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A METACRITICAL APPROACH TO JOHN DONNE’S METAPHYSICAL POETRY

Abstract

In metacritical approach, it is important to critique a critic's work; to describe and evaluate the principles and methods of a critical approach; to question the theoretical foundations of criticism; or to study the history, purpose, or context of a critical text. This paper aims at scrutinizing John Donne’s “The Canonization”, “The Relic”, and “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning” through metacritical approach by focusing on some of the criticism made to demonstrate him not as a poet but as a versifier, as well as an inferior poet who was not only condemned but also envied. Unlike the traditional poets of his time, Donne demanded intellectual agility and personal response. He also followed aesthetic theories that were too sophisticated for his time. The criticism upon Donne selected in this paper reveal that Donne has been ignored and disregarded as a poet even though he uses his wit and creates something new in his poetry.

Keywords: John Donne, Metaphysical Poetry, Metacritical Approach

JOHN DONNE'IN METAFİZİK ŞİİRİNE METAELEŞTİREL BİR YAKLAŞIM

Öz

Metaeleştirel yaklaşımda bir eleştirmenin eserini eleştirmek; eleştirel bir yaklaşımın ilke ve yöntemlerini tanımlamak ve değerlendirmek; eleştirinin teorik temellerini sorgulamak; eleştirilen metnin tarihini, amacını veya içeriğini incelemek önemlidir. Bu makale, John Donne'un "*The Canonization*", "*The Relic*", and "*A Valediction Forbidding Mourning*" adlı şiirlerini metaeleştirel bir yaklaşımla incelemeyi amaçlarken, onu bir şair olarak değil, bir nazım yazarı olarak, sadece aşağılanan ve kınanmış değil, aynı zamanda gıpta edilen bir şair olarak da göstermek için yapılan eleştirilere odaklanacaktır. Donne zamanının geleneksel şairlerinden farklı olarak, entellektüel çeviklik ve kişisel yanıtlar aradı. Ayrıca, yaşadığı zamana göre çok ileride olan sanat kuramlarını takip etti. Bu makalede seçilen Donne eleştirisi, Donne'un nükte yeteneği kullanarak şiirinde yeni bir şey yaratmasına rağmen, bir şair olarak görmezden gelindiğini ve göz ardı edildiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: John Donne, Metafizik Şiir, Metaeleştirel Yaklaşım

Introduction

Metaphysical Poetry was a literary movement that emerged as a consequence of the political, social, religious and economical conditions during the age of reason. Frank J. Warnke asserts that Metaphysical poetry is characterized by ingenuity, obscurity and intellectuality in addition to conceits, irony and paradoxes (1993). It incorporates ideas and metaphors from philosophy, theology, medicine and astronomy. Considered the pre-eminent representative of the Metaphysical poets, John Donne was in rebellion against the conventional imagery of The Elizabethan poetry. His poems are intellectually complex and full of conceit. With their lack of conventionality, Donne's poems can easily be separated from the conventions of English poetry during the Elizabethan period in England. In those years, criticism was totally theoretical and even though he was beyond discussion from that theoretical centre, there has been considerable amount of criticism on Donne.

Donne has been not just a major representative of the Metaphysical Poetry, but a peculiar poet no matter how harshly he was criticised. His verses have resisted the abuse and disdain yet he uses his wit successfully in his poetry which has manifested itself as perplexing but impressing, complex but understandable, strange but beautiful works of art. Besides Donne's contribution to the school of Metaphysical Poetry, it is important to point out the unique and exceptional quality in Donne's poetry through his thoughts in relation to his poems, his style and language in criticism, and his use of conceit and wit. This paper aims at scrutinizing Donne's "*The Canonization*", "*The Relic*", and "*A Valediction Forbidding Mourning*" through metacritical approach by focusing on some of the criticism made to demonstrate him not as a poet but as a versifier, and an inferior poet who was not only condemned but also envied. "Criticism comes from some kind of crisis and if there is no risk, criticism is not criticism. Being critical helps to broaden some thoughts and even change them" (Özdemir, 2018, p. 506).

In metacritical approach, it is important to criticize a critic's work; to describe, to broaden and evaluate the principles and methods of a critical approach; to question the theoretical foundations of criticism; or to study the history, purpose, or context of a critical text. The criticism upon Donne selected in this paper support the fact that Donne has been ignored and disregarded as a poet even though he uses his wit and creates something new in his poetry. Unlike the traditional poetry of his time, he demanded intellectual agility and personal response. He also followed aesthetic theories that were too sophisticated for his time. He went on his way of disregarding the poetical theories of his time and his responsibilities towards the readers such as giving a lesson, teaching and appealing to their tastes.

