

➤ SEMESTER I: CORE COURSE 2

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➤ WRITINGS OF THE RENAISSANCE

➤ Module 5

➤ 1 William Shakespeare Sonnets 18,30

➤ 2 Francis Bacon 'Of Studies', 'Of Truth'

➤ 3 Edmund Spenser 'Prothalamion'

➤ Module 5

➤ 4 John Donne 'A Valediction Forbidding Mourning'

➤ 5 Andrew Marvell 'To His Coy Mistress'

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➤ 1 Thomas Moore: Utopia

➤ SEMESTER I: CORE COURSE 5

➤ INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE

➤ Module 4

➤ 1 Kiran Desai : The Inheritance of Loss

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Maladies

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John Donne - 1572 – 1631



Life

➤ -the founder of the meta
poetry

➤ greatest representative of



➤ John Donne struggled with _____ all of his life.

➤ Alcoholism

➤ poverty

➤ Illness

➤ doubt

➤ Donne's first religion was:

➤ Baptist

➤ Catholicism

➤ Buddhism

➤ Atheism

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➤ John Donne was imprisoned for:

➤ stealing the Official Seal.

➤ eloping with Ann More.

➤ refusing to write for King James.

➤ plagiarizing another writer's work.

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➤ . John Donne married Anne More in:

➤ 1601

➤ 1605

➤ 1891

➤ 1897

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➤ Which 'Inns of Court' did John Donne join in 1592?

➤ Oxford Inn

➤ Lincoln's Inn

➤ London Inn

➤ Royal Inn

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➤ John Donne wrote his famous phrase 'John Donne, Anne Donne, Un-done' in concern to:

➤ Birth of a stillborn as his 12th child

➤ Death of his daughter at the age of 18

➤ Loss of his position following his marriage

➤ Being forced to change his religion

➤ Who was Donne's chief patron 1610 onwards?

➤ Sir Robert Drury

➤ Sir Henry Styron

➤ Sir Walter Raleigh

➤ William Harrington

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➤ 'The Anatomy of the World' was written in the memory of:

➤ Mary, his daughter

➤ Lucy, his patroness

➤ Elizabeth Drury, his patron's daughter

➤ Anne More, his wife

➤ Who said about Donne, “He affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softnesses of love”?

➤ John Dryden

➤ Ben Jonson

➤ S. Eliot

➤ Samuel Johnson

➤ Who claimed, “Donne, for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging”?

➤ Ben Jonson

➤ S. Eliot

➤ Samuel Johnson

➤ John Dryden

➤ Which of T. S. Eliot's poems mentions John Donne?

➤ Ash Wednesday

➤ Aunt Helen

➤ Whispers of Immortality

➤ Gerontion

➤ Which of these novels uses John Donne's love story with Anne More as its subject?

➤ The Lady and the poet

➤ Conceit

➤ The Meaning of Night

➤ Stardust

Life

➤ born of a family with a s
tradition.

➤ educated at the Trinity C



Life



Cadiz in 1596 and later became secretary to Lord Keeper

utch forces

Life



with the niece of Lord
prisoned

Life



se, he lived in poverty.

ome of his most beautiful poems

ful love lyrics

So Much Death and Poverty...

- Married in 1601, had 12 children (incl. 2 stillborns)
- Three more children died before age 10
- His wife died in 1617
- he never remarried
- ○ Rare for this time
- In a state of despair, Donne noted that the death of a child would mean one less mouth to feed, but he could not afford the burial expenses

• John Donne's House

- In 1615 he gave up his job and entered the priesthood, and soon became Dean of St Dunstons Church.



• John Donne's House

➤ As the most famous of the time- he wrote sermons and poetry



➤ And these were known as his sacred verses.

➤ “Donne wrote some of the most passionate love poems and most moving religious verse in the English language” (Damrosch and Dettmar 1669).

➤ He is hailed as the “Monarch of Wit” (Dickson xi).

