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**JOHN DONNE'S CONTRIBUTION  
TO THE METAPHYSICAL POETRY**

**MASTER THESIS**

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## ABSTRACT

This study tried to put forth John Donne's contribution to the Metaphysical Poetry and English Literature in general. The purpose of the study was to show that John Donne not only established a new school but also led many other poets of the period according to his school of thought. Starting from his childhood, the elements that shaped his life and his works were taken into consideration in this study as they are of great significance in terms of John Donne as a Metaphysical Poet.

In order to understand the term 'metaphysical' in the sense of poetry, the characteristics of the metaphysical poetry were studied in the context of John Donne's poems. The actions that shaped Donne's life were examined in accordance with the reactions that he showed throughout his life. Donne's conversion is one of the significant turning points of his life as he could find a secure job by starting working as a dean in the church.

The study tried to put forth some parallels between Donne's life and his poetry. When we examine the poems by Donne profoundly, it is clear that they reflect some elements that Donne experienced in his private life. Some of his poems reflect his personal experiences with his mistresses such as 'To His Mistress Going to Bed' in which the speaker is trying to persuade his mistress to come to the bed.

This study tried to show how John Donne differed from his contemporaries. The period in which Donne appeared was the era of the Elizabethans and they were at the center of the attention of the public. The Elizabethans used mostly the same themes and the same words in order to reflect their feelings; however, Donne used colloquial words for which he was understood better than the Elizabethans even though his poems were decorated with his wit full of his intelligence. The themes of Donne's poetry were generally focused on bodily love rather than spiritual love which was familiar with the Elizabethans because Donne believed that the spiritual love would be achieved only by means of bodily love.

There are many significant elements for which Donne is famous such as conceit, sound system, imagery and allusion and each of them are taken into consideration in the context of the poetry of Donne in the study. Donne was a significant poet of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries because he led many

other poets of the period like George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw, and Andrew Marvell who all turned out to be the most significant figures of the Metaphysical poetry.

## ÖZET

Bu çalışma, John Donne'ın Metafizik Şiire ve genel olarak İngiliz Edebiyatına katkılarını ortaya koymaya çalışmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı John Donne'ın yeni bir akım ortaya çıkarmakla beraber, kendi düşünce akımına göre dönemin diğer şairlerini de yönlendirdiğini göstermektir. Çocukluk döneminden başlayarak, bir Metafizik Şair olarak John Donne açısından büyük önem arz ettiği için yaşamını ve çalışmalarını şekillendiren elementler bu çalışma içerisinde dikkate alınmıştır.

Şiir bağlamındaki 'metafizik' terimini anlamak için, metafizik şiirin özellikleri, John Donne'ın şiirleri içerisinde incelenmiştir. Donne'ın hayatını şekillendiren eylemler, hayatı boyunca ortaya koyduğu eylemlere göre ele alınmıştır. Donne'ın mezhebini değiştirmesi hayatının önemli dönüm noktalarından biridir ki böylece kilisede başrahip olarak çalışmaya başlayarak güvenli bir iş sahibi olabilmıştır.

Çalışma Donne'un hayatı ile şiirleri arasındaki bazı benzerlikleri ortaya koymaya çalışmıştır. Donne'ın şiirlerini derinlemesine incelediğimiz zaman, Donne'ın kendi özel hayatında yaşadığı bazı tecrübeleri yansıttıkları açıktır. İçerisindeki konuşmacının kadını yatağa gelmesi için ikna etmeye çalıştığı 'To His Mistress Going to Bed' (Yatmaya Giden Sevgiliye) gibi şiirlerinden bazıları, Donne'ın kadınlarla yaşadığı özel deneyimlerini yansıtmaktadır.

Bu çalışma John Donne'ın çağdaşlarından nasıl farklı olduğunu göstermeye çalışmıştır. John Donne'ın ortaya çıktığı devir önem Elizabeth şairlerinin ve yazarlarının dönemi ve onlar tüm halkın ilgi odağıydı. Elizabeth şairleri ve yazarları çoğunlukla duygularını ifade etmek için aynı temaları ve aynı kalıp kelimeleri kullandılar; oysa Donne günlük dile ait kelimeleri kullanarak, şiirleri tamamıyla zekâ dolu nükteleriyle süslenmiş olmasına rağmen Elizabeth şairlerinden ve yazarlarından daha iyi anlaşılmuştur. Donne'ın şiirlerindeki temalar genellikle, Elizabeth yazarları ve şairlerinde görülen ruhsal aşktan çok, bedensel aşka odaklıydı çünkü Donne ruhsal aşka ancak bedensel aşk aracılığıyla ulaşabileceğine inanıyordu.

Yoğunlaştırılmış benzetme, imgecilik, ses sistemi ve kinaye gibi Donne'ın iyi olduğu birçok önemli unsur vardır ve bunlar çalışma içerisinde şiirleri ışığında

ele alınmıştır. Donne on altı ve on yedinci yüzyılın önemli bir şairiydi çünkü George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw, and Andrew Marwell gibi Metafizik Şiirin en önemli figürlerine dönüşen birçok şaire yol göstermiştir.

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“Love and salvation are not the two great subjects of his poetry; they were also preoccupations that gave dramatic shape to his life.”

Achsah Guibbory

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The sixteenth century is obvious to be the most flourishing period of English Literature as it introduced, perhaps, the most significant figures of English Literature including William Shakespeare and John Donne. Everyone has an idea about Shakespeare to some extent, however, John Donne is, to a great extent, considered to be only famous for his words 'for whom the bell tolls' or 'No man is an Island'. In fact, he established an original school of himself, the Metaphysical Poetry.

Metaphysical Poetry has always been viewed as one of the most distinguished branches of English Poetry throughout the history of English Literature. If we are to understand Metaphysicals deeply, it is certain to examine it through the previous periods of English Poetry. It is widely known how Shakespeare used some elements from ancient popular drama (Hamlet, for example, was originally an old Spanish tragedy). That Jacobean and Caroline poetry took their roots in the conventions of the Elizabethans is understood from the words by Trevor James (1988):

The various literary traditions of the seventeenth century do not exist in watertight compartments. Ben Jonson and his 'sons' popularised the elegant 'Cavalier' fashion, Donne and Herbert the tense intellectual style of the Metaphysicals. The extent to which poets crossed traditions, and the artificiality of critical divisions, are illustrated by the way Jonson could occasionally sound like Donne, and vice versa, while Milton sounded like neither (p. 25).

Most of the branches of literature have something deriving from its precedings, so does the Metaphysical poetry. That is why we should pay attention to the previous movements in English Literature. To start with the origin of the poetry, it goes back to Ancient Greece B. C., however, the emergence of poetry in England

occurs in the sixth and seventh centuries A. D. By the Norman conquest of England, the language of literature was also under the conquest of French and Latin as the court and the parliament preferred using French as the official language. The rebirth of English Literature occurs with the works of Chaucer, who is accepted as the first leader in English Language and Literature. His *Canterbury Tales* plays a significant role in English Literature along with the Pearl Poet's *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. These works were also accepted as the significant examples of the Medieval English Literature.

The Elizabethan Era, without any hesitation, has been accepted as the most flourishing period of English Literature by many scholars. In this period, William Shakespeare turned out to be the second leader of English Language and Literature. Elizabethan period saw the development of drama to a great extent. Renaissance provided the source for drama from Ancient Greece and Renaissance writers created many works by using this source. After the introduction of sonnet form by Thomas Wyatt to English Poetry, Shakespeare popularized it to a great extent. He used iambic pentameter as well as octave and sestet form in his sonnets. Other significant poets of this period were Edmund Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney. Elizabeth, herself, was known to write some kind of poetry like *On Monsieur's Departure* in this era as well (Alvarez, 1994).

After the Elizabethan Era, the Jacobean emerged under the influence of Ben Jonson, who became the third leader in English Literature after Chaucer and Shakespeare. After him, John Donne played a significant role in English Literature along with the other Metaphysical poets who conveyed the meaning of the poems in a quite different way. The Elizabethans were highly focused on the theme of love with their characteristic style like using verse. They often dedicated their works to the court just like the Petrarchans who were similar to the Elizabethans in practice. The period of the Elizabethans and the Petrarchans coincides with that of the Metaphysicals. Because these precursors of the Metaphysicals had already run out of every way of expressing the theme of love, Donne and friends had to find a new way to convey their feelings and thoughts about 'love'. Donne chose a way that was less travelled by and this was the key for the emergence of the Metaphysical poetry.

Donne did not pay attention to what the others were doing or saying about him. He reflected his wit and intelligence in his works in a harmony with his style.

While the Elizabethans were largely writing about the court and the courtiers, Petrarchans were writing about love conventions, and the neo-Platonism was glorifying the spiritual love, Donne appeared with many innovations. He ignored most of these styles before him and emerged a new way of expression in poetry. The neo-Platonism glorified spiritual love ignoring the bodily love. Donne opposed this idea and argued that one could only reach spiritual happiness through the bodily love.

Moreover, mutual love theme of Donne is worth studying as it is another characteristic of him. When Donne's poems are read, it is apparent that his approach to the theme of love differs from his contemporaries. It is so common to see his poems written for the one that he has already 'got'. He celebrates mutual love as he thinks that two lovers are just like two hemispheres of the earth. They make up 'one' when they are together. Otherwise, the lovers suffer from incompleteness.

The fact that this study is about the contribution of John Donne to the Metaphysical poetry will make it necessary to look the terms that are associated with him. First of all, the term 'conceit' will be discussed by means of examples from his poetry in order to put forth his ingenuity. There are also many other originalities, both technical and stylistic, of Donne. Donne used some figures of speech largely in his poetry such as analogy, hyperbole, metaphor, and simile. Especially, analogies play a significant role in Donne's poetry as they are highly used to show his cultivation. Donne had a great deal of knowledge of astronomy, both traditional and modern, and he displayed it to a great extent in his poetry.

One of the most apparent contributions of Donne is his use of emblem in his poetry. Emblems were in vogue in the sixteenth century. Antwerp was the center and there were a few figures interested in publishing emblem books such as Geoffrey Whitney. Donne got some examples from those books as well as he created some emblems on his own. The emblems were significant for Donne as some of his conceits were directly taken from emblems such as an emblem of the storm-tossed ship in 'A Hymn to Christ' which was written before his journey to Germany in 1618. Another example can be the emblem of compass in 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'. The emblems helped Donne use imagery in his poetry as well. Donne's images were sometimes from old astronomy as we can see

it in 'Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward' in which he tells about old beliefs about the planet earth.

What makes Donne so special among the other figures of the period? The question can be answered according to the way he led in his expression. Donne was bored of the accumulated vocabulary of the time. He always wanted to travel on a road which was used less or, if possible, never. The general theme of the literature was love and it was reflected with the same sense all the time. The poems were full of likening the mistress' lips to cherry and her cheeks to rose. After all, Donne was so different from the others that he could imagine his mistress as the fixed foot of a compass ('A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning').

Donne's another originality was his choice of vocabulary as he used everyday language in his poems unlike the accumulated vocabularies of the Elizabethans and the Petrarchans. Donne's colloquials enabled his poetry to pull the interests of more readers. The readers were able to understand what these metaphysical poems were conveying in spite of the fact that Donne's poems were often hard to solve because of his wit. However, Donne wanted his readers to be as intelligent as himself, that is why he only wrote for a group of elite friends.

*The Songs and Sonets*' of Donne are of great significance as they introduce another contribution of him to the metaphysical poetry; the sound system. The use of sound system is another feature of Donne's poetry as well as that of some other metaphysical poets. These poems have a fluent rhyme schedules which make poems like 'Go and Catch a Falling Star', 'The Canonization', 'The Flea', and 'The Sun Rising' to be sung just as the ancient Greek ballads. As well as sound system of the poetry, rhythm is of great significance in Donne's poetry. Unlike other poets, Donne used the rhythm in order to appeal the readers through their ears.

As a result of the attention Donne pulled, he has been criticized harshly so far. First of the strictures he faced was because of his avoidance of accent. Johnson claims that he deserves hanging because of this. Another criticism about Donne is related to the position of Donne in some of his poems such as 'Go and Catch a Falling Star' and 'Woman Constancy' in which the speaker makes the advocates of woman rights angry. Donne is criticized for being anti-feminist in these poems.

Donne's works can be categorized into five certain groups; *Satires, Elegies, Songs and Sonets, Divine Poems, and Anniversaries*. Each of the categories consists

of some certain characteristics. For example, *Satires* were generally written in order to criticize the social system and moral values while *Elegies* reflect special love affairs of Donne in an Ovidian way of expression. While *Song and Sonets* put forth the most special poems comparing the accumulated feelings and thoughts with Donne's special ones, *Divine Poems* are written on religious purposes. *The Anniversaries* can be accepted as a bridge between the secular poems and the religious poetry of Donne. They assume a dualistic division between body and soul. They are considered to urge the reader to isolate themselves from the earthly pleasure expressing the meaninglessness of the world.

The purpose of this study is to put forth the contribution of Donne to the Metaphysical Poetry as it is, apparently, countless. He was a forerunner in English poetry and, as a consequence; his originality in style led many successors including George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw, and Andrew Marvell who all turned out to be the most significant figures of the Metaphysical poetry.

## CHAPTER II

### JOHN DONNE AS A METAPHYSICAL POET

John Donne speaks in his letter to Prince Charles, a significant figure of the period, that he has had three 'Births'. First one is the natural birth when he comes to the world. Second one is a supernatural birth as his entry into the ministry is a 're-birth' for him. And the third one is his recovery from his 'sickness' (Bald, 1970). Before focusing on the mature John Donne, it would be better to have a look at the 'young John'.

John Donne was born in London, in the year 1573, to a 'good and virtuous' family. He was lucky about the family he was born into as his father was originally from Wales and he had some kind of relationship with Sir Thomas More. His mother, Elizabeth Heywood, was the daughter of John Heywood the writer, who had married Sir Thomas More's niece. This provided 'John' with an intellectual background which would, later, contribute to him in his career (Margaret, 1988).

He started his education at home with a private tutor who took care of him until he was ten years old. At the age of eleven, he went to the University of Oxford which was the best at education of the languages of French and Latin and then he attended Cambridge. When he was seventeen, he was removed to London, and then admitted into Lincoln's Inn, with intent to study law. He gave great testimonies of his wit, his learning, and of his improvement in that profession which never served him for other use than an 'ornament and self-satisfaction' (Bald, 1970).

Donne was one of at least six children but by the time he reached his adulthood only one of them, his sister Anne, was still alive. His mother married twice after his father's death in 1567 but he was lucky with his stepfather; with the first particularly, a distinguished professional man who made excellent arrangements for the John's education, to begin with by private tuition at home and later Oxford and Cambridge as well. The death of his father at an early age played a

significant role in Donne's life. He died before Donne's admission into the society; and, being a merchant, left him his portion in money. John's family watched his education profoundly and he got education both in the mathematics, and in all the other liberal sciences. Donne was born in London and lived most of his life there. For that reason his outlook was naturally urban and sophisticated (Beer, 1989).

After 'John' was ready to be John Donne, his life circle started with writing letters to some ladies in order to attract them with his wit and ended with a great range of works including *Satires, Elegies, Songs and Sonets*, etc. However, the last years of Donne passed with an obsession of death, for that reason, he could only write a few pieces some of which were incomplete. One of the pieces he accomplished in his life time was 'Death's Duel', which was called his own funeral sermon. It was completed just a few weeks before he died in London on March 31, 1631. The last thing Donne wrote just before his death was 'Hymne to God, my God, In my Sicknesse' (Donne, 2007).

There are some elements that shaped Donne's life to a great extent. First of these was not a thing that Donne could choose; his religion. He was born into a Catholic family and brought up as a Catholic by his family and tutors. His tutors were of great education in religion and they tried hard to make Donne a religious figure.

When Donne was at his early twenties, he had to make a choice, a choice which would affect his life entirely. He was born and brought up as a Roman Catholic but it was a big obstacle before him in the sense of gaining a prestigious position in the society. He made a marriage which affected his whole life as well. His elope with Anne More caused him to be dismissed from the society for a long time. His marriage and choice of the religious tendency would make his life get shaped differently.

Donne's marriage plays a significant role in his life beside his conversion. Until he met his prospective wife, Anne More, he was ambitious about placing a prestigious position in society. He went to Italy and Spain for some special journeys having studied law at the Inns of Court. After his return to England, he started a job as a secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton who was a nobleman, judge and statesman who served as Lord Keeper and Lord Chancellor then.