Much criticism against Donne and Metaphysical Poets was centered on the idea that his school behaved radically different from the general current of poetry, which was enough for the critics to condemn him and left him rest behind the scene of remembrance. "Poetry was a way for Donne to show his wit, his skill, his learning, his rhetorical command... Donne was writing a kind of antipoetry" (Alpers, 1993: p. 230). Wit, which characterizes all Donne's most brilliant verse is defined as both the intellect and quickness of fancy. Thus, the lack of conventionality— or antipoetry-- has been the basis of the criticism against Metaphysical Poetry.

Some Critical Perspectives on Donne

Some of the most prominent figures of literary criticism before the twentieth century, Alexander Pope, John Dryden, Samuel Johnson and William Hazlitt criticised the school of Metaphysical Poetry which has been a ground for criticism for a long time and used as a term of abuse and insult. However, the coming of the modern poetry reduced the reaction against it. Since today's reader may at times be confused with Donne's poetry, it is not surprising to know that Metaphysical Poets were not accepted as poets during their life time as they stood opposite to the general flow of poetry of the seventeenth century. Centuries had to pass and points of view considerably changed so as to be able to understand the value of Metaphysical Poetry.

In his "An Essay on Criticism," Alexander Pope deeply attacks the Metaphysical Poets of the seventeenth century because they ignore the rules of the forefathers; and maintains that, it is difficult to neglect the proficiency of this poetic form which linked between matter and spirit (Evanz, 1990: p.29). Pope was both confused with what he thought as chaos in Donne's work and praises Donne's wit at the expense of his versification. "Donne (like one of his Successors) had infinitely more Wit than he wanted Versification: for the great dealers in Wit, like those in Trade, take least Pains to set off their Goods" (qtd. in Smith, 1983: p.178). Pope struggles with the fact that Donne had wit not as a poet but a versifier. His famous lines on Metaphysical Poets:

*Some to conceit alone their taste confine,
And glitt'ring thoughts struck out at ev'ry line;
Pleas'd with a work where nothing's just or fit;
One glaring chaos and wild heap of wit.*
(An Essay on Criticism, Poetry Foundation, 2018)

What he means by wit and chaos is a combination of thought and feeling which is required for reading Metaphysical Poetry and understanding Metaphysical conceit. What is more, the Metaphysical conceit differs from the proceeding types of conceits, which are mainly comparative.

It also differs in its illumination to a certain idea. Golban states, “*This peculiar blend of passion and thought, or feeling and thought* (as T. S. Eliot understood it), is considered to be essential to the reading of Metaphysical poetry, as it is one of the essential ingredients of the Metaphysical conceit (Golban, 2006: p.3).

Alexander Ballock Grosart essayed a scholarly edition of Donne's poems in which he turned back upon Donne's eighteenth-century accusers. Grosart's edition of Donne's poems in 1872, is considered as a major literary event as it is the first version of the poems since the seventeenth century which takes account of the early manuscripts. He believed that it was Pope and his followers who didn't know true poetry from versifying; for they thought Pope's versions of Donne's satires an improvement on Donne and didn't see how they robbed the originals of all their force, nobility and justness. “He claims that Donne is a great poet, an absolute and unique genius” (Smith, 1983: p.26). We may assume that, on the one hand, Pope regards Donne's poems unworthy because of their lack of discipline, on the other hand, he is responsive to their creativeness and genius, and this confusion makes it difficult for him to arrive to a negative final judgment of them.

The Influence of Donne upon John Dryden

One of the most important seventeenth century English critics, John Dryden popularized the term “metaphysical” and applied it to the seventeenth-century poetry (Bennett, 1953). In 1693, Dryden criticized Donne in one of his essays, suggesting that Donne did not write poetry appropriately and affirmed that the poetic devices he applies to poetry had a strange and undesirable effect on the mind of the reader. In “A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire”, Dryden writes about Donne as ‘the greatest wit, though not the best poet, of our nation’: “He affects the Metaphysicks, not only in his Satires, but in his Amorous Verses, ...and perplexes the Minds of the Fair Sex with nice Speculations of Philosophy, when he should ingage their hearts, and entertain them with the softness of Love” (1900: p.19).

