SEMESTER-I UNIT –I

JOHN DONNE: VALEDICTION FORBIDDING MOURNING, THE GOOD MORROW, BATTER MY HEART

UNIT STUCTURE

Learning Objectives

Introduction

Metaphysical Poetry

John Donne: The Poet

The Texts of the Poems

Reading the Poems: Major Themes and Critical Reception of John Donne

Summing Up

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After going through this part of unit-I you will be able to

- Discuss metaphysical poetry
- Discuss the life and work of John Donne as leader of the metaphysical school of poetry
- Discuss the features of John Donne's poetry
- Make yourself familiar with the major themes of his poetry
- Examine and analyse his poetic style
- Discuss what is it that makes his poetry unique

Introduction

John Donne is one of the most celebrated poets of English literature. He is known for his distinct poetic style and unique treatment of the theme. He wrote both love poems and religious poems. His love poems are known for the variety of approaches to love. He is called the leader of the metaphysical school of poets because it is his poetry and poetic style that led to this distinct style of writing poetry. Apart from John Donne others in the group of metaphysical poets include Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughan, George Herbert and others. Lets us discuss something about metaphysical poetry.

Metaphysical Poetry

The 'Metaphysical poetry' emerged as a special branch of poetry in the Elizabethan period. While the traditional Elizabethan lyrics were characterised by the conventional Petrarchan paraphernalias, the 'Metaphysical poetry' is marked by novelty of expression and technical ingenuity. The major poets in this school are John Donne, Andrew Marvell, George Herbert, henry Vaughan, Abraham Cowley and others.

The term 'metaphysical' was, however, applied rather accidentally to designate a particular group of poets. Dryden disapprovingly wrote of Donne, "He(Donne) affects the metaphysics not only in his satires but in his amorous verses where nature only should reign and perplexes the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy". Dr Johnson subsequently employed the term 'to a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets'. Since then Donne and his followers are described as 'metaphysical poets'.

However, the term 'metaphysical' is not used in the dictionary sense. Dr Johnson also did not mean that Donne and his followers were philosophers or philosophers poets like Lucretius or

Dante. They had used the knowledge of the philosophers like Aristotle, Plato and Thomas Aquinas in their poetry.

So, the term 'metaphysical poets' means a special group of poets whose poetry has some common characteristics that differentiate them from their contemporaries.

So, what are the features or characteristics of Metaphysical Poetry that differentiate from others genre of poetry? Let us discuss some of them:

Concentration of Thought:

Helen Gardner points out that a metaphysical poem is marked for its concentration. A metaphysical poem is usually brief, concise and closely woven. The reader is held to an idea or a line of argument. He is not allowed to pause and ponder over a passage. A metaphysical poems demands that we pay attention and rad on. Gardner says, it is like a limiting frame in which words and thought are compressed, 'a box where sweets compacted lie'.

Metaphysical Conceit

A unique feature of metaphysical poetry is its use of highly unconventional conceit. However, it is not used for decoration. It is used to persuade, to define, to prove a point. The speaker says something, it explains that. It is also highly erudite and impresses by strangeness.

Dialogic/ Argumentative Approach

A metaphysical poem is written in a dialogic manner. The speaker engages in a dialogue with either the beloved or God or the reader. Although the listener is silent, he /she engages in the dialogue.

Unification of Sensibility

A metaphysical poem uniquely blends passion and rationality, emotion and intellectualism. There is an admixture of intellectualised passion or passionate intellectuality.

Intellectualism

The metaphysical poets were men of learning and naturally their poetry bears an unmistakable stamp of their wide knowledge and intellect.

Dramatic Beginning and Colloquialism

A metaphysical poem is often marked by sudden and dramatic beginning. See the beginning of *The Cannonization-*

'For God's sake hold your tongue and let me love'
A metaphysical poem is also marked by the use of rough everyday / colloquial language.