Meanwhile, he met Egerton's niece, Anne More who was also a relative to Sir Thomas More. He fell in love with her, however they did not follow the traditional way of getting married, and consequently, it costed Donne a great deal. Donne eloped with Anne More in 1601 and this costed him being barred from employment, which caused a fall in his career. He tried to find a secure job for many years seeking help from authorized people, but it was not true until 1615 when he started working in the Church of England as Dean of St Paul's. Rest of his life passed preaching powerful and dramatic sermons that applied personal experience to the public discussion of biblical texts, theological issues, and matters of faith. Here we see the differences that Donne experienced unlike his contemporary Herbert, who was also one of the significant poets of the Metaphysicals. Herbert could not achieve his aims because of the death of James in 1625. Just as Donne did, so Herbert entered the Church reluctantly. However, he could not get to any high Office like Donne.

After the mistake Donne did by eloping with Anne More, he had much difficulty in making a living. His unconventional marriage as well as his being a Catholic prevented him from gaining a position in the society. What is the matter with his being a Catholic? The answer may be non-sense for today but it was not in the sixteenth century. The oath in the college meant to obey the Church of England. However, Donne did not oath, as he was a Catholic, and he could not get any position neither in Oxford nor in Cambridge.

When Donne was born in 1572, his religion was already present, having been chosen for him like all the new-born. He was born into Roman Catholic families some of whom had suffered the infliction of loss, pain, or death for adherence to Catholicism as some people in power then were trying to change England into a Protestant state. It is not for sure when Donne left Roman Catholicism for the Church of England. Here arises the question why Donne wanted to change his religion. Guibbory (1993) claims in her essay that contradictory impulses probably motivated his conversion and:

Ambition as well as the desire to escape persecution- the desire to have a comfortable place in his society in more than one sense- may have influenced his conversion. Intellectual and spiritual conviction,

however, were also surely important factors, for Donne tells us he had read extensively in contemporary theological disputes. (p. 124)

John Donne made some critical decision but he is still known as a “wit” who wrote his poems to an elite class consisted of his friends. He did not publish his poems; instead, they circulated on manuscripts. It is also known that John Donne’s poems were such difficult to understand that they required an upper level of intelligence to understand them. This may be a reason why Donne just wrote for his educated friends. So, his most important and formative audience was the circle of friends he had before his marriage in 1601. Donne wrote his poems for this group of friends when he was at his early twenties. Donne’s friends were to much extent like Donne; they finished the same schools (Cambridge and Oxford) and they attended to the Inns Of Court. When we look them up in the period of Donne, each of his friends were of a respected state in the society. They were either in the profession of diplomacy or law; either in that of politics or army (Marotti, 1986). The list of the group shows us the kind of audience Donne was writing for, what interests and tone they might have had in common. The list starts with Sir Henry Wotton who was a poet, and later, became the Ambassador to Venice and finally Provost of Eton. The second one in the list is John Hoskyns who was a close friend and later became a Member of Parliament, Judge, poet as well as he wrote one of the significant books of the Elizabethan period, *Directions for Speech and Style*. The third place is for Sir Rirchard Baker who turned out to be a M.P. and High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, historian, essayist and translator. The fourth one is Christopher Brook who became a significant lawyer as well as a poet. The fifth one is Samuel Brook (brother of the former) who, also played a role in Donne’s eloping with Anne More, was a minor poet as well as a dramatist. The list goes on with Rowland Woodward, a diplomat and courtier. The next one is a relative of the former, Thomas Woodward who was a leading lawyer. The eighth in the list is Beaupre Bell who was a satirist. The ninth is Sir John Roe, a poet and soldier. The tenth is Sir William Cornwallis, a politician and the first English imitator of Montaigne; the next person in this elite list is Sir Robert Cotton, the antiquary. The eleventh one is Sir Francis Wooley, who “put up the Donnes during the difficult years of their disgrace. The twelfth person is Sir

Tobie Mathew who was a close friend of Bacon, a diplomat and the list ends with Henry Goodyer who was a soldier, a courtier and patron of the arts.\*

As it was expressed before, this elite group of friends had many things in common; when we list the things they have in common, the first place is most probably the education they got. They went to the same educational mill like Donne, Oxford or Cambridge and then their final destination was Inns of Court where they all got their law education which shaped the lives of most of them. The second place is related to the former as their education determined their profession to great extent. They started serving in diplomacy, law, politics, the church, the army or court which were all the most respected professions of the time. The third place is about their families they were born into. They were all from wealthy middle class families not from the families of aristocracy. It is often thought that if they were knighted, as any of them were, they were knighted more for their services than their birth. Moreover, they all wrote a piece of poetry in a way illustrating their interests. However, only one of them published his pieces apart from Donne. He was Gilpin and he was criticized him for plagiarizing Donne. Alvarez (1967) states in the following paragraph:

In short, Donne's first and most formative audience was made up of the young, literary, middle class intellectual elite who, like Donne himself, were to become the leading Professional men of the time. This, in Carew's words, was "The Universall Monarchy of Wit", men of intellect and wide, varied talents, who like the subjects in any other monarchy, had language, customs, conventions and interest in common. Donne was their "King, that rul'd as hee thought fit". But that merely meant he was more powerful, more authoritative than the rest. He was not apart from them (p. 36).

The question why the Metaphysicals used an intellect manner in their poetry is of great significance, in many ways, for most of the critics. Of course, there were some changes during the period of the Metaphysicals, and those changes affected these manly men. We see changes in values and attitudes and Frances Austin (1992)

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\* The information about the elite group of Donne's audience can be found in Ezel, Margaret J. M. (1992). *The "Gentleman's Journal" and the Commercialization of Restoration Coterie Literary Practices: Modern Philology*, Vol. 89, No. 3 pp. 323-340. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

claims that these “made for an intellectual climate in which men examined their consciences more closely and took stock of their own position in relation to Church and State”. We get an answer to the question why Donne wrote religious poetry of an intensely personal kind as it is added that “such heartsearchings as those of Donne, whose Roman Catholic background hindered his secular career, led to religious poetry of an intensely personal kind” (p. 1).

Donne has always been considered as one of the greatest wit of the English literature. However, some scholars criticize him for his poems that are argued to be anti-feminist. One of these poems is ‘Go and Catch a Falling Star’ in which there is a disputed idea that “nothing is as impossible or bizarre as the notion of a woman being both beautiful and faithful” (Singh, 1992). It may be accepted as ‘witty or conventional’ as well as there may be no reason to look for an autobiographical fact behind the poem. The poem, ‘Go and Catch a Falling Star’ is highly criticized for being an anti-feminist poem and it is not hard to find some elements that may make the advocates of the women rights get angry with him. There are many writers criticizing Donne in the sense of his approach to the ‘sex’ such as Elizabeth M. A Hodgson, in her *Gender and the sacred self in John Donne* (2001) and H. L. Meakin, in his *John Donne's Articulations of the Feminine* (1999):

Go and catch a falling star,  
Get with child a mandrake root,  
Tell me where all past years are,  
Or who cleft the Devil's foot,  
Teach me to hear mermaids singing,  
Or to keep off envy's stinging,  
And find  
What wind  
Serves to advance an honest mind.

[...]

If thou find'st one, let me know,  
Such a pilgrimage were sweet;  
Yet do not, I would not go,  
Though at next door we might meet:  
Though she were true, when you met her,  
And last, till you write your letter,  
Yet she

Will be  
False, ere I come, to two or three. (Donne, 2008).

When we try to analyze the poem we first see the word ‘mandrake root’ which is a plant that is supposed to resemble a man. It is believed that this plant’s root uttered a human scream when pulled out of the ground. It was also used as an aphrodisiac. After that, Donne mentions ‘devil’ which was generally portrayed in the middle ages and the Renaissance as having horns, a tail and cloven heels.

Another poem that is argued as being anti-feminist is Donne’s ‘Woman Constancy’. It is actually as dramatic monologue. Unlike ‘song’ it is addressed directly to the mistress; as in *The Flea* the poet’s argumentative wit produces the dramatic turn at the end. The title is ironic, because of the fact that the subject of the poem is woman’s inconstancy:

NOW thou hast loved me one whole day,  
To-morrow when thou leavest, what wilt thou say ?  
Wilt thou then antedate some new-made vow?  
Or say that now  
We are not just those persons which we were?  
Or that oaths made in reverential fear  
Of Love, and his wrath, any may forswear?  
Or, as true deaths true marriages untie,  
So lovers' contracts, images of those,  
Bind but till sleep, death's image, them unloose ?  
Or, your own end to justify,  
For having purposed change and falsehood, you  
Can have no way but falsehood to be true ?  
Vain lunatic, against these 'scapes I could  
Dispute, and conquer, if I would;  
Which I abstain to do,  
For by to-morrow I may think so too (Donne, 2008).

When we look at the poem, the first thing that draws our attention is the questions marks; there are six questions in the seventeen line poem. The questions show that the speaker continually asks and expects answers from his mistress. One of the most apparent analogies in the poem can be accepted as the mistress’ inconstancy being like the moon. As the moon changes day by day, so does his mistress. This is one of the strictures that Donne was opposed to. The advocates of the women rights do not accept the idea of women’s likening to the moon in the sense of inconstancy.

Another significant poem that Donne can be accepted as to be anti-feminist is 'Community'. In this poem, Donne argues that women are merely 'things indifferent' (line 3) which 'all' men may 'use' (line 12). They have no moral value, let alone spiritual and thus sexual love becomes a matter of physical appetite:

GOOD we must love, and must hate ill,  
For ill is ill, and good good still ;  
    But there are things indifferent, 3  
Which wee may neither hate, nor love,  
But one, and then another prove,  
    As we shall find our fancy bent.

If then at first wise Nature had  
Made women either good or bad,  
    Then some wee might hate, and some choose ;  
But since she did them so create,  
That we may neither love, nor hate,  
    Only this rests, all all may use. 12

[...]

But they are ours as fruits are ours;  
He that but tastes, he that devours,  
    And he that leaves all, doth as well;  
Changed loves are but changed sorts of meat;  
And when he hath the kernel eat,  
    Who doth not fling away the shell? (Donne, 2008).

The last stanza, again, proves that this is an anti-feminist poem as the first lines of the stanza refer to women as objects that men possess; 'they are ours as fruits are ours'.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TERM “METAPHYSICAL”

What is Metaphysical Poetry and who are metaphysical poets? The twenty first century readers most probably have some trouble with understanding the term “metaphysic” and the poetry written in the first three quarters of the seventeenth century, about a half millenium ago. One of the most well-known definitions is made by Patricia Beer (1989) in her book, *An Introduction to Metaphysical Poets*;

the metaphysical poets were the men who wrote in a certain manner during the first three-quarters of the seventeenth century, who were led, both chronologically and from the point of view of influence and importance, by John Donne, and whose way of writing came to an end with the poetry of Andrew Marvell and Abraham Cowley (p. 1).

The origin of the word, “metaphysic” for this kind of poetry and the poets of that first stood in *A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* by Dryden (1999); He says of Donne:

He affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softnesses of love (p. 67).

T.S. Eliot (1972) in his essay *The Metaphysical Poets*, after remarking that “the term has long done duty as a term of abuse, or as the label of a quaint and pleasant taste”, is concerned not to discuss its possible accuracy but to define the essential qualities of the poets who are so called (p. 282). In fact, Donne tries to express his ideas through the background information he does not state them openly in his poetry. Expressing that the metaphysics occur in Donne’s poetry as a vehicle but never as the thing conveyed, Mrs Joan Bennet (1979) states in her *Five Metaphysical Poets*:

It is not altogether a happy term, since it gives the impression that Metaphysical poetry discusses the nature of the universe, in short, that as Dryden assures the Earl of Dorset, Donne perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softnesses of love. But Donne and the poets most influenced by him were not speculating about the nature of things as, for instance, Milton does in *Paradise Lost* or Pope in *The Essay on Man* or Tennyson in *Memorian* (for there is a similar motive in these three poems, despite all differences of temperament and of treatment). (p. 1)

It is clear that the Metaphysicals were not the ones that their label referred to. They were of no kind which fulfil the task in which a real 'metaphysical' one must accomplish. An example can be helpful to prove that Donne was not concerned with the nature or anything related to. Donne was just trying to express 'a state of mind by referring to a background of ideas'. The example is from *Holy Sonnet VII*:

At the round earth's imagined corners blow  
Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise  
From death, you numberless infinities  
Of souls, and to your scattered bodies go;  
All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,  
All whom war, dea[r]th, age, agues, tyrannies,  
Despair, law, chance hath slain, and you, whose eyes  
Shall behold God, and never taste death's woe.  
But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space;  
For, if above all these my sins abound,  
'Tis late to ask abundance of Thy grace,  
When we are there. Here on this lowly ground,  
Teach me how to repent, for that's as good  
As if Thou hadst seal'd my pardon with Thy blood (Donne,  
2008).

In this sonnet, John Donne displays his reverence to God apparently, and repents for his sinful soul in the sestet of the sonnet as well as his originality profoundly. He breaks the rules of previous sonneteers with his rhyming. The intense emotion of the poem is provided by Donne's use of rough rhyming, alliteration and assonance. The same style can be seen in *An Anatomy of the World* which is quite a long poem of Donne.



And new philosophy calls all in doubt,  
The element of fire is quite put out,  
The sun is lost, and th'earth, and no man's wit  
Can well direct him where to look for it

[...]

Steward to fate; she whose rich eyes and breast  
Gilt the West Indies, and perfum'd the East;  
Whose having breath'd in this world, did bestow  
Spice on those Isles, and bade them still smell so,  
And that rich India which doth gold inter,  
Is but as single money, coin'd from her;  
She to whom this world must it self refer,  
As suburbs or the microcosm of her,  
She, she is dead; she's dead: when thou know'st this,  
Thou know'st how lame a cripple this world

[...]

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough way,  
And lured me towards sweet Death; as Night by Day,  
Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,  
Led into light, life, peace. An antelope,  
In the suspended impulse of its lightness,  
Were less aethereally light: the brightness  
Of her divinest presence trembles through  
Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew  
Embodied in the windless heaven of June  
Amid the splendour-winged stars, the Moon  
Burns, inextinguishably beautiful:  
And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full  
Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,  
Killing the sense with passion; sweet as stops  
Of planetary music heard in trance.  
In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,  
The sunbeams of those wells which ever leap  
Under the lightnings of the soul--too deep  
For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense (Donne, 2008).

There is no doubt that the Metaphysicals used some likeness between things which may be so simple just as likening the rose to the cheeks of the mistress or it may be so complex just as the relations being only a similarity in colour, touch and scent. When we come to the matter of 'emotion', we see that the Metaphysicals seem quite analytic about it. Sometimes, this analyticism forces them to use words

which call the mind into play, rather than those that appeal to the senses or evoke an emotional response through memory. Mrs Bennets (1979) states that:

The poets who wrote successfully in the metaphysical style were all of them self-conscious and analytic, though they vary greatly in the range and depth of their thinking and in the subtlety of their self-knowledge. Donne, for instance, links up a wider range of the ideas and explores a more complex attitude of mind in 'Batter my Hearth' than Herbert does in Affliction, while Herbert's Affliction is more subtle and self-aware than Vaughan's Distraction; but all three are analyses of emotion. They have in common sufficient detachment from an experience, at first intensely felt, to be intellectually aware of its intricacy (p. 3).

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE METAPHYSICAL POETRY

For the Metaphysical style any definition will have its limitations, but it can be defined according to the characteristics of the poems of this genre. There are many significant elements which are familiar with the Metaphysical poets such as conceit, sound system, imagery and allusion. The list is not exclusive, but all these features mark a shift in literary style so major that Donne's contemporaries were able to speak of a 'School of Donne'.

Donne is famous for the sound of his poems, and their use of figurative language, especially their conceits, are two elements which not only provide vivid demonstration of how the Metaphysicals inherited stylistic conventions, commonplaces, and assumptions from their Elizabethan predecessors, but also show how they developed characteristics which became particularly their own. Trevor James (1988) in his *The Metaphysical Poets* states:

Some have marked on the Metaphysicals' expression of Renaissance individualism, namely that they present a private, not a public, world. Many have concentrated upon stylistic features: recondite imagery, dissonance, logical argumentative structure, equivocal nature, dramatic qualities. Most favored of all has been the view that 'wit'-imaginative intelligence shown in verbal and intellectual agility- is a defining characteristic (p. 33).

One of the significant components of Metaphysical poetry can be accepted as 'sound'. As we all know the tradition of the ancient Greek in which poets used to sing their literal pieces as a song. This is the origin of the most Metaphysical poem's sound system. The Metaphysicals wrote their poems according to the system of sound in order to enable them to be sung (Cookson, 1990). We can sum up that the sound is a distinguished element of the poetry of the Metaphysicals. It is

claimed that the roughness of sound and use of an idiomatic speech rhythm expresses a different attitude to experience.

