



# **Victoria University Of Bangladesh**

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## **Answer to question no -2**

If i have been studying John Donne's metaphysical poetry, you've probably noticed that his works are riddled with

different symbols and motifs. Embedded throughout his poetry, these literary devices may seem slightly abstruse to the reader. You may find yourself asking: What do they mean? And in relation to what? Even Donne's contemporaries failed to appreciate his poetry. The neoclassical poet John Dryden rejected Donne's works because it "affects the metaphysics" 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".

One thing that you should understand about Donne's romantic poetry, is that while his stark images of compasses and spheres may seem foreign to you, they were also alien to his predecessors too. So, if you're struggling to comprehend his enigmatic poetry, not to fear! Because John Donne's poetic peers didn't initially get it either.

The reason for this is because Donne refused to conform to the poetic conventions of the time. The poet emerged as an idiosyncratic in the Elizabethan era, the Renaissance. Unlike his contemporaries, he didn't employ elaborate descriptions of symbol natural landscapes, classical myths and female beauty. The reason for this was because Donne did not believe in the

one-sided love and emotional frustrations that his contemporaries tried so hard to convey in such imagery.

Donne's poetry was so different because he rejected and even openly mocked the idea of such a high-minded religious worship in literary romance. In "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," Donne criticises the "tear-floods" and "sigh-tempests" of the "dull sublunary lovers." In a similar vein, Donne satirises the "sighs" and "tears" (The Canonisation) so prevalent in Petrarchan works.

Instead, Donne advocated for a different kind of love. He espoused a love that comprised of the Body and the Soul, which was a dominant intellectual issue in the literary treatment of love in the 1590s. More specifically, Donne embraced the balance between Platonic love and the Ovidian love.

Platonic: Platonic love is essentially love that surpasses the mere sensual and physical. It is a very spiritual concept and is based on reason, affection, respect, intellect and compatibility.

The idea of balance derived from discoveries being made about the human body during the Elizabethan era. The Renaissance was fundamentally a time of discovery particularly in the area of science. Elizabethans believed that elements in the body needed to be balanced,

Top Tip: When you're analysing John Donne's poetry and writing essays, be aware of Donne's overarching message in his romantic poetry. Most explanations about his use transcendent relationship with his lover is thus determined by obtaining a balance between the spiritual and earthly pleasures. Most examination questions will leave room for to discuss the connection between the material and the divine world! Make sure to understand this, because this is a huge component to his poetry.