetics and the holy book and also criticize the prevailing consumerist ISA influencing the social norms of the time: "Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux" (Pope, 2005/1712, p. 36). In canto II, Belinda wears a cross-shaped necklace which

shows satirically the paradox and harmony of erotic and religious imagery in the accepted cultural norms. It also reveals the equal power of an attractive woman with the sacred religious concepts in the views of others: "On her white Breast a sparkling *Cross* she wore, / Which *Jews* might kiss and *Infidels* adore" (Pope, 2005/1712, p.38).

The ISA of the 18<sup>th</sup> century England was trying to turn politics into a popular social issue, as political and commercial issues became more and more intertwined. The importance of social gatherings and parties and their usefulness in political affairs was evident, and they became a site of the give-and-takes of politicians and show-off for the rich people: "Here Thou, great *Anna!* Whom three realms obey, / Dost sometimes Counsel take—and sometimes Tea" (Pope, 2005/1712, p.46).

With all the shallowness of the parties described in *The Rape of the Lock*, their importance in forming and maintaining the ideology of the time is stressed, too. Great families and patrons of the arts gathered at court, sheltered from the outside world and devoted to the pursuit of their personal interests which consequently shaped the interest of the public (Rousseau, 1969, p. 3). With the popularity of parties in this era, they became a site for the portrayal of the culture and of accepted beliefs of the upper class. Pope brings the example of a superb party in his work, not only to criticize the people participating in it, but to show how the use of parties is important in forming the ideology of society at that time.

In various Talk the cheerful hours they past,  
Of, who was *Bitt*, or who *Copotted* last:  
This speaks the Glory of the *British Queen*,  
And that describes a charming *Indian Screen*  
A third interprets Motions, Looks, and Eyes;  
At ev'ry Word a Reputation dies. (Pope, 2005/1712, p.86)

All the people at this party are used to paying attention to the shallow and external appearance of others so that the readers can understand the necessity for a Belinda at this party. There has to be a coquette in order to be observed and praised for their luxurious clothes and beautiful faces. These material beauties reinforce the political ISA since it provides instance pleasure of the kind the winning political/economical group will enjoy more: exotic luxuries, love and attention of fashionable women, and power in dominating these sources of pleasure. Belinda and other coquettes act like advertisement for the trophies the winning parties at any negotiation might enjoy. Their mere presence empowers the discourse of commercialism and materialism.

Belinda is introduced as a shallow female figure in the opening of the poem when the narrator refers to her room and her make-up tools. The fashionable women at that time were more engaged with their appearances and their belongings, which also evoked the disapproval of the elites of the society. Joseph Addison, the well-known essayist of the time, believed that although "our English Women excel those of all Nations in Beauty, they should endeavour to outshine them in all other Accomplishments proper to the Sex" (quoted in Rous-

seau, 1969, p. 6). With all these superficial values, the importance of the lock of Belinda's hair is stressed because it becomes a symbol of her charms, which, at least in the beginning of the poem, is purely superficial.

The Baron, rejected by Belinda, cuts the lock of her hair to take revenge and also to partly possess the property he has been denied: "He saw, he wish'd, and to the Prize aspir'd" (Pope, 2005/1712, p. 39). The Baron is attracted to Belinda only based on her physical beauty and this emphasizes the characteristics of the people in the court of which the Baron may be a representative. Critics believe that his desire to have Belinda develops from his visual evaluation of her beauty alone (Cohen, 1976, p. 55). However, it seems that the word "prize" emphasizes the material connotations of Belinda for the Baron (or women for the men with authority).

In a consumer society, where everyone is concerned with the external appearance, there is no room for morality. Thus, even the morality in this work has the essence of shallow values and people do not pass correct judgments. McConnell (2007) shows that in the poem "objects become humanized, and humans become objectified" (p. 683). So the value of human beings is rated not according to humanity and moral uprightness, but according to money, external appearance and beauty. Belinda knows this and tries to glamorize her appearance to emphasize her material worth. The attention she attracts at the party acts as an interpellating tool to make her accept her role as a trophy. So, Belinda is shaped by the ISA of material values as well as gender values.

It is worth noticing that even Clarissa, the supposedly wise woman who is the only character calling for morality, cannot be easily judged as truly wise. It is interesting that she is the very person who provides the Baron with the scissors with which he cuts the lock of Belinda's hair. An "elusive character", Clarissa is an agent of "paradox" (Rousseau, 1969, p. 10), and her honesty and sensibility are questionable. Pope intends "the poem's moralist, Clarissa, [to] be touched with both sublimity and comicality, that she preach a generally sound moral only to be herself implicated by it as well, that she inflame as she pacifies" (Trimble, 1974, p. 679).