Metaphysicals were really careful about the form of their poetry as they paid great attention to the metre and rhyme, however, we cannot talk about the same attention about the verse as they thought that the verse should be 'rough, rugged and irregular'. Most scholars of the time severely criticized the Metaphysicals and the most severe one was the words of Ben Jonson as he claimed that John Donne 'deserved hanging' as he did not pay attention to the accent (Maine, 1996).

Most probably, the most significant feature of the Metaphysicals, especially of John Donne, is the usage of 'conceit'. What is conceit then? If we want a complete answer to this question, we had better look at the definition by Helen Gardner (1978):

A conceit is a comparison whose ingenuity is more striking than its justness, or, at least, more immediately striking. All comparisons discover likeness in things unlike: a comparison becomes a conceit when we are made to concede likeness while being strongly conscious of unlikeness (p. 9).

While Helen Gardner defines conceit as 'a comparison', we see the definition of it by Samuel Johnson, in *Life of Johnson* by James Boswell (2006), as 'a kind of discordia concurs, a combination of similar images, or discovery of occult resemblance in things apparently unlike.' (p.678)

The use of conceit in poetry of the seventeenth century is a usual thing but the Metaphysicals differed from their contemporaries, the Elizabethans, in some ways. The Elizabethans used the conceit mostly to embellish their poetry, to make them more charming while the Metaphysicals employed it in order to make their thoughts wear a body. In brief, the conceit of Elizabethans was 'decorative' while that of the Metaphysicals was 'organic'. James (1988) expresses the 'conceit' of the Metaphysicals as:

Designed to define or persuade, it represents an extreme proof by analogy and forces speculation: its dramatic, rigorous, complex and unlikely analogies express its rhetorical intention. The result is a style in which nothing can be taken for granted and where subject, tone, professed attitudes and sentiments are all equivocal. In fact, a

distorted or unexpected perspective is almost the essence of the Metaphysical conceit (p. 33).

It can be clear if two poems of the same 'species' are compared: Donne's *Good Morrow* and George Gascoigne's *Good Marrow*. It can be seen that they both show that they are aware of the genre and they are 'aubades, poems welcoming the day. In the poem by Gascoigne, appeared in Giles Fletcher's *Poetry of the seventeenth century*, he takes the rainbow and the promise of redemption:

The rainbow bending in the sky,  
Bedeck'd with sundry hues,  
Is like the seat of God on high,  
And seems to tell these news:  
That as thereby He promised  
To drown the world no more,  
So by the blood which Christ hath shed,  
He will our health restore (p. 4).

The image of a rainbow can most probably be related with hope. The poem was written to celebrate the recovery of King George V from serious illness. Just as the rainbow is a sign of the end of the rain, it is also the end of the illness of his master. Here we see the conceit used to embellish the thought thereby we are not able to see the same use of conceit in John Donne's poetry, or that of other Metaphysicals. When we look at the poem *Good Morrow* by John Donne, it is so much different, both in manner and expression, from that of George Gascoigne:

I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I  
Did till we loved? Were we not weaned till then?  
But sucked on country pleasures childishly?  
Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den?  
'Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be.  
If ever any beauty I did see,  
Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee

[...]

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,  
And true plain hearts do in the faces rest,

Where can we find two better hemispheres  
Without sharp north, without declining west?  
Whatever dies was not mixed equally;  
If our two loves be one, or thou and I  
Love so alike that none do slacken, none can die. (Smith, 1996).

Here we see that the conceit is used not for embellishing the thought but making the thought wear a body. The reader is shocked by the speaker whether the image of a baby shows the purity of their love or it shows the physical love as the expression 'got' implies that their relation also includes physical relation, too. 'Good Morrow' is actually an 'aubade' which means an open air serenade at dawn. For that reason, we can say that this poem can be accepted to be addressing the dawn of the love between the speaker and his mistress.

In this poem, we also have a different air of meditation given by Donne by using 'wonder' at the beginning. The expression of 'wean'd ... childishly' is a good example of analogy employed by Donne. As we know an infant suckles at its mother's breast; as it grows older it is weaned away from its mother's milk and introduced to solid food. Donne, here, suggests that till they fell in love with each other his mistress and he were like infants or those people who enjoy rustic pleasures, but their love has caused them to grow up. Now they are like those sophisticated people who can enjoy the pleasures of the city or court. Nowhere is it suggested that Donne and his mistress had not previously been in love; rather, their previous loves got less. It is also claimed that the milk and meat contrast is Biblical. We also see a use of colloquialism by the use of 'snorted' (snored) (Singh, 1992).

In the poem, Donne uses an allusion of Seven Sleepers which is a tale about seven Christian men who sought shelter in a cave in order to escape the persecution of the Roman emperor Decius. The cave was walled up because of the emperor's orders so as to make these men starve to death. However they fell into a 'miraculous' sleep and awoke after 187 years. By this allusion, Donne aims to state the idea that before they fell in love the mistress and the poet could not be said to have been living, only sleeping.

We can make it certain by grouping the conceit into two: first one is the way the poet summarizes the idea 'radically' to which Donne's *The Relic* is a good example with the line 'A bracelet of bright hair about the bone' which shocks the

reader with the strange and ‘strongly contrasted associations’ evoked by ‘bright hair and bone’. Another condensed conceit example can be the line ‘Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb’ in *Holy Sonnets* by Donne. The second one is the way the poet spreads the idea through the poem. We can give an example from Donne with his ‘A Valediction: forbidding Mourning’ :

AS virtuous men pass mildly away,  
And whisper to their souls to go,  
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,  
"Now his breath goes," and some say, "No."  
Such wilt thou be to me, who must,  
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;  
Thy firmness makes my circle just,  
And makes me end where I begun.  
(Donne, 2009).

One of the most famous of Donne’s conceits is found in this poem where he compares two lovers who are likened to the separated legs of a compass. In the poem we get the idea that if the one lover moves, the other one follows just as one leg of a compass follows the other leg. Donne did not condense the conceit in a line or two, he spreaded his idea of two lovers being like two legs of a compass throughout the poem.

Donne’s *Holy Sonnet VI* with Thomas Nashe’s *Summer’s Last Will and Testament* were written in the same period as well as in the same theme. The rhythms in these poems are so different and each of them creates a different mood. The choice of the words and images plays a significant role in the creation of these different moods. Here are these two poems; first, the poem by Nashe and then that of Donne:

Adieu, farewell, earth's bliss;  
This world uncertain is;  
Fond are life's lustful joys;  
Death proves them all but toys;  
None from his darts can fly;  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord, have mercy on us!

[...]

Haste, therefore, each degree,  
To welcome destiny;  
Mount we unto the sky.  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord, have mercy on us! (Cunningham, 1953).

And Donne's *Holy Sonnet VI*:

This is my play's last scene ; here heavens appoint  
My pilgrimage's last mile ; and my race  
Idly, yet quickly run, hath this last pace ;  
My span's last inch, my minute's latest point ;  
And gluttonous Death will instantly unjoint  
My body and soul, and I shall sleep a space ;  
But my ever-waking part shall see that face,  
Whose fear already shakes my every joint.  
Then, as my soul to heaven her first seat takes flight,  
And earth-born body in the earth shall dwell,  
So fall my sins, that all may have their right,  
To where they're bred and would press me to hell.  
Impute me righteous, thus purged of evil,  
For thus I leave the world, the flesh, the devil. (Carey, 1990).



## CHAPTER V

### ACTION-REACTION

The last quarter of the sixteenth century was a period in which the Petrarchan style of literature was at its peak while Donne was commencing to 'write'. Before him, the Elizabethans and the Petrarchans were about to finish every style that had been used to express 'love'. The preceders, including even Shakespeare, used "the conventional pose of self-depreciation and adulation of the mistress" in their works and Donne thought to choose a different way which was travelled less than the others. Donne did not stop writing about love; however there was little left in the sense of style, he continued to write as there was much more to be said about it.

Even though some scholars of Donne claim that there is no relationship between Donne's life and his poetry (Bennet 1979), it is clear that we can see accurate parallels between them. If we try to relate Donne's poetry with his life, we can see a great accordance between each other. His personal life and poetry has connections about love and his relation to God. A seventeenth century biographer of John Donne, Izaak Walton (2004), claims that the secular love poems were written by young John Donne while the religious poems were written by the old, priest John Donne.

For instance, we can easily relate the poem, *The Flea*, with Donne's experience with Anne More before they eloped. *The Flea* is a poem in which the speaker is trying to convince a reluctant woman to sleep with him using many amazing and witty sentences. This poem might give some clues about the relation between Anne More and John Donne before they eloped as, in the poem, the speaker (who we can call John Donne) displays "control, elegance, and power through verbal wit and argument" while the woman (who we can call Anne More) "repeatedly frustrates his desire for conquest."

Another example may be the poem, *Holy Sonnets*, in which the speaker is trying to understand himself through Christ. We can relate this poem with Donne's life as a Dean of St Paul's. In this poem, Donne uses an analogy which is a significant feature of his poetry as well as that of Metaphysical poetry. He draws an analogy of contrast between his "flattering, persuasive addresses to his profane mistresses and his present address to God":

As in my idolatrie  
I said to all my profane mistresses,  
Beauty, of pitty, foulnesse onely is,  
A signe of rigour: so I say to thee,  
To wicked spirits are horrid shapes assign'd,  
This beauteous forme assures a pitious minde (Donne, 2008).

In the argument whether the parallel between Donne's life and his poetry is of importance or not, we realize that what matters is that Donne knew much enough to portray and analyze a wider range of emotion than any other English poet except Shakespeare. His *Songs and Sonets* and the *Elegies* may be dramatic or they may be subjective, more probably they are a mixture of the two, for experience and detachment are equally essential to a poet. If we are to understand Donne and his poetry, we should be careful about associating the themes and feelings that Donne used in his poetry. As it was expressed before, Donne lived a great life full of adventure; he made journeys from side to side resulting with a wide range of poems.

The sixteenth century experienced the flood of conventional sonnet sequences in the Petrarchan fashion in which Shakespeare played the most significant role. Some other poets followed him in the same tradition while some other poets felt the need of realism. These poets wanted realism in their works as they thought it as an escape from idealization, the result was, of course, inevitably cynicism. One affection is replaced by its opposite. Some of Donne's poems, like his prose *Paradoxes and Problems*, are the products of this reaction. Their characteristics are the products of this reaction as well. The characteristics are intellectual overflowing quantity and spirit of contradiction. Both prose and verse writings in this mood are exercises in moral paradox, which compensate for cold affection by bright wit and ingenious logic.

It is widely accepted how different Donne was as he used a totally different way of expressing his feelings and thought in his verses. He was a good observer as well as he was balanced about his use of logic and emotion in his poetry. Sometimes, Donne was criticized to be anyone similar to his precursors and there may be some clues that may lead us to believe so, however, Donne is certain to have used a different style in his poetry. He was an innovator not only for the verse style but also for the prose. The prose writers had the chance of acquiring some new techniques from their contemporary poet, Donne.

WHEN by thy scorn, O murd'ress, I am dead,  
And that thou thinkst thee free  
From all solicitation from me,  
Then shall my ghost come to thy bed,  
And thee, feign'd vestal, in worse arms shall see :  
Then thy sick taper will begin to wink,  
And he, whose thou art then, being tired before,  
Will, if thou stir, or pinch to wake him, think

[...]

A verier ghost than I.  
What I will say, I will not tell thee now,  
Lest that preserve thee ; and since my love is spent,  
I'd rather thou shouldst painfully repent,  
Than by my threatenings rest still innocent (Donne, 2009).

It is reasonable to conjecture, from the evidence of Donne's life and correspondence, which the poems just referred to were written before he met Anne More, who was to be his wife. But they may well have been written in the same years as another set of poems conceived in quite a different temper. These are the poems that record the poignant delight of mutual love-making, without reference to outside interference, and with no hint of inadequacy in the beloved. Typical poems in this mood are 'The Sunne Rising', 'the Dreame', 'The Breake of Day'.

'The Breake of Day' is the only one of Donne's poems that is put into the mouth of a woman and it is especially interesting for that reason. If he could imagine himself into other situations which had no counterpart in real life, there is

no need then to suppose that every poem had its corresponding anecdote. The poem speaks so:

'TIS true, 'tis day ; what though it be?  
O, wilt thou therefore rise from me?  
Why should we rise because 'tis light?  
Did we lie down because 'twas night?  
Love, which in spite of darkness brought us hither,  
Should in despite of light keep us together.

[...]

Must business thee from hence remove?  
O ! that's the worst disease of love,  
The poor, the foul, the false, love can  
Admit, but not the busied man.  
He which hath business, and makes love, doth do  
Such wrong, as when a married man doth woo (Donne, 2008)

The theme of John Donne's love poem 'The Break of Day' is lovers parting at dawn and the metaphorical comparison of the speaker's love to the elements of day and night. This poem is assumed to be a feminine point of view which is revealed in its structure and thematical development as well as it may be considered as voicing the same sex love as George Klawitter expresses in his work *The Enigmatic Narrator: The Voicing of Same-Sex Love in the Poetry of John Donne* (1994). The poem is constructed of three stanzas; each stanza contains six lines. The first stanza is written in the form of a dramatic monologue of four questions demanding confirmation if the speaker's lover is going to leave because day has come. The speaker questions the importance of time and conventions of love making as day rolls into night and night rolls into day.

The second stanza is based on a personification of light and how it affects the speaker's attitude towards his or her lover. It is also based on conditions that if light could see, things that were not initially apparent, would suddenly become clear. The third stanza concretely describes the daily activities associated with light such as business and work and how they negatively affect the attitude of the speaker.

‘The Sunne Rising’ is remarkable for its variety of tone, from the gay impertinence of its opening:

BUSY old fool, unruly Sun,  
Why dost thou thus,  
Through windows, and through curtains, call on us ?  
Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run ?  
Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide  
Late school-boys and sour prentices,  
Go tell court-huntsmen that the king will ride,  
Call country ants to harvest offices ;  
Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,  
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

[...]

She's all states, and all princes I ;  
Nothing else is ;  
Princes do but play us ; compared to this,  
All honour's mimic, all wealth alchemy.  
Thou, Sun, art half as happy as we,  
In that the world's contracted thus ;  
Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be  
To warm the world, that's done in warming us.  
Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere ;  
This bed thy center is, these walls thy sphere (Donne, 2009).

Donne could handle sensual love in all its aspects, from the bitterness of desire thwarted, to the fleeting paradise of desire fulfilled. But he was to do more than this. There are a number of poems which celebrate the rarer love in which senses are vehicles and means of judging to whom any given poem was addressed; but we know that his relation to Anne More was of this character. Thirteen years after his marriage to her he could write: ‘We had not one another at so cheap a rate as that we should ever be weary of one another’ (Black, 1959; Carey, 1081; Gardner, 1967). The sentence strikes the same note of security as distinguishes his most mature love poetry. The need for watchful jealousy passes when the fickle senses are no longer the foundation upon which love is built. To Donne, this experience was like awakening from a nightmare as he cries:

And now good morrow to our waking soules,  
Which watch not one another out of feare;

This welcome to serenity is the counterpart of his former distrust, both of his own and of his mistress' constancy. His ardent and adventurous temperament craved a point of rest, first from the love of women and later from the love of God. The triumphant close of *The Anniversarie* is the assertion of a satisfied need:

Who is so safe as wee? Where none can doe  
Treason to us, except one of us two.  
True and false feares let us two refrain,  
Let us love nobly, and live, and adde againe  
Yeares and yeares unto yeares, till we attaine  
To write threescore: this is the second of our raigne  
(Donne, 2008).

In this phase of experience Donne does not surprise us by wit into the acceptance of a paradox; he progresses from thought to thought with a measured and weight music:

Dull sublunary lovers love  
(whose soule is sense) cannot admit  
Absense, because it doth remove  
Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love, so much refin'd  
That ourselves know not what it is,  
Inter-assured of the mind,  
Care lesse, eyes, lips, and hands to misse (Donne, 2008).