➤ He wrote FIVE different types of poems:

➤ Satires

➤ Elegies

➤ Verse Letters

➤ Songs & Sonnets

➤ Holy Sonnets or “Divine Poems”



Satires

- Dealt with common Elizabethan topics, such as corruption in the legal system.
- They also dealt with the problem of true religion, a matter of great importance to Donne..

Satires

- He argued that it was better to examine carefully one's religious convictions than blindly to follow any established tradition, for none would be saved at the Final Judgment.

Three stages of Donne's Poetry
Not necessarily chronological, but an
easy way to categorize Donne's works.

- The young "Jack Donne:" reflected by a misogynistic, lusty, and cynical persona in his early poetry ("The Flea," "The Bait," and "Song—Go and Catch a Falling Star")
- Having inherited a considerable fortune, young "Jack Donne" spent his money on womanizing, on books, at the theatre, and on travels

➤ 2. The courting / married lover:
reflected by a Neoplatonic ideal of
transcendent love- but a love also
founded in the physical (A Valediction:
Forbidding Mourning and “The
Ecstasy”)

➤ 3. Dr. Donne, the dean of St. Paul's Cathedral: religious poetry (Holy Sonnets) and prose ("Meditation 17") that sometimes praises, sometimes struggles with God's transcendent perfection.

Stage 1: Early Poetry (Elegies)

- Donne's earliest poems: Knowledge of English society coupled with sharp criticism of its problems

➤ His Erotic Poetry- Donne's early career was also notable for his erotic poetry(sexy stuff, , especially his elegies

➤ He employed unconventional

➤ Metaphors to portray sex



License my roving hands, and let them



W.

Stage 2 Poetry- (Neo) Platonic Love

- Physical love (animal lust) is base, common, low-born;
- Spiritual love is worthy, unique, divine
- Love, through procreation, is the closest humans come to immortality
- Comprehension of love brings
- comprehension of beauty as infinite



Stage 2 Poetry- (N Platonic Love



➤ Stages of Platonic love:

➤ 1) Initiated by Sense

➤ 2) Founded in Reason

➤ 3) Attains Spiritual Quality

➤ A Neo platonic Syllogism:

➤ God is everlasting, perfect divine love;

➤ True, spiritual love is everlasting and perfect;

➤ Therefore, two lovers united by spiritual love are close to divinity.

➤ A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning

➤ “But we by a love, so much refined,

➤ That ourselves know not what it is,

➤ Inter-assured of the mind,

➤ Careless eyes, lips and hands to miss.”

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Stage 3- Religious Poetry

- a more somber and pious tone in his later poems:
Because of His numerous illnesses, financial strain, and the deaths of his friends
- Donne focused his literary career on religious literature.
- He quickly became noted for his sermons and religious poems.

➤ His early belief in the value of skepticism now gave way to a firm faith in the traditional teachings of the Bible.

- The lines of these sermons influenced future works of English literature.
- E.g. Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which took its title from a passage in Meditation XVII
- Thomas Merton's *No Man is an Island*,
- which took its title from the same source.

Meditation XVI



- No man is an island, entire of itself;
- every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.
- Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

Later Poetry Continued-

A Challenge to Death

- Towards the end of his life Donne wrote works that challenged death, and the fear that it inspired in many men, on the grounds of his belief that those who die are sent to Heaven eternally.



17th C. English Literature: Metaphysical Poets



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Characteristics of Metaphysical Poetry

- With a rebellious spirit, the metaphysical poets tried to break away from
- the conventional fashion of the Elizabethan love poetry.
- The diction is simple and echoes the words and cadences of common speech.
- The imagery is drawn from the actual life.
- The form is frequently that of an argument with the poet's beloved, with God, or with himself.

Metaphysical



- In Donne's day, conceit simply meant: idea.
- Metaphysical Conceit: combination of heterogeneous ideas yoked together by violence that is sustained throughout the poem.

➤ .

Metaphysics



- an extended metaphor that combines two vastly different ideas into a single idea, often using imagery.

Metaphysical Concepts



- One of the most famous of Donne's conceits is found in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"
- he compares two lovers who are separated to the two legs of a compass.

These Poems are... Complex!