A **Rough Comparison** between Elizabethan Lyrics and metaphysical poetry can be made for use of the students

Elizabethan Lyrics	**Metaphysical Poetry**
Appeals to heart	heart and mind
Treatment of theme- simple	marked by technical innovation
Imagery- conventional	highly unconventional imagery
Ladylove- idealised and idolised	realistic/ ironic presentation
Diction/ metre- standard	colloquial, based on actual speech

The **rise of metaphysical poetry** in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period can be attributed to the following reasons-

1. Saturation of Elizabethan lyrics
2. Complexity of life- political and religious strife
3. New learning
4. Metaphysical poets were learned men

JOHN DONNE: THE POET

John Donne is considered now to be the preeminent metaphysical poet of his time. He was born in 1572 to Roman Catholic parents, when practicing that religion was illegal in England. His work is distinguished by its emotional and sonic intensity and its capacity to plumb the paradoxes of faith, human and divine love, and the possibility of salvation. Donne often employs conceits, or extended metaphors, to yoke together "heterogenous ideas," in the words of Samuel Johnson, thus generating the powerful ambiguity for which his work is famous. After resurgence in his popularity in the early 20th century, Donne's standing as a great English poet, and one of the greatest writers of English prose, is now assured.

In Donne's own day his poetry was highly prized among the small circle of his admirers, who read it as it was circulated in manuscript, and in his later years he gained wide fame as a preacher. For some 30 years after his death successive editions of his verse stamped his powerful influence upon English poets. During the Restoration his writing went out of fashion and remained so for several centuries. Throughout the 18th century, and for much of the 19th century, he was little read and scarcely appreciated. It was not until the end of the 1800s that Donne's poetry was eagerly taken up by a growing band of avant-garde readers and writers. His prose remained largely unnoticed until 1919.

In the first two decades of the 20th century Donne's poetry was decisively rehabilitated. Its extraordinary appeal to modern readers throws light on the Modernist movement, as well as on our intuitive response to our own times. Donne may no longer be the cult figure he became in the 1920s and 1930s, when T.S. Eliot and William Butler Yeats, among others, discovered in his poetry the peculiar fusion of intellect and passion and the alert contemporariness which they aspired to in their own art. He is not a poet for all tastes and times; yet for many readers Donne remains what Ben Jonson judged him: "the first poet in the world in some things." His poems continue to engage the attention and challenge the experience of readers who come to him afresh. His high place in the pantheon of the English poets now seems secure.

The Poems:

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
  The breath goes now, and some say, No:

So let us melt, and make no noise,
  No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
'Twere profanation of our joys
  To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,
  Men reckon what it did, and meant;
But trepidation of the spheres,
  Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love
  (Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
  Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined,
  That our selves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
  Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
  Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
  Like gold to airy thinness beat.

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.

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.

Discussion of the Poem

John Donne, a 17th-century writer, politician, lawyer, and priest, wrote "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" on the occasion of parting from his wife, Anne More Donne, in 1611. Donne was going on a diplomatic mission to France, leaving his wife behind in England. A "valediction" is a farewell speech. This poem cautions against grief about separation, and affirms the special, particular love the speaker and his lover share. Like most of Donne's poems, it was not published until after his death.

The speaker opens with an image of good men dying quietly, softly urging their souls to leave their bodies. These virtuous deaths are so imperceptible that the dying men's friends disagree about whether or not the men have stopped breathing yet.

The speaker argues that he and the lover he's bidding farewell to should take these deaths as a model, and part ways silently. They should not give in to the temptation to weep and sigh excessively. In fact, grieving so openly would degrade their private love by broadcasting it to ordinary people.

Natural earthly disturbances, such as earthquakes, hurt and scare human beings. Ordinary people notice these events happening and wonder what they mean. However, the movements of the heavens, while being larger and more significant, go unnoticed by most people.