Donne shows his skillful pose in other poems such as 'The Flea'. The poem expresses complex emotion. Donne, in this poem, conceives and expresses a love which, though it belongs as much to the body as to the mind, is strong in absence and even independent of external beauty. In *Elegie V* he leaves his Picture with his mistress before going on a journey. When he returns the Picture might be of no likeness:

HERE take my picture ; though I bid farewell,  
Thine, in my heart, where my soul dwells, shall dwell.  
'Tis like me now, but I dead, 'twill be more,  
When we are shadows both, than 'twas before.  
When weatherbeaten I come back ; my hand

Perhaps with rude oars torn, or sun-beams tann'd,  
My face and breast of haircloth, and my head  
With care's harsh sudden hoariness o'erspread,  
My body a sack of bones, broken within,  
And powder's blue stains scatter'd on my skin ;  
If rival fools tax thee to have loved a man,  
So foul and coarse, as, O ! I may seem then,  
This shall say what I was ; and thou shalt say,  
" Do his hurts reach me? doth my worth decay?  
Or do they reach his judging mind, that he  
Should now love less, what he did love to see?  
That which in him was fair and delicate,  
Was but the milk, which in love's childish state  
Did nurse it ; who now is grown strong enough  
To feed on that, which to weak tastes seems tough .  
(Donne, 2009)

It is widely accepted by many scholars of John Donne (Stubbs, 2006 and 2007; Summers, and Pebworth, 1986) that the themes of Donne's maturity have a great range; just some of them can be the relation between mind and body, the security of a love in which that relation has been fully established, and the unity of lovers. They are apparently themes that can interest everyone who has any type of experience in love, that is, they are themes which concern all lovers and, here we can remember Dryden's famous saying about Donne and the term 'conceit' because these themes refute the implication of Dryden's famous criticism. Dryden's Picture of Donne who 'perplexes the minds of fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy' is profoundly misleading. He may use such speculations as an instrument; but his own inquires in his poetry are about love itself. We may give some examples from his poetry such as:

Me thinks I lyed all winter, when I swore,  
My love was infinite, if spring make't more (Love's Growth,  
Donne, 2008).

Or

Thou canst not every day give me thy heart,  
If thou canst give it, then thou never gavest it. (Lovers'  
Infiniteness, Donne, 2008).

If we are to understand why these poets including Donne were called Metaphysicals, Joan Bennet (1979) can help us make our minds as she states in her work that:

The 'metaphysics' occur in his poetry as vehicle but never as the thing conveyed. Before and during his married years Donne enjoyed the friendship of women and these friendships gave rise to a number of poems concerning a relation between man and woman in which, for some reason, physical union is denied. In *The Undertaking* he claims such a relation as an ideal, desired in itself, but beyond the reach of most men (p. 22).

'The Undertaking' is another significant poem of John Donne. The poem starts out saying that he did something that he feels is great however he doesn't want anyone to know what it is. Then it says that what he has achieved is very hard and most people know of it; thirdly it states that if he would not change it for he likes it and it claims that people have consumed love for a very very long time that love is perished and men should not waste it for it is rare. Thus love should be kept hidden from men that misuse it. In the poem, the speaker tells something brave that he did firstly (line 1) and then something that his mistress did (line 25), the poem continues as in the following lines:

I HAVE done one braver thing 1  
Than all the Worthies did ;  
And yet a braver thence doth spring,  
Which is, to keep that hid.

It were but madness now to impart  
The skill of specular stone,  
When he, which can have learn'd the art  
To cut it, can find none.  
So, if I now should utter this,  
Others—because no more  
Such stuff to work upon, there is—  
Would love but as before.

[...]

Then you have done a braver thing 25  
Than all the Worthies did ;



And a braver thence will spring,  
Which is, to keep that hid (Donne, 2008).

In the works of Donne, one can easily realize the fact that our poet mostly complains about 'incompleteness'. His intellect rebels against the restraint that has been imposed. He claims to have obeyed the rules, but not to have accepted them just as in his poem, 'The Relique' in the following lines:

Coming and going, wee  
Perchance might kisse, but not between those meales;  
Our hands ne'r toucht the seales,  
Which nature, injur'd by late law, sets free  
These miracles wee did; but now alas,  
All measure, and all language, I should passe,  
Should I tell what a miracle shee was (Donne, 2008)

In 'Twickenhan Garden' the speaker complains more bitterly against the impossibility of possessing his beloved; the last couplet is his grudging acceptance of the facts (line 26-27):

Hither with christall vyals, lovers come,  
And take my teares, which are loves wine,

[...]

Then by her shadow, what she weares.  
O perverse sexe, where none is true but shee, 26  
Who's therefore true, because her truth kills mee 27  
(Donne, 2008).

The town that gave its name to the poem, Twickenham, is, in Donne's day, was a pleasant and fashionable small village a few miles west of London, on the north bank of the River Thames. Twickenham Park was the country house of the Countess of Bedford from 1608-1617. She was also one of the patronesses or sponsors Donne had been courting to help him through the difficult period of his life after his marriage, when his career prospects started to fall down. To understand the poem, we can ask some questions; first of all, is it a complaint? The answer may be like this; 'Twicknam Garden' could therefore be seen not so much as a love poem as a complaint that the Countess of Bedford has not welcomed his efforts at

securing her patronage. This assumes the 'she' is the Countess. The second question is if it is a joke? However, it could be seen as a love play, a joke, where Donne is just playing with the idea of the Countess being his mistress, as a sort of flattery – she was, after all, well into middle age. Another one would be if the poem is in melancholic mood? On the other hand, the poem could be taken more as a mood poem: although it is springtime, the traditional time for lovers to be happy, Donne is deeply melancholic and with good reason. In 'The Blossome', the speaker yells flower firstly and then to 'poor heart' (line 9) and he proposes to wean his hearth from an unyielding lover and to give it 'to another friend' (line 39). The poem continues as in the following lines:

LITTLE think'st thou, poor flower,  
 Whom I've watch'd six or seven days,  
 And seen thy birth, and seen what every hour  
 Gave to thy growth, thee to this height to raise,  
 And now dost laugh and triumph on this bough  
 Little think'st thou,  
 That it will freeze anon, and that I shall  
 To-morrow find thee fallen, or not at all.

Little think'st thou, poor heart, 9  
 That labourest yet to nestle thee,  
 And think'st by hovering here to get a part  
 In a forbidden or forbidding tree,  
 And hopest her stiffness by long siege to bow,  
 Little think'st thou  
 That thou to-morrow, ere the sun doth wake,  
 Must with the sun and me a journey take.

[...]

Meet me in London, then,  
 Twenty days hence, and thou shalt see  
 Me fresher and more fat, by being with men,  
 Than if I had stay'd still with her and thee.  
 For God's sake, if you can, be you so too ;  
 I will give you  
 There to another friend, whom we shall find 39  
 As glad to have my body as my mind (Donne, 2008).

After his wife's death he sought in religion for the sense of security and completeness that she had at one time given him. Religion had always been of great intellectual interest for him. Born and bred a Roman Catholic he accepted the Church of England. In *Satyre III*, written between 1593 and 1595, he considers the choice of the forms religion like Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism. Religion and the search for true church are of grave importance to him and he tries to decide which religion is right and which one would provide him with salvation:

Let him ask his. Though Truth and Falsehood be  
In Tear twins, yet Truth a little elder is ;  
Be busy to seek her : believe me this,  
He 's not of none, nor worst, that seeks the best ;  
To adore or scorn an image, or protest,  
May all be bad. Doubt wisely; in strange way

[...]

The mind's endeavours reach ; and mysteries  
Are like the sun, dazzhng, yet plain to all eyes.  
Keep the truth which thou hast found ; men do not stand  
In so ill case that God hath with his hand  
Signed kings' blank-charters to kill whom they hate,  
Nor are they vicars, but hangmen to fate (Satire: of Religion,  
Donne, 2008).

In the *Holy Sonnets* the desire for intellectual rest is interwoven with a need for the emotional serenity he had tasted in marriage. He cries out to god in the accents of love:

Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I  
Except you'enthral mee, never shall be free,  
Nor ever chast, except you ravish mee.

He expresses his love for God in terms of that of a lover for his mistress, or, as here, a woman for her lover, he trusts and mistrusts God's pity as the lover vacillates between the secure sense of being loved and the recurrent fear that love may yet be withdrawn. The following lines of 'What if this present were the world's last night?' explain this:

What if this present were the world's last night?  
 Mark in my heart, O soul, where thou dost dwell,  
 The picture of Christ crucified, and tell  
 Whether that countenance can thee affright,  
 Tears in his eyes quench the amazing light,  
 Blood fills his frowns, which from his pierced head fell.  
 And can that tongue adjudge thee unto hell,  
 Which prayed forgiveness for his foes' fierce spite?  
 No, no; but as in my idolatry  
 I said to all my profane mistresses,  
 Beauty, of pity, foulness only is  
 A sign of rigour: so I say to thee,  
 To wicked spirits are horrid shapes assigned,  
 This beauteous form assures a piteous mind (Donne, 2008).

In the religious poetry Donne explores his feelings towards God just as, in secular poetry; he explored his feelings towards the beloved. The *Litany*, which is considered to be written in 1609 when he had turned away from the Catholic Church into which he had been born and had become a member of the Church of England, must have been among the earliest of Donne's religious poems. It was dismissed as a 'cold work of the intellect', but its measured tone is the result, not of coldness, but of the combination of thought and feeling. It has an intricate slow music which suggests thinking aloud:

From being anxious, or secure,  
 Dead clods of sadness, or light squibs of mirth,  
 From thinking, that great courts immure  
 All, or no happiness, or that this earth (Donne, 2008).

In this poem, Donne goes through the various parts of the Catholic liturgy but uses it not as a public poem or meditation, but rather a private prayer. He calls upon the persons of the Trinity, the Virgin Mary, the Angels, and the various doctors and saints of the church, but, unlike in the Catholic Mass, does not call on each one of these to pray for him. In each of the the nine-line stanzas (following an *ababcdcd* rhyme scheme), Donne meditates on the nature of the person or group, and how it relates to his own sins and desires. He said of the Doctors of the Church:

The sacred academy above  
 Of Doctors, whose pains have unclasp'd, and taught

Both books of life to us—for love  
 To know Thy scriptures tells us, we are wrote 112  
     In Thy other book—pray for us there, 113  
     That what they have misdome 114  
 Or missaid, we to that may not adhere. 115  
 Their zeal may be our sin. Lord, let us run  
 Mean ways, and call them stars, but not the sun (Donne, 2008).

He tries to make an unsubtle job at incorrect interpretation of Scripture by Catholic theologians in the past. Donne, a profoundly religious man who would go on to be a high official in the Anglican Church, was conflicted about his change from the Church of Rome to the Church of England. This poem, while preserving much of the Catholic litany, shows his attachment to the old ritual while the content sometimes provides a criticism to the old ways of thinking. Donne, ever the intellectual poet, sometimes uses his wit to make such incongruous comparisons that his self-conflict becomes evident:

And since Thou so desirously  
 Didst long to die, that long before Thou couldst,  
     And long since Thou no more couldst die,  
 Thou in thy scatter'd mystic body wouldst  
     In Abel die, and ever since  
     In Thine ; let their blood come  
 To beg for us a discreet patience  
 Of death, or of worse life ; for O, to some 89  
 Not to be martyrs, is a martyrdom. (Donne, 2009). 90

We are able to see many other examples about this in Donne' poetry and another example is in the following lines:

Son of God, hear us, and since Thou  
 By taking our blood, owest it us again,  
     Gain to Thyself, or us allow ;  
 And let not both us and Thyself be slain ;

O Lamb of God, which took'st our sin,  
 Which could not stick to Thee,  
 O let it not return to us again ;  
 But patient and physician being free, 251  
 As sin is nothing, let it nowhere be. 252  
 (Donne, 2008).

After the first thirteen stanzas, the rest of the poem consists of another fifteen in the same form which touch upon the various temptations, challenges, and failings that Donne faces as a Christian. His overriding desire is for ‘evenesse’ (166, 208), or consistency in facing and overcoming sin. It is an extraordinarily complex work, as is usual for Donne, with a wealth of allusions, paradoxes, extended metaphors, and abstractions. Donne is struggling in this poem to overcome the more ‘wicked’ parts of him, and become a better and more whole Christian. He refers to other sinners too, ‘Sonne of God hear us’ (line 244), but this is essentially a personal poem, a catalog of Donne’s personal struggles, especially his more esoteric and theological ones, couched sometimes in the language of generalities; but it is always more about his own soul’s peril than the world’s. ‘A Litany’, written about a decade before his *Holy Sonnets* and considered inferior to them both as poetry and as religious meditation, is nevertheless an example of his poetic virtuosity, and is an interesting artifact of a turning point in a great poet’s life. We may realize the balance and serenity throughout the poem as well as the struggle through the thought of the poem. The minds of us, the readers, are continually checked, not by the surprise of paradox but by the sense of balance and sufficiency. The following lines from the sixteenth stanza of ‘The Litany’ will help us understand what these sentences try to convey:

From needing danger, to bee good,  
From owing thee yesterdaies teares to day,  
From trusting so much to thy blood,  
That in that hope, wee wound our soule away,  
From bribing thee with Almesi to excuse  
Somme isnne more burdenous  
From light affectin, in religion, newes,  
From thinking us all soule, neglecting thus  
Our mutual duties, Lord deliver us (Donne, 2008).

Because John Donne did not find it necessary to publish his poems at the time he wrote, except the manuscripts, we do not have much chance to date his poems. However, it is possible if we have a look at his poetic manner in his works. As we know, his life is quite connected with his poetry.

## CHAPTER VI

### JOHN DONNE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE METAPHYSICAL POETRY

It has been long argued whether John Donne founded a school or what. Donald Mackenzie (1990) argues in his book, *The Metaphysical Poets*, that if the later poets of Metaphysical poetry make use of Donne's way of poetry, it provides "misleading and downright wrong" (Mackenzie 1990) for which he states three reasons:

...firstly, because it runs counter to our initial experience. No one who comes to Vaughan from Donne is likely to feel after an hour that he has been reading pretty much the same kind of poetry. ...secondly, because Donne is so various. If it is said that a later poet follows Donne one should ask which Donne for there are several, and some of his most distinctive effects are not taken up by any poet who comes after... thirdly, because what Donne establishes is not a "genre" but a "style" (p. 53).

When we think over the terms "genre and style", we can easily see that they differ from each other about the subject matter of "structure" and "texture" respectively. Donne is accepted as the father of the poetry which was named as "metaphysical" by Ben Johnson who most probably inspired from Dryden (John Dryden, 1999). He wrote his poems in a different way using "new things" of which some poems made use in their later poems. One of the most significant one of these was the term "conceit" that he often used in his poems. His use of conceit turned out to be a striking feature of Metaphysical poems.

What is conceit then? If we want a complete answer to this question, we had better look at the definition by Helen Gardner (1978):

A conceit is a comparison whose ingenuity is more striking than its justness, or, at least, more immediately striking. All comparisons discover likeness in things unlike: a comparison becomes a conceit

when we are made to concede likeness while being strongly conscious of unlikeness (p. 9).

One of the most significant innovations that Donne brought to the poetry was his use of 'erotic love' in his poems. He often related eroticism with 'human spirituality' in his poetry. Guibbory (1993) states:

Because his poetry speaks to needs and desires that seem to persist despite cultural and historical differences, Donne is accessible, compelling, and engaging...and his poetry exhibits considerable variety, defying readers' attempts to reduce it to a neat order. Whereas his contemporary Ben Jonson preferred to speak in a single, constant voice in his poems, avoiding masks as he praised virtue and castigated vice, Donne adopts different roles and postures- the libertine rake, the devoted and constant lover, the cynic who feels cheated by his experience in love, the despairing sinner fearing damnation, the bold suitor claiming his right to salvation. The poetry expresses radically contradictory views- of women, the body, and love (p. 127).

Donne's contribution to the Metaphysical poetry consists of his five formal verse satires, fewer than twenty love elegies, some short epigrams, the long, unfinished poem *Metempsychosis*, some occasional poems and verse letters (including three epithalamions and two *Anniversaries* on the death of Elizabeth Dury) many of which were addressed to actual or prospective patrons, and thirty-five divine poems (including twenty-one religious sonnets and three hymns).

Donne was not lucky enough to see most of his poems published in his life time. Just a few of his poems were published while he was still alive. His poems passed from place to place, from person to person, or from hand to hand in manuscript. His poems were, also, read by only significant readers that Donne had close familiarity or association as well as nearness in friendship. His poetry as *Poems* was published only after he died.

When were the most productive years of John Donne? As we know, Donne died in 1631 at the age of fifty-nine, having experienced such a hard life just as Vaughan who was also another significant poet of the Metaphysicals. Donne seems to write most of his established poems at his middle ages. His most productive years coincide with his twenties.



