

THE GLORIOUS WORLD OF METAPHYSICAL POETRY: JOHN DONNE, ANDREW MARVELL, GEORGE HERBERT AND HENRY VAUGHAN

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Abstract: Metaphysical poetry is characterized by the use of elaborate figurative language, original assumptions, paradoxes, and philosophical themes. English metaphysical poetry is the richest and most widespread in the language.

Keywords- Metaphysical, imagination, resurrection, philosophical themes, traditional verse.

I Introduction

Metaphysical poetry was considered interesting until it underwent a startling reappraisal after World War I, but it was tainted with eccentricity, twisted, brilliant and ambiguous. Poetry" This term was first coined by Dr. Johnson found John Donne's poetry difficult and unnatural because of his tremendous imagination. John Dryden and Samuel Johnson used the term "metaphysical" as applied to seventeenth-century English and continental European poets to denounce the "unnaturalness" of these poets. - As Wolfgang von Goethe wrote, "The unnatural is natural," metaphysical poets continue to be studied and revered for their complexity and originality

The Term Metaphysical

The word metaphysical is used in literature to describe a concept where things are defined by something non-physical. Metaphysical writing deals with intangible experiences and feelings. Metaphysical poetry is defined by the exploration of philosophical themes, wit, and a looser use of meter. These poems also often touched on modern scientific advances.

II Literature Reviews

John Donne (1572–1631)

Donne was the most influential Metaphysical poet. His personal relationship with spirituality is at the center of most of his work, and the psychological analysis of his work marked a dramatic departure from traditional, genteel verse.

His early works, collected in Satires, Songs, and Sonnets, were published during an era of religious oppression. His Sacred Sonnets, which include many of Donne's most enduring poems, were published shortly after his wife died in childbirth. The intensity with which Donne grapples with the concepts of divinity and mortality in the Holy Sonnet "Sonnet X [Death, be not proud]," "Sonnet XIV [Batter my heart, three person'd God]," and "Sonnet XVII [Since she whom I loved hath paid her last debt]."

1) The Flea by John Donne

'The Flea' is one of the most commonly cited examples of a metaphysical poem; it is also one of Donne's best. The poem makes a familiar argument in a very original way.

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,

How little that which thou deniest me is;

It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,

And in this flea our two bloods mingled be; [...]

Donne's speaker suggests to a woman that he wants to sleep with that it's fine for them to get together because the same flea has fed on the blood from both their bodies. They're already experienced their fluids mixing.

John Donne is a pioneer of metaphysical style. His poems give abundant evidence of a metaphysical nature, and *Valediction: Forbidding Mourning* is no exception. All the characteristics of metaphysical poetry can be clearly illustrated by this poem.

T.S. Eliot remarks. "If Donne, in youth was rake then I suspect that he was a conventional rake; if Donne in age was about then I suspect that he was conventionally devout".

There are novel thoughts and expression in *A Valediction : Forbidding Mourning* . We find startling thoughts in this poem. The departure of the lover (poet) is contrasted with the departure of soul from body. The lover wants to depart.

"As virtuous men pass mild by away,

And whisper to their souls, to go",

We are also surprised when the lover denies his absence to his beloved in the morning. The poet's proposal: "Do not make a noise, neither floods of tears move nor storms of sighs". This quality is also evident in the poet's presentation of his idea that ordinary lovers consider separation as an earthquake, which is harmful and frightening, but great loves do not harm their love, just as the shaking of the heavenly bodies does not cause fear. Although he does this on purpose to show his strong feelings of love for his beloved and to comfort her, he becomes extraordinary. It also surprises readers.

“Moving of th’ earth brings harms and fears,
Men reckon what it did and meant,
But trepidatin of the spheres
Though greater for, is innocent”.

The images used in the stanza above are strange and far-fetched as far as our thoughts are concerned. The Lover Poet ignores the value of physical, sensual, and sexual relationships in love. He does this purely on purpose, but he becomes extraordinary in order to show her strong affection for her loved one and comfort her. It also scares the reader.