Clarissa can be regarded as the medium of the interpellation of the dominant ideology which is revealed in the last canto of the poem through her speech on the transitory nature of beauty and the necessity for higher virtues. She exercises both the Repressive and the Ideological aspects of subject formation. Her giving the scissors to the Baron can function as the repressive force in the court, the RSA. However, her final speech is equally important which acts as interpellation by praising qualities in women that make them more functional according to the family norms of the time. She persuades Belinda to be obedient and repressed by men not only in the love affairs, but also in the social manners such as cards games. Although it seems that Clarissa is a woman with a voice and is therefore not wholly subjected by the male-dominated ideology of the time, it becomes clear that she is actually the mouth-piece of that ideology. She herself is interpellated into believing that the role prescribed by the society to women is the one natural and correct path for everyone. She con-

cludes her advice by demanding Belinda to change her position as a maid into an obedient housewife because her beauty does not last. Still she does not advise girls to be educated, wise or knowledgeable. Instead, she demands a sweet temper and an easy acceptance of the social family roles.

But since, alas! frail Beauty must decay,  
Curl'd or uncurl'd, since Locks will turn to grey,  
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,  
And she who scorns a Man must die a Maid;  
What then remains, but well our Pow'r to use,  
And keep good Humour still whate'er we lose? (Pope, 2005/1712, p.75)

Belinda's chastity is questioned by Clarissa because the heroine is not a bride but a coquette, as the discourse of the age would describe her. A coquette is "a woman (more or less young) who uses arts to gain the admiration and affection of men, merely for the gratification of vanity or from a desire of conquest, and without any intention of responding to the feelings aroused; a woman who habitually trifles with the affections of men" (Reichard, 1954, p. 889). She is not like other girls and her motivations for showing off are not to get a husband, but to be admired. That's why she is punished by Clarissa helping the Baron to cut one of her locks. Clarissa acts as an RSA in this work because once the ideological forces cannot persuade the individual to accept his/her subjection in the ISA, the RSA begins to repress the deviator by punishing and condemning them for refusing to fulfill their destined subject position (here, that of a wife). We can see the traces of how people of the time, even the elites, looked at girls like Belinda for their physical appearance and their search for many lovers at the same time. Richard Steele described Coquettes as "the most charming, but the most unworthy, sort of women" (quoted in Reichard, 1954, p. 890). Addison and Steele as the most influential essayists and journalists of the period played their role in the ISA by persuading readers in elite magazines such as *The Spectator* to think according to the dominant ideology regarding women. Yet when the ISA is unable to persuade the individuals, RSA starts to punish those people who do not accept their subjection. After Belinda is punished by the RSA, she starts to lament for herself and this reaction shows how the forces work in harmony with each other to make the subjects obedient. "Oh had I rather un-admir'd remain'd / In some lone isle" (Pope, 2005/1712, p. 70).

Discussions upon chastity and virtue are important ideological aspects of *The Rape of the Lock*, which are paired with an ambiguity in moral judgment which shows the poet's criticism of those ideologies. Clarissa blames Belinda, while Belinda blames the Baron. The readers may come to a dilemma regarding the moral judgment of the situation. Pope artistically implies lack of absolutism to avoid any judgment. That is one reason for the continued liveliness and attraction of this poem over centuries. It is up to the readers to evaluate the characters according to their own ideological frameworks while the narration of the poem makes it clear that any judgment is at least partly at fault. Belinda is naturally judged according to her chastity, but the notion of chastity itself is an ambiguous one in the poem. The purpose of women in attending luxurious parties

as such was expected to be finding a husband. Belinda as described in the work is not a girl who is in search of a suitor, and she is unique at the party as the center of everyone's attention. It is stated in Canto II that she shows her favor not to one single man, but extends her charms to anyone who approaches her: "Favors to none, to all she Smiles extends, / Oft she rejects, but never once offends" (Pope, 2005/1712, p. 38).

If Belinda is regarded as trivial or coquettish, her punishment takes place at the hands of a man who is much more trivial than Belinda. The Baron burns love letters and tokens of his previous lovers before the party at the altar of gods to grant him victory in his love interest in Belinda. The hint is that his chastity is also questionable as are his motivations. Were he a true lover, would have wanted the beloved's esteem and attention, not a lock of her hair. Yet, as the sexual connotation of the title of the poem suggests, there is more than a mere lock of hair at stake here. The Baron violates the physical integrity of Belinda, which connotes her virginity, yet this act is done with the assistance of the supposed moralist of the poem, Clarissa. The moral ambiguity is hard to go unnoticed. The violent rape (of the lock?) is the ultimate RSA tool in making the disobedient girl submit to the Subject. And the twisted judgment of the moralist society is that Belinda herself is to blame for having attracted the attention of a man without returning his affections, while it is also clear that the Baron's affections were not beyond physical conquest.