How did Donne differ from the Elizabethans? The answer to this question can be found when we have a look at the way the Elizabethans wrote. Donne was the most significant figure who was also accepted as the one who stated the 'break' between the Elizabethans and the Metaphysicals.

Starting with Donne, the founder of the poetry, later called as Metaphysical, a new way of language appeared at the very beginning of the seventeenth century. The preceding writers were the Elizabethans including William Shakespeare. The Elizabethan era, named with the Queen Elizabeth, was a period which played a significant role both in English history and English literature. We see the flowering of poetry as well as drama in this period. Of course, Shakespeare was the prominent figure who took great part in this contribution. It was also the period of English Renaissance in which new way of literature, music and architecture arose.

The Protestant-Catholics divide occurred in this time played a significant role in John Donne's life. Donne was Catholic by birth, and, because of his upbringing as Catholic, he could not have the chance of raising his position in the society until his conversion. Once he turned out to be the Dean of St Paul, he achieved his goal in life.

The tradition of 'song' started with the Elizabethans Era on which many scholars studied (Tostado, 1990; Lace, 1995; Davis, 1930; Carpowich, 2007). Thomas Campion, Nicholas Grimald, Thomas Nashe and Robert Southwell were some of the most well-known song writers of the period. Apart from these poets, we have a great account of songs of which we do not know the poets. Campion is accepted as the greatest songwriter of all. Campion is also notable because of his experiments with metres based on counting syllables rather than stresses. These quantitative metres were based on classical models and should be viewed as part of the wider Renaissance revival of Greek and Roman artistic methods. The songs were generally printed either in miscellanies or anthologies such as Richard Tottel's 1557 *Songs and Sonnets* or in songbooks that included printed music to enable performance. These performances formed an integral part of both public and private entertainment. By the end of the 16th century, a new generation of composers, including John Dowland, William Byrd, Orlando Gibbons, Thomas Weelkes and Thomas Morley were helping to bring the art of Elizabethan song to an extremely high musical level (Carpowich, 2007).

In Elizabethan era, the Queen Elizabeth supported the art so much that the poetry and art in general emerged. The Queen's encouragement was of great significance that the poets paid this back writing their workes for the honour of the court. This was the reason why courtly poetry emerged in this period. One of the most important works (dedicated to the court) of the period is *The Faerie Queene* by Edmund Spenser. He praised the Queen in this extended hymn in an effective way. Another work of this kind is Philip Sydney's *Arcadia* by far his most ambitious work. It was as significant in its own way as his sonnets. The work is a romance that combines pastoral elements with a mood derived from the Hellenistic model of Heliodorus. This courtly trend can also be seen in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calender*. This poem marks the introduction into an English context of the classical pastoral, a mode of poetry that assumes an aristocratic audience with a certain kind of attitude to the land and peasants. The explorations of love found in the sonnets of William Shakespeare and the poetry of Walter Raleigh and others also implies a courtly audience (Stuart, 2003).

After all these contributions of the Elizabethans to the literature of English, we cannot deny that Donne and his successors did not 'get' anything from their preceding ones. Donne was an Elizabethan by birth and upbringing and wrote his earliest poems, including at least some of his *Song and Sonets*, before the turn of the century. For that reason, it is not fair to claim that he does not owe anything to the Elizabethans. Moreover it is apparent that his language and that of his followers necessarily grew out styles in 'fashion' in his youth. Despite of the fact that he is turning against it, his poetry, both in treatment of the subject matter and language, has many things in common with the language style of the Elizabethans.

Austin (1992), later in his work, expresses the fact how the new generation after the Elizabethans changed their style:

Donne was not alone among the poets (and also playwrights) of the 1590s and first decade of the new century to turn to a plainer style. Indeed, the plain as opposed to the eloquent style was not new in English poetry but stemmed from medieval didactic and moral verse. It was first applied to the lyric by Wyatt, who used it to express anti-courtly attitudes to the Petrarchan love convention... Unlike Sidney, Raleigh and Spenser, the new and younger poets were not courtiers. They were by birth or education, like Donne, aspirants to public Office. They tended to gather round the Inns of Court, which became

in effect a training ground for a ‘civil service’. In these circumstances it was not surprising that there was a move away from the language of courtly ritual. Indeed, Donne’s language has been described as ‘Inns of Courtly rather than courtly’. (p. 6)

We can divide the works of John Donne into some certain categories such as *satires, elegies, songs and sonnets, etc.* To start with *Satires*, we can say that they express an “overwhelming sense of the degeneracy of late sixteenth century English society” (Guibbory, 1993). The satires were mostly written in 1590s and they were focused on the public and political issues. Guibbory (1993) summarizes what Donne tried to say in the *Satires* in his essay:

Coming under scrutiny are the frivolous, materialistic values of his society (1), the legal system (2), religious institutions (3), the court and the courtiers (4, 1), and the judicial system and structure of rewards in late Elizabethan England (5). The speaker of the *Satires* embodies qualities that oppose the viciousness of society: he is constant and scholarly (1), devoted to God and spiritual values, earnest and searching rather than complacent (3), preferring the ‘meane’ to either extreme (2), filled with hatred for vice (2) and vicious people in power (5) but moved by pity for humanity (3, 5). (p. 131).

Donne wrote his *Satires* as if he was the last ‘good man’ in the corrupt society on the Earth. Donne’s aim in writing these poems is to criticize the society, the institutions, and the system. We may also see the strictures in his elegies as well as the songs and sonnets. It is clear in the poems that Donne isolates himself from the society as we said before as if he was the last ‘good man’.

Away thou fondling motley humorist,  
Leave mee, and in this standing wooden chest,  
Consorted with these few bookes, let me lye  
In prison, and here be coffin'd, when I dye;  
Here are Gods conduits, grave Divines; and here  
Natures Secretary, the Philosopher;  
And jolly Statesmen, which teach how to tie  
The sinewes of a cities mistique bodie;  
Here gathering Chroniclers, and by them stand  
Giddie fantastique Poets of each land. (Donne, 2008)

3

We may also see some contrary ideas in Donne's Satires, too. He had some dilemmas against the society in which he was a member. *Satire III* shows a significant event in Donne's life. As we know Donne was born into a Catholic family and brought up according to Catholicism. In this satire, we see his complex feelings about the public world. As the society was Protestant, Donne had difficulty in adapting to the circumstances. Donne compares the Christian religions to women. He claims that one can choose any of those religions (Catholics, Protestant, Anglican, etc.) just as one can choose any of the women kind. He also criticizes the people who choose only one certain religion (one wife in another sense) for wrong reasons. The last lines of the satire also reveal the dilemma the virtuous person faces:

Fool and wretch, wilt thou let thy soul be tied  
 To man's laws, by which she shall not be tried  
 At the last day? Oh, will it then boot thee  
 To say a Philip, or a Gregory,  
 A Harry, or a Martin, taught thee this?  
 Is not this excuse for mere contraries  
 Equally strong? Cannot both sides say so?  
 That thou mayest rightly obey power, her bounds know;  
 Those past, her nature and name is chang'd; to be  
 Then humble to her is idolatry.  
 As streams are, power is; those blest flowers that dwell 103  
 At the rough stream's calm head, thrive and do well, 104  
 But having left their roots, and themselves given  
 To the stream's tyrannous rage, alas, are driven  
 Through mills, and rocks, and woods, and at last, almost  
 Consum'd in going, in the sea are lost.  
 So perish souls, which more choose men's unjust  
 Power from God claim'd, than God himself to trust (Donne, 2009).

As it was expressed before, Donne had a great dilemma in this satire as he tries to find a secure place in the society as well as he wants to isolate himself from the society. As it is considered by many scholars of Donne (Simpson, 1962; Winny, 1981; Le Comte, 1965) he was at odds with society.

Unlike *Satires*, Donne tried to express special issues of love in his *Elegies*. Donne apparently seems to turn to Ovidian way of poetic style in his elegies quitting the tradition of Petrarch. As it is known, Petrarchan poetry was mostly focused on courtly love and it was really popular in the period Donne lived. It was influential on the whole Europe. The poets imitated him in a great sense. Petrarchan poetry

expressed a great admiration for the court and especially for the queen. However; Donne turns to the example of the Roman poet Ovid in his *Elegies*. Ovidian poetry, contrary to that of Petrarchan, mocks the courtly love (Sullivan, 2008).

Just to remember the way Ovid wrote his poetry, it can be accepted that he reacted against idealization of love. Ovid considered human beings were of the nature, bodily creature, having much in common with animals. For that reason, Ovid's poetry possessed 'body' within itself. Donne followed Ovid in the sense of 'bodily love'. The speakers of the Donne's *Elegies* were aware of the fact that the goal was sexual intercourse.

It is also considered by some scholars of Donne (Whalen, 2002; Cousins, 2002; Dalglish, 1961) that politics and analogies link the private sphere of love with the public world of politics suggesting a desire for greater power in both spheres. Just as in the satires, we can see contrary impulses in Donne's *Elegies* as well. While some of the elegies show disgust against the woman body by focusing lower parts of the body, some other appreciate it. While the elegies such as 'Change', Nature's lay Idiot', and 'Oh, let me not serve so' include elements that mocks the Petrarchan style of poetry, some other elegies like 'Love's Progress' include elements that show woman body as desirable (Taylor, 2002).

One of the best known of elegies is, of course, 'Going to Bed' in which the speaker tries to tempt the woman starting the poem by calling her near him: 'Come, madam, come' (line 1). He wants her to remove her clothes and come to the bed as it is 'bed-time' (lines 7-10) so he can explore his America (her body). The analogy works great here (line 27). Donne both shows his knowledge about the exploration of the new-land as we call it "wit" and he also makes a great analogy by comparing the exploration of the new-land, America to the exploration of the body of his mistress (Meakin, 1998).

It is usually accepted in some seventeenth century criticism (Roy and Kapoor 1969; Spingarn, 2005) that the poem includes contradictory impulses as Donne both glorifies woman as the sources of all riches, favor and joy and he also identifies woman to be explored and possessed by man. The attitudes to the woman in Renaissance were certain as Petrarchan style glorified women as the source of all beauties. The poem's last lines (47-48) are of great significance as they claim the speaker's profession in love:

COME, madam, come, all rest my powers defy; 1  
 Until I labour, I in labour lie.  
 The foe oft-times, having the foe in sight,  
 Is tired with standing, though he never fight.  
 Off with that girdle, like heaven's zone glittering,  
 But a far fairer world encompassing.  
 Unpin that spangled breast-plate, which you wear, 7  
 That th' eyes of busy fools may be stopp'd there. 8  
 Unlace yourself, for that harmonious chime 9  
 Tells me from you that now it is bed-time. 10  
 Off with that happy busk, which I envy,

[...]

Licence my roving hands, and let them go  
 Before, behind, between, above, below.  
 O, my America, my Newfoundland, 27  
 My kingdom, safest when with one man mann'd,  
 My mine of precious stones, my empery ;

[]

Full nakedness ! All joys are due to thee;  
 As souls unbodied, bodies unclothed must be  
 To taste whole joys. Gems which you women use 35  
 Are like Atlanta's ball cast in men's views;

[]

There is no penance due to innocence :  
 To teach thee, I am naked first ; why then, 47  
 What needst thou have more covering than a man? 48  
 (Donne, 2002)

‘Going to Bed’ is not just one of the significant elegies, it is significant because it challenges not only Petrarchan style of poetry, but also it challenges neo-Platonic idea of love. Unlike the idea of the neo-Platonics, however, Donne, in this poem, expresses the significance of bodily love. An analogy can be seen in the unclothing of the speaker and his mistress as it can be accepted as the soul’s divesting itself of the body in order to enjoy ‘whole joyes’ (line 35).

Alvarez (1967) states in his work, *The School of Donne*, that the *Elegies* seem definably younger work than the best *Songs and Sonets*. He claims that this is

because of something more than their occasional self-consciousness, which was the younger Donne's fatal Cleopatra. Then he goes on:

It is a question of technique. The key to Donne's mature style is his use of logic: the more subtle and complex the emotion, the greater the logical pressure. The mature Donne organizes his poems in such a way that each shift of feeling seems to be substantiated logically. In the Elegies, however, the emotions are simpler and are sustained in their singleness. He adopts a stance and then develops it dramatically, not logically. So instead of a piece of elaborate human dialectics, he leaves you with a situation presented in the vivid coloring of more or less single strong feeling (intro. XIV)

Another significant elegy of Donne, 'The Perfume', can be accepted as one of the most 'inventive' one of all Donne's poems. We see a great play of 'wit' in this elegy. However, it is more 'ornamental' than 'profound', that is, the elegy is full of puns, dramatic details, and including masculine independence. Briefly, it is less analytic than energetic. We only see the deepening of tone when the speaker's masculinity is itself threatened (line 53-54):

I taught my silks their whistling to forbear ;  
Even my oppress'd shoes dumb and speechless were ;  
Only thou bitter sweet, whom I had laid 53  
Next me, me traiterously hast betray'd, 54  
And unsuspected hast invisibly  
At once fled unto him, and stay'd with me.

[...]

You're loathsome all, being taken simply alone ;  
Shall we love ill things join'd, and hate each one?  
If you were good, your good doth soon decay ;  
And you are rare ; that takes the good away :  
All my perfumes I give most willingly  
To embalm thy father's corpse ; what? will he die? (Hayward,  
1950).

Although it was designated as an elegy in its original title, 'The Perfume' is really better considered a seventy-two-line Renaissance imitation of a classical form. John Donne, most probably, called it an elegy because he composed it in closed couplets, consecutive lines of end-stopped iambic pentameter, a verse pattern that roughly corresponds to the Latin *elegia*. He used the same pattern for his

satires, but unlike those, this is addressed to a particular lover, as a commentary on their relationship. It may also be called a dramatic monologue.

Of course, there is a clear difference between younger John and John the mature; and this is apparent in his poems as well. After his Elegies, we see maturist techniques largely and clearly in his later-works: 'A Nocturnal upon Saint Lucy's Day' is a good example to show his maturity in technique. This poem is known to be written for Donne's patron's daughter who died at an early age as well as it is considered to be written after Donne's wife's death:

'TIS the year's midnight, and it is the day's,  
Lucy's, who scarce seven hours herself unmasks ;  
The sun is spent, and now his flasks  
Send forth light squibs, no constant rays ;  
The world's whole sap is sunk ;  
The general balm th' hydroptic earth hath drunk,  
Whither, as to the bed's-feet, life is shrunk,  
Dead and interr'd ; yet all these seem to laugh,  
Compared with me, who am their epitaph.

[...]

But I am none ; nor will my sun renew.  
You lovers, for whose sake the lesser sun  
At this time to the Goat is run  
To fetch new lust, and give it you,  
Enjoy your summer all,  
Since she enjoys her long night's festival.  
Let me prepare towards her, and let me call  
This hour her vigil, and her eve, since this  
Both the year's and the day's deep midnight is (Donne, 2009).

We can realize the similarity between the first line of the poem and the last one: 'TIS the year's midnight, and it is the day's, / Lucy's,' and 'since this / Both the year's and the day's deep midnight is'. These lines are more or less in the same meaning. The last line is simply a restatement of the first one. However, there is a difference; in the beginning of the poem, the speaker has a difficulty in questioning, however, in the end of the poem, there is a clear resolution. The speaker realized that mature people have to experience the grief in their life and accept it. We see Donne's logic and learning as the significant impulses in his matured feeling as a poet.



To continue with *Song and Sonets*, we can say that they are accepted to be the most private poems of John Donne. His quest to understand love is the main theme of these poems. They are supposed to be written in a larger period than *Satires* and *Elegies*. Donne tries to express love by comparing the accumulated ideas about love and the experienced love. (Eliot, 1969).

John Donne is famous for the theme of mutual love in his poems which are considered to be the most well-known and admired. Charles Fowkes (1982) states in his *The Love Poems of John Donne*:

Donne was a man who knew all the many faces of love-- physical passion, jealousy, rapture, grief and parting-- and possessed the genius to distill his experiences into poetry. The potency of his writing has lost none of its effect; Donne's love poetry taps the reservoir of feelings and emotions common to all human beings (intro, I).

Mutual love is one of those common things to all human beings and Donne is clearly good at expressing it in his poetry. John Donne is accepted to have contributed to the love poetry in a great sense. One of the fields that he was that significant is his 'celebration of mutual, reciprocal love' which Thomas N. Corns (1993) accepts in his *The Cambridge companion to English poetry, Donne to Marvell* that it was the most important contribution of him. As we see in his poetry, 'Good Morrow' makes us remember the new perspective from which the rest of the world looks insignificant:

I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I  
Did till we loved? Were we not weaned till then?  
But sucked on country pleasures childishly?  
Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den?  
'Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be.  
If ever any beauty I did see,  
Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee

And now good morrow to our waking souls,  
Which watch not one another out of fear;  
For love all love of other sights controls,  
And makes one little room an everywhere.  
Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,  
Let maps to other, worlds on worlds have shown;

Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one (Celements, 1966).

