

## An Analysis of Extended Metaphor of Love Portrayed in the Literary Works of the Famous Poet John Donne

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**Abstract:** This paper will go through the many types of love that can be found in John Donne's love poetry. When we go through Donne's love poems, we see that Donne has given us the conception of different forms of love, such as spiritual, carnal, conjugal, platonic, ardent and cynical etc. It discusses Donne's conception of multi-dimensional love and the study is done with reference to the love poems that have been prescribed for us- *The Sunne Rising, A valediction: Forbidding Mourning, The Good Morrow* etc. His focus was in dramatising, investigating, and illuminating the condition, or rather states, of being in love through a multitude of analogies.

**Keywords:** Love, Conceit, Metaphysical poetry, physical passion, spirituality.

**Introduction:** The phrases "metaphysical" and "physics," which are Greek in origin and mean "beyond" and "physical nature," respectively, are where the name "metaphysical" derives from. Metaphysical period is one of the remarkable periods of history of English literature. The name applied to a group of seventeenth-century poets and Dr. Johnson seems to have borrowed the term 'metaphysical' from Dryden who said that he 'affects the metaphysics'. Although John Donne was the father of this class of poetry, the metaphysical school included some other names like Abraham Cowley, Andrew Marvell, Richard Crashaw, Robert Herrick, George Herbert, and Henry Vaughan. The so-called "metaphysical type of poetry" is a term used to describe Donne's poetry. At the beginning of the discussion, it might not be absurd to explain the word "Metaphysical" and explore the origins of what is known as poetry that is metaphysical.

Grierson describes metaphysical poetry in the following terms: "a poetry which, like that of the *Divina Commedia*, the *De Nature Rerum*, perhaps Goethe's *Faust*, has been inspired by

*a philosophical conception of the universe and the role assigned to the human spirit in the great drama of existence.”*

In the 17th century, the metaphysical school of poetry revolted against the stale and worn-out Elizabethan poetry. The insurrection was headed by John Donne. His poetry is notable for its intense passion, sharp intelligence, and dramatic force. He enjoys reflection and self-analysis and only writes about his own intellectual, spiritual, and romantic experiences rather than fictional shepherds and shepherdesses. His fifty-five songs, which he wrote during the course of his life at various points, and which were first published in 1633 in a book titled *Songs and sonnets*, are what give him his reputation as a love poet. Some of Donne's love poems were influenced by real people and events in his life, but the rest are reflections of the poet's strong emotional activity. Donne's love poems explore love-relationships from the perspective of the man. Donne presents his philosophy of love in a very distinctive way through his metaphysical writings. In other words, John Donne may be considered a supporter of a brand-novel, multifaceted theory of love—one that is significantly distinct from that of his forebears and even his successors.

**Discussion:** Donne's love poems show a variety of moods, from cynicism and scorn to faith and acceptance, and encompass a wide spectrum of emotions, from intense physical desire to spiritual love. Donne is a remarkable poet because his work expresses a wider variety of emotions than any other poet before him and is grounded in his own experiences rather than being overly academic. The definition of love in Donne's poetry is incredibly creative and clever. He loves with everything of his heart—it's passionate, sensual, spiritual, coarse, harsh, flirty, conjugal, and reasoned. Donne used the technique of fusing sexual images with religious and spiritual situations in many of his writings. Most of Donne's poems depict how two lovers' souls leave their bodies after sexual union and mingle together before returning to their original bodies. These descriptions are the key characteristics of Donne's method. Each of the loves is purified by this experience, which also brings them spiritual happiness. Such a notion is at odds with the tenets of some philosophical traditions, such as Stoicism, which prioritise order and reason over sensory experiences in the search for spiritual truth.

One might contend that John Donne's method of fusing sexual language with spiritual subject matter operates as a reasonable objective in demonstrating his notion of bliss, which outlines romantic satisfaction and religious satisfaction as two in tandem phenomenon. This approach may be seen by certain individuals as paradoxical. Through his poems and his use of various metaphysical devices, such as conceits, imageries, and wit, he presents his love in a singular way. We may infer that Donne was not just a poet but also a thinker after reading some of his mandated love poems and analysing their themes. It encompasses a variety of types of love, such as the ardour with which he occasionally expresses his feelings for someone, whether it be spiritual, sensual, flirting, or marital.

Donne is so passionate and enthused about his love that he cannot stand the presence of anybody or anything, not even another heavenly body like the sun.

Let sea explorers explore new worlds,

Let maps depict other worlds on worlds, and

Let us hold one world, each of which has one and is one. (The Good-Morrow)

*The Good Morrow* brings out a contrast between a life without love and a life of all absorbing, passionate love. It pointed out in the poem that the world of love is as specious and as good as the physical world- it is even better in some respects. As Williamson puts it, this fine love lyric "*is not merely the salutation of a new day but the discovery of something more real and strange than anything they have known an absorbing love.*" The development of thought in the poem and the imagery is governed by this idea of such a love. Thus, the poem begins with ordinary reality, in which love makes all past experience seem childish or oblivion as deep as that of the seven sleepers. Now their souls have wakened to a new life of love- they become absorbed in one another- love, not fear restricts their attentions to each other and love makes their little room a world. No voyager or map-reader can find a world more wonderful than they find in each other.