However, Donne not only perplexes the minds but creates a striking effect on his readers by engaging the idea of physical and spiritual love in their hearts. To illustrate, the famous poem named, “The Canonization” begins unusually: “*For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love; / Or chide my palsy, or my gout, My five grey hairs, or ruined fortune, flout,*” (1-2)

There is a reference to old age in these lines of the poem which is highly dramatised. Donne had to choose the character of an ageing man so that his obstinate love may appear all the more disreputable. The speaker says at first he and his lovers are like flies drawn to a taper. Then he says they are like the taper itself. Later, they become the strong eagle which represents masculinity and the elegant dove which represents femininity. Like the phoenix, they rise and die which implies that their love is more than singular bond, in which love-making confirms rather than destroys.

Call us what you will, we are made such by love;

Call her one, me another fly,

We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,

And we in us find the eagle and the dove.

The phoenix riddle hath more wit

By us; we two being one, are it.

So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit. (19-25)

The two lovers are compared to tapers consumed by fire. Similarly they are consumed by the heat of their passion, yet their love will rise from their ashes and it will be renewed, like the mythical phoenix. The lover will gain a spiritual strength through his love. “The Canonization” conveys that love is a kind of religion, which destroys its devotees through worldly success to improve them as human beings. Such lovers must renounce the world and their own lives for each other. Love both denies them the material gainings of the world, and provides them with another superior world.

What Dryden condemns becomes appreciated and admired in the twentieth century because criticism not only reflects the preoccupations of the period, but also changes together with the tendencies and thought of the new periods. A critic of the twentieth century, Alvarez says, “Criticism is always partial... it reflects the preoccupations of the time in which it was written” (1967: p. 11). This remark supports how Dryden makes his own prescription and finds it wrong to perplex the minds of fair sex.

The Influence of Donne upon Samuel Johnson

One of the most influential literary figures in England, Samuel Johnson, criticizes Metaphysical Poetry in *The Lives of the Poets*. He believes that Metaphysical poets “were men of learning”:

... to shew their learning was their whole endeavour; but, unluckily resolving to show it (their learning) in rhyme, instead of writing poetry they only wrote verses and very often such verses as stood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the modulation was so imperfect that they were only found to be verses by counting the syllables (1936: p.34).

The Metaphysical Poets, according to Johnson, desired to assert what had been never said before. They struggled to be unique in their thoughts and were careless of their language. They had their own thoughts that they express through their own manner. In fact, they carried the Elizabethan freedom of imagination and delight in verbal fancies to a point at which it became difficult for the average reader to grasp their meaning.

Samuel Johnson finds these poets “not successful in representing or moving the affections” and takes the term metaphysical as an insult. He asserts that these poets do not have the right to have the name of poets since they “neither copied nature nor life, neither painted the forms of matter, nor represented the operations of intellect...” (Johnson, 1936: p.15). Johnson has distaste for witty and skillful conceits in Donne’s poetry. He is vexed in his claim that Metaphysical Poets like Donne used their wit to present “the most heterogenous idea are yoked by violence together” (Johnson, 1936: p.15). In *Life of Cowley*, Johnson states “... the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought, and, though he sometimes admires, is seldom pleased” (Smith, 1983: p. 218).

Metaphysical Poets obviously used striking, unusual and perplexing conceits. One of the most popular poems by Donne, “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” is a good example for his use of “heterogenous” ideas. In this poem, Donne employs his metaphysical wit to develop a series of arguments for the speaker to console his wife before he leaves home. The speaker tries to convince her that spiritual love cannot be affected by their physical distance. Then he tries to

show her that since their souls are one, distance will only increase their love. “*Our two souls therefore, which are one/ Though I must go, endure not yet*” (II, 21-22).

What makes Donne unique is the way he unites two different ideas in such a powerful way and extends his argument with such rational reasons. Donne successfully manages to portray a careful logical and intellectual image that satisfies the emotions and appeals to imagination while he compares the unity between lovers to the legs of the compass:

*If they be two, they are two so
as stiff twin compasses are two
thy soul the fixed foot makes no show
to move, but doth, if the other do
And though it in the center sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.*
(25-32)

The speaker proves his comparison by drawing a circle –symbolic of the union of lovers—with a compass. While he goes on with two things so dissimilar, we see he is quite distant from a traditional mind. His lover and he are compared to the twin legs of a compass. The circle is an image of eternity, which has neither beginning nor an end. The allusion to the circle signifies that the lovers will be together forever in perfect love. Since compasses draw circles, the image of the compass legs separating and then coming back together thoroughly shows the lover's journey that makes him end where he has begun.