Donne often relates the worlds of the lovers to each other and also argues that each lover possess his own world and he calls it microcosm; on the other hand, the real world is defined as macrocosm by Donne to which his poem 'I am a little world made cunningly' is a good example. Theresa M DiPasquale (2001) states in her *Literature and Sacrament: The Sacred and the Secular in John Donne* that 'the connection between the macrocosmic and microcosmic events' occur in this poem. It can be seen in his 'The Sun Rising' as well:

She's all states, and all princes I ;  
Nothing else is ;  
Princes do but play us ; compared to this,  
All honour's mimic, all wealth alchemy.  
Thou, Sun, art half as happy as we,  
In that the world's contracted thus;

[...]

Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;  
This bed thy center is, these walls thy sphere (Donne, 2009).

The line 21, 'She's all states, and all princes I', suggests that Donne's description of 'mutual' love often assumes a degree of inequality between the lovers; as we see, Donne refers his mistress as 'all States' however, he refers himself as 'all Princes' illustrating the inequality between themselves. Donne sometimes tries to express the injustice and difference between male and female. He aims to show that love can eliminate these inequities and differences between the sexes. Here we can remember one of the most well-known poems of Donne, 'The Canonization', in which Donne states that 'So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit' (line 25). We can also remember the poem, 'The Relic', in which Donne says:

First we loved well and faithfully,  
Yet knew not what we loved, nor why

Difference of sex we never knew, 25  
No more than guardian angels do; 26

This is both a religious and a love poem through which Donne displays love which is exclusively spiritual. As it is an accumulated idea, it is easy to accept that two lovers make up a whole. They complete each other and make a unique world of themselves. We can remember 'The Good Morrow' as well; Donne tells us about 'two hemispheres' which are the lover and his mistress. The two hemispheres of the world make up the whole world and so do two lovers. This is again the basic element of the 'mutual love'. One lover always needs the other one in order to make the whole so he or she can be happy. Otherwise, the lover cannot be happy as he or she would stay 'incomplete'.

Completeness of the lovers is due to the unity of them and this is expressed best by the line (24):

"we two being one, are it"

Donne wrote this line in 'The Canonization', one of his masterpieces. The two lovers make up the one. They turn out to be one person. Their souls get united and they get united physically.

The opening of 'The Canonization' is one of the most widely known of Donne's poems as it starts with a call to the mistress:

For Godsake hold your tongue! and let me love,  
Or chide my palsy, or my gout,  
My five grey hairees, or ruined fortune flout;  
With wealth your state, your minde with arts, improve;  
Take you a course, get you a place,  
Observe his honour, or his grace,  
Or the King's real, or his stamped face  
Contemplate: what you will, approve,  
So you will let me love (Nutt, 1999).

Donne uses his wit again in this poem by attributing religious significance to a bodily intercourse and then the speaker claims that he and his mistress deserve to be canonized as saints. He expresses the power of love in the poem with the line 'we are made such by love' (line 19) and goes on with the Phoenix riddle. He states the differences of sexes and the completing power of lovers (line 24-25):

Call's what you will, we are made such by love; 19  
 Call her one, me another fly,  
 We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,  
 And we in us find th' eagle and the dove.  
 The phoenix riddle hath more wit  
 By us ; we two being one, are it ; 24  
 So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit. 25  
 We die and rise the same, and prove 26  
 Mysterious by this love (Nutt, 1999).

At the end of the poem, the speaker claims that he and his mistress will die as martyrs in a hostile world, and finally their love will provide a 'patterne' for others (line 45). Donne again states the power of love as well as its significance with line, 'We can die by it, if not live by love' and the line 36 suggests their deserving to be canonized:

We can die by it, if not live by love, 28  
 And if unfit for tomb or hearse  
 Our legend be, it will be fit for verse ;  
 And if no piece of chronicle we prove,  
 We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms ;  
 As well a well-wrought urn becomes  
 The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,  
 And by these hymns, all shall approve  
 Us canonized for love ; 36

[...]

So made such mirrors, and such spies,  
 That they did all to you epitomize—  
 Countries, towns, courts beg from above  
 A pattern of your love. (Nutt, 1999). 45

The aim of the speaker to be canonized can remind us of William Shakespeare's Sonnet 18 as these two poems seek to be immortal. Donne wants to be canonized in order to live even after their death just as Shakespeare wants to make his mistress live forever (line 11-14) in his sonnet:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

[...]

Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade, 11  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest: 12

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, 13  
So long lives this and this gives life to thee (Donne, 2009). 14

Donne seems to oppose neo-Platonic ideas in most of his poetry. Neo-Platonic ideas suggest that the lover can ascend to the spiritual love only by leaving the bodily love behind him. There is no place for body in the spiritual love according to the neo-Platonism. However, Donne argues that spiritual love is also bodily and lovers can transcend to the spiritual love by embracing the body. 'The Ecstasy' is a good example for Donne's argument. He expresses the interrelation of body and soul in this poem. As Guibbory states "the first half of the poem emphasizes transcendence and the spiritual nature of love as it describes that lovers' souls have left their bodies and experienced an 'extasie' illuminating the mystery of their love as a mixture of souls" (p. 137).

As, 'twixt two equal armies, Fate  
Suspends uncertain victory,  
Our souls—which to advance their state,  
Were gone out—hung 'twixt her and me.

[...]

This ecstasy doth unperplex  
(We said) and tell us what we love ;  
We see by this, it was not sex ;  
We see, we saw not, what did move :

But as all several souls contain  
Mixture of things they know not what,  
Love these mix'd souls doth mix again,  
And makes both one, each this, and that (Donne, 2009).

Until this part, we may claim that Donne advocates neo-Platonic ideas. The speaker mentions 'soul' repeatedly in many lines. The spiritual love is transcended in this first part of the poem. However, Donne changes the tension in the second

part using the conjunction, 'but' (line 49). We can go on with 'but' as well; but love that leaves behind the bodies turn out to be incomplete. So the second half of the poem defends the need to return to the 'body' :

But, O alas ! so long, so far, 49  
Our bodies why do we forbear?  
They are ours, though not we ; we are  
Th' intelligences, they the spheres.

We owe them thanks, because they thus  
Did us, to us, at first convey,  
Yielded their senses' force to us,  
Nor are dross to us, but allay. 56

[...]

And if some lover, such as we,  
Have heard this dialogue of one,  
him still mark us, he shall see  
Small change when we're to bodies gone (Donne, 2009).

We may see Donne's different approaches to love in his different poems. Sometimes he approaches love as something unnecessary and sometimes as if it was the meaning of life. We can relate this different treatment to the range of Donne's age in his poetry. Younger Donne can be considered as more cynical; 'Air and Angels' can be a good example for cynical Donne while 'Farewell to Love' and 'Love's Alchemy' are good example for experienced Donne in the sense of love (Keynes, 1958).

Donne's *Song and Sonets* mostly focus on the relationship between lovers. The male and female relations make up the main theme of these poems. The bodily love is seen as the basic necessity of life unlike neo-Platnic ideas. After all, Donne's *Songs and Sonets* are the group of poems that get the most reaction from the critics of modern times (Hammond, 1986; Warnke, 1987; Keast, 1978; Constance, 1969).

After, *Satires, Elegies, and Song and Sonets*, it is turn of the *Divine Poems* of Donne. Till these poems, Donne described the relation between lover and the beloved, male-female relation, the bodily love, etc. *Divine Poems* search for the relation of man with God; however, they are subject to get related previous poems. Donne tries to relate the love between man and woman with the love between man

and God; he tries to understand the love by comparing these kinds of love. He also seeks to understand the relation between bodily love and the spiritual love.

Donne's *Anniversaries* on the death of Elizabeth Drury, who was the daughter of his patron, Sir Robert Drury, can be accepted as a bridge between the secular poems and the religious poetry of Donne. This poem may remind us of 'A Nocturnal upon St Lucy' Day' in the sense of expressing the meaninglessness of the world as the embodiment of virtue, the beloved woman, existing no more. *Anniversaries* assume a dualistic division between body and soul. They are considered to urge the reader to isolate themselves from the earthly pleasure expressing the meaninglessness of the world. The speaker of the poem counsels his soul to look upon his body as poisonous 'small lump of flesh' that has 'infected' him 'with originall sinne' (Second Anniversary, line 164-7). Here we are get confused by Donne as he was arguing the reverse in 'The Ecstasy' by defending bodily love as the way to the spiritual love. As well as 'Air and Angels' in which he defends body as the mean to function for soul:

Thinke but how poore thou wast, how obnoxious;	
Whom a small lumps of flesh could poyson thus.	164
This curded milke, this poore vnlettered whelpe	165
My body, could, beyond escape, or helpe,	166
Infect thee with originall sinne, and thou	167
Couldst neither then refuse, nor leaue it now.	

[...]

Thinke, when t'was growne to most, t'was a poore Inne,  
A Prouince Pack'd up in two yards of skinne (Donne, 1982).

These lines are from 'the Anniversaries' of John Donne. He conveys the meaning by using body as the mean for functioning for soul. This most probably reminds us of Donne's 'Air and Angels' in which Donne does the same. Here we can take a look at the poem, 'Air and Angels' in order to understand better:

TWICE or thrice had I loved thee,  
Before I knew thy face or name ;  
So in a voice, so in a shapeless flame  
Angels affect us oft, and worshipp'd be.  
Still when, to where thou wert, I came,

Some lovely glorious nothing did I see.  
But since my soul, whose child love is,  
Takes limbs of flesh, and else could nothing do,  
More subtle than the parent is  
Love must not be, but take a body too ;

10

[...]

As is 'twixt air's and angels' purity,  
'Twixt women's love, and men's, will ever be (Donne, 2008).

In the first stanza of 'Air and Angels' (line 10) Donne is saying much what he says in 'The Extasie' (or 'The Ecstasy'), man is a body as well as a soul; love is the child of the soul, but the soul itself can do nothing in this world without the body; More subtile then the parent is, / Love must not be, but take a body too. Struck by grief of his wife's death, Donne wrote the seventeenth Holy Sonnet, 'Since she whom I lov'd hath paid her last debt'. According to Donne's friend and biographer, Izaak Walton, Donne was thereafter 'crucified to the world'. Donne continued to write poetry, notably his *Holy Sonnets* (1618), but the time for love songs was over (Walton, 2004).

One of the Donne's well-known sonnets is *Holy Sonnet* in which the speaker talks after his mistress' death. The speaker refers to death as the 'last debt' (line 1) which is a good metaphor in a sense, and this 'debt' is 'to nature' (line 2). It is accepted to present Donne's sense anxiety and conflict about the value of human love:

Since she whom I lov'd hath paid her last debt  
To nature, and to hers, and my good is dead,  
Here the admiring her my mind did whet  
To seek thee, God; so streams do show the head;  
But though I have found thee, and thou my thirst hast fed,  
A holy thirsty dropsy melts me yet.  
But why should I beg more love, when as thou

9

(Donne, 1982).

Donne most probably wrote this poem after his wife, Anne More's death. In the poem we can realise the fact that Donne uses a pun in the line 9 by begging for 'more love': here we can understand it in two ways; Donne wants more love from God feeling lonely and neglected. This is the first literal meaning of the line, however, if we relate the word 'more' with Donne's ex-wife Anne More's last



name; it means that Donne asks for 'More love'. He wants the love of his dead wife and, in a sense; he wants his wife back from God. Moreover, it can be considered that Donne both wants the love of God and that of his dead wife. Here, a blasphemy occurs if we think that Donne is not satisfied with the love of God and asks for 'more' or 'More' love. However this is in a sense a sign of his being honest to God, by begging for earthly pleasure.

Although Donne searches for a 'constant' love, we can easily realize his attraction for 'change' in his poetry as well. His elegy, 'Variety' can be a good example to show his greed in one sense. He tells the reader about his 'appetite' for different experiences. However, there are some other poems in which the speaker asks for 'stability'. Moreover, Donne wrote some poems that bring together the attraction for change and the desire for stability in order to find whether both of these can be present in a love experience. Donne also searches if love can be constant and grow without any decay in his poems such as 'Love's Growth'.

Another significant contribution of Donne to the Metaphysical poetry is his use of emblem in his poetry. Before we mention emblem in Donne, we had better look it up in the sixteenth century. Emblem books were of great significance during the Tudor England. They were, in some sense, books of pictures with some words. Geoffrey Whitney published an example of emblem book having benefited many published ones in other European countries. It was *A Choice of Emblems* which was an anthology actually. The pictures were generally 'conventional and abstract' although the usual way the emblems occurred was 'representational'. Why were they interesting then? The answer to this question was the use of "wit" by which apparently unconnected ideas were linked.

As it is claimed that the most significant feature of Donne poetry is the conceit, we should also express how Donne used the conceit in his poetry. When the conceit is mentioned, we, at first, remember Donne's conceit of the 'compasses'. After having been informed about the emblem tradition of the period, we may think that the most well-known conceit of Donne is most probably a stolen idea, thereby, 'it is not original'. Moreover, we can apparently see the use of emblem in Donne's poetry with the word 'emblem' in the fourth line:

In what torn ship soever I embark,  
That ship shall be my emblem of thy Ark;  
What sea soever swallow me, that flood  
Shall be to me an emblem of thy blood;  
Though thou with clouds of anger do disguise  
Thy face, yet through that mask I know those eyes,  
Which, though they turn away sometimes,  
They never will despise.

4

I sacrifice this Island unto thee,  
And all whom I loved there, and who loved me;  
When I have put our seas 'twixt them and me,  
Put thou thy sea betwixt my sins and thee.  
As the tree's sap doth seek the root below  
In winter, in my winter now I go,  
Where none but thee, th' Eternal root  
Of true Love, I may know. (Gardner, 1965).

Here we see the typical emblem of the storm-tossed ship. Another emblem can be seen in the lines 'At the round earths imagin'd corners, blow / Your trumpet, Angels...' Here is the emblem tradition that allows Donne to present these two world views visually and simultaneously one superimposed upon the other. While most of the emblems are originally from the ancient Greek tradition, the emblem of the Jesuit also shows itself in the poetry of the seventeenth century. In the *Holy Sonnet* by John Donne, he says 'Batter my heart' implying the torture Christ suffered. Knowledge of the emblem tradition helps the reader to understand the strange 'pictorial' quality that Donne often draws, as in the *Holy Sonnet*, 'I am a little world made cunningly':

I am a little world made cunningly  
Of Elements, and an Angelike spright,  
But black sinne hath betraid to endlesse night  
My worlds both parts, and (oh) both parts must die.  
You which beyond that heaven which was most high  
Have found new spears, and of new lands can write,  
Powre new seas in mine eyes, that so I might  
Drowne my world with my weeping earnestly,  
Or wash it if it must be drown'd no more;  
But oh it must be burnt! alas the fire  
Of lust and envie have burnt it heretofore,  
And made it fouler; Let their flames retire,  
And burne me o Lord, with a fiery zeale

Of thee and thy house, which doth in eating heale  
(Donne, 2008)

In most of the poems by John Donne, he largely uses metaphors and similes; however, we cannot say that they are used to take the attention over themselves. Except emblems and conceits in Donne's poetry, repetitions in many forms are the principal rhetorical device that Donne used in his poetry. A good example of the repetition in Donne's poetry can be one of his letters to 'the Lady Bedford' (Wesley Milgate, 2000). In this verse letter, he uses repetition as well as he repeats the words as if he intended to make a riddle. It required a certain intellect to solve the sentences:

You that are she and you, that's double shee,  
In her dead face, halfe of your selfe shall see;  
Shee was the other part, for they doe  
Which build them friendship, become one of two (p. 94).

We may also see the repetition in Donne's *The Second Anniversarie* (also subtitled as 'The Progress of the Soule') which he wrote after the death of Elizabeth Drury, daughter of his patron, Sir Robert Drury.

Shee to heaven is gone,  
Who made this world in some proportion  
A heaven, and here, became unto us all,  
Joye, (as our joyes admit) essentiall.  
But could this low world joyes essentiall touch,  
Heaven accidentall joyes would passe them much (Donne,  
2008).

