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## Money Matters: Comparative Study Of Pope's "The Rape Of The Lock" And Bong Jon Ho's Movie "Parasite"

SHINJINI DAS

PG STUDENT

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

VASANT KANYA MAHAVIDYALAYA

BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY VARANASI

### Abstract

Nowadays, when we look at our society, it can be seen that a person's status in society is determined on how much wealth he possesses. Human beings and their emotions are not valued and we tend to care more about the fancy objects that we use in our house. Our relationships often have come to be based on the possession of these material objects. The Rape of the Lock criticizes the extreme importance given to material things and Parasite shows how a Materialistic mindset is often a consequence of your financial position. In the film, we see that Kim's family is aiming to achieve the materialistic things of Mr Park's family and due to this, they commit mistakes and crimes. The film becomes a satire on a consumerist and capitalist society and how too much desire of the materialistic things could be detrimental. In the poem, The Rape of the Lock by Alexander Pope, there is a similar obsession with the materialistic things. When Belinda wakes up from sleep, we see that she is obsessed with the dressing table and the make-up products that lay on the dressing table. Pope uses a mock- heroic style to depict the consumerist society and how the cutting of the lock, which symbolises the beauty of Belinda, arouses anger in Belinda.

Keywords: Materialism, class disparity, mock- heroic

There has been an obsession for money and fanciful things from ages. People tend to attach more values towards artificial objects rather than humanity. Often a person's status or position in the society is determined on how much money he has in his possession. "The Rape of the Lock", written by Alexander Pope is one such poem which criticizes and satirizes the obsession that the world attaches to objects and to establish his point, he has exaggerated the value that has been attached to lifeless objects. On the other hand, Parasite, explores the same theme of materialism, but its presentation is different. The greed for expensive items and the lure for lucre emanates from financial status as well. When a family is struggling due to inadequate financial availability, the urge to earn more and more money increases. They may earn money to a point that they are able to live comfortably, but the greed is insatiable. Often, they develop criminal attitudes to earn more money easily. "Parasite" is one such film, where we see that Kim Ki-Taek's family leads an impoverished life, but when they get acquainted with the luxuries associated with money, they adopt fraudulent means as an easy way to earn money. This greed later leads the family to earn the notorious reputation of being criminals.

In "The Rape of the Lock", the society seems to attach more importance to non-living objects than to the human beings themselves. One examples of this importance can be seen from Canto 1 itself. Even Pope's usage of mock-heroic effect shows how exaggerated is the importance attached to lifeless possessions. Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace in "The Things Things Don't Say: The Rape of the Lock, Vitalism, and New Materialism" says that material objects seem to possess a great deal of agency. From the first Canto itself, Kowaleski notices that Belinda's world is one in which bells appear to ring themselves, slippers appear to do the knocking, and watches answer back. The most important part of the mock heroic satire is Belinda's dressing table. The importance attached to the dressing table is quite exaggerated, it's equivalent to an altar where heroes pray before going to battle. Belinda's ritual, conducted every morning in front of the dressing table is synonymous to a religious ritual, praying for the success of a hero in the battlefield. The things are denoted as "unnumbered treasures" where Belinda seems to have been quite lucky to have possession of these valuables and these "offerings" are given to Belinda, who is a priestess and a Goddess at the same time. The Toilette or the dressing table, contains make-up products, combs, India's gems, perfumes, and "puffs, powders, patches, Bibles and billet-doux". Scholars note that there is no distinction between the Bible and the other objects placed on the dressing table. These become the objects of worship and this proves to be an example of the amount of importance the 18th century society attached to these lifeless entities. Alex Eric Fernandez says that Belinda's toilette is filled with paraphernalia which provides status upon the possessor. He continues saying that the objects on Belinda's dressing table becomes an example of mercantilism. When we proceed to Canto 2, it can be observed that Belinda is nourishing two locks. These locks also have power, as they perform the function of locking the hearts of men. The locks are described as labyrinths where slaves are imprisoned and also through these locks, hearts are captivated in chains. In Canto III, after the game of Ombre between Belinda and the Baron, the rich people are trying to show off their wealth again. They are drinking coffee in cups imported from China, and this was considered to be equivalent to an important religious ritual in Pope's society. One more example, of the importance attached to objects is that of Belinda's bodkin, which bore history of family lineage. Alex Eric Hernandez in "Commodity and Religion in Pope's "The Rape of the Lock", it is mentioned that there was an increase in consumerism in the period and this meant a new and dynamic market for consumer goods ranging from fashionable clothing and cosmetics to imported coffee to erotic poets, to imported coffee and exotic pets. He also points out that Belinda's dressing table becomes an example to show this change.