Pope is critical of this twisted ideology by implying that it is not chastity and virginity that is important, but it is honor which is ignored and forgotten in this aristocrat community. Even the educated and sophisticated members of the aristocracy are not free to think on their own and judge the right and wrong of their actions according to humanistic codes of honor. They, like everyone else in the society, are blinded and subjected by ISA. Althusser points out that the identity of the ruling class is also shaped by the ISA and only their position in the society differs from the others (Althusser, 1971/1968, p. 147). As it is reflected in the poem, in Canto I, the party held at Hampton court is a portrayal of the people who care for their appearances and are busy with rumors and gossips. The important men of office hurry to sentence the wretched people to death in order to eat their food on time: "When hungry Judges soon the Sentence sign, / and Wretches hang that Jury-men may Dine" (Pope, 2005/1712, p. 86). Clearly, Pope wanted to attack the attitudes of the upper class people, those who rule over the others without considering the humanitarian perspectives of life.

Pope's use of mythology like the role of sylphs and nymphs especially in end of the poem shows his clear protest against the human attitudes in the sense that the interpellation of the individuals can influence people, but not the different creatures, like the sylphs who are not shaped by the ideology, and ISA cannot influence them in any way. This may lead to metaphorical interpretations on the outcasts of the society like the Catholics or the independent thinkers who did not adapt to the dominant ideology and were either downgraded or dismissed from their social life.

The ending of the poem is one of 'redemption' either for Arabella Fermer or Belinda, but this is also an ambiguous kind of redemption. The lost lock of hair is taken to the heavens to shine as a star to influence more people than it would do on the earth. Ironic as it is, one can hardly miss the positive connotation of the stars and heavens. Some critics believe it is a metaphor for Arabella's eventual marriage that would clean the stain of dishonor; "However, marriage extracts her from society rather than integrating her" (McConnell, 2007, p. 687). In keeping with this reading of the ending, one might conclude that the last scene is not to show the importance of purity or knowledge in women, but to manifest how the ruling ideology keeps itself safe from any danger since it is outside the reach of people who are all subject to it. Thus, it would seem that in the end, nothing in the accepted social norms changes and it is Belinda who has to pay for acting against the ISA.

However, the present study does not find this reading satisfactory since it neglects the more serious and artistically calculated tone of the last section of the poem. The elegance of the scene is not disproportionate and mocking as it was in the previous sections of the poem, and the subject matter is for once lifted from the earthly-bound commercialized considerations into aesthetic realms. The violated Belinda is consoled with a language which does contain empathy, and instead of being chastised and blamed, or attacked and harassed, she is reassured that there remains an essence of beauty from her lock in the heavens. The devalued woman is helped to regain her honor, interestingly, this time in the world of art, which, Pope suggests, can still go beyond the material world and its ideologies to be judged by a totally different criterion for its originality and non-material beauty. He suggests that through poetry, which is an apparatus in itself and a source of value, Belinda can be safe from the erosion of ISA and RSA.

Pope revokes the dominant ideology's success in controlling the society by inscribing Belinda's name amidst the stars and revealing that her lock of hair is disappeared and turned into a constellation. So the ideological forces cannot harm her lock of hair and also they cannot deny Belinda's name (or identity) in the realm of art which makes her immortal.

When those fair Suns shall sett, as sett they must,  
And all those Tresses shall be laid in Dust;  
This Lock, the Muse shall consecrate to Fame,  
And mid'st the stars inscribe Belinda's Name! (Pope, 2005/1712, p. 94-95)

## Conclusion

In *the Rape of the Lock*, Pope criticizes the dominant ideology of his society and the characters' interpellation by using elegant style to mock the restrained and refined but empty manners of the upper class which points to the ugly reality prevalent in the society covered with elegant postures. He depicts various social forces in the poem, and reveals how the RSA and ISA work together to interpellate the individuals into being subjected by the dominant ideologies. The

characters of the poem are all in one way or another the products of those ideologies and shaped into their current form by the forces of RSA and ISA. The characters pass easy and superficial judgments on the violated heroine of the poem, Belinda, but the poet makes sure that the judgment for the readers is not that easy.

In the end of the poem, having mocked the ideologies of his era, Pope refuses to be interpellated into blaming Belinda (or any other character). He changes the scene of the poem from the materialistic world into the artistic world to open up a path of hope for resisting the persuasive ISA that appears in the form of morality and the harsh RSA that violently harasses subjects. Belinda is eventually safe in Pope's poetry, and immortalized to remind the readers to avoid shallow judgments and easy closures in favor of true honor and beauty.

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