- Meant to make you think.
- “It makes demands upon the reader and challenges them to make it out. It does not attempt to attract the lazy and its lovers have always a certain sense of being a privileged class, able to enjoy what is beyond the reach of vulgar wits” (The Metaphysical Poets 17).

Paradox

- What is paradox?
- An apparently untrue or self-contradictory statement or circumstance that proves true upon reflection or when examined in another light.

Argumentative Form

- With the brief, simple language, the argument is continuous throughout the poem.
- The poems forms force the reader to trace the argument throughout the entire poem.
- They always have a surface level meaning, and then an implication (explore some sort of conflict)



John Donne is famed for 3 things

➤ A great visitor of ladies

➤

2. A great frequenter of plays

➤

3. A great writer of conc

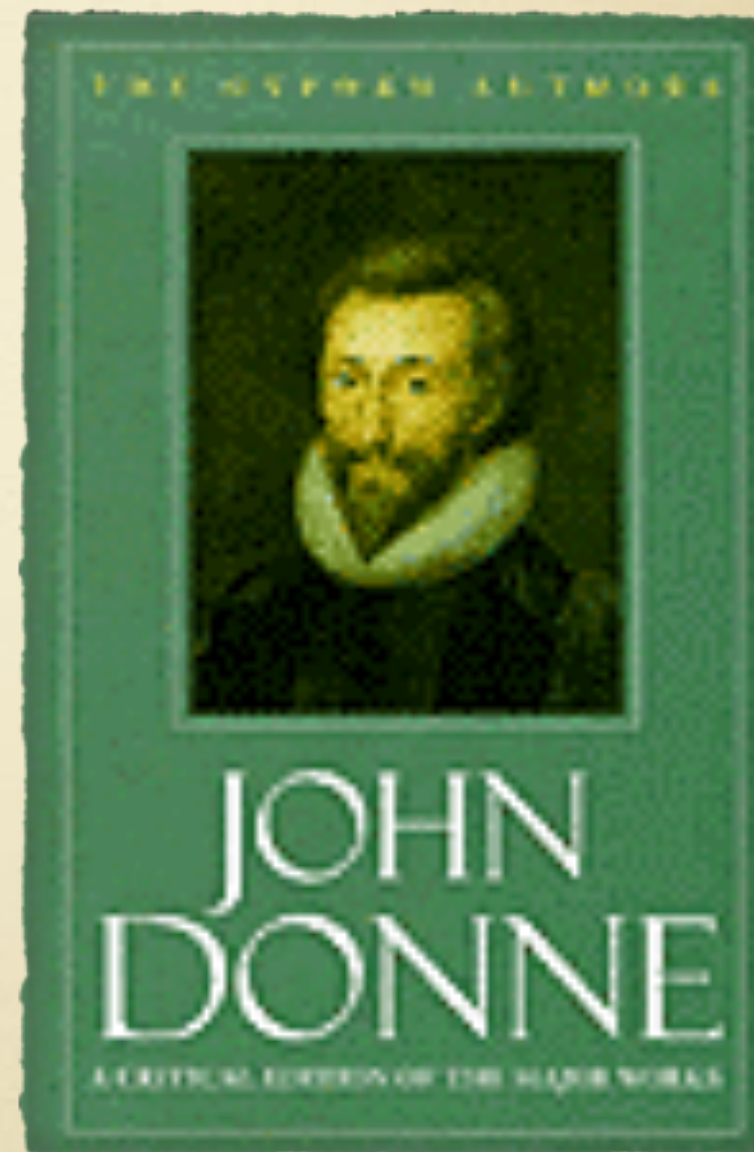


➤ John Donne's conceit can be seen from his "Go catching the falling star" in which he listed many impossible things---

➤ the most impossible thing is a

➤ woman's faith and heart.





Metaphysical Poetry – Platonic Love

- During the Renaissance, Plato got mingled with Christian and Eastern thought.
- Through this mingling- Platonic love
 - love of physical beauty in general
 - and ultimately to the love of that beauty

Metaphysical Poetry – Platonic Love

- "not in the likeness of a face or hands or in the forms of speech or knowledge or animal or particular thing in time or place, but beauty absolute, separate, simple, everlasting--the source and cause of all that perishing beauty of all other things."

