Unit-2

Q. Evaluate Dryden's Mac Fleknoe as a Mock-Heroic Poem.

A. A Mock-Heroic poem uses the formal elements which characterize the epic genre to depict a trivial situation. It thus creates a contrast between the form and content that results in a satiric and absurd effect, ridiculing the characters in the plot and their actions.

In the form and style, Mac-Fleknoe is a kind of mock -epic or mock-heroic poem. The very opening of Mac-Flecknoe is characterized by epic inflation which has a comic effect. Flecknoe who is known to be a worthless poet is compared to Augustus Caesar. The mock-heroic vein is continued throughout the poem in the portrayal of ironic politeness is continued also, being inseparable from the mock-epic device. Mac-Flecknoe is the poet king of the realm of nonsense. Mac-Flecknoe is regarded by his father as the throne of dullness because he looks majestic with his huge bulk, like the huge Oak trees and is at the same time devoid of the power to think like them.

We fine another touch of mock-heroic and ironic picture. When Mac-Flecknoe is compared to Arion, a musician whose music attracted the dolphins, but Mac-Flecknoe atracted only 'Little Fishes'.

The name Shadwell was sounded from several localities named by Dryden were sordid and inhabited by uncultured people. Mac-Flecknoe is then ironically called "Prince of thy harmonious band". His music excited the jealousy of the famous musician John Singleton who renounced the triumph he had won. We find another example of the same style and technique in the description of the place which has been chosen as the site of Mac-Flecknoe's coronation.

The ceremony of the coronation is described with the use of inflated language which ill-accords with triviality of the theme and gives raise to laughter because of this incompatibility. At the same time no abusive words are used and the tone is ironic politeness. Flecknoe is called 'The Hoary Prince' who appeared in majesty, high on a throne. Thus herein also blooms the epic style.