

John Donne As A Poet of Love

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Abstract

John Donne is a great poet of love. His poetry presents different aspects of love. He exposes faithful love as well as faithless love. He presents devoted love as well as religion of love. As a poet of love Donne occupies a unique position. He is a great love poet because his poetry records and communicates the diverse experiences of love. His biographers tell us that he had enough experience of love's many mood from the most brutally cynical to the most idealistic and his poems prove that he had enough dramatic power to escape from the limits of anecdote into the expenses of poetry. It is true that his personal experiences of love must have been at the root of most of his love poetry but it does not seem proper to associate all his poems to the events or episodes of his own life or to his own changing moods. The poet deals with the basic nature of soul: three kinds of spirits based on three principal part brain, heart and liver. But Donne the love-poet was an intellectual realist with regard to his conception of love and women. The love poetry of the Petrarchians is conventional since they continued to uphold the medieval ideal of "amour courtois", in their love lyrics. But Donne rejected the lofty cult of love and woman. John Hayward remarks that Donne was "the first to break clean away from the medieval ideal of amour courtois." For example, in the poem entitled 'Go, and Catch a Falling Star', he writes that a beautiful woman can never remain true and faithful to her husband.

Keywords: Ambiguous, Ostentatiously, Assimilated, Aggrandizement, Heterosexuality, Sexual Libertarianism, Denunciation, *Twicknam*, *Nocturnal*, Platonic Love, Intellectualized

Introduction

John Donne is one of the greatest poets of love. He wrote many song and sonnets on the subject of love. As an amorist, he is original and bold. He did not write love-poems in the manner of his predecessors or contemporaries. He revolted against all traditions. Watson, Sidney, Daniel, Spenser, Drayton, and Lodge are the pipers of Petrarch's woes, sighing in the strain of Ronsard or more often of Desporters. Shakespeare sounded a deeper note. He revealed a fuller sense of the complexities and contradictions of passionate devotion. But Donne's treatment of love is entirely unconventional. He becomes conventional sometimes because he wants to dally half ironically with the convention of Petrarchian adoration. He rejects the cult of woman-worship. His predecessors and contemporaries used to give status of goddess to woman than that of a woman of flesh and blood. The lover not only flattered her, but promised her an immortality of fame to be secured by his verse. John Donne was totally against these traditions.

He was a realist in love and revolted against these fashionable and meaningless conventions. As an innovator of new kind of love, Mair remarks: "Elizabethan love poetry was written on a convention which, though it was used with manliness and entire sincerity by Sidney, did not escape the fate of its kind. Dante's love for Beatrice, Petrarch's for Laura, the gallant and passionate adoration of Sidney for his Stella, became the models for a dismal succession of imaginary woes. They were all figments of the mind, perhaps hardly that; they all use the same terms and write in fixed strains epicurean and sensuous like Ronsard, ideal and intellectualized like Dante, sentimental and adoring like Petrarch. Into this enclosed garden of sentiment and illusion Donne burst passionately and rudely, pulling up the

Gaycoloured tangled weeds that choked thoughts, painting, as one of his followers said, the seeds of fresh invention. Where his forerunners had been idealist, epicurean, or adoring, he was brutal, cynical and unmitigably realist. He could begin a poem, 'For God sake hold your tongue, and let me love; he could be as resolutely free from illusion as Shakespeare when he addressed his Dark Lady:

Hope not for mind in woman; at their best
Sweetness and wit, they're but mummy, possess.

Donne's love poetry is singularly fresh and untraditional. He regards woman as essentially in constant fickle and in their love. They are devoid of both faith and virtue. In his Song he says that man may do any number of impossible things- he may go and catch a falling star he may get with child a mandrakeroot, and even find out when all the past year are. But he will be unable to find a woman who is sincere and true. If somebody finds such a woman, by the time the poet goes and sees her, she will be false to two or three lovers already.

In the love-poems written before his marriage, he was a bitter cynic who was mocking at womanhood contemptuously. He was argumentative and intellectual in his love poems. For instance, he says in Sun-Rising;

"She's all states and all princes I
Nothing else is."

From this he gives the intricate argument that the sun, being old can do his duty more easily by shining on the lovers' bed. If the sun had just shone on the lovers' bed it would be as good as it were shining over the world. Thus his poems are highly well-reasoned and argumentative. But they are not devoid of intense passion. The skill lies in his blending passion and intellect.

According to H.J.C. Grierson, there are three distinctive strains in the love-poetry of Donne. Firstly, we note the cynical strain in his most of the poems. It is the most distinctive strain in Donne's early poetry. The Elegies are the fullest record of Donne's more cynical frame of mind and the conflicting moods which it generated. Secondly, we can distinctly note the Platonic strain. Poems like Twickenham Garden, The Funnerall, The blossom, The Primrose, are the indicative of his Platonic strain in love poetry.

The final strain in Donne's love poetry is that of marriage-love.

Donne's reputation as a poet of love rests upon his fifty-five love lyrics. They appeared in Songs and Sonnets in 1633. Before their publication they had been widely read in literary circles. They are supposed to have been written at different times. And in his later poems, when he had married Anne More, his love appears as Platonic love.

Lewis traces three levels of sentiment in the love-poetry of John Donne. On the lowest level, he finds "the celebration of simple appetite" as in Elegy xix, on the highest level, he has "the poems of ostentatiously virtuous love", and between these two extremes falls the great body of Donne's love-poetry, where he seems to continue, at least in some respects, the medieval tradition. Love is still a god and lovers his "clergie"; oaths may be made in "reverential fease" of his "wrath"; and the man who resists him is "rebel and atheist",

Study me then you shall lovers be
At the next world, that is at the next Spring
For I am every dead thing

In whom love wrought new Alchemy.

Lewis believes that Donne never for long freed himself from this "medieval sense of the

sinfulness of sexuality" Continuing in the same strain. Lewis declares that Donne's love-poetry, like the medieval love-poems, rings the changes on five themes: "on the sorrow of parting (including death), the miseries of secrecy, the falseness of the mistress the fickleness of Donne, and finally on contempt for love itself.

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to present Donne's love poetry. Donne's love poetry shows that he has felt almost everything as man can feel about a woman, scorn, self-contempt, anguish, sensual delight and the peace and security of mutual love. And also to present Donne's love poetry is singularly fresh-hand untraditional as he regard woman as essentially in constant fickle and in their love. They are devoid of both faith and virtue.

Review of Literature

In love, says Pascal, the body disappears from sight in the intellectual and spiritual passion which it has kindled. That is what happens in Donne, especially in The Anniversarie, not altogether in The Extasie. Ben Jonson has rightly remarked that Donne was "the first poet in the world for some things." And Coleridge observes, "I should never find any fault with metaphysical poems, if they were all like this or but half as excellent." According to Prof. Grierson contrasts Donne with Milton, and says, "Donne is not a Milton, but he sounded some notes which touch the soul and quicken the intellect in a way that Milton's magnificent and intense but some-what hard and objective art fails to achieve".³

Finally, Donne in his love-poetry dwells on the "infinite quality of passion, and of the replaces and reactions from passion".⁴ and his poems such as The Second Anniversarie, The Dreame, The Relic, and The Extasie are the best examples to prove this. Mrs Joan Bennett in her reply to Lewis. entitled The Love Poetry of John Donne remarks, "The greatness of Donne's love poetry is largely due to the fact that his experience of the passion ranged:

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action

But Donne knew something more than what Shakespeare describes here. He also knew the "marriage of true minds", and many of his poems are about that experience. Another great thing about Donne, the love-poet is that he does not despise the flesh. He accepts physical beauty as an embodiment of soul's beauty. So much so that he does not repent of this type of love-poetry even in the Holy Sonnets. On the contrary, he expressly states that love for his wife led him direct to the love of God. And Donne deserves praise for his candid confession.

Research Methodology

John Donne is considered one of the greatest of English love-poets. His reputation as a love-poet rests upon the fifty-five lyrics extant in his Songs and Sonnets and the twenty poems published as elegies. But his attitude to love and women was quite different from that of the Elizabethan love-poets and his own contemporaries. The Elizabethan love-poet looked upon his beloved as a goddess, as a fairy, a flower, etc,

and love as a divine Passion. But Donne's love poetry is above all the others.

Research Design

The research methodology in the present investigation will be exploratory, interpretative, evaluative and analytical. Diverse theme in the selected books are contemplated.

Sampling Design

To evaluate the result we will use judgmental or purposive random sampling method which will represent perfect argument on the topic of research.

Data Collection

Primary Data; Secondary Data

The primary data will collected with the assistance of the selected books. It will be additionally collected with the assistance of dialogue with policy markers administrator and adolescents.

Secondary Data

The secondary data will be collected from numerous resources like visiting to various libraries, books, Research Journals, internet, magazines and literary columns in newspapers and others various speeches delivered by John Donne and other eminent philosophers

Planning and Analysis of Data

The main data techniques utilities in this research contemplate were semi-structured meeting member perception gather discussion, optional source analysis and perfect argument on the topic. Individual meetings established a stand out amongst the most remarkable method and significant well springs of data. The analysis of information right of the bat managed the portrayal of each case dependent on the information collected by means of the distinctive patterns in each case contemplate. It is the creators contention that the depictions of the case contemplates enable one to pick up insights into the specific information. At last , considering that this research think about is made out of three distinctive case , it was important to scan for patterns in every one of the case. The empowered the researcher to build up a solid assemblage of evidence from the case.

Hypothesis

Donne's poetry acts as a prove with in human frame. As the prove goes deep to the wound and not only withdraw the total stink fluid which is harmful to the body but also make it enable for new healthy growth. Like wise we can say that his poems are similar to the pestisize that save a rotten development timely. We have to seem on reading an individual's personal love , and not just a poet contribution to a long standing tradition of poetic love Finally we have to consider whether Donne's poetry express real love at all and he was merely a talented poet using his wit and ingenuity to create didactic atmosphere.

Objectives of the Study

To explain the treatment of love by profound sensuous as well as keenly sensual, passion feeling sensuality all are combined and subjected to physical love. The following are the main objectives of this paper:

1. To analyse of love experience were wide and varied and so is the emotional range of his love poetry.
2. Donne's treatment of love is entirely unconventional except when he chooses to dally half-ironically with the conventional of Petrarchan tradition.
3. Donne's is not loved and liked today for medievalism, and his love-poetry is a very complex phenomenon.
4. Donne thought Love is not a smooth and ideal things and women are as much a prey to passion and sexual hunger of men.

Popularity of John Donne as A Love Poet

Donne is a great poet of love. His poetry presents different aspects of love. He exposes faithful love as well as faithless love. He presents devoted love as well as religion of love:

Faithless Love

John Donne's famous poem 'Go and Catch a Falling Star' presents this ugly aspect of love that is a sort of business in the name of love. Donne composed the song in 1597. He was unmarried and regular visitor to prostitutes. His vision of woman was low, mean and confined. He believed that all beautiful women were faithless. The poet claims that a beautiful woman would always be faithless. He asks his friend to find even a single woman who is beautiful as well as faithful. The poet challenges his friend to discover a faithful beautiful woman and if he succeed in finding her out ,he should tell about her to the poet. The poet decides not to go to meet such a woman. The matter is not to avoid the journey, but faith in his concept of women. The poet would not go to meet her even if she lives the next door. The poet fears that she may be chaste when the friend meets her, but would not remain so by the time, the poet reaches her. She would have been false to two or three men before the poet meets her.

If thou findest one, let mee know,
Such a Pilgrimage were sweet;
Yet does not, I would not goe,
Though at next doore wee might meet
Though shee were true, when you met her,
And last, till you write your letter,
Yet shee
Will bee
False, ere I come, to two, three.

Faithful Love

It is a sublime aspect of love that depends on physical union, but turns into a spiritual union that makes love immortal. The poet wears a bracelet made of his beloved's hair round his wrist. When the poet dies, the bracelet is round his wrist. Years after , when the grave is opened to bury a new dead body, his bones are removed from that grave. It suggests a dead body is like a guest allowed taking rest for a short period. After some time, its remains are removed to provide room for another guest. Like corrupt women, graves too change their bed partners. While removing the bones, the grave digger marks a ring of bright hair, worn carefully round the wrist. The grave digger thinks that a couple was buried there in the single grave.

The bracelet of hair was a mysterious device to unite their souls. It is proper to keep them together to the Day of Judgement. The poet takes pride in his faithful love. It is true enough to be free from lust. They love so greatly without knowing the source of their love. They do not know the cause of their love. They know at least, they are not attracted by sex desire. The poet claims love has made them sublime like angels. They love souls without making difference between male and female. During ordinary activities, they loved and kissed each other without any sexual intention. Intimate moments too could not stain the seal of chastity. Their love is wonderful in this sense. But now, he decides to tell his beloved that she is wonderful.

When my grave is broke up againe
Some second

Devoted Love

John Donne's famous poem 'The Sun Rising' deals with devoted love. The poet rebukes the sun for its want of good manners. It disturbs in young people's rest and love making. The sun should spare lovers. Love does not change with season, climate or days. It is timeless. He asks the sun to report if East India and West Indies are at their proper places or missing. He calls India the Indies of spices and West Indies the Indies of mines. The poet claims that both the Indies are present on his bed. The poet's beloved has the quality of the both. Likewise, all the rich kingdoms are present on his bed for nothing is richer than his beloved. The poet has a very high opinion of his beloved. He values her more than all great treasures. She is more than all states and the poets is her king. There is none more prosperous and powerful than the poet. Other kings are toys before him. The poet's honour surpasses their honour. All worldly wealth is vain before his achievement. The poet enjoys himself in perfect love of his beloved. They are happier than the sun. For them, their world is limited to their bed. The sun has the duty to warm the whole world. It is easy for the sun to warm them for bed represents the whole world. If the sun shines on them, the world will be illumined. Their bed is the centre and the walls of their room are the wide sphere of movement for the sun

She is all states, and all Princes, I,
Nothing else is.

Religion of Love

John Donne's famous poem 'The Canonization' introduces love as religion. Giving up interest in worldly things, the poet is devoted to the act of love making with his beloved. Giving importance to his love, he neglects these activities. He has a right to love his beloved all the time. The poet claims that he and his beloved have become saints of love. Their bodies are separated, but souls are united. Their love is highly sublime. Love has transformed the identity of the poet and his beloved. They may be called flies as well as candles. In love, they live for each other and are ready to die for each other. They are their own preserver as well as destroyer in other words, the eagle and the dove together. They are like the Phoenix that takes birth

from the ashes of the former and only one survives at a time. As saints of love the poet and his beloved would be immortalized.

Call us what you, We' are made such by love;
Call her one, mee another flye
We' are Tapers too, and our owne cost die,
And wee in us finde the ' Eagle and the Dove.

Concepts of Love

John Donne's conception of love is a different from those of other love poets. We can represent his conception of love as follow: "At an early stage, love in a physical passion, a cause of pain and suffering. The pleasure of sensual love is like the delight given by a summer night, which is as cold as winter" 1 (P. 16) But between a faithful husband and his wife, it rises to be a only passion and finally to be Platonic love. It reunites the souls of the two lovers into one. But this love requires the lovers to love each other on both the planes—Physical and spiritual. Without physical basis, Platonic love is not possible, although temporary separation does not matter

Nature of His Poetic Thought on Love

A critic remarks that Donne's love songs are the expression of his different moods in love. In other words, Donne's treatment of love is unconventional. His poetic thought on love is made up of different moods produced in him by love.

Love as Physical Passion

"The Blossom" is one of his earliest poems. Here he starts with the belief that love is a physical passion. He compares his beloved, Mrs. Magdalen Herbert (a married woman), to a blossom whose beauty is fading fast. Then he expresses his view that without physical reactions, such as kissing and embracing, there can be no love. He writes;

"A naked thinking heart that makes no show
Is to a woman but a kind of ghost"

(The Blossom)

Love As Cause of Pain and Suffering

It was only Donne that declared that love gives the lover much pain and suffering. lover always suffer from love pain In one of the poem 'Love's Alchemy', he state that lovers some time feel happiness of love and more they get is a fraud. Lovers always dreams of much happiness through their union. But they get nothing better than the pleasure of a summer night, which resembles the coldness of winter season;

"So lovers dreams a rich and long delight,
But get a winter- seeming summer's night"

(Love's Alchemy)

Love Can't Be Spiritual

In the same poem, he also says that there can be no spiritual love between a man and a woman. It is because a woman does not possess a mind. He writes that we should not hope for mind in women. At their best, they are dead bodies invested with souls;

"Hope not for mind in women; at their best

Sweetness and wit, they are but Mummy
possest,'

(Love's Alchemy)

Growth of Love-A Continuous Process

In 'Love's Growth', he says that growth of love is a continuous process. So love is a complex

thing. Every new experience added to it makes it more complex. Yet it grows in dimensions within its own universe. A single circle in water expands into countless circles, when the water is stirred. in the same way ,the circle of love , being stirred grows into countless circles within its own universe whose centre is the beloved;

"if as in water stir'd more circle be

Produced by one, love such additions take

Those like to many spheres but one heaven make,

For they are all concentre into thee.

Love – A Holy Passion

But when Donne had married Anne more, love became to him holy passion. In "The Canonization" he represents himself and his beloved as two souls loving and dying for each other. He also says that after their death they will be canonized for loved.ach of them loves the other so passionately as if each one were a taper as well as a fly for the other.

Call her one, me another fly,

We are tapers, too, and at our own cost die."

{The Canonization,}

Platonic Strain of Love

According to Prof. Grierson Donne's Platonic strain of love presents love of souls rather than bodies. In "The Canonization", Donne exposes the spiritual aspect of his love. According to him he and his beloved are like two burning tapers which burn by themselves in each other's love—the one sacrifices life for the other's sake. They two being one are Phoenix. Their two sexes fit together so perfectly that they form a being of no sex. Even after death they will come to life again.

The Phoenix riddle hath more wit

By us, wee two being one, are it,

So, to one neutrall thing both sexes fit,

Mysterious by this love

Donne treats his love as a holy passion. His love is pious enough to be called a devotion. The lover believes that the love poems narrating their love are like hymns or religious prayers. Their love is free from lust. After their death, the world would recognize them as holy saints of love. Lovers would regard them as a model and wish for the same devotion from the objects of their love.

And by these hymns, all shall approve

Us canonized for love

And thus invoke us, " You whom reverend love

Made one another's hermitage.

Again in another poem

Donne's "The Relique" is a plea for Platonic love. The poet is eager to die with a bracelet of his beloved's bright hair about his wrist although he had no physical union with his beloved. His love is perfect and faithful although he does not know what he loves and why. They love like angels unaware of difference of sex which plays a vital role in physical union, but in Platonic love it hardly matters. They meet and depart like common lovers, but the meeting leads to the union of souls. It has no physical attraction. They do not go beyond kissing.

First, we lov'd well and faithfully,

Yet knew not what wee lov'd, nor why,

Difference of sex no more wee knew,

Than our guardian angels does:

Coming and going, wee

Perchance might kisse, but not between those meales;

Our hands ne'r touch the seales,

Which nature, injur'd by late law, set free;

Spiritual Strain of Love

Donne proves that love does not depend on body which is subject to death but love is immortal. It is worshipped even ages after the lover's death. He regards his meeting and departing with the beloved as feeding of their souls. Therefore, he never tried to violate the seals of restriction put on physical union before marriage.

Coming and going, wee

Perchance might kisse, but not between those meales

Love for the poet is a spiritual matter which does not give importance to difference of sex for a soul is neither male nor female.

Difference of sex no more wee knew,

Than our guardian angels doe.

Positive Attitude towards Love

'The Sunne Rising' is a great love poem which expresses Donne's positive attitude towards love. He gives it the highest importance and rebukes the sun when its rays enter his bedroom and disturb his love-making. He claims that the sun can't regulate the routine of lovers. If the lovers become angry, all the shine of the sun may be destroyed.

Busie old foole, unruly Sunne,

Why does thou thus,

Through windows, and through curtaines call on us?

Secular Love

Among the things Donne identifies his beloved with is land, which is remarkably presented throughout his works because of both its frequency and the subsequent arguments made about it. In "Going to Bed,"² the lover addresses his beloved as "O my America, my new found land," and asks her to let his "roving hands" explore her body:

'License my roving hands, and let them go

Before, behind, between, above, below.

O my America, my new found land,

My kingdom, safeliest when by one man manned,

My mine of precious stones, my empery,

How bless'd am I in discovering thee!'

The Conjugal Strain of Love

Donne's love poetry shows the conjugal strain when he supports physical aspect of love and exalt the importance of sexual satisfaction. In his poem 'The Sunne Rising' the poet is solely absorbed in the charms of his beloved's beauty. He feels disturbed when sun rays enter his bedroom early in the morning while he is making love with his beloved. He rebukes the sun for its ill manners.

Busie old foole, unruly Sunne,

Why dost thou thus,

Through windows, and through curtains call on us ?

The poet warns the sun that he can eclipse the light of sun rays only by closing his eyes, but he does not wish to lose his beloved's sight even for a while. He claims that his beloved is all in all for him

Immortality of Love

Donne love poems show immortality of love. In poem 'The Canonization' the poet openly declares that the world is not fit for his love for worldly people have no sense of regard for love. They may create obstacle after obstacle in the way of their love. They are ready to renounce the world for the sake of love. Besides it, they have full faith in the immortality of love and they know that death is not the end of love. If they do not get place in a tomb, monument or books of history, they will be remembered as immortal lovers in sonnets which like hymns would canonize them.

We can dye by it, if not live by love,
And if unfit for tombes and hearse
Our legend bee, it will be fit for verse;
And if no piece of Chronicle we prove,
We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms;

Themes of Loves

The greatness of Donne's love poetry is largely due to the fact that his experience of the passion ranged from its lowest depths to its highest reaches. There is hardly any aspect of love between man and woman which he has not described in his numerous poems. His descriptions of the joys of union are as delightful as his handling of the phenomenon of separation is original. While many of his poems describe tortures, agonies and torments of unreciprocated love, in other poems he celebrates the reciprocated love, and tells us what infinite peace and happiness it has for the lovers. There 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. Donne's treatment of love in light and flippant mood cannot be ignored in a study of his love poetry. Sometimes he appears before us as a typical coxcomb of the Elizabethan age and presents before us his doctrine of promiscuity at other times he shocked the lovers of tradition by such lines as the following

I an two fools I know,
For loving and for saying so
In whining poetry.....

Donne's love poetry shows that he has felt almost everything as man can feel about a woman, scorn, self-contempt, anguish, sensual delight and the peace and security of mutual love. We can conclude this study of Donne's love poems with these words of Crofts that in them "We are aware of the man speaking in a manner and to a degree hardly to be paralleled in our reading of lyric poetry. Every word is resonant with his voice, every line seems to bear the stamp of his peculiar personality".

Conclusion

To conclude, Donne's love poetry has no consistent philosophy. His view on love and woman reflect his diverse moods which have been expressed with singular force and grandeur. A critic therefore remarks: "A great vitality of mood characterizes Donne's love poetry." It is also unconventional in that his attitude to women and love is intellectual and realistic. In spite of its Platonic garb in several poems, his love is profoundly sensuous. According to Grierson, his love-poetry reflects three strains- the strain of contempt and rejection, the strain of conjugal love, and that of Platonic love. Combined together, they mean something like this:

Sensual love is lust, its pleasure is short-lived. Bare spiritual love is like a ghost. So consistent love springs from the union of the body and the soul of two strictly faithful lovers who are husband and wife.

Donne's love poetry is great because it expresses diverse experiences and thought he travelled from one type of experience to another, he carried with him into the new a vivid memory of what the old had felt like. Donne's experience of the passion ranged from its lowest depths to its highest reaches. He describes the tortures agonies and torments of unreciprocated love and infinite peace and joy of reciprocated love. There is genuine passion in love poems and he does not belittle physical love, "through physical love, physical limits are transcended." True lovers cannot be parted in spirit. The sorrow of parting, the gentler pathos of temporary separation in married life is described in some of the poems. Donne felt everything a man can feel about woman, scorn, self-contempt, anguish, sensual delight and the peace and security of mutual love. Every word in his love poems is resonant with his voice, every line seems to bear the stamp to his peculiar personality. In short Donne felt that physical love is a gateway to spiritual rapture.

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