The movie "Parasite" shows two families- one of which is rich and the other is poor. Kim Ki - Taek's family lives in poverty. In "Analysis of Social Class Inequality Based on the Movie Parasite" by Chang Liu, Liu mentions that the number of bread slices Kim Ki -Taek ate, showed that they had a very hard life. Liu also notes, that, compared to Park's family, whose dog eats different kinds of food, but the life of Kim Ki-Taek's family is quite poverty stricken. The living conditions of both the families also show the struggles that Kim Ki-Taek's family has to face. Kim Ki-Taek's family doesn't even have proper hygienic conditions of living, as the basement is infested with insects and they have a peculiar smell in their clothes which is quite unacceptable to the rich Park family. With the money, they earned by working at Park family's house and the income from making pizza boxes, they could afford pizza and drinks. This showed the improvement in that style of living. Min, Ki Woo's friend, brings a stone, which is supposed to bring wealth and prosperity. But the stone proves to be destructive to the Kim family. Ki-Woo was introduced to the Park family, through a lie and this lie continued to go deeper and deeper as all the family members took up their jobs in the Park family. Eagerness to earn money, drives them to tell lies and they don't even think twice to use the vulnerability of a mother. When a family is struggling financially, money becomes necessary. But the thirst for money, slowly converts into materialism, and the aim becomes to earn more and more money. Slowly and slowly, we lose our rationale and we put ourselves into danger. "Parasite" also portrays this example. Ki-Woo and his family creates a web of lies and creates for themselves an opportunity where they can earn money and through this eat food items like pizza, which were quite inaccessible to them at one point. Though they received the satisfaction as they had good food and got to party and drink at the Park House, when they had gone for their camping, they ultimately drove themselves in danger. Kim Ki-Taek became a murderer, Ki-Jung dies while Ki-Woo and his mother always remain under the eyes of the law. They had lost the peace of the life and the familial warmth they had. Parasite teaches us that although money and non- living objects are important for living a decent life, we must not let it overpower our minds.

Parasite and Rape of the Lock, both deal with the concept of how too much value is attached to money and matter. Both depict materialism, but they do it in different ways. In Rape of the Lock, Pope gives extreme importance to Belinda's dressing table and the use of mock- heroic style highlights about the amount of attention that human beings attach to the material world. Belinda's ritual at the dressing table is exaggerated, and the detailed description that Pope mentions about the things that are placed on the dressing table are synonymous to the importance attached to this thing by the human world. Belinda becomes a representative of the society, where materialistic possessions determine our position. Belinda's possession of the cosmetics, gems and perfumes spread on the dressing table upholds her position as a Priestess and a Goddess. On the other hand, the film Parasite, is like a warning, where it shows that one must adhere to earn money in an honest way. Too much greed can often lead people to resort to wrong means. The money earned can be more, but finally, it snatches away the peace. Kim Ki-Taek's family goes on continuously committing crime, innate to the consequences that they may have to face. The money they earned must have been enough to enhance their financial condition, but they, lost the peace in the life. Kim Ki-Taek ended up being a murderer, while his wife and son lead a life filled with constant interrogations from the police. Kim Ki-Taek's daughter had to sacrifice her life. They earned money, but at the end, they lost their real treasure of life, that is, their family.

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