Metaphysical Poetry – Platonic Love

- When this scheme is Christianized by equating this ultimate beauty with the Divine Beauty of God, the Renaissance Platonic lover can move in stages through the desire for his mistress, whose beauty he recognizes as an emanation of God's, to the worship of the Divine itself

Metaphysical Poetry- Platonic Love

- This complex doctrine of love which embraces sexuality (the mystical union of souls, - Donne's The Canonization) but which is directed to an ideal end (discussed in Plato's Symposium) is particularly evident in Donne.

➤

Metaphysical Poetry- Platonic Love

- Platonic love has also come to mean a love between individuals which transcends sexual desire and attains spiritual heights
- Ex: some of the courtly romances like Tennyson's Idylls of the King
- as well as homosexual love (Forster's Maurice)
- derived from the praise of homosexual love in The Symposium

2

➤ Donne is a person who has tasted every fruit

➤ in love's orchard. -- Joan Bennett

2

➤

➤ Love and Compass

➤



➤ Dr. Johnson “the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together”

➤ celebrated by Eliot as “disparate
experiences constantly amalgamated”

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2

➤ Grierson – “the tenderest of Donne’s love poems”

➤

➤ Coleridge “an admirable poem which none but Donne could have written”

➤ It is the conceit of the pair of compasses that attracts Coleridge’s admiration

➤

➤ The figure of the compasses suggests the idea that “love is not love which alters when it alternation finds”

➤ SONNET 116

➤ Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no; it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

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I. Background

- In 1611, John Donne wrote “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” to his wife, Anne More, weak and pregnant when he was about to set off France conducting government business.
- Donne intended to persuade his wife to release from the sadness of their departure.



I. Backgrounds

➤ Valediction is derived from a Latin word, meaning to say farewell.

➤ The title says, in part, we must r



II. Rhyme Scheme and Meter

- Each four-line stanza is quite unadorned, with an
- ABAB rhyme scheme and an iambic tetrameter.

- It is iambic tetrameter with eight syllables (four feet) per line.

- Each foot, or pair of syllables, consists of an
- unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.

- So let /us melt/, and makes/ no noise,
- No tear/-floods, nor/ sigh tem/pests move,

➤ Stanza 1 and 2

➤ Tenor- their separation

➤ Vehicle -virtuous men pass away mildly (death), a man's soul from his body

➤ “parting” to “death” is a common comparison in literary works.

➤ Here, “Virtuous” refers to not in moralities, but those people who can meet their death without complaints, saying it is time for their souls to move on to eternity.

- profanation -- the act of showing contempt for God or holy things. “debasing or cheapening (of religious)
- laity -- common people (of religious) church members who are not ordained clergymen; laymen
- Hyperbole: tear-floods, sigh tempests

➤ “melt” means the physical bond that unites us.

➤ we must not cry storms of tears, and move tempests of sigh.

➤ To declare our love publicly will debase and cheapen our love, which is love of the ordinary people.

➤ This shows the speaker’s emotional aristocrats.

Stanza 3, 4 and



- trepidation – movement
- sublunary love — below the moon, worldly love

- Moving of the earth:
harmful and causing fear



Stanza 3, n



- Trepidation of the spheres:
- the movement of the sun and other heavenly bodies; natural and harmless, actually with more greater motions but unknown. (astronomy)

➤

- Moving of the earth → the dull sublunary love → sensual and physical bond
- Trepidation of the spheres → the speaker's love → spiritual attachment
- Our love is so refined, so otherworldly, that it can still survive without the closeness of eyes, lips, and hands.

➤ An earthquake causes destruction; it makes the earth shake and move, and frighten people

➤ But the movement of the spheres- the sun, the moon, and the stars- though much greater, causes no harm, and the people are not afraid of it because they are unaware of it.

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➤ Earthly lovers whose love is based on their senses cannot bear the absence of the object of love.

➤ This is because their senses miss the object; that is to say they are miserable when they lose sight of the beloved.