In *The Sunne Rising*, we see Donne as an ardent and passionate lover where he speaks about the necessity of private space in love. The poem is a love lyric which stresses the self-sufficient nature of love. The poem opens abruptly, in a colloquial manner which is so

characteristics of Donne. Conventionally the Sun is glorified as God, but Donne's attitude towards the sun is different as we can see him scolding the sun as the 'Busie old foole, unruly sunne' for peeping through the window of his bedroom where he spends moments of love with his beloved and for disturbing him thus. In the words of Percy Marshall, "*There the poet catches the sun and addressing him as man to man, is playfully angry at his intrusion.*"

*He pictures the day's first activities, of the boys who pass his windows on their way to school or work, and of the court which was the focal point and symbol of the 16<sup>th</sup> century English life; he strips down the rigours of a time table; and he centres his attention on the thought of love."*

In addition to being an adoring idealist of heavenly love, Donne also believes in romantic love. He gives hint of physicality in love in poems like *The Sunne Rising*, where he chides the sun for disturbing him and his beloved in their bedroom by peeping through the window. Similarly, *The Flea* also bears hint of the desire for being united sexually. It looks at the issue of love through the agency and symbol of an insect who sucking of the blood from the lovers united them by proxy. The poet displays the flea that bit him and then her, pointing out that because their bloods have mixed within the flea, they are now connected inside its body, nearly like being united sexually. The poet continues to argue with the woman, attempting to persuade her that the flea is like to their marital bed, where they have united as one.

The woman in this poem is mute, as is usual of Donne's love poems, but it becomes clear from the poem that she wishes to kill the bug because the poet begs her to "spare" it and contrasts killing the flea with dying both him and herself because their lives are intertwined in it. In the poem, the author brilliantly compares the sexual interaction between a man and a woman to this beetle. In this poem, Donne deviates from the typical Petrarchan perspective on love; the love that is stated is mostly of a spiritual nature, as opposed to the love that is portrayed in *The Flea*, which has as its foundation the desire to form a physical connection. Donne departs from Petrarchan love in *The Flea* in this way.

However, Donne occasionally advocates forcefully for divine affection in his view of affection. In these situations, he believes that the expression "love" refers to the merger of two minds rather than the physical relationship that exists between two bodies, in which case the lovers' souls interact and get intoxicated while they are in the state of love. Genuine affection makes individuals forget about themselves and become one.

*Our two soules therefore, which are one,*

*Through I must goe, endure not yet*

*A breach, but an expansion,*

*Like gold to ayery thinnesse beate.* (A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning)

When the poet was getting ready to leave for France, he wrote the poem A Valediction: Forbidden Mourning. The poem, which he dedicates to his cherished wife Anne Moore, captures the Platonic ideal of marital love. It is considered by Grierson to be "the tenderest of Donne's love poems." The unity of two loves even while they are physically apart is the poem's central topic. To convince his loved one not to cry when he leaves for France, the poet makes a lot of justifications throughout the poem. The poet claims that since physical separation proves the spiritual basis of their love, sincere lovers shouldn't shed tears over it. Physical separation does not indicate the end of their relationship; rather, it serves to strengthen it by putting their love to the test and bringing the lovers' souls closer together. They should thus say goodbye to one another without raising a fuss. By weeping for the physical separation, they will only be vilifying their supreme love, which is spiritual, which is divine and pure. The poet stresses the eternal nature of spiritual love while elaborating on the dichotomy between worldly and spiritual love.

By including the well-known conceit of the compass, the superiority of spiritual love is further demonstrated. As the two legs of a compass are linked at the top, so too are the lovers spiritually joined even if they are physically apart. Donne compares the male lover to the leg that travels out of a circle, and the female lover to the constant leg of the compass. It would not be feasible to make a circle if the constant end of the compass lost its consistency and moved here and there. Similar to how the moving foot of the compass circles around

before returning to the centre, the poet claims that if his lover stays steadfast and devoted to him, he is obligated to return and be rejoined with her. Donne therefore occasionally embodies the platonic kind of love. According to *The Good Morrow*, two souls can mingle to create a new oneness exactly as the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—were intended to unite to create new matter.

In Donne's conception of love, the concept of two coming together to create a new one is crucial. When a couple finds true love, they become self-sufficient in one other and create their own universe, independent of everything else. These words from *The Sunne Rising* convey this concept:

*She's all states. And all Princes, I, Nothing else is.*

*Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;*

*This bed thy centre is, these walls, thy spheare.*

And again in *The Good Morrow*:

*For love, all love of other sights controules,*

*And makes one little roome, an everywhere.*

Donne also elevates his adored wife's and himself's love to a higher plane—a spiritual one—as seen in *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*, which he addresses to her.

**Conclusion:** Donne's love poetry reflects a wide range of shifting opinions and ideas about romance. Through his poetry, Donne expresses love as occasionally being physical, occasionally being spiritual, and occasionally being both. When Donne discusses physical love, he frequently compares it to a spiritual experience. The breadth and depth of Donne's love poetry are truly amazing. As a result, he exhibits a complex attitude towards love by discussing it as something that can be at once passionate, platonic, physical, spiritual, conjugal, or flirtatious. He also discusses love in a variety of contexts by making outstanding use of metaphysical allegories, images, wit, and his own unique poetic style. In summary, we can say that Donne experienced practically all of the emotions that men might

experience when they are among women, including ridicule, self-disgust, pain, physical pleasure, and the calm and serenity of shared love.

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