Boring, commonplace people feel a kind of love that, because it depends on sensual connection, can't handle separation. Being physically apart takes away the physical bond that their love depends on.

The speaker and his lover, on the other hand, experience a more rare and special kind of bond. They can't even understand it themselves, but they are linked mentally, certain of one

another on a non-physical plane. Because of this, it matters less to them when their bodies are apart.

The souls of the lovers are unified by love. Although the speaker must leave, their souls will not be broken apart. Instead, they will expand to cover the distance between them, as fine metal expands when it is hammered.

If their souls are in fact individual, they are nevertheless linked in the way the legs of a drawing compass are linked. The soul of the lover is like the stationary foot of the compass, which does not appear to move itself but actually does respond to the other foot's movement.

This stationary compass foot sits in the center of a paper. When the other compass foot moves further away, the stationary foot changes its angle to lean in that direction, as if longing to be nearer to its partner. As the moving foot returns, closing the compass, the stationary foot stands straight again, seeming alert and excited.

The speaker's lover, he argues, will be like his stationary foot, while he himself must travel a circuitous, indirect route. Her fixed position provides him with the stability to create a perfect circle, which ends exactly where it began—bringing the speaker back to his lover once again.

Themes & Style

John Donne wrote “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” on the occasion of his separation from his wife, Anne, on diplomatic business. The poem concerns what happens when two lovers have to part, and explains the spiritual unification that makes this particular parting essentially unimportant. The speaker argues that separation should not matter to him and his lover because genuine love transcends physical distance.

A valediction is a farewell. Donne’s title, however, explicitly prohibits grief about saying goodbye (hence the subtitle of “Forbidden Mourning”) because the speaker and his lover are linked so strongly by spiritual bonds that their separation has little meaning. Indeed, the speaker characterizes himself and his lover as “Inter-assured of the mind.” Donne created this

compound word—which combines the prefix "inter," meaning mutually and reciprocally, with "assured," meaning confident, secure, or dependable—to emphasize that the two lovers are linked by a mutual mental certainty about their love. They are so close in this way that the separation of their bodies doesn't mean much.

The speaker further assures his lover that their souls, as well as their minds, are unified. Physical separation doesn't "breach" or break this bond. Instead, their souls expand outward to cover the distance between them, as a soft metal is beaten to spread thinly over a larger surface area.

The speaker introduces the most detailed simile in the poem when he compares the soul of himself and his lover to the two legs of a drafting compass, in order to explain how they are still connected even when physically apart. The addressee of the poem is the "fixed foot" of the compass, the point that stays on the paper. The speaker is the moving point, which draws the circle. Although one leg of the compass doesn't move, the speaker points out that it "leans" as the other leg moves farther, making a wider circle, and "grows erect" when the other leg comes nearer.

The speaker asserts that his lover will play the "fixed foot" to his moving foot. Although the speaker "must" travel away, he will remain on a "just" path, correct and faithful. Together, the legs of the compass create a circle, which has an associative resonance with the spheres in stanza 4. In the popular philosophy of the time, circles and spheres represented perfection, harmony. The speaker's faith in his lover's "firmness" will make him trace a perfect circle, which ends precisely where it began. This ending also implies a promise of return, since the speaker intends to "end where I begun," coming back to his lover after his travels. True love, in the speaker's summation, not only can withstand any separation, but will always bring lovers back to each other.

The speaker of Donne's poem argues that visible grief at the lovers' parting would be a "profanation of our joys"—that is, that to loudly mourn would belittle the love the couple shares by proclaiming it to the ordinary world. Yet even as the poem urges a reliance on the power of spiritual connection in order to soften the pain of separation, it presents such connection as rare. The speaker disparages more ordinary, earthly love, as well as any bold proclamations of

feeling, as indicative of the need for physical proximity. In doing so, he elevates the quiet surety he shares with his partner as the mark of true, spiritual love.