Upon reading the conceit from an entirely new way, we admit that Donne achieves something more than “counting the syllables” as Johnson has put. So, the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by a unique combination since Donne manages to unite the souls of the lovers with a compass. The poem's structure resembles a logical argument, but its logic supports an essentially irrational texture. Johnson relates in *Life of Cowley*, “To the following comparison of a man that travels and his wife that stays at home with a pair of compasses, it may be doubted whether absurdity or ingenuity has the better claim” (qtd. in Smith, 1983: p.230). He further states that in this poem “it is apparent that whatever is improper or vicious is produced by a voluntary deviation from nature in pursuit of something new and strange, and that the writers fail to give delight by their desire of exciting admiration” (qtd. in Smith, 1983: p.231). Johnson was unkind to the school of The Metaphysical Poets. He thought that these poets only wanted to show their learning and have unrestricted freedom of imagination which made it difficult for the average reader to grasp their meaning.

Thus, in Donne's poem “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” the conceit becomes the instrument of persuasion and of definition in an argument. Moreover, through the progression of the poem, Donne's method becomes interesting because the poet has built a complex argument for why the lovers should not be worried about their separation. Although the images (souls of lo-

vers and compass) may not at first seem to be related, it is obvious that Donne establishes unity and integration by using various images together throughout the poem.

Johnson is one of the most influential of Donne's critics. He sees Donne as versifier rather than poet, ridicules his learned skill, denies him most of the qualities good writing must have. For many years, most people knew Donne only by what Johnson said and quoted in his essay, and they had an assumption that Donne is a trader of conceit. (Smith, 1983) Johnson criticizes, "... those however who deny them to be poets allow them to be wits. Dryden confesses of himself and his contemporaries that they fall below Donne in wit, but maintains that they surpass him in poetry" (Smith, 1983: p.217). His *Life of Cowley* essay harmed Donne. *Life of Cowley*, was taken as a definitive dismissal and some commentators have argued that "far from lacking sympathy with Donne's poetry and dismissing it, Johnson knew it intimately, admired it, and was trying to establish new criteria for its appraisal" (Smith, 1983: p.217).

The Influence of Donne upon William Hazlitt

As a critic of English Literature, William Hazlitt writes on the Metaphysical Poets, in his *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* that "the object of these writers was to match any idea with any other idea" (1819: p.62). He also defines these poets as "an ill-sorted, unprofitable union... applying to serious subjects that quaint and partial style of allusion which fits only what is light and ludicrous, and building the most laboured conclusions on the most fantastical and slender premises"; Hazlitt continues, "The imagination of the writers... was lost in the labyrinths of intellectual abstraction, or entangled in the technical quibbles and impertinent intricacies of language... not of the absence of genius, but the abuse of it" (1819: p.63).

I agree with Hazlitt because Donne creates a kind of labyrinth in his poetry. By breaking down the conventions of Petrarchan poetry, Donne uses metaphysical conceits from a wide variety of areas of knowledge such as coins, alchemy, medieval philosophy, meteorology, mythology, government, law, geography. What is more, Donne's poetry has created a shock upon his readers who have been accustomed to sonnets based on traditional way of love's declaration. So, the way Donne opens his poetry is unique among the other love poems of his period because Donne parodies contemporary Petrarchan notions of love. To give an example, in his poem "The Canonization", Donne refers to issues like nobility, world of politics and wealth. In contrast to Petrarchan tradition of love-poetry, Donne never idolizes the objects of his passion.

On the other hand, I disagree with Hazlitt's definition of Metaphysical poets since Donne does not abuse genius and is not lost in the labyrinths of abstraction. In "The Canonization", his portrayal of love both as a physical and spiritual union through conceits disclose the fact that achieving human bond when in danger leads to self-improvement. Donne uses the conceit in a mystical way to express life's circular movement of death and rebirth: "*We die and rise the same, and prove/ Mysterious by this love*" (26-27). The conceit gives the impression that love is regarded as "sanctifying" and that "extravagant canonization" expresses at least emotional truth (Lawrence, 1985: p.233). Therefore, the wit used in the poem reveals that lovers can defy their mortality and withstand death.