George Herbert (1593–1633)

Born in Wales in 1593, George Herbert was an important figure in the world of poetry, influencing the growth of the metaphysical movement, which speculates on the concepts of love and religion. A gifted orator and popular Anglican priest, he came from a wealthy family who were interested in and active in the arts. His father died when he was just three years old, but his mother was determined to ensure that her children had a good education and a better life.

He entered Westminster School at the age of twelve and won a scholarship to enter the University of Cambridge, where he completed his master's degree at the age of twenty-three. After being appointed lecturer of rhetoric and promoted to the post of rhetoric, he showed his abilities as a quick speaker and thinker. However, he suffered from tuberculosis from an early age, which may have deteriorated his health later in life and prevented him from pursuing a career that would eventually lead to a financially secure royal appointment. He had been writing poetry for some time at this point and decided to take this opportunity to revise his collection with the book *The Temple*. He also used his time and his own money to help rebuild the parish church.

‘The Collar’ is one of Herbert’s best-known poems.

2) The Collar

[...] But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild

At every word,

Me thought I heard one calling, Child!

And I replied My Lord.

In this poem the poet speaks about a "collar", by which a Christian priest is identified. (It is interesting to note that Herbert was himself a priest.) He describes the collar as something that restricts freedom in an intolerable way.

Herbert's poems speak of a number of qualities that are described as metaphysical. The poem "Easter Wings" deals with resurrection. "The Collar" depicts a man who is losing his faith and feels anger for his commitment to God. But finally, he can overcome his rebellion against God. Thus, Herbert is literally a metaphysical poet. 'Jordan (I)' This is neatly exemplified by the implied comparison of the river Jordan with the feeble streams of inferior pastoral poets. "Church-Monuments" - It's a reminder that we will die. In 'Wreath' Herbert creatively suggests the shape of a wreath through the rhyme scheme of his poem.

His poems are very philosophical and contemplative. A large part of his poetry deals with biblical subjects and the Christian faith.

'The Pearl' by George Herbert

I struck the board, and cry'd, No more.

I will abroad.

What? shall I ever sigh and pine?

My lines and life are free; free as the roe,

Loose as the winde, as large as store.

Shall I be still in suit? –

His use of conceit in his poetry distinguished him as one of the metaphysical poets, but it was only after his death that his work came to light. On his deathbed, when consumption overcame him, Herbert sent the Temple manuscript for publication by his friend, Nicholas Ferrer, in the hope of benefiting souls in need he was. He died shortly thereafter in 1633 at the age of 40, and the collection appeared a few months later. It went through his eight editions by 1690, and some of its poems have since developed into hymns that are still sung in churches today.

Some of the poems are presented as model poems, in which words form the form of something that is an integral part of meaning.

Henry Vaughan (1621 – 1695)

Henry Vaughan was a Welsh metaphysical poet, English-language author and translator, and physician. His religious poetry appeared in *Silex Scintillans* in 1650 and in another volume in 1655. Henry Vaughan is associated with the metaphysical poets of the eighteenth century of Vaughan's life. Henry Vaughan, like his great mentor George Herbert, was of Welsh descent. Vaughan was one of twins (his brother Thomas became an alchemist and later died of

mercury poisoning in 1666). Like many Welsh scholars, Henry appears to have gone to Jesus College, Oxford - although details of his education and life in general are patchy. His later studies in London (law) were interrupted by the English Civil War in 1642, and he later studied and worked in medicine rather than law.

Henry Vaughan's Poem "The World" deals with the idea of attaining spirituality through God's guidance.

"The World"

I saw Eternity the other night,

Like a great Ring of pure and endless light,

All calm, as it was bright;

And round beneath it, Time in hours, days, years,

Driv'n by the spheres

Like a vast shadow mov'd; in which the world

And all her train were hurl'd.