The speaker begins by describing the quiet deaths of “virtuous men.” These deaths are almost imperceptible as the men “whisper to their souls to go,” indicating their readiness for death with the smallest possible sound. Their watching friends in fact have difficulty telling whether or not their breathing has actually stopped, because it is already so subtle and faint. The speaker argues that his parting with his lover should imitate the quiet quality of the deaths he describes. He cautions against “tear-floods” and “sigh-tempests,” the usual signs of separation, because they make the grief of parting too readily apparent to others. Their particular kind of love, he claims, would be degraded by letting other people know about it. The parting he wants is thus invisible to the outside world. It doesn’t make a sound, or show signs of physical grief like tears and sighs.

By referring to the rest of the world as “the laity” (usually used to contrast ordinary people with clergy), the speaker also implies a religious element to the love he shares. He and his lover have a sacred spiritual bond, which other people cannot understand. In this way, the speaker further indicates that the love he’s talking about is different from the usual kind. The speaker then contrasts movements of the earth (possibly referring to earthquakes and similar natural disasters) with the “trepidation of the spheres” (although it’s commonly used to indicate anxiety and fear, an archaic meaning of the word “trepidation” is a physical trembling motion). The speaker points out that disturbances of the earth are very noticeable, causing “harms and fears.” This is an implied analogy for the troubles of ordinary lovers, whose separations are stormy and public. In contrast, the trembling of the cosmos (according to the Ptolemaic model), while actually much more significant, goes unnoticed by people on earth. For the speaker, then, his parting with his lover should follow this example. It’s a massive event, yet must remain invisible to outsiders.

The speaker goes on to stress that his refined, highly mental conception of love is different from that of “dull sublunary lovers,” who need concrete proximity to one another. “Sublunary” means both “under the moon” and “mundane" or "worldly.” Donne thus refers to popular love poetry’s use of the moon as a romantic image, yet dismisses this as earth-bound and boring.

The “soul” of commonplace love is “sense,” or physical sensation. This kind of love cannot cope with absence, because it is essentially about sharing pleasures of the body.

The speaker and his lover, in contrast, have a connection of mind and soul that makes physical presence less important. For them, love has been “so much refined” that it is beyond even their understanding. What they can understand is the link between them, which goes beyond ordinary romantic and sexual feeling. They are “Inter-assured of the mind,” and so do not need their bodies to be near each other in order to preserve their love. In this way, Donne implicitly separates mundane, worldly love from what, in his eyes, is more genuine, spiritual connection.

The Good-Morrow

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.

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.

Discussion of the Poem

"The Good Morrow" is an aubade—a morning love poem—written by the English poet John Donne, likely in the 1590s. In it, the speaker describes love as a profound experience that's almost like a religious epiphany. Indeed, the poem claims that erotic love can produce the same effects that religion can. Through love, the speaker's soul awakens; because of love, the speaker abandons the outside world; in love, the speaker finds immortality. This is a potentially subversive argument, for two reasons. First, because the poem suggests that all love—even love outside of marriage—might have this transformative, enlightening effect. Second, because of the idea that romantic love can mirror the joys and revelations of religious devotion.

"The Good Morrow" is a celebration of love, which it presents as an intense and unparalleled pleasure. All the joys that the two lovers experienced before they found each other pale in comparison to the joy they experience together. Indeed, love is so powerful that the speaker describes it as an *awakening* of the soul: it is almost a religious experience. And like a religious experience, it reshapes the lovers' attitude to the world at large. Like monks or nuns who dedicate themselves to religious practice, the two lovers dedicate themselves to love above adventure and career success. "The Good Morrow" thus translates romantic—and erotic—love into a religious, even holy, experience. Love itself, the speaker suggests, is capable of producing the same insights as religion.

"The Good Morrow" separates the lives of the lovers into two parts: before they found each other, and after. The speaker describes the first part of their lives with disdain: the pleasures they enjoyed were "childish." Indeed, they were not even "weaned": they were like babies. Like children, they had a limited understanding of life. They were aware of only some of its "country" (or lowly) pleasures, going through the motions of life without knowing there could be something more.