In this stanza we can see apparently that Donne repeated the words 'heaven' and 'joy' three times and the word 'essential' twice. The repetition of 'essentiall' is also significant as it literally implies the 'essence' of the joy of the soul of the dead girl who is considered to be in heaven now. He also adds that this in turn contrasts with the 'accidentall' joy of heaven, which surpass any earthly conception of 'essential' and everlasting joy. Donne uses a different way of repetition and we can see it in many poems of him. For instance, his *Holy Sonnets VII* in which he lines up words consecutively in sixth line:

At the round earth's imagin'd corners, blow  
 Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise  
 From death, you numberless infinities  
 Of souls, and to your scatter'd bodies go;  
 All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,  
 All whom war, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies, 6  
 Despair, law, chance hath slain, and you whose eyes  
 Shall behold God and never taste death's woe (Donne,  
 2008).

And also in *Holy Sonnet XIV* in which he lines up words consecutively in second, third, and fourth lines:

Batter my heart, three-personed God, for you  
 As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend; 2  
 That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend 3  
 Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new. 4

[...]

Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,  
 But am betrothed unto your enemy:  
 Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,  
 Take me to you, imprison me, for I,  
 Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,  
 Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me (Donne, 2008).

We can also see a great paradox at the last lines of the poem. It is an epigram as well. This is a way Donne used in his poetry in which 'paradoxical and riddling' elements make for 'close-packed meaning'. Another use of repetition occurs in 'the Good Morrow' in the second stanza:

And now good morrow to our waking souls,  
 Which watch not one another out of fear;  
 For love all love of other sights controls,  
 And makes one little room an everywhere.  
 Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,  
 Let maps to other, worlds on worlds have shown;  
 Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one (Donne,  
 2008).

The repetition of 'worlds' here refers to the worlds of the lovers. However, we can question the number of the worlds. As we know, the Elizabethan age was remarkable for its voyages of discovery such as that of Magellan, Cristopher

Colomb, etc. Donne contrasts the everexpanding sense of the universe with his 'littler room' wjich the mistress' presence has turned into a self-sufficient world.

Some scholars (Singh, 1992) comment about the number of the 'worlds' in the poem and asks some questions; whether their is only one world for the lovers or two worlds , those of the poets and his mistress, or four worlds, each lover being one and also each possessing one. We may ask whether the lovers together constitute one world or are each of them a seperate world.

We can also see repetitions in *Holy Sonnet XIX* in which Donne lines up words consecutively in eighth line as well as the repetition of the word 'as':

Oh, to vex me, contraries meet in one:  
Inconstancy unnaturally hath begot  
A constant habit; that when I would not  
I change in vows, and in devotion.  
As humorous is my contrition 5  
As my profane love, and as soon forgot: 6  
As riddlingly distempered, cold and hot, 7  
As praying, as mute; as infinite, as none 8  
(Donne, 2009).

When we look at the type of the words, it is apparent that most of them are verbs which are all 'dynamic'. It can be considered that this adds significantly to the vigorous quality of the verse, particularly in the final line in which each verb takes stress. Just as the paradox in the previous poem, here occurs a paradox again in the opening lines of the poem. It is called 'polyptoton' (the repetition of a word in a different form) such as 'inconstancy and constant'. It means that the whole poem is constructed round opposites, both words and concepts: such as 'constant habit and change'; 'cold and hott'; 'praying and mute'; 'infinite and none'. Another paradox may also be seen at the last lines of the poem where Donne combines 'disease' with 'a state of true health'.

## CHAPTER VII

### JOHN DONNE'S TECHNICAL ORIGINALITY

There is a famous saying of Robert Frost: "Two roads diverged in a wood. And I took the one less travelled by. And that has made all the difference". We can adopt this to Donne easily. Donne, too, chose the less travelled road which resulted in a totally different kind of literature differing from those of his contemporaries.

Donne's technique was in many ways a new thing in English poetry and his most important innovations, although they found imitators among his immediate successors, afterwards remained in abeyance for a certain amount of time. Donne had a different conception of function of imagery from that of these other poets. The purpose of an image in his poetry is to define the emotional experience by an intellectual parallel. There are many examples; the first may be 'The Fleas' in which the speaker conveys the meaning of their sexual love with his mistress by the image of a 'flea'. Another example can be the 'compass' which helps the poet to convey the meaning of the speaker's longing for his mistress.

In the sense of the period of Donne, it was not easy for the readers to understand the originality of Donne. They needed to try hard to do so. To understand Donne, the reader must have intelligence as much as that of Donne. The reader must be intelligent because it will not be easy for them to follow him in his poetry. Even in the same poem, Donne is capable of surprising the reader about the mood in the beginning of the poem and the mood at the end, and sometimes, the mood would perplex the reader even in the same stanza. 'The Sunne Rising' may be a good example which surprises the reader about the changing of the mood throughout the poem. Another good example can be 'The Relique' as it has a 'sardonic temper' at the beginning while the following lines make us confused because of the changing temper:

When my grave is broke up again	1
Some second guest to entertain,	
(For graves have learn'd that woman head,	
To be to more than one a bed)	
And he that digs it, spies	
A bracelet of bright hair about the bone,	6
Will he not let'us alone,	
And think that there a loving couple lies,	8
Who thought that this device might be some way	9
To make their souls, at the last busy day,	10
Meet at this grave, and make a little stay?	11
If this fall in a time, or land,	
Where mis-devotion doth command,	
Then he, that digs us up, will bring	
Us to the bishop, and the king,	
To make us relics; then	
Thou shalt be a Mary Magdalen, and I	17
A something else thereby;	18
All women shall adore us, and some men;	
(Donne, 2008).	

The first stanza is about death and endless love. The speaker tells us the 'exhumation' (unburying) of his and his lover's grave. Donne forms a somber tone in the first stanza mentioning 'grave', and the judgement day as 'the last busy day'. In the second stanza Mary Magdalen is mentioned and the reader may be made to think that it is her whom lies beside the speaker who is in the grave as she was always depicted with long, golden hair. The persona goes on then state that the gravedigger should realise that 'there a loving couple lies' (line 8) and that he should leave them be together. Images of death are enforced through the use of words such as 'grave' and 'bone' (lines 1, 6) and the speaker is able to indicate that he and his lover have been dead and buried for quite a long time giving a sense of time. In the last lines of the first stanza, the speaker is talking about his spiritual connection to his lover and how he thinks that the 'device' which he holds will help him to find his lover in the afterlife (the last busy day), so that their souls may meet again for a 'little stay' (line 11). The second stanza is about religion and identity. The speaker is suggesting that their bodies may be mistaken for holy relics and the lover beside him may be Mary Magdalen, the Saint, which makes him 'a something else thereby' (line 18), or one of her lovers. If their bodies were mistaken for holy

relics, then they would be taken to ‘a bishop or a king’ where everyone would adore them and consider them to be miracles. The couple was in love and did not consider much about being faithful to God. In the second stanza the speaker says ‘mis-devotion’ which may be an indication of their following earthly pleasure but God.

They did not display their relationship ‘between meals’ which may refer to religious connotation between Mary Magdalen, Jesus and Jesus’ disciples having supper which in turn may indicate that the speaker may be considering himself as Jesus. ‘Our hands ne’er touched the seals, which nature, injured by late law, sets free’ is saying that love should not be trapped by laws and marriage, it should be free. The couple’s time together is a miracle and the speaker cannot describe in any language what a miracle ‘she’ was. We may not know much about Donne’s biography, but, it is not difficult to realize some reflections from his life in his poetry. Donne was a great intellectual figure of his time. He was pretty much interested in astronomy, chemistry, geography, philosophy, law, and theology which were the indications of cultivation of the period. The scientists and the thinkers of the time meant so much to Donne, because of the benefit he got; the innovations brought about the ‘scepticism’. The scepticism of the modern astronomers about law and logic in stellar movements was paralleled in the seventeenth century by scepticism about the central position of the earth. We may see these parallels in Donne’s poem, ‘The Anatomie of the World’. The following lines make us understand how the ‘new philosophy’ (line 205) affected Donne:

And new Philosophy calls all in doubt, 205  
The Element of the fire is quite put out; 206  
The sun is lost, and th’earth, and no man’s wit  
Can well direct him where to look for it.  
And freely men confess that this world’s spent,  
When in the planets and the firmament

[...]

Prince, subject, father, son, are things forgot,  
For every man alone thinks he hath got  
To be a phoenix, and that then can be  
None of that kind, of which he is, but he (Donne, 2008).



Beside Donne is considered to be an intellectual figure of his time, he did not quit the old astronomy as well. He was largely focused on new science, philosophy, and astronomical innovations, however, Donne is considered to have used most of his images from the old astronomy, too. ‘Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward’ may be a good example to show the old astronomical beliefs of Donne:

Let mans Soule be a Spheare, and then, in this, 1  
The intelligence that moves, devotion is, 2  
And as the other Spheares, by being growne 3  
Subject to forraigne motion, lose their owne,  
And being by others hurried every day,  
Scarce in a yeare their naturall forme obey:

[...]

O thinke mee worth shine anger, punish mee,  
Burne off my rusts, and my deformity,  
Restore shine Image, so much, by thy grace,  
That thou may'st know mee, and I'll turne my face.(Gardner, 1978)

Again in the ‘Valediction: Forbidding Mourning’, he uses an old-fashioned belief about the ‘planet Earth’. The speaker says that when the earth moves, it brings “harms and fears,” but when the spheres experience “trepidation,” though the impact is greater, it is also innocent. ‘A Valediction: forbidding Mourning’ is one of Donne’s most well-known poems and it is also significant because of its claim about the ‘spiritual love’. As we know, Donne appreciated bodily love mostly, being against neo-Platonic ideas, however, Donne, in this poem, anticipating a physical separation from his beloved, invokes the nature of that spiritual love to prevent the ‘tear-floods’ and ‘sigh-tempests’ (line 6). The poem is essentially a sequence of metaphors and comparisons, each describing a way of looking at their separation that will help them to avoid the mourning forbidden by the poem’s title:

AS virtuous men pass mildly away,  
And whisper to their souls to go,  
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,  
"Now his breath goes," and some say, "No."

So let us melt, and make no noise,  
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move ; 6

'Twere profanation of our joys  
To tell the laity our love.

7

[...]

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,  
Like th' other foot, obliquely run ;  
Thy firmness makes my circle just,  
<sup>35</sup> And makes me end where I begun (Donne, 2009).  
<sup>36</sup>

Though they must separate, their souls are still one, and, therefore, they are not enduring a breach, they are experiencing an “expansion”; in the same way that gold can be stretched by beating it “to aery thinness,” the soul they share will simply stretch to take in all the space between them. If their souls are separate, he says, they are like the feet of a compass: His lover’s soul is the fixed foot in the center, and his is the foot that moves around it. The firmness of the center foot makes the circle that the outer foot draws perfect. The last two lines of the poem speaks this (line 35-36). They are as the feet of a compass, connected, with the center foot fixing the orbit of the outer foot and helping it to describe a perfect circle. As the most scholars of Donne (Celements, 1990; Gottlieb, 1990; Smith, 1991; Ried, 2000) claim the compass is one of Donne’s most famous metaphors, and it is the perfect image to encapsulate the values of Donne’s spiritual love, which is balanced, symmetrical, intellectual, serious, and beautiful in its simplicity.

The comparison of ‘the earth’ to ‘the lovers’ is of great importance. The speaker says he and his mistress are like the two ‘spheres’ of the earth. However, he claims that their movement will not have the harmful consequences of an earthquake like the vibration of the spheres. The two lovers are miserable as they cannot experience any physical love, their love is spiritual. The speaker says that their farewell should be as mild as the uncomplaining deaths of virtuous men, because weeping would be ‘profanation of our joys’ (line 7) conveying the title of the poem.

As we know, Donne reflects a different, unconventional love; however, there is a dichotomy between the common love of the everyday world and the uncommon love of Donne in his poetry. This is apparent in many love poems of

Donne including ‘The Sun Rising’, ‘The Canonization’, and ‘A Valediction: forbidding Mourning’. Sidney Gottlieb (1990) states in his *Approaches to Teaching the Metaphysical Poets* that:

The effect of this dichotomy is to create a kind of emotional aristocracy that is similar in form to the political aristocracy with which Donne has had painfully bad luck throughout his life and which he commented upon in poems, such as ‘The Canonization’: This emotional aristocracy is similar in form to the political one but utterly opposed to it in spirit. Few in number are the emotional aristocrats who have access to the spiritual love of the spheres and the compass; throughout all of Donne’s writing, the membership of this elite never includes more than the speaker and his lover—or at the most, the speaker, his lover, and the reader of the poem, who is called upon to sympathize with Donne’s romantic plight (p. 33).

A significant originality of Donne in poetry can be seen in ‘The Broken Heart’ as well. In this poem, the speaker claims that ‘love’ is nothing but insanity because love ‘decays’ (line 3) in a short period of time as well as it destroys the lovers in many ways. Donne uses analogies in this poem as it is common originality of him. In the first stanza he claims that he has had plague for a year (line 6) and he is aware of the fact that nobody would ‘believe’ this as the plague kills one in a short time. (Here we should remember how the plague killed thousands of people in England in this period). Another one is that the speaker claims that he has seen a powder burning for a whole day (line 8) and knows that people would ‘laugh’ at him as it burns in a moment. Donne aims to prove that love is not different from a plague or a flask of gunpowder. Love maintains just for a very short time.

He is stark mad, whoever says,  
That he hath been in love an hour,  
Yet not that love so soon decays,  
But that it can ten in less space devour ;  
Who will believe me, if I swear  
That I have had the plague a year? 6  
Who would not laugh at me, if I should say  
I saw a flash of powder burn a day? (Donne, 2008). 8

In the second stanza, the speaker claims that a heart is a massive consumer as it ‘swallows’ the lovers and ‘never chaws’ (line 14). Heart ‘draws’ the lovers

towards 'him' unlike other feelings arrive at the heart themselves. Love uses all parts of the heart unlike other feelings just uses some certain parts of it. Love is like a 'tyrant pike', and our hearts are like the small fish ('fry') it feasts on (line 16)

Ah, what a trifle is a heart,  
If once into love's hands it come !  
All other griefs allow a part  
To other griefs, and ask themselves but some ;  
They come to us, but us love draws ;  
He swallows us and never chaws ; 14  
By him, as by chain'd shot, whole ranks do die ;  
He is the tyrant pike, our hearts the fry. 16  
(Donne, 2008).

Addressing his beloved, the speaker asks her a question: If what he says about love is false, then what happened to his heart the first time he saw her? He says that he entered the room with a heart, and left the room without one. If his heart had been captured whole by his beloved, he says, it would have taught her to treat him more kindly; instead, the impact of love shattered his heart 'as glass' (line 24).

Still, he says, a thing cannot be so utterly destroyed that it becomes nothing; the pieces of his shattered heart are still in his breast. In the same way that a broken mirror reflects 'a hundred lesser faces' (line 30), the speaker says that his 'rags of heart' can 'like, wish, and adore' (line 31); but after experiencing the shock of 'one such love' (line 32), they can never love again.

If 'twere not so, what did become  
Of my heart when I first saw thee?  
I brought a heart into the room,  
But from the room I carried none with me.  
If it had gone to thee, I know  
Mine would have taught thine heart to show  
More pity unto me ; but Love, alas !  
At one first blow did shiver it as glass. 24

[...]

Therefore I think my breast hath all  
Those pieces still, though they be not unite ;  
And now, as broken glasses show  
A hundred lesser faces, so 30

My rags of heart can like, wish, and adore, 31  
But after one such love, can love no more. 32  
(Donne, 2008).

It is widely accepted by many scholars (Lim, 2005; Davies, 1994) that ‘The Broken Heart’ is an excellent example of Donne’s style in his ‘metaphysical’ mode. The poem conveys a pretty simple thought of love’s destroying hearts. Structurally, the poem looks at its theme from a different angle in each of its stanzas. The first stanza is metaphorical and explanatory, establishing the basic idea of the poem by showing that to be in love for an entire hour would be like having the plague for a year or seeing a powder burn for a whole day; love survives for a short time. The second stanza personifies love as a kind of consumer that consumes lovers in a while by ‘swallowing and never chewing’.

In the third stanza, the speaker starts to express more specifically. The speaker tells the reader when his heart was ‘taken’. The final stanza details what happens to a heart after it has been shattered by the force of love. He states that his heart was shattered into pieces just like ‘broken glasses’ (line 29). Sidney Gottlieb (1990) states that ‘The Broken Heart’ typifies the quality of Donne’s metaphysical poems (p. 36). Donne’s poems may seem hard to understand at first glance, but, once you get the idea of the poem, it turns out to be easier to appreciate it. This poem is remarkable for its unusual conception of love. One of the originalities of Donne is, present in this poem, that he compares love to death by a violent disease, plague. Actually, it is Donne’s originality as no poets of the period would think about it at that time when Petrarchan style was at its peak.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to show how John Donne contributed to the poetry as well as to English Literature in general. The contribution of Donne is of great significance as it is clear from the pieces he presented in this work as well. He had a great range of works some of which are his *Satires, Elegies, Songs and Sonets, Divine Poems* and also his letters as he was not only a significant poet but also well-known letter-writer.