The doting lover in his quaintest strain

Did there complain;

III Methodology

Vaughan's best-known collection of poems is the collection (1650) *Silex Scintillans* ("Sparks of Flint"), which five years later was republished in an enlarged edition. The book represents a departure from Vaughan's earlier secular work and a maturation of his poetic voice. It seems that he suffered from some unspecified illness at the time, which made him withdraw from life into a religious state. He became an important devotional poet of the 17th century under George Herbert (1593-1633); Vaughan wrote of Herbert that his "holy life and verses have converted many pious converts". Vaughan, however, in many ways curiously imagines and anticipates the romantic poets who wrote more than a century after his death: although his style and five is firmly rooted in the devotional and metaphysical poetry of the seventeenth century, his themes often foreshadow Wordsworth's imaginings of the blissful paradise of childhood innocence and the role of natural objects in helping us appreciate the numinous and the spiritual. One of Vaughan's best known and most studied poems, *The Retreat* provides a good insight into the proto-romantic elements of his work.

Henry Vaughan continued to write poetry after the heyday of *Silex Scintillans* in the early 1650s, but much of his best poetry - the enduring poems - comes from this work. Finally, religious faith is a strong part of metaphysical poetry. The religious tone of the poem is very

biblical, and Vaughan offers those dealing with worldly material and power the solution they need to embrace God in their lives to achieve happiness and find true "eternity." He repeats the "dark statesman" and the "damned" who like the "dark night" and who live between "classes and caves" who refer to their life "fearing thieves" and "under the ground" because it "shows the way" to eternity to the "true light". He further states that the "ring" or "eternity" is the "bridegroom" that God himself gave to the "bride" or to the church, and this is a clear solution to what the "dark statesman" or politicians or "pointers" These, who live in fear and isolation, must follow this church which must be "trodden under the sun" and "led to God.

For example, The Altar was shaped as such. He produced only one work of prose, a practical guide to clergymen entitled The Country Parson which was published almost 20 years after his death.

Andrew Marvell (1621- 1678)

One of the metaphysical poets is considered to be Andrew Marvell. He, like John Donne, relied on metaphysical conceits in his poetry, which are the witty and complex comparisons that are characteristic of metaphysical poetry. Similar to Donne, many of his poems discuss spiritual issues and life's fleeting nature. Even "To His Coy Mistress," Marvell's probably most well-known poem, quickly shifts from seduction to metaphysical speculation. The poem is both a declaration of carpe diem, which means "seize the day," and a poem of seduction. The "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die" perspective on life is based on the carpe diem philosophy, which advocates living life to the fullest in the here and now.

Andrew Marvell received his education at Cambridge University. He was the son of a clergyman. Marvell served with John Milton in government positions and traveled extensively after working as a tutor. He may have helped Milton avoid severe punishment, including the death penalty, after the Restoration. Marvell once backed King Charles I, but he switched to Oliver Cromwell and the commonwealth government after that. Marvell was elected to represent Hull, his hometown, as a Member of Parliament during the Interregnum. Even though his earlier work praised Charles II's reign, he wrote several poems praising Oliver Cromwell and works critical of Charles II's court after the Restoration.

3) To His Coy Mistress by Andrew Marvell

This poem is second only to the 'The Flea' as commonly cited examples of metaphysical poetry.

Had we but world enough and time,

This coyness, lady, were no crime.

We would sit down, and think which way

To walk, and pass our long love's day.[...]

The speaker, who may be Marvell, is conversing with a woman he loves in this piece. Throughout the poem, he tries to persuade her that they should sleep together. He asserts that life is far too brief to be wasted without enjoying oneself.

IV Conclusion

Poets whose works have been categorized as “metaphysical” regularly try to find out the answers to questions such as, does God exist? Or, does humankind really have free choice? Or, what is the nature of reality?

Now, we can say that John Donne, Andrew Marvell, George Herbert and Henry Vaughan are great metaphysical poets in both content and method. They are poets of spirit in respect of emotions and thoughts. In style, they are intellectual, in diction they are homely and graceful, and in the construction of their poems, they are logical in belief and faith.

The experience of flux and transition in the present century seems to have given us an understanding denied to the eighteenth century, to the Victorians, and even to the Romantics. Donne and his followers have seemed to be particularly relevant.

V References

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