Hazlitt's general attitude was that poetry of wit was a lesser kind of poetry when compared to the Metaphysical Poetry and although he was attracted to some tensions in Donne, he saw Donne as an inferior poet. Hazlitt wrote: "It is like poetry waking from a trance: with an eye bent idly on the outward world, and half-forgotten feelings crowding about the heart; with vivid imp-

ressions, dim notions, and disjointed words” (qtd. in Bloom, 2008: p. 49). Therefore, Hazlitt's approach is far from being haphazard and unsystematic. He reminded us of Johnson's approach, if we disregard Johnson's formality. Like Pope, Johnson did unintentionally great damage to Donne's reputation.

The Influence of Donne upon T.S. Eliot

As to the criticism in the twentieth century, T.S. Eliot did a great deal to establish a favourable place for Metaphysical Poetry. Eliot's essay “The Metaphysical Poets” is one of the most significant critical documents of the modern age. In this essay, he asserts that these poets used the conceit as a tool to challenge imagery, to stimulate both emotions and intellects, and that they aimed at expressing their highly passionate sensitivity in a frame of deep thinking. (1970) Eliot has shown that Metaphysical Poets are neither quaint nor fantastic, but great and mature poets. They do not represent a digression from the mainstream of English poetry, but rather a continuation of it. T.S Eliot relates that some of Donne's most successful and characteristic effects upon poetry are secured by brief words and sudden contrasts. He says “a civilization with great variety and complexity must produce various and complex results” (1970: p. 221). He expects more comprehensiveness and allusiveness from the Metaphysical Poet and believes that the poet must even force or dislocate language into his meaning (1970). This is similar to Donne's approach to show everything in a new perspective centuries ago while playing with the language and also making his poetry unique.

Eliot's theory focuses on the fact that Donne could feel his thought or be aware of thinking through the senses. From the framework of Eliot's theory of dissociation of sensibility, Donne interrupts the current of poetry by unifying sensibility. Thus, division between thought and feeling in poetry caused much critical re-valuation and rethinking. Eliot described dissociation as the separation of feeling and thinking and considered it as the aim of the poet to attempt a reconciliation.

We have mentioned how Dryden saw Donne's poetic concern as a vice and against novelty; however from Eliot's viewpoint, it seems there is a conflict between “the new work of art and the old existing order”. Eliot reconciles this conflict in “Tradition and Individual Talent.” “The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them... the whole existing order must be... altered... and this is conforming between the old and the new” (2000: p.2396-7). Donne is aware of the clash between the old and the new, the world of faith and the world of reason. Eliot also thinks, unlike Dryden, “novelty is better than repetition” (2000: p. 2396). Furthermore, in order to express the period of Dryden briefly, Eliot says “... in the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered; and this dissociation was aggravated by Milton and Dryden” (1970: p. 219).

For Eliot, Metaphysical Poets made themselves difficult to understand while trying to find the best way to express their thoughts and feelings. Contraries are juxtaposed, dissimilar or exactly opposite objects are interfused because Metaphysical Poets and Donne attempted to express their thoughts and feelings at the same time. “Eliot sees Donne as a poet of the world's literature because he so often expresses ‘his genuine whole of tangled feelings’ in which a change of mood means a shift of emphasis rather than the substitution of one feeling for an entire different one” (Burke,1947: p.17). What is more, Eliot says, “A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility. When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for work, it is constantly

amalgamating disparate experiences, the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary" (Eliot, 1970: p.30).

In other words, Donne was able to fuse material with spiritual, thought with feeling. This is a unified sensibility-- a process in which the poetic sensibility is composite, in which thought and feeling are the same, and intellect has blended with passion. It enables the poet to respond to heterogeneous experience in a unified way. In order to understand how he accomplishes this kind of experience and how he associates thought and feeling, we may examine his poem "The Relique". The poem opens:

*When my grave is broken up again
Some second guest to entertain,
(For graves have learn'd that woman head,
To be to more than one a bed)
As he that digs it, spies
A bracelet of bright haire about the bone, (1-6)*

Donne uses wit to portray a new dimension of the immortality of love. Images of death and love mingle with each other: The speaker's and his lover's corpses are rotten and the gravedigger digs the ground to bury some other corpse. His thoughts and feelings are associated to create the image of grave which contains a lover's bones mixed with only a scrap of his beloved's hair to unite them. Carey suggests that hair, in this case, overcomes the mortality of the physical body, since it is "bright"; and therefore still filled with light or energy. Thus, hair itself transcends temporality as its brightness connotes its holiness. (qtd. in Dorenbaum, 2012: p. 8).