As we know, our experiences in life shape our future. For that reason, it was important to keep eye on the biography of a significant figure like Donne. If we question the most important element that shaped Donne's life, the quick answer would be his religion, of course. Born and brought up as a Catholic, Donne suffered much because of his beliefs. Catholicism prevented him from his academic career. As he was Catholic, he would not keep the oath of the college. The subject of religion would play a significant role in his adult life.

Another significant experience that shaped Donne's life can be considered as his 'marriage' with Anne More. After Donne started job, and met Anne More, he fell in love inevitably. Love and marriage are just like horse and carriage. Donne eloped with her and he had to quit his job near his patron, as his illegal-wife was his niece. Anne More was also related to Thomas More, who played a significant role in the court of the period. Donne could not find another secure job because of his illegal marriage. Now, Donne was both a Catholic and he was a guilty person who lost both the confidence and self-confidence.

After all these obstacles, Donne had to take some important steps; he need to change the flow of his life. At that time, Donne quited Catholicism and started to serve for the Church of England. It was the most important decision he had made beside his elope with Anne More. However, his conversion provided him with a

secure job as a dean. His life turned out to be steadier. As we can realize easily, Donne experienced all those things as a consequence of his previous experiences. They shaped his life as well as his poetry. There were other elements that played a significant role as well. The death of his wife, Anne More, shows its reflection in the poetry of Donne immediately. Donne's tendency to bodily love rather than spiritual one, his longing for his wife and asking for more love as well as 'More love' are of great importance in his poetry.

The experiences in Donne's life can be considered to have parallels with his poetry. Even though some scholars do not accept any biographical truths in his life, it is not hard to find some in some of his poems. For instance, 'The Flea' might give some clues about the relation between Anne More and John Donne before they eloped as, in the poem, the speaker (who we can call John Donne) displays "control, elegance, and power through verbal wit and argument" while the woman (who we can call Anne More) "repeatedly frustrates his desire for conquest."

All these experiences shaped Donne's life and his poetry. He turned out to be a great poet but not only because of his experience. He was a gifted figure. He had some innate talents such as having a great intelligence, being called 'John the Wit'. He showed off his wit in his letters to the ladies in order to attract them with his intelligence.

After his show-off letters to the ladies, the most important audience of Donne was an elite group of his close friends. Donne used to read his poems to this elite audience and get the reactions. He did not publish his works except some manuscripts. For that reason, Donne could not get the chance of being read by much more people. This elite group was lucky to read them from the first hand. They were either in the profession of diplomacy or law; either in that of politics or army. Even some of them tried to imitate Donne, however, they could not succeed in writing poems as striking as those of Donne.

Donne is accepted as the founder of the Metaphysical Poetry; in order to understand the term, the definitions by many scholars of Donne appeared in this study. The most famous one was that of Helen Gardner from whom many other researchers have got benefits. The origin of the term was of some debate; however, it is accepted to have appeared in *A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* by Dryden for the first time. Some scholars claimed that it was

not a 'happy term' because it did not compensate what these poets were doing, at least they were not writing about the nature of the universe. I tried to explain the term in detail in this study and it is clear that the term, metaphysical, is actually not appropriate for these poets. That Donne seems to be interested in astronomy may lead us to the exact meaning of the term; however, his purpose was not reflecting the universe but his intellect.

When Donne started to 'write' in his early twenties, the Elizabethans were competing with the Petrarchans. While the Elizabethans were largely writing about the court and the courtiers, Petrarchans were writing about love conventions, and the neo-Platonism was glorifying the spiritual love, Donne appeared with many innovations. He started to glorify 'bodily love' as he believed that spiritual love would reach its peak by means of bodily love. Throughout this study, the term 'conceit' appeared many times. It is 'extended metaphor' in other words. Donne used conceits in his poetry to great extent. The conceits were the indication of Donne's intellect. As Donne is considered to be the best 'wit' of his time, the conceit is his originality in the poetry as well. Donne's aim in using conceit was different from his preceders.

The use of conceit in poetry of the seventeenth century was a usual thing but the Metaphysicals differed from their contemporaries, the Elizabethans, in some ways. The Elizabethans used the conceit mostly to embellish their poetry, to make them more charming while the Metaphysicals employed it in order to make their thoughts wear a body. In brief, the conceit of Elizabethans was 'decorative' while that of the Metaphysicals was 'organic'.

One of the most famous of Donne's conceits is found in this poem where he compares two lovers who are separated to the two legs of a compass. In the poem we get the idea that if the one lover moves, the other follow just as one leg of a compass follows the other leg. Donne did not condense the conceit in a line or two, he spread his idea of two lovers being like two legs of a compass throughout the poem

As well as conceits, the use of 'emblem' was Donne's another excellent characteristic. The fact that conceits derived from emblems in the sixteenth century was another important section of this study. Actually, some of the emblems were already known at that time, but Donne created many emblems on his own. While



most of the emblems are originally from the ancient Greek tradition, the emblem of the Jesuit also shows itself in the poetry of the seventeenth century. Donne conveyed his feelings and thought by means of emblems to great extent in his poetry. Another contribution that Donne made in the poetry was his use of 'analogy'. He reflected his 'wit' by means of his analogies. One of the most well-known analogies appears in his 'The Broken Heart' by likening love to plague and flask of gunpowder.

Repetition is one of the most widely used devices Donne worked in his poems. His aim to use repetition was ranging. Sometimes, he wanted to make his poems fluent by repeating the same words; he sometimes repeated words in order to add a vigorous quality to his poetry.

Donne used paradoxes in his poetry as well as rhetoric and images. As we repeatedly mention that Donne was a great wit, he wanted his readers to be wit as much as himself. He did not aim to be understood easily when his poems were read. He wanted to challenge his readers while reading, make them think about the poem, make them analyze his poems in detail. This was one of the major characteristics of John Donne. He had a great imagination as he could liken two lovers to two legs of a compass, so did he want his readers to use their imagination. A reader must be as intelligent as Donne in order to understand his poem, 'The Flea' in which the speaker gets united with his mistress through a flea that bites and tastes the blood of these two lovers. Or, that reader must be clever enough to understand the analogy of two lovers to the spheres of the world.

The surprise openings are worth mentioning in Donne's poems. They were a reflection of the preceding styles of the sixteenth century. In drama in the sixteenth century, it was of importance to take the audience's attention with a surprise opening. This enables the audience to remember that work beside it pulls the attention. So did the Metaphysical poets and largely used the tradition of surprise opening in their poetry. Donne was one of the best of them as we, the readers, remember most of the opening lines of his poems such as; 'For Godsake hold your tongue! And let me love' of 'The Canonization' or 'Go and catch a falling star' of the poem titled by this first line.

Sonnet was, perhaps, the most attractive works of the sixteenth century as William Shakespeare played a really great significant role with his sonnets. Donne

and Shakespeare differed from each other in the sense of theme. Shakespeare, as he was one (and the most famous) of the Elizabethans, mostly used the theme of love in their sonnets, however, John Donne, being one (and the most famous) of the Metaphysicals, generally wrote with 'religious purposes'.

As it was mentioned in this study, Donne wrote his poems just for a special elite group of his friends most of whom, later, turned out to have prestigious states in the society. He never published his works apart from some manuscripts. Actually, he was invited to be appear in some anthologies; however, Donne refused to do so. His works appeared just in two witty collections. Regardless of these two collections, we can say that he did not find it necessary to get involved in the literary world. He tried to isolate himself from that world and succeeded. However, it cannot be considered as a right decision because Donne deserves to have appeared in all anthologies and collection of his period, having such a great intellect and wit. Perhaps, he was unlucky as he was born at the same time William Shakespeare, who had pulled all the attention of the literary world of the period, was still alive. Even today, Donne's period, the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century, recalls people William Shakespeare first of all.

How was Donne different from his contemporaries? The answer was his use of colloquialism in his poetry. The Elizabethans and the Petrarchans were largely using 'accumulated' vocabulary. They had already finished everything that can be an expression of feelings in poetry. However, Donne appeared with a new way of reflecting feelings and he did this by means of everyday vocabulary that is called colloquial. One of the biggest contributions of Donne is his use of colloquialism in his metaphysical poetry. This enabled him to be understood better even his poem required much effort to get solved. This is the clue how Donne makes readers get involved in his poetry. The poems may seem hard at the beginning of the poem but once you grasp the mood and tendency, you begin to get the idea of the poem soon.

Donne deserves to be the most significant figure of the Metaphysical poetry as he adopted most of the styles that are characteristics of it. One of his adoptions was the use of everyday vocabulary. Donne did not prefer using some archaic words such as *ye* and *thou* as well as the *-th* ending of the third person present singular. By doing so, Donne's poetry looked much more modern than the poems of

the period. His language differed from the Elizabethans as well in the context of the vocabulary choices. Donne preferred using everyday language in his poetry unlike his predecessors. His followers did the same and used, largely, the words in everyday use. Before the Metaphysicals, the Elizabethans mostly used the 'accumulated' words. Donne tried to get rid of them as they were not efficient to reflect the real feelings of him, being a metaphysical poet.

The use of sound system is another feature of Donne's poetry as well as that of some other metaphysical poets. Donne used 'sound pattern' in order to enable his poems to be sung just as the ancient Greek ballads. We see this sound pattern especially in Donne's 'Songs and Sonets'. They have a fluent rhyme schema. When you read one of those poems, you feel like you are singing a song, for example, 'Go and Catch a Falling Star', 'The Canonization', 'The Flea', and 'The Sun Rising'. All these are songs written with a sound pattern in order to be sung.

As well as sound system of the poetry, rhythm plays a great significance in Donne's poetry. Unlike other poets, Donne used the rhythm in order to appeal through the readers' ear to the intellect.

There has been a long debate whether John Donne founded a 'school' or what he did was just a 'new style' in poetry. Many scholars accept that what the Metaphysicals did was nothing but a style; however, some others believed it was a genre. In this study, an answer was sought, and the result is of question. The way of works was different from the preceding ones; that is true. But, they appeared with some poetry written in the same themes, metres, rhyme schema, etc. The Metaphysicals were going to the same destination but they were leading a different road. It was the road that made the Metaphysicals including Donne different from their predecessors and successors. Donne was an Elizabethan by birth and upbringing and wrote his earliest poems, including at least some of his *Song and Sonets*, before the turn of the century. For that reason, it is not fair to claim that he does not owe anything to the Elizabethans. Moreover it is apparent that his language and that of his followers necessarily grew out styles in 'fashion' in his youth. However, Donne did not write his poetry dedicating to the Queen and the court. Indeed, Donne's language has been described as 'Inns of Courtly rather than courtly'.

Despite of the fact that he is turning against it, his poetry, both in treatment of the subject matter and language, has many in common with the language style of

the Elizabethans In spite of their differences from others, it is hard to claim that it was a new school but a new style.

One of the themes that is dedicated to John Donne is his use of ‘erotic love’ in his poetry. Donne always opposed to neo-Platonic ideas about poetry. As neo-Platonicism glorified spiritual love, they underestimated bodily love and there was no place for sexual love in their works. Donne, after all, glorified ‘bodily love’ as he believed that spiritual love would be achieved only through bodily love.

Donne’s contribution to the Metaphysical poetry consists of his five formal verse satires, more than twenty love elegies, some short epigrams, the long, unfinished poem *Metempsychosis*, some occasional poems and verse letters (including three epithalamions and two *Anniversaries* on the death of Elizabeth Dury) many of which were addressed to actual or prospective patrons, and thirty-five divine poems.

Donne has always been criticized for many things he did such as avoiding accent in his poetry. What insulted some people was the pose he showed in some of his poetry like ‘Go and Catch a Falling Star’ and ‘Woman Constancy’. Donne is criticized for being anti-feminist in these poems. His thought was that a woman cannot be both beautiful and faithful and this makes the feminist get angry with him.

The works of Donne can be categorized into five main groups; *Satires*, *Elegies*, *Songs and Sonets*, *Divine Poems*, and *Anniversaries*. They were generally focused on public matters and politic issues. Donne wrote his *Satires* as if he was the last ‘good man’ in the corrupt society on the Earth. Donne’s aim in writing these poems is to criticize the society, the institutions, and the system. His *Elegies* reflect Donne’s special love experiences by Ovidian way of expression. Unlike the popular style of the Petrarchans of the period, Donne mocked the courtly poetry because he was writing Ins of Courtly, not courtly.

The third category is Donne’s *Songs and Sonets* which are accepted to be the most private poems of him. They are a quest, for Donne, to understand love. Donne tries to express love by comparing the accumulated ideas about love and the experienced love. Another prominent group of Donne’s works is his *Divine Poems* in which he mostly uses the theme of religion. *Divine Poems* search for the relation of man with God; however, they are subject to get related previous poems. Donne

tries to relate the love between man and woman with the love between man and God; he tries to understand the love by comparing these kinds of love. He also seeks to understand the relation between bodily love and the spiritual love. The fifth one is *the Anniversaries* which are highly melancholic as they are written after the death of a fifteen year old girl, Miss Drury, the daughter of Donne's patron. *The Anniversaries* can be accepted as a bridge between the secular poems and the religious poetry of Donne. They assume a dualistic division between body and soul. They are considered to urge the reader to isolate themselves from the earthly pleasure expressing the meaninglessness of the world.

Another group of works of Donne can be categorized under the title of *Meditations*. They are, in practice, Donne's private meditations, *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, and they, written while he was suffering from a serious illness, were published in 1624. The most famous of these is undoubtedly Meditation 17, which includes the immortal lines 'No man is an island' and 'never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee'.

'Mutual love' was what Donne usually celebrated in his poems. He believes that each lover is actually a different world (as he expresses by 'spheres' in his poems). Donne defines the world as macrocosm and each person as a microcosm. It is considered that the world of love contains everything of value; it is the only one worth exploring and possessing. Hence the microcosmic world of love becomes larger and more important than the macrocosm. This is again the basic element of the 'mutual love'. One lover always needs the other one in order to make the whole so he or she can be happy. Otherwise, the lover cannot be happy as he or she would stay 'incomplete'. The mutual love poems express longing for intimacy with another human being, the pull toward union that remedies 'defect of loneliness' (The Ecstasy, line 44), these other poems exhibit a desire for emotional detachment, and for preserving a separate identity.

We may see Donne's different approaches to love in his different poems. Sometimes he approaches love as something unnecessary and sometimes as if it was the meaning of life. We can relate this different treatment to the range of Donne's age in his poetry. Younger Donne can be considered as more cynical; 'Air and Angels' can be a good example for cynical Donne while 'Farewell to Love' and 'Love's Alchemy' are good examples for experienced Donne in the sense of love.

John Donne is the founder of the Metaphysical poetry and he needs some originality to do so. His originality makes up a significant part of this study. First of all, Donne's use of imagery was his distinctive and typical feature of him. There were many imitators of him even two centuries after his death. He used images which are pretty well known in English poetry. One of them is the image of flea in 'The Flea' and the other one is the image of compass in 'A Valediction: forbidden mourning'. They are of Donne's distinctive originality. As these images require a pretty good intelligence as well as imagination, the readers must be capable not only of feeling and thinking at the same time; but even of simultaneously sharing an emotion and enjoying a joke.

Donne often used allusions in his poetry, too. One of them occurs in 'The Relic' in which Donne refers to the supper of Jesus with Mary Magdalen and his disciples. Another allusion occurs in 'Good Morrow' referring to Seven Sleepers. By this allusion, Donne aims to state the idea that before they fell in love the mistress and the poet could not be said to have been living, only sleeping.

Scepticism played an important role in Donne's poetry. He owed his sceptic style to the thinkers, astronomers, and scientists of the period. The scepticism of the modern astronomers about law and logic in stellar movements was paralleled in the seventeenth century by scepticism about the central position of the earth. As well as new astronomical developments in stellar movements, the old astronomy made up a pretty good part of his poetry. Some of his imagery derived from old astronomical beliefs reflected in his poetry such as 'Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward' in which Donne tells us about the spheres of the world, likening two lovers to them.

John Donne's contribution the Metaphysical poetry is quite countless as it is clear from the study he not only established a new style but also he led many successors of him including the most significant figures of the Metaphysical poetry such as George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw, and Andrew Marvell.

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