➤ Dull sublunary lovers- insensitive earthly lovers whose love is physical and not spiritual

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➤ But our love is refined and spiritual.

➤

➤ They have absolute confidence in each other's soul.

➤ so much so, the physical self, eyes, lips, hands, etc.
do not matter at all.

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➤ Stanza 6

➤ Even if he has to leave of his beloved, his physical absence from her side will not be a breach of their love.

➤ On the other hand, his going away results in an expansion of their love even as gold when beaten to airy thinness never breaks but spreads over a larger area.

Stanza 6, 7, 8 and 9

- Our souls are one, like a gold beaten to airy thinness. (alchemy)
- A gold -- when it is beaten with a hammer, widens and lengthens
- when we depart, the spiritual bond that unites us actually expands rather than causes a break and rift.
-

Stanza 6, 7, 8 and 9

- Our souls are two, like the feet of twin compasses. (geometry)
- The wife's soul - the fixed foot
- The husband's soul - the outer foot

➤ Stanza 7

➤ The lovers are two – but they are like the two legs of a pair of compass united at the top

➤ The beloved who stays at home is like the fixed leg of the compass

➤ The fixed foot (wife's soul) makes no show to move, but does if the outer foot (husband's soul) moves.

➤ When the outer foot (husband's soul) travels far, the fixed foot (wife's soul) should follow it and grows straight until the outer foot (husband's soul) comes back. Wife's attachment to husband

- Your position there helps me complete my circle so that I end up where I began. The image of a circle (perfection) Husband's attachment to wife
- Dr. Johnson – “the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together”

- The poet's beloved is like the fixed leg of the compasses; it is in the centre. But when the other leg, namely the poet moves round it, it too responds and helps complete the circle.
- The poet's going away is like the moving of the leg of the compasses and its return only to be reunited with the beloved.

- It is the firmness of the fixed foot that enables the moving foot to draw the circle and then return to the place from where it has started.
- It is the faithfulness, firmness and steadfast loyalty of the beloved that enables him to complete his journey and return home

V. Theme

- Real, complete love unites not only the bodies of a husband and wife but also their souls.
- Such spiritual love is transcendent, metaphysical, keeping the lovers together intellectually and spiritually even though the circumstances of everyday life may separate their bodies.

A Comparison between the Common
Love of the Everyday World and the
Uncommon Love of the Sneaker

the common love of the everyday world	the uncommon love of the sneaker
	like virtuous men pass
many complaints	
	as the trepidation of the unknown
no absence of the body	
	more of spiritual love

- Scholars have long sought the origin of Donne's "compass figure"
- from Omar Khayyam to Guarini, the Belgian printer Christopher Platin
- a Persian mathematician, astronomer, philosopher, and poet, widely considered to be one of the most influential thinkers of the Middle Ages. He wrote numerous treatises on mechanics, geography, mineralogy and astronomy.

➤ Guarini –Camillo-Guarino Guarini
was an Italian architect of
the Piedmontese Baroque, active
in Turin as well as Sicily, France,
and Portugal.

➤ Christophe Plantin was an influential Renaissance humanist and book printer and publisher.

➤ anonymous author of another compass
poem in a seventeenth- century
commonplace book

- No absolute source has been agreed upon
- possibly influenced directly by Dante
- Regardless of - "The Valediction; Forbidding Mourning," in the final analysis, owes much to Dante

➤ the influence of Dante upon Donne

➤ “The Compass Figure Reinterpreted” -

➤ Robert F. Fleissner

➤

➤ W. A. Murray –

➤ Remarks – “Donne's conceits turn out to be connected by complex associations, which, when we discover them, give his poetry a greater degree of coherence”

➤ Evelyn M. Simpson –

➤ in her second edition of Donne's prose works-

➤ "Donne," she says had travelled in France, Spain, and Italy and knew something of the language and literature of all these countries. He was one of the few Jacobean writers who read Dante in the original.

- There is first the possibility that Donne was familiar with *La Vita Nuova* as well as *Il Convito* and *La Divina Commedia* –
- for it is conceivable that Dante's picture of Love occupying the very center of a circle had an influence upon Donne's compass figure.