The contrast between the description of the hair as "bright", an adjective that normally indicates abundant life, and the grave which suggests mortality is interesting. The central theme of this stanza is that anyone digging up and finding their mingled bones would assume that, on judgment day, when the dead will be raised, their souls will meet here and stay together.

*Difference of sex no more we knew
Than our guardian angels do;
Coming and going, we
Perchance might kiss, but not between those meals;
Our hands ne'er touch'd the seals
Which nature, injur'd by late law, sets free;
These miracles we did, but now alas,
All measure, and all language, I should pass,
Should I tell what a miracle she was. (25-33)*

The speaker is not able to describe the woman he loves in detail; since she is above all possibilities of explanation which makes her gain quality of God. Thus, the way Donne uses his wit to convey a physical union turns into an attempt to express a spiritual union. Suggesting that the

two souls find their bodies, the physical contact is necessary to facilitate the lovers' spiritual union. The main idea of the poem is based on an immortal love; this is what will lead the lovers to eternal life. Moreover, contrasting images and paradoxes, metaphysical wits, lead to the theme of self-improvement through love. Nonetheless, what makes the spiritual union possible seems to be the union of the lovers' physical body parts. This reveals a kind of unifying sensibility, as Eliot has asserted.

Thus, Donne tries to reflect experiences which require both feeling and the reason; but he perplexes his reader while doing this. Moreover, Donne could combine dissimilar ideas and experiences; he had the ability to remove the abstraction of thought from experience. Šmejdoá writes,

Instead of the dissociation of sensibility, he (Eliot) speaks about the disintegration of the intellect. This term describes the lack of unity between emotion and thought. The perfect harmony of thought and emotion was reached in the thirteenth century, but was never achieved again... In this process, a metaphysical poet has a very significant role: 'to transform thought into feeling and feeling into thought' (2013: p.25).

In *The Clark Lectures*, Eliot states that it is vital to understand the poetry of the past so that we may understand that of our own time and understand ourselves. (1970) He believes that a poet who is simultaneously a critic never stays only on a theoretical level, because he tries to defend the kind of poetry he is writing, or to formulate the kind that he wishes to write. That is why Eliot's personal view of John Donne significantly shaped both his poetry and criticism.

Conclusion

"The true heroes of the eighteenth-century criticism are the few independent spirits who spoke up for Donne in spite of the prevailing detraction and in spite of their own offended ears" (Smith, 1983: p. 17). Donne's poems are difficult to grasp because they require a deeper understanding and a scrutiny over the thoughts and feeling in them. The conventional idea of poetry that a poem should appeal to ears and the heart and that it should reflect an idea openly is what Donne rebelled against. However, he never made his reader lost. Alvarez states, "to take the sciences in all the imaginative strength of the new discoveries, and bring them all together as protagonists in the inward drama of his own powerful experience" (1967: p. xix). He also thinks the most important influence Donne exerted on English poetry is the intellectual tone rather than the conceit. (1967: p.41).

Consequently, via the experience (physical union leads to a spiritual union) given in "The Relique" in which Donne associates thought and feeling as a kind of unifying sensibility; we also observe how physical and spiritual love are similarly portrayed in "The Canonization". A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" is another example Donne employs metaphysical wit to form an argument for the speaker to convince his wife that spiritual love cannot be affected by their physical distance. Using a wide variety of areas of knowledge and urging his reader to think over and over of a poem, Donne was unique in applying metaphysical conceits different from plain extended metaphors. In some parts of his poetry, he takes a reader's mind and imagination, explains his comparison through his conceit, which becomes his achievement.

Therefore, the conceit creates a shock upon the reader at first sight and helps to give a sound to the intellectual tone. Moreover, Donne's poetic genius becomes apparent as the thoughtful reader pieces the conceit and images in his poetry together. Donne remains the poet of puzzling

self-contradictions, mingled beauties and complications, who is able to manifest both the real and the unreal, as well as paradoxical and seemingly contradictory suggestion of the physical and the spiritual, the material and the ideal.

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