But once they find each other, it feels as though their eyes have been opened. The speaker realizes that any "beauty" experienced before this love was really nothing more than a "dream"—a pale imitation—of the joy and pleasure the speaker has now. "Good-morrow to our

waking souls," the speaker announces at the start of stanza 2, as though the lovers had been asleep and are just now glimpsing the light of day for the first time.

Since the sun is often associated with Jesus Christ in Christian religious traditions and light is often associated with enlightenment, the speaker's description of this experience is implicitly cast in religious terms. That is, the speaker makes waking up alongside a lover sound like a religious epiphany or a conversion experience. The consequences of this epiphany are also implicitly religious. Having tasted the intense pleasures of love, the lovers give up on adventure and exploration: instead they treat their "one little room" as "an everywhere." In this way, they become like monks or nuns: people who separate themselves from the world to dedicate themselves to their faith.

Further, the lovers' devotion to each other wins them immortality: "none can die," the speaker announces in the poem's final line. Immortality is more commonly taken to be the reward for dedicated religious faith, not earthly pleasures like romantic love. In describing this relationship in religious terms, the speaker breaks down the traditional distinctions between love and religion. Where many religious traditions treat erotic love as something potentially harmful to religious devotion, the speaker of "The Good Morrow" suggests that erotic love leads to the same devotion, insight, and immortality that religion promises.

However, the speaker doesn't specify the nature of the love in question. If the lovers are married, for instance, the reader doesn't hear anything about it. Instead, the speaker focuses on the perfection of their love, noting the way the two lovers complement each other. Unlike other poems that argue for the holiness of married love specifically (like Anne Bradstreet's "To My Dear and Loving Husband"), "The Good Morrow" holds out an even more subversive possibility: that *all* love is capable of producing religious epiphany, whether or not it takes a form that the Church sanctions, like marriage.

Batter my heart, three-person'd God

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurp'd town to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
But am betroth'd 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.

Discussion of the Poem

The poem Batter My Heart is part of John Donne's *Holy Sonnets* sequence, which was probably written during the years 1609-1611 and meditates on God, death, divine love, and faith. "Holy Sonnet 14" comes later in the series and depicts a speaker's personal crisis of faith. The poem also boldly compares God's divine love to a rough, erotic seduction. This intimate and unconventional portrayal of a speaker's longing for faith has made the poem one of Donne's most famous.

John Donne wrote the series of poems called the *Holy Sonnets* during a period of religious conversion from Catholicism to Anglicanism. In this particular poem, the speaker has lost touch with God altogether and prays desperately for God to return. Furthermore, the speaker believes that faith can only return through forceful means: God has to force his way back into the speaker's heart. The poem, then, is at once a witty and an achingly open portrait of a soul desperate to overcome the torment of religious doubt.

A few lines in, the speaker states the poem's central problem most clearly: "I [...] labor to admit you, but oh, to no end." In other words, the speaker is *trying* to believe in God, to allow God into the soul, but keeps failing. This is the crux of the poem: it's not so much that the speaker

doesn't *believe* in God but rather that the speaker cannot *feel* God in heart and soul, as the speaker once did.

The word "admit" here, then, is a **pun**. It literally means to "let in," as if God can be let in to the speaker's soul. But it also puns on the sense of admitting something is true—the speaker is having a hard time *admitting* that God is real. "Reason," the speaker's ability to think logically, has been no help in this matter, pushing the speaker to further desperation rather than comfort; trying to proves God's existence using logic isn't necessarily convincing to one's emotions.

Furthermore, the speaker introduces this problem as a **metaphor**: "I, like an usurp'd town to another due, / Labor to admit you." The speaker's soul is like a "usurp'd town," a town that has been conquered by an enemy. The identity of this enemy is unspecified, but it can be interpreted as the devil, or atheism, or any other force that leads people away from God. The implied solution, then, is that God must "break" into the "town" of the speaker's soul, and set the speaker free. Doubt, then, is cast as a kind of painful imprisonment.

In fact, the speaker seems to feel that faith is beyond the speaker's control. Although the speaker keeps trying to let God in, that won't work. Instead, the speaker begs God to force his way into the speaker's soul. That's why the poem begins, "Batter my heart." It's as if the speaker's heart is a fortress, and God must invade that fortress. Through divine force, God can "make" the speaker "new," transforming the speaker back into a devout Christian. The speaker's crisis of faith, then, is so extreme that only extreme measures on the part of God can overcome it. The speaker sincerely wishes to return to God, but doesn't have the strength to do it alone.

The speaker makes a bold comparison between faith in God and erotic love. In fact, the erotic desire expressed here is not simply metaphorical. Rather, it can be thought of as a heightened form of sexuality, a desire for ecstasy on a *spiritual*, rather than simply physical, plane. The speaker begs for a rough—and consensual—seduction, one that fills the speaker with such passion that it eradicates all doubt in God. It is only through such passion, rather than logic or reason, that the speaker can truly overcome this crisis of faith.

The speaker begins the poem by emphasizing the importance of the heart, which represents passion and love: "Batter my heart, three person'd God." By beginning with this line, the speaker suggests that passion is central to faith. The speaker needs to feel passionate love for God in order to believe in him. This description also emphasizes the "force" of divine love. The speaker doesn't ask God to gently slip into the speaker's heart, but rather to break in. This isn't a gentle seduction, but a rough one.

In the middle of the poem, the speaker's state is like that of someone who's been separated from the person they love and forced to marry someone else: "Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain, / But am betroth'd unto your enemy." The speaker wants to be with God, but is "betroth'd," or married, to God's "enemy." This enemy can be interpreted as the devil, atheism, or anything else that causes one to lose faith. Whatever the case, the gist is clear. The speaker is comparing the situation to something like *Romeo and Juliet*, or any number of stories about ill-fated lovers.

The speaker believes faith can only be recovered through "my heart"—through passion—rather than "Reason," which is too easily led astray by powerful arguments. In lines 7-8, the speaker says, "Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend, / But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue." Here, "Reason" means one's ability to think logically about things. The speaker is saying that Reason *should* be providing arguments for faith in God. Instead, though, Reason falls for other arguments, "is captiv'd" by them. These arguments make it harder to let God into the speaker's heart. That's why God instead has to use passionate force to reach the speaker.

At the end of the poem, the speaker begs not only to be rescued, but in turn imprisoned and "ravish[ed]" by God. More specifically, the speaker has a series of demands, including "Divorce me," "break that knot again," "imprison me," and "ravish me." Here, "Divorce me" means that the speaker wants God to divorce the speaker *from* the "enemy" the speaker has been "betroth'd" to. Then, the speaker will be able to be married to God—a benevolent "imprison[ment]" that is actually "free[dom]," because the speaker's soul will now be at ease, free from spiritual distress.

"Ravish" here means intense sexual pleasure, but it can also have forceful undertones. While the speaker isn't necessarily referring to sexual assault, the word is nevertheless startling, especially in a religious poem. It captures the desire for a rough, forceful, spiritual seduction that guides the poem. The arc of this poem, then, follows an increasingly passionate plea for God to spiritually and forcefully return to the speaker.

Summing Up

Reading these three poems you have now a good understanding of the genre of metaphysical poetry. As you can see the poetry of the metaphysical poets is marked by innovative and erudite conceites, concentration of thoughts, and argumentative approach to the theme. The metaphysical poets had a big impact on modern poetry. T S Eliot wrote two essays on metaphysical poetry and John Donne which cemented the popularity of John Donne in the twentieth century which continues unabated.