➤ This relationship is an especially appealing one to consider since it takes into account the more aesthetic aspects of Donne's image.

➤ the circle transcribed by the compasses has more poetic significance than the compasses themselves

➤ The import of this fact has been duly pointed out by Joan Bennet:

➤ The circle occurs again and again in Donne's verse and in his prose as the symbol of infinity

➤ Insensibility to such intellectual symbolism has caused, not only Dr. Johnson, but even so modern a critic as Miss Sackville-West to cite the compass image, in the Valediction: Forbidding Mourning, as an example of metaphysical ineptitude

- few other resemblances between La Vita Nuova and Donne's poem which bear some comparison
- The quality of the love described is similar: Dante idealizes Beatrice to the extent that he incorporates something of the Divine in her
- this same element is evident in Donne's conception
- (" T'were prophanation of our joyes / To tell the layetie our love " which is " so much refin'd ").

➤ Donne's very title implies sublimation of the emotional (" Forbidding Mourning").

➤

➤ Both works deal with the problem of the absence of the lover from his beloved

➤ (revealing a spontaneity on the part of each poet suggestive of the autobiographical).

- And finally both, in their use of the circle, reflect the medieval reverence for this figure as the Eucharistic form.
- This was natural for Dante the Roman Catholic; Donne, whose sermons reiterated the medieval tradition (he was raised an austere Catholic), frequently referred to God in terms of the geometric form

- there is a common bond which links the two poets.
- Both are concerned with divine and human love
- - even to the point of ennobling the passion of man for woman by relating it to the ethereal expression of perfection found in the image of the circle

- In the twelfth chapter of Dante's *Vita nuova*, Love appears to the poet in the form of an angel and gives himself a mystic definition:
- " I am as the center of a circle, to which all parts of the circumference stand in equal relation; you, however, are not so"
- *La Vita nuova* XII, 21-23, an interpretation see C. S. Singleton, "Vita Nuo'va XII, Love's Obscure Words," *Romanic Review* XXXVI (April, 1945), pp. 89-102.

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➤ For Dante, as for most thinkers of his time, the spatial and temporal perfection represented by the circle precluded its use as a symbol for anything human.

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- The perfect circularity of the Paradiso was a gift awaiting the man who had been through Hell;
- it could never be considered a birthright, for perfect circles transcend the human just as the heavens transcend the earth.
- So great was the gap between perfection and humanity that it could be spanned only by the Incarnation.

➤ Soul body relationship

➤ Ramie Targoff. John Donne: Body and Soul.

➤ The unifying preoccupation of all John Donne's writings, according to Brandeis University English professor Ramie Targoff, is his obsession with the mysterious relationship between his soul and body.

- As both poet and preacher, Donne urgently pursues complex, contradictory metaphysical speculations about his soul's origins, its separation from the body at his death, and its eagerly awaited reunion with his body on Doomsday.
- Though the Apostles' Creed has since the
- second century professed, "I believe in the resurrection of the body,"

➤ Targoff carefully distinguishes Donne's conviction from prevailing Christian dualism, the idea familiar from Marvell and Montaigne that the soul is the body's unwilling prisoner, longing to be freed into eternity.

➤ Donne's belief that the soul only reluctantly leaves the body and his anxiety over their intervening separation is heterodox, she demonstrates, but not heretical.

- Likewise she comments that Donne's invented word valediction reflects his preoccupation with
- the anticipation of parting and reunion both between lovers and between his soul
- and body.
-

➤ Thus “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning,” which famously concludes in a homecoming circle drawn with “stiff twin compasses,” begins by comparing the lovers to “virtuous men” who “whisper to their souls, to go.”

➤ Similarly, in “The Second Anniversarie,” according to Targoff’s extraordinary reading, Donne longs for the metaphysical homecoming of the body to the soul, and the soul in question, she remarks, is not that of Donne’s patron’s late daughter, Elizabeth Drury, but his own.

- Unlike Herbert and Milton, who each assume a
- public voice
- Donne speaks with purely private intensity, frequently writing as if on the